

Constructing Participation:

A Study of Cambodian Sensemaking
of International Development Policies

by Jenny Knowles



វិទ្យាស្ថានបំរើអ្នកសំរាប់សំរួលការងារអភិវឌ្ឍន៍
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PREFACE

My feet touch the Phnom Penh airport tarmac. The heat and the sun are comforting, like in so many other developing countries visited in my past. I could be in Ghana or Mexico or Algeria. But no, this is Asia. This is Cambodia. There is no denying that I have entered another world. My most basic sensemaking orientations are immediately challenged. I sensed the fieldwork experience would profoundly shape me as a researcher and human being, much more than I would shape it! It did in more ways than I could have imagined in those early hours...

Within a few days of landing, I start to question the whole premise of the study. *Why in the world did I think I'd be able to come halfway around the world to study someone else's sensemaking?* By the time I've negotiated an apartment lease and had my first meal, my most basic value orientations, sense of what constitutes right and wrong, and belief in linear and logical orientations are turned on their head. *Is it too late to turn back?* Luckily, interviews had already been scheduled so I was thrown into the thick of data collection before I could over-think the research project.

The research quickly began to take on a life of its own, on so many levels. As I listened to Cambodians' descriptions of their country's history and the international advisors' commitment to the program, I realized an incredibly complex intermeshing of narratives had to be negotiated to do this research well. As a result, an oftentimes disconcerting, shall I say, 'dynamism' pervaded the research experience. The complexity of my research subjects' lives, interactions, and the organization's history and placement was oftentimes overwhelming. *Everything was supposed to feel much more contained, bounded, and manageable!*

Yet, as I collected data, the first noticeable theme to emerge across interviews was a strong sense of belief, which helped me to begin to piece the narratives together - belief in the power of an idea, belief that a group of people with a vision and determination can make a difference, and belief in the human spirit to persevere. A narrative stream began to emerge! Yet, the analytic road was also bumpy, especially as I shared my study concept with international staff and consultants. As I described my excitement around attempting to understand local staff's sensemaking, I found that my topic was not intuitively accessible to many of those who were deeply rooted in the development complex. Questions and comments abounded, including: *"Why is studying sensemaking important when all we have to do is respond to our donors' bottom line?" "Better to spend your time measuring outputs and impact, not on documenting sensemaking! Is that even possible in this place?"*

In response to these challenges, this study begins with several caveats, namely that this is not a traditional policy study. It is not an attempt to evaluate the program studied, nor does it link the documented sensemaking processes to policy impacts. It does not follow expectations of written products typically associated with traditional donor-oriented studies. It has not attempted to provide a comprehensive record of the program or its achievements, nor does it take a position on the program's perceived success. Instead, this has been an effort to examine sensemaking processes of a particular group of local staff in an effort to better understand how mid-level managers navigate the complexities of international policy implementation. It is best read as an exercise in bracketing of core assumptions about the development industry and the people who make up its human dimension.

ABSTRACT

Understandings of development require grounding – both in the sense that understandings of the principles underlying participatory development must be held by local and international staff working on the ground, but also grounded in the local culture. This study seeks to close the cognitive gap between international and local perspectives on participation by asking the research question: *How do multiple environments interact to create local understandings of participation in international development environments?*

This ten month ethnographic study of a donor program in Cambodia included a mix of interviews, program and historical document analysis, and observations in order to explore the implementation of the participatory development policy through a sensemaking lens. The research draws on three fields of knowledge to make connections across these macro and micro environments: managerial sensemaking and schema literatures, studies related to domestic and international policy implementation, and theoretical conceptualizations of participatory development.

To answer the research question, five ‘socio-cognitive environments’ (SCEs) surrounding the Seila program environment in the country of Cambodia were explored. This theoretical construct helped to disentangle the factors that influenced how one group of local staff negotiated complex cultural and historical realities in juxtaposition to donor conceptualizations of development. The five SCEs documented include the international macro-environment, the Cambodian historical and cultural macro-environments, the more immediate policy environment surrounding the program, and the micro-programmatic environment composed of the program’s internal operations and organizational culture.

By employing the SCE construct, a complex picture emerged of how local mid-level managers, working to implement the program’s participatory mandate, were influenced by their positioning at the confluence of these five socio-cognitive environments, providing new understanding of the forces which promote local staff’s internalization of democratic governance principles. This study suggests that even in program environments with high degrees of cognitive dissonance due to macro-historical factors, and where international development mandates tend to create additional cultural and organizational blockages, micro-programmatic interactions can significantly influence the ability of local staff to surmount strong cognitive obstacles.

NOTE ON INTERVIEW QUOTES AND TRANSCRIPTION

METHODS

Senior Provincial Program Advisors (SPPAs – pronounced “spas”) were chosen as the focus of the study, in part because they are required to possess a command of English and this made it possible for me to conduct interviews with them. However, some limitations in understanding were encountered and are elaborated in Chapter 3.

I have attempted to leave quotes as close to their original form as possible to preserve their authenticity and richness. However, modifications have been made to ensure that a reader with little or no knowledge of Cambodia or the Khmer language is able to fully understand and appreciate their meaning. It should be noted that many Cambodians speak English in a similar fashion to the Khmer language, which does not include plurals, verb conjugation or tenses. There are also substantial differences in sentence structure from spoken English. Therefore, interview texts were modified to ease reading. Specific modifications include:

- Pluralizing words by adding “s” to the end, without notation.
- Adding connecting words such as “or” and “and” without notation.
- Deletion of superfluous words without notation (e.g. “so do they listen or do they make notes” became “do they listen or make notes”).
- Reordering of words without notation when the intended meaning was apparent.
- Adding verbs [in brackets] when the intended meaning was readily apparent, but it appeared that language limitations prevented full expression of an idea.
- Correcting simple grammar [in brackets], (e.g. “not happy the government” became “not happy [with] the government”).

Furthermore, because the Khmer language does not conjugate verbs or have past or future tenses, a SPPA interviewee may be speaking in the present tense when, in fact, he or she is referring to something in the past or the future. This fact accounts for the transitioning between interviewee quotes in the present tense and the study narrative in the past tense.

The errors, omissions problems herein, I accept as my own. To request additional information or data sets, please contact: jenknow@gmail.com.

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ABBREVIATIONS¹

ADB:	Asian Development Bank
ADESS:	Agricultural Development Support to Seila
ADP:	Area Development Plan
ADS:	Area Development Schemes
AIT:	Asian Institute of Technology
BPD:	Bureau for Policy Development, UNDP
C/S:	Commune/Sangkat (Council)
CAR:	Council for Administrative Reform
CARERE1:	Cambodia Resettlement and Rehabilitation Programme
CARERE2:	Cambodia Area Rehabilitation and Regeneration Project
CAU:	Contract Administration Unit (of the PRDC ExCom)
CBO:	Community-Based Organization
CBRD:	Community-Based Rural Development
CC:	Commune Council
CCB:	Commune and Community Based Natural Resource and Environmental Management (Danida Programme)
CCF:	Country Cooperation Framework
CD/CB	Community Development/Capacity Building (advisement position label)
CD:	Community Development
CDC:	Commune Development Committee
CDC:	Council for the Development of Cambodia
CDP:	Commune Development Plan
CDRI:	Cambodia Development Research Institute
CIP:	Commune Investment Plan
CNRM:	Community-based Natural Resource Management
CPP:	Cambodian People's Party
CRDB	Cambodian Rehabilitation and Development Board (part of CDC)
D+LG+UD:	Democracy, Local Governance, and Urban Development Networks, Bureau of Policy Development, UNDP
DAC:	Development Assistance Committee
DDC:	District Development Committee
DDF:	Decentralized Development Fund
DDFC:	District Development Facilitation Committee
DFID:	Department for International Development (British)

¹ In cases where acronyms or labels have changed over time, I use the most recent version. (e.g. Seila instead of SEILA, Carere instead of CARERE, etc.)

DFT:	District Facilitation Team
DK:	Democratic Kampuchea
DOLA:	Department of Local Administration
DOP:	Department of Planning
DORD:	Department of Rural Development
DRD:	Decentralized Rural Development
DWVA:	Department of Women’s and Veteran’s Affairs
ExCom:	Executive Committee of PRDC
FAO:	Food and Agriculture Organization
FHQ:	In-Country Field Office Headquarters
FM:	Formal Mandate
FUNCINPEC:	Unified Front for an Independent, Neutral, Peaceful and Cooperative Cambodia
GID:	Gender in Development
GRO:	Grass-Roots Organization
GTZ:	German Development Assistance Agency
HQ:	New York Headquarters
ICORC:	International Committee on the Reconstruction of Cambodia
IDP:	Internally Displaced Persons
IFAD:	International Fund for Agriculture and Development
INGO:	International Non-Governmental Organization
IO:	International Organization
IS:	Individual Schema
JTMC:	Joint Technical Management Committee
JTMU:	Joint Technical Management Unit
KPNLF:	Khmer People's National Liberation Front
KPRC:	Kampuchean People’s Revolutionary Council
KR:	Khmer Rouge
LCB:	Local Capacity Building
LCBA:	Local Capacity Building Advisor
LCBU:	Local Capacity Building Unit
LDC:	Least Developed Country
LDF:	Local Development Fund
LDP:	Local Development Project
LGA:	Local Government Authority
LGU:	Local Government Unit, UNCDF
LPP:	Local Planning Process
LPU:	Local Planning Unit
LUMU:	Land Use Management Unit

LUP:	Land Use Planning
LUPU:	Land Use Planning Unit
M&E:	Monitoring and Evaluation
MAFF:	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
MEF:	Ministry of Economy and Finance
MEIU:	Monitoring, Evaluation and Information Unit (PRDC ExCom)
MIS:	Management Information System
MOAFF:	Ministry of Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries
MOC:	Managerial and Organizational Cognition
MOEF:	Ministry of Economics and Finance
MOI:	Ministry of Interior
MOP:	Ministry of Planning
MOU:	Memorandum of Understanding
MOWVA:	Ministry of Women's and Veterans' Affairs
MRD:	Ministry of Rural Development
MWRM:	Ministry of Water Resources and Meteorology
NCDD:	National Committee to Manage Decentralization and Deconcentration Reforms (post-2006)
NCSC:	National Committee for Support to the Communes
NGO:	Non-Governmental Organization
NI:	Narrative Inquiry
NPRDC:	National Programme to Rehabilitate and Develop Cambodia
NPRS:	National Poverty Reduction Strategy
NREM:	Natural Resource and Environmental Management
ODA:	Official Development Assistance
OECD:	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OPS:	Office of Project Services (now UNOPS)
OS:	Organizational Schema
PA:	Program Advisor
PAG:	Permanent Advisory Group, Sida
PAT:	Programme Advisory Team
PBC:	Planning and Budget Committee, Commune Council
PD:	Participatory Development
PDIP:	Provincial Development Investment Plan/Program
PDP:	Provincial Development Plan
PDRD:	Provincial Department for Rural Development
PFT:	Provincial Facilitation Team
PIP:	Public Investment Program

PLG:	Partnership for Local Governance
PLUP:	Participatory Land Use Planning
PM:	Programme Manager
POLA:	Provincial Office of Local Administration
PPM:	Provincial Programme Manager
PPP:	Province Planning Process
PRA:	Participatory Reflection and Action
PRA:	Participatory Rural Appraisal
PRD:	Participatory Rural Development
PRD:	Policy Research Division/Department
PRDC:	Provincial Rural Development Committee
PRDD:	Provincial Rural Development Department
PRK:	People’s Republic of Kampuchea
PRODERE:	Programme for Displaced Persons, Refugees and Returnees, Central America
PRSP:	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
PSDD:	Project in Support of Democratic Development through Decentralization and Deconcentration
PSO:	Provincial Support Office
PSU:	Provincial Support Unit
QIPs:	Quick Impact Projects
RDS:	Rural Development Structure
RESS:	UNOPS Rehabilitation and Social Sustainability Division
RGC:	Royal Government of Cambodia
RILG:	Rural Infrastructure and Local Governance Project
RILGP:	Rural Investment for Local Governance Project (post-2006)
ROAR:	Results-Oriented Annual Report (UNCDF document)
RR:	Residential Representative
SAS:	Strategic Areas of Support
SC:	Social Constructionism
SCE:	Socio-Cognitive Environment
SEDP:	Socio-Economic Development Plan
Seila:	Khmer word for “foundation stone”
Sida:	Swedish International Development Co-Operation Agency
SIP:	Seila Investment Plan/Program
SNC:	Supreme National Council of Cambodia
SOP:	Standard Operating Procedures
SPC:	School Parents Committees
SPD:	Small Arms and Light Weapons Policy Development

SPPA:	Seila Provincial Programme Advisor
STF:	Seila Task Force
STFS:	Seila Task Force Secretariat
TA:	Technical Assistance
ToR:	Terms of Reference
TSS:	Technical Support Staff
UN:	United Nations
UNBRO:	United Nations Border Relief Operation
UNCDF:	United Nations Capital Development Fund
UNDAF:	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP:	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR:	The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF:	United Nations Children’s Fund
UNOPS:	United Nations Office for Programme Support
UNRISD:	United Nations Research Institute for Social Development
UNTAC:	United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia
VDC:	Village Development Committee
WB:	World Bank
WFP:	World Food Program
WHO:	World Health Organization
WSSD:	World Summit for Social Development

DEFINITIONS: LOCAL TERMINOLOGY

<i>Backstopping:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Name used in Cambodian donor environment to describe the relationship between donor-funded technical advisors and government counterparts. (e.g. Donor staff are charged with “backstopping” a programme or RGC official)
<i>Barang:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Common slang term referring to individuals of Western origin.
<i>Cambodian National:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A person born and living in Cambodia.
<i>Cambodian People’s Party (CPP):</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Kampuchean People’s Revolutionary Party (KPRP), the sole political party during the Vietnamese occupation (1979 - 1993), was re-named Cambodian People’s Party upon the initiation of the UN peace initiatives in the country. The party headed by Hun Sen, the formerly Vietnamese appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs during the People’s Republic of Kampuchea, and composed the first Government of Cambodia in coalition with the FUNCINPEC party in 1993. Hun Sen headed a military coup in 1997 which has since resulted in CPP holding ongoing majority power in the government.²
<i>Commune Chief:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elected and ceremonial head of the Commune Council³, serving in a variety of official and informal functions, including administrator, conflict mediator. Core figure in decentralization process, particularly since becoming an elected position in 2002. <p>“On February 3, 2002, Cambodia elected its first decentralized government bodies, the commune councils. There are 1,621 communes in Cambodia, with a total of 11,261 elected councilors. Under the Law on the Administration and Management of Communes, a commune council is a body elected to represent the citizens in its commune and to serve their general interests. The commune councils are elected by eligible commune citizens and are directly responsible to them. The Ministry of Interior plays an oversight role, although this responsibility has been largely delegated to the</p>

² <http://www.thecpp.org/>; http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hun_Sen

³ Ninh & Henke 2005

	<p>provincial/municipal governors by <i>Prakas</i> (proclamation). Depending on their geographic and demographic profiles, the commune councils consist of between 5 and 11 councilors. Typically, if there are between 3000 and 5000 people in a commune, there are 5 councilors; for 5001 to 7000 people, there are 7 councilors; and populations between 7001 and 9000 people have 9 councilors. If there are more than 9000 people in a commune, there are 11 commune councilors. The commune council has a 5-year mandate, which expires when a new council takes office. The next elections are expected to take place in 2007.”⁴</p>
<p>Commune Clerk</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The clerk is the person who attends all meetings, provides technical assistance to the CC, and is put in place and trained by the government.⁵
<p>Commune Councils:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are 1621 Commune Councils in Cambodia and 11,261 Commune Councilors. Commune councils have two types of roles, one in local commune affairs, and the second as an agent of the central government pursuant of tasks delegated by central government authorities. In terms of local commune affairs, Commune councils have duties to promote and support good governance by managing and using existing resources in a sustainable manner to meet the basic needs of the commune, serving the common interests of the citizens, and respecting national interests in conformity with the State’s general policy. Specific duties include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintenance of security and public order: this may include taking measures to reduce crime and violence, introducing rules affecting public markets and cooperating with police. • Arranging for necessary public services and being responsible for the good process of those services; for instance, water sanitation, road construction and repair, health services, education and waste management. • Encouraging the promotion of the comfort and welfare of citizens; for example, establishing a local park or playground. • Promoting social and economic development and

⁴ Mansfield & MacLeod 2004, 5

⁵ Bothe 2004

	<p>upgrading the living standards of citizens; for example, seeking investors for development projects in the commune.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protecting and conserving the environment, natural resources and national culture and heritage; this may include implementing programs to protect local wildlife and flora, and local natural resources. • Reconciling the views of citizens to achieve mutual understanding and tolerance; for example, assisting in resolving disputes within the commune. • Performing general affairs to meet the needs of citizens.⁶
Community Level:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community based organizations (UNCDF label)
Council for the Development of Cambodia (CDC):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Among others (See cited website for additional information) CDC roles include: • “Act as the "Focal Point" and "One Stop Service" of the Royal Government of Cambodia in its relations with donor countries, agencies and NGOs; and as the "Focal Point" and "One Stop Service" for Government ministries and agencies in aid coordination and allocation/utilization.” • “Formulate and implement the Strategic Framework on Development Cooperation Management to strengthen Government ownership and leadership in development process and to strengthen partnership between Royal Government of Cambodia and the donor community.”⁷
Counterpart:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Term used to refer to one’s work partner in the development process. (e.g. A technical advisor might serve as a counterpart to RGC staff or vice versa.)
Decca	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Commune councils are delving into policy formulation through the enactment of commune orders, known as <i>decca</i>. The most common policies enacted include those required to access commune funds (planning and budgeting, procurement, and monitoring and evaluation committees). Others relate to sectoral issues such as fisheries or community forestry and are usually drafted with the assistance of an agency that specializes in that sector. A few commune councils have initiated their own <i>decca</i>, and these appear to relate to fairness and inclusion –whether to

⁶ Mansfield & MacLeod 2004, 5-6

⁷ <http://www.cdc-crdb.gov.kh/default.htm>

	<p>compensate villagers for property damage or to ensure that the council is being responsive to all villagers.”⁸</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commune councils have the power to approve <i>deccas</i> (orders) so long as these do not conflict with any international treaties recognized by Cambodia, the Constitution, national laws or other legal instruments. • Most <i>deccas</i> enacted by commune councils are based on forms provided by the Ministry of Interior. The most common relate to the creation of sub-committees required by the local planning process (LPP) policy as part of the commune planning process, including the Planning and Budgeting Committee (PBC), procurement committee, and supporting committee.⁹
District Facilitation Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A District Facilitation Team (DFT) is made up of provincial and district level government staff supporting commune councils on issues such as LPP, <i>decca</i> development and technical guidelines for the bidding process as outlined in Prakas 292.¹⁰
Donor:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International, multi or bi-lateral donor agencies or their agents who provide funds for development activities in developing countries.
Ex-Com Permanent Member:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Chair of Executive Committee of the PRDC has the right to appoint any member of the Executive Committee as Permanent Member. The permanent member shall perform the following duties on behalf of the Executive Committee: • Prepare agendas, invitation letters and minutes for the Executive Committee meetings; • Review incoming and outgoing correspondence, ensure timely distribution to appropriate Executive Committee Units and the Governor for action, and maintain an efficient filing system; • Facilitate exchange of information between the Municipal Rural Development Committee and the Executive Committee units, line departments and other agencies; • Approve expenditures less than US\$1,000 under delegated

⁸ Mansfield & MacLeod 2004, 5.

⁹ Mansfield & MacLeod 2004, 6.

¹⁰ Mansfield & MacLeod 2004, 12-13.

	<p>authority from the Chair of the Executive Committee and in accordance with financial guidelines and procedures;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perform other duties as requested by the Chair of the Executive Committee.¹¹
ExCom:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Executive Committee of the Provincial Rural Development Committee is charged with execution of the annual work plan and budget and day-to-day work of PRDC. The ExCom consists of the following members: Governor Chair; Deputy Governor 1st Deputy Chair; Director, Department of Rural Development 2nd Deputy Chair; Director, Department of Planning Member; Director, Department of Economy and Finance Member; Director, Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Member; Director, Department of Water Resources and Meteorology Member; Director, Department of Women’s and Veterans Affairs Member; Director, Provincial Treasury Member; Chief, Unit of Local Administration Member. • The ExCom establishes the following units to assist in carrying out day-to-day duties: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contract Administration Unit (CAU) • Local Administration Unit (LAU) • Technical Support Unit (TSU) • Finance Unit (FU)¹²
Expat:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expatriot. Foreigner residing and/or working in Cambodia, not of Cambodian nationality.
Funcinpec:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funcinpec is an acronym for Front Uni National pour un Cambodge Indépendant, Neutre, Pacifique, et Coopératif. This party was initiated in 1981 by Prince Sihanouk. Until 2007, it was led by Prince Ranariddh and supported a royalist agenda.¹³
Infra-Local Level:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Village/neighborhood leaders (UNCDF label)
Local Level:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commune/district local authority (UNCDF label)

¹¹ PRDC Excom Prakas Number 292, Article 5

¹² PRDC Excom Prakas Number 292, Article 4

¹³ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Norodom_Ranariddh; <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Funcinpec>; <http://www.funcinpec-usa.org>

Logframe:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The product of the LFA presented in a Logframe Matrix (also known as the Logframe). The matrix provides a summary of what the project aims to achieve and how, what the main assumptions are, and a framework for developing the activity's monitoring and evaluation system.¹⁴ • Matrix enclosing a project's assumptions and intervention logic in which means of verification and objectively verifiable indicators are presented.¹⁵
Mid-Level Manager:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managers not working directly with community members, but overseeing a number of community development projects. (In the SEILA case, these are provincial level managers.)
National Level:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In contrast to international headquarter level or local/provincial field office operations, national level refers to programme headquarter operations located in Phnom Penh.
National-Level Staff:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals working at the national level of operations in the PLG or Seila staff, as contrasted with local or provincial level staff. Staff could be Cambodian or international.
Organic Law:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A term introduced in 2005 to describe the administrative and management laws being developed in Cambodia to direct a broad decentralization and deconcentration reform effort in Cambodia.
Partnership for Local Governance:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The donor-support project to the RGC and Seila operations.
Planning and Budget Committee:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sub-Committee of the Commune Council, composed of one woman and one man from each village covered by the commune. "Such Committees are composed of councilors and may also include citizens (or other representatives, such as NGO staff) as members. Committees play an advisory role to a council."¹⁶
Praka:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal proclamation, regulation or decree adopted by a Minister.
Program Manager:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managers physically located at the headquarter level and charged with oversight of a country program's operations.

¹⁴ <http://www.aadcp.org/keyterms.html>

¹⁵ <http://www.projectmanagement.ro/Glossary.html>

¹⁶ Mansfield & MacLeod 2004, 6

Program:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An administrative unit that includes a group of smaller community-level “projects” that are designed to achieve a program’s mandate. The Seila program is considered as such, not a project. Many NGO-support activities would fall under the project categorization.
Project:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the development context, a project typically refers to a stand-alone, small-range project with short-term and limited objectives, not connected to a larger program-focus.
Project Manager:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managers located within a country’s operations, whether at the community, provincial, or country headquarter levels. International or national staff can serve in such a position.
Provincial Department of Planning:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible for the technical review of sub-national development plans and for overseeing planning training and support.¹⁷
Provincial Department of Rural Development:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides technical support to communes and rural services.¹⁸
Provincial Level:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The highest level of government before the national level, above the district, commune, and village administrative levels. Provincial Governors are appointed, not elected. Provincial level is also the location of the majority of the development work related to the Seila programme.
Provincial/Municipal Rural Development Committee:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Established to manage the Seila Program at Provincial/Municipal level. Consists of the following members: Governor Chair; Deputy Governor 1st Deputy Chair; Director, Department of Rural Development 2nd Deputy Chair; Director, Department of Planning Permanent Member; Directors, Technical Departments Members; Chiefs, District/Khan Members • The Provincial/Municipal Rural Development Committee has the following roles and responsibilities: • Review the indicative planning figures and approve Provincial/Municipal development plans; • Review and sign the annual work plan and budget in accordance with guidelines and national criteria and submit to the Seila Task Force for approval;

¹⁷ Blunt & Turner 2005, 81

¹⁸ Blunt & Turner 2005, 81

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approve the sector allocation and program support budgets in accordance with the Seila workplan and budget; • Promote and support effective collaboration between government institutions, the private sectors, civil society and national/international development agencies in the planning and management of the Provincial/Municipal development; • Support the implementation of decentralization and deconcentration and other policies in accordance with national level guidance; • Mainstream gender and natural resource and environment strategies within the development plans of the Seila Program. • Review and endorse progress reports on the implementation of the annual work plan and budget and submit to the Seila Task Force.¹⁹
Provincial Offices of Local Administration:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides a link between the provincial administration and the commune councils, and give various types of support – training, technical advice, and so on.²⁰
Sam Rainsey Party:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Originally known as the Khmer Nation Party, the founder, Sam Rainsey, renamed the party Sam Rainsey Party. On various occasions this opposition party has found itself charged with defamation and Sam Rainsey himself fled the country for periods of time in fear of persecution.²¹
Seila Programme:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A donor-supported government program, a “framework for resource mobilization” in support to poverty alleviation. • The programme’s goal is ‘to contribute to poverty alleviation through good governance’. The ‘immediate objective’ of the programme is ‘to institute decentralised systems and strategies to manage sustainable local development’. The Seila programme also fulfils an ‘aid mobilisation and coordination’ (a ‘programming framework’) role for channelling donor support to the RGC’s decentralisation and deconcentration reform programme.²²

¹⁹ PRDC Excom Prakas Number 292, Article 3

²⁰ Blunt & Turner 2005, 81

²¹ <http://www.samrainsyparty.org/>; http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sam_Rainsey

²² Blunt & Turner 2005, 81

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Seila programme has a broad mandate that encompasses substantial technical assistance to the establishment and operation of: the commune as a level of government; and a national network of trainers and facilitators, and others, who provide training and other support services to the communes. The programme could also play a significant role in the development of deconcentration in the country.²³
Seila Salary Supplement:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incentive payment made to government officials out of donor funds in an effort to improve shorter-term efficiency within the civil service. • Salary supplements are provided because they are thought to provide an important incentive for civil servants to do their work properly and deliver outputs as intended. • The Seila staff mostly consists of seconded staff from line ministries and, as in many other donor-funded projects in Cambodia, they are paid salary supplements. • A challenge of integrating Seila into the regular administrative structure would be to ensure levels of salaries that can motivate staff to work properly.²⁴
Supreme National Council of Cambodia (SNC):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "The unique legitimate body and source of authority in which, throughout the transitional period, the sovereignty, independence and unity of Cambodia are enshrined." SNC, which was made up of the four Cambodian factions, delegated to the United Nations "all powers necessary" to ensure the implementation of the Agreements.
Wat:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Translates in English to pagoda. Location serves as a place of worship for Cambodian Buddhists. Monks recite the dharma and often provide basic education to community members. It is also an important venue for community social and associational life, particularly in rural locations in Cambodia. Community education and meetings regarding issues affecting members are often held at pagodas. The Pagoda leadership is made up of a hierarchy of Monks and a lay-persons management committee.

²³ Blunt & Turner 2005, 81

²⁴ http://www.cdc-crdb.gov.kh/cdc/practices_chapter8.htm

DEFINITIONS: THEORETICAL CONSTRUCTS

Cognitive Link:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An individual who serves as a sensemaking conduit for others through dialogue or action, facilitating others' internalized sensemaking process.
Cognitive Processing:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social (i.e. located in humanly constructed settings). • Embodied (i.e. bodies are pragmatically and theoretically significant). • Concrete (i.e. physical constraints of realization and circumstance are viewed as of the utmost importance). • Located (context-dependence is a central and enabling feature of all human endeavor). • Engaged (i.e. ongoing interaction with the surrounding environment is recognized as primary). • Specific (what people do varies dramatically, depending on contingent facts about their particular circumstances).²⁵
Enactment:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "As a property of sensemaking, [enactment] means that we create an activity that reflects our making sense of the experience within our environment."²⁶ • The rediscovery of knowledge, or a self-fulfilling prophecy.²⁷
Feedforward Loop:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Represents the continual looping, non-linear sensemaking process that managers are engaged in as they operate in policy project environments (e.g. The post-engagement schemas that emerge from the managerial sensemaking and action of one project mandate serve as the pre-engagement schemas of future policy sensemaking).
Formal Mandate:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The written, formally adopted policy mandate that establishes the parameters of policy implementation processes.
Individual Schema:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Templates that, when pressed against experience, give it form and meaning."²⁸ • Individual and organizational schemas are a function of group and individual choice, and motivated by individual and collective interests.²⁹

²⁵ Cantwell Smith 1999

²⁶ Helms-Mills 2003,198

²⁷ Weick 1979 (Weick downplays the issue of the extent to which organizational actors are bound by individual limitations and biases.)

²⁸ Bartunek & Moch 1987, 484; Hastie 1981, 39-88; Markus & Zajonc 1985, 137-230

²⁹ Showers & Cantor 1985, as quoted in Bartunek & Moch 1987

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The formation and existence of such schemas represent active organizational interventions, “effect[ing] the interpretive – essentially cultural – perspectives [of the individual member] giving coherence and meaning to experience.”³⁰ • They are an integral part of organizational culture, often held by a significant number of members.
Inputs:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The resources, social interactions, conversations, ideas, and schemas that managers consult in their effort to make sense of a formal mandate.
In-Situation Schema:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encompass context-specific schema that “capture the range of knowledge needed for...sensemaking efforts: self, person, organization, object/concept, and event.”³¹ • From a cultural perspective, these schemas serve as “individuals’ repository for organizational culture knowledge, including the values and beliefs attributed to various individuals and collectivities, appropriate behaviors for various situations, traditional ways of doing things, reinforcement contingencies, peer and normative pressures, role knowledge, the meaning ascribed to verbal, physical, and behavioral artifacts, and the defining characteristics of the organization and its subgroups.”³² (See also <i>schema</i>)
Managerial Action:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The activities managers engage in as a result of the sensemaking process.
Managerial Sensemaking:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The interpretive process individuals undergo when confronted with new information. • Managerial interpretation and decisionmaking. • The process by which managers create meaning around policy implementation. • Leads to action on mandates. • Influences the actions managers take to implement policy mandates.
Mid-Level Manager:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The thinking, acting human being that is hypothesized to serve as a conduit through which policy ideas transform into action.
Organizational Culture:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “A pattern of shared basic assumptions that a group learns as it solves its problems of external adaptation and integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and therefore taught to new members

³⁰ Bartunek 1984

³¹ Harris 1994, 312

³² Harris 1994

	as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems." ³³
Organizational Environment/Context:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cognitive entities. • Enacted environments. • Agents in service to the socio-cognitive experiences of human beings residing in such contexts. • "Multiple, converging realities which result in continually new understandings about the world."
Organizational Schema:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "The outcome of negotiations participants undergo to develop common orientations towards events."³⁴ • The negotiations between actors in response to the receipt of new information lead to collective interpretations (Author paraphrasing). • Influence individual sensemaking and actions towards policy mandates. • The group constructs members hold about their organizational context.³⁵ • An individual's understanding of the organization of which they are a member.³⁶ • OS influence the "knowledge and impressions regarding organizational groupings (or sub-groupings) as entities (e.g. "headquarters") somewhat extracted from their individual members."³⁷ (<i>see also schema</i>) • "Represent shared meanings or frames of reference for the organization as a whole or for its subgroups."³⁸
Participation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "The action or fact of partaking, having or forming a part of."³⁹ It can be either transitive or intransitive; either moral, amoral or immoral; either forced or free; either manipulative or spontaneous."⁴⁰ • "Taking part...occurs when group members have an adequate and equal opportunity to place questions on the agenda and to express their preferences about the final outcome during decision-making...can occur

³³ Schein 1992,12

³⁴ Bartunek 1987

³⁵ Harris 1994

³⁶ Harris 1994

³⁷ Harris 1994

³⁸ Bartunek 1993, 327

³⁹ Oxford English Dictionary 2005, as quoted by Rahnema 1992

⁴⁰ Rahnema 1992, 116

⁴¹ UNDP 1997, 34

⁴² Stanley 2002, 2

	<p>directly or through legitimate representatives."⁴¹</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "An informed process through which UNCDF partner institutions, in project formulation, and the poor, in project implementation, have an equal opportunity to...actively negotiate and collectively define their own social and economic objectives; access and control available resources...; plan, manage and implement their own development activities; Solve [own] conflicts and demand/obtain political and institutional accountability."⁴²
Participatory Citizenship:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More political notion of participation, people playing an "active role in shaping the future of his or her society through political debate and decision-making."⁴³
Participatory Development:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "A process by which people take an active and influential hand in shaping decisions that affect their lives."⁴⁴ • "A process through which stakeholders influence and share control over development initiatives, and the decisions and resources which affect them."⁴⁵
Post-Engagement Schema:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schemas that emerge as a result of managerial sensemaking, response, and action to a policy mandate.
Pre-Engagement Schema:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those schemas that managers hold about the formal policy mandate or inputs before they interact with the mandate, which influence how they will make sense of a policy idea.
Schema (e.g. Frame, Knowledge Structure, Mental Representation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "The process by which people will reconstruct a story to fit in with expectations based on prior knowledge and expectations. The original story undergoes processes of rationalization, deletion, elaboration, and distortion which...are shaped and guided by pre-existing schemata."⁴⁶ • Mental models that are held, individually or collectively, that managers consider as they make sense, respond, and act on the mandate they are charged with implementing. (Author's definition) • Analytic tools for entering the subjective world of human social interaction and interpretation that support the policy implementation process. • Schemas are a function of group and individual choice, motivated by individual and collective interests.

⁴³ Miller 1995, 433

⁴⁴ Participatory Development and Good Governance 1995, 8

⁴⁵ Van Wicklin 1994, 3

⁴⁶ Bartlett 1932, 316

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They are an integral part of organizational culture, often held by a significant number of members.
Sensemaking:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The interpretive process individuals undergo when confronted with new information. • Can be a collective or individual process, but does not ever occur in a vacuum, (occurs within a broader socio-cognitive environment).
Socio-Cognitive Environment:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The space in which actors negotiate shared understandings of the policy mandate, which leads to collective interpretations known as organizational schemas.⁴⁷ • The space where social, human interactions transpire that determine how managers make sense of their work. • Complex and overlapping inter- and intra-organizational interactions between a broad range of institutions, government actors, community stakeholders, and beneficiaries, which make up what I am terming the program's socio-cognitive environment (author's definition). • Composed of social interactions that lead to the formation of organizing frameworks that guide and give meaning to behavior. • The social experience supporting policy implementation.

⁴⁷ Bartunek's definition of organizational schema (Bartunek & Moch 1987, 486)

Chapter 1

Introduction: From Global Paradigms to Grounded Policy¹

Today's international development environments are infused with participatory ideals which require the implementation of mandates through multicultural partnerships composed of international and local participants. Local staff play a powerful interpretive role in deciphering complex ideas related to democracy building, public administrative reform, and decentralization efforts to program beneficiaries. These foundational elements of good governance programming are often wholly foreign notions to populations in developing countries, so interpretations of these ideas can significantly influence how the mandate will be understood and acted on at the local level. In such environments, finding cognitive alignment between the principles embedded in the mandates and local understandings of those principles is critical. Human understanding and motivation are thus critical linchpins in the successful implementation of global policies on the ground.

Yet, transforming abstract and idealized participatory principles into practice is particularly formidable because participatory development is typically experienced as an alien, externally driven idea (Chambers 1995). In post-conflict societies which have only experienced authoritarian, patrimonial social hierarchical structures, local sensemaking can be particularly far removed from the assumptions undergirding the mandate. Resulting misunderstandings can undermine poverty reduction, good governance, and participatory development programming - foundational conditions necessary to promote accountability, empowerment,² and ownership of development activities by program beneficiaries. Other obstacles include structural and organizational dynamics inherent in international development agencies and local organizations, as well as cultural orientations and historical experiences. As well, both local and international staff capacity and motivation to resolve cognitive dissonance can be quite limited.

Generating new understanding of how democratic principles can come to be aligned with grounded, localized ways of being and acting represents a critical contribution to future international policy implementation. This study considers how native mid-level managers working in such environments play a vital role in translating and transforming international mandates into locally accessible frameworks. This study aims to make a contribution to understandings of sensemaking processes in international development by rendering explicit an implicit process undergirding policy implementation activities - the socio-cognitive transactions between the human beings charged with their enactment.

To do this, this study has focused on the socio-cognitive dynamics surrounding native mid-level managers operating within an international program environment in the country of Cambodia. Their *sensemaking* (e.g. the interpretive process individuals undergo when confronted with new information) is the focus of the study, explored through the construct of *socio-cognitive environments* (SCEs) surrounding these mid-level managers. I define SCEs as *the space where social, human interactions transpire in which actors negotiate shared understandings of the policy mandate that determine how managers make sense of their work*. SCEs can be complex and overlapping, encompassing both inter- and intra-organizational interactions between a broad range of institutions, government actors, community stakeholders, and beneficiaries. *Schemas, the mental models that are held individually or collectively, that managers consider as they make sense, respond, and act on the mandates they are charged with implementing*, are also used to explore the sensemaking environment. Through this framing, the study findings highlight the crucial cognitive link local

staff sensemaking plays in international development policy implementation processes on the ground in beneficiary countries.

1.1. Overview of Theoretical Knowledge Gaps

There are many gaps in the knowledge of management dynamics associated with international policy implementation processes. Balancing positive aspects of organic, indigenous organizational processes and rational-bureaucratic development models introduced by donors represents a significant challenge (Lewis et al. 2003). This study of managerial sensemaking in international aid organizations contributes to the domestic and international policy literatures by broadening the scope of traditional policy implementation research. It introduces the notion of *socio-cognitive environments* as a theoretical construct to consider collective human agency as an influential variable in implementation processes. As a result, this research informs three bodies of knowledge of import to development theorists, policymakers, and practitioners alike.

First, the study provides new knowledge of sensemaking dynamics underlying international policy implementation processes and contributes theoretically by introducing the construct of socio-cognitive environment. Second, the study also contributes empirically to the emerging body of literature examining more human dimensions of international policy processes (Apthorpe 1996; Mosse 2005; Lewis & Mosse 2006; Mitchell 2002; Mosse 2005) by supplying new understandings of how international participatory development policies transform through local level practices. Finally, this exploratory research has paved the way for future research streams to focus on demonstrably measuring the socio-cognitive dynamics introduced in this study, linking them more directly to policy outputs and impacts. As a result, mid-level managers' sensemaking will increasingly emerge as an instrumental variable worthy of consideration throughout the program cycle, from policy formulation to implementation to monitoring and evaluation activities

1.1.1. Managerial Sensemaking in Multi-Cultural Contexts

Staff sensemaking in geographically and culturally dispersed development environments is poorly understood and requires further study (Nelson & Wright 1995; Blackburn & Holland 1998). Past management studies have tended to focus on the micro-level dynamics of sensemaking without considering the macro-level forces at play. The lack of attention to the social experiences surrounding policy implementation is surprising, especially since thinking, acting human beings are the primary conduit through which policy ideas transform into action. This neglect is most likely due to the subjective nature of human interaction and interpretation and the difficulty of measuring these experiences. Understanding how the confluence of macro- and micro-level environments influence those charged with such activities represents a significant contribution to both fields. The sensemaking and schema literatures are useful lenses to consider the collective sensemaking processes occurring in these environments. This study's analytic framework is framed around these constructs, following in the tradition of interpretivist and narrative studies of management and organizational behavior (Morgan 1986; Boyce 1995; Boyce 1996; Hansen et al. 2007).³

1.1.2. The Human Dimension of International Policy Implementation

The literature focused on United States-based policy implementations has mapped many dimensions but has not examined socio-cognitive processing as an influential variable in its own right. As well, policy implementation models developed in single country contexts have not been able to account for the complexities of the international development context (Mosse & Rew 1998). Even though national policy agencies might have relatively far-flung field offices, value and cultural similarity leads to a certain degree of alignment of interpretation and action amongst staff. In contrast, in international contexts, the great

geographical and cultural distance between the introduction of an idea at the headquarters level and the actions taken by staff in the field can vary greatly, resulting in numerous clashes of perceptions around the policy implementation process.

In such environments, the ability to predict and measure the behavior, attitudes, and actions of the people effecting policy processes is valuable, although terribly difficult to achieve. In previous efforts to develop better understanding of these human dimensions of the policy process, macro-level studies have attempted to document the systemic political, economic and socio-cultural contexts which public policies are enacted (*for a variety of examples see* Palumbo & Harder 1981; Marshall et al. 1986; Kingdon 1995; Grindle & Thomas 1991; Stone 1997; Parsons 1995). Yet, such research has typically been limited to documenting the most measurable streams of organizational activities and program outcomes, without exploring the complexity of human interactions driving these efforts or how macro- and micro-level forces interact to influence sensemaking.

Micro-level policy studies have explored individual-level problems, typically aimed at identifying micro-level technical solutions. Such works include examinations of bureaucracies (Wilson 1989), policymaker's interpretations (Marshall et al. 1985; Yanow 1996), front-line workers (Lipsky 1980; Goetz 1996; Tandler 1997; Maynard-Moody & Musheno 2003), and beneficiaries' understandings of the policy process (Thomas 1985; Robb 1999; Brinkerhoff & Goldsmith 2003). However, limited efforts have been made to examine the interactive effect of such environments on mid-level managers' sensemaking. This meso-level study attempts to capture the multiple and competing understandings of participatory development existing to fill this gap.

1.1.3. The Importance of Front-Line Workers as Cognitive Conduits in International Settings

Studies of front-line workers in the United States (Lipsky 1980; Maynard-Moody & Musheno 2003) highlight both the challenges and opportunities of working directly with beneficiaries, operating at the service delivery boundary. However, few empirical studies of international settings have been conducted. The front-lines of international development are rife with cognitive dissonance as local and international staff are confronted with management of the integration of international policy mandates into local cultures. New principles, organizational models, and ways of doing and being that accompany such mandates frequently collide with local culture, history, and traditional organizational dynamics. In multi-cultural international development program environments, local mid-level managers are particularly significant sensemaking conduits, positioned to make sense of and transmit local inputs to donors and vice versa. They thus serve as critical linchpins between the strategic apex of international donors and community-level program operations (Mintzberg 1979, 19-20).

At the same time, these local program managers find themselves operating in a sea of juxtapositions. They must balance their efforts to empower local actors with monitoring the influence such increases in local autonomy can have on the quality of organizational outputs. They are expected to ensure participation, but not at the expense of ensuring suitable donation-output-impact ratios. Managers may be instructed to play a 'hands off' role in program design and implementation in participatory programs where communities are expected to play a lead role. Yet these same managers are expected to intervene in cases where low capacity or limited experience result in failed initiatives. As they negotiate these managerial challenges, local managers/advisors⁴ working within country programs become important interpretive forces (Holcombe 1995; Craig & Porter 1997, 2006; Estrella 2000; Cooke & Kothari 2001; Long 2001; Lewis et al. 2003; Craig & Porter 2006).

1.2. The Cambodian Context: Cultural and Historical Obstacles to Participatory Development⁵

Cambodia was selected as the location for the study as it provides a rich context for considering cognitive processes. Cambodia has undergone significant economic and political transition in the past decade, emerging from a civil war, to an aid recipient almost entirely dependent on international support,⁶ to an increasingly self-sufficient nation. The extreme unlikelihood of Cambodia as a political environment where participatory development would be expected to work must be noted. Against these odds, international donors have invested significantly in promoting a *good governance* paradigm in this country, in direct juxtaposition to a great number of historical, political, and cultural obstacles.

Most significantly, the Khmer Rouge period altered the mindset of Cambodian people in ways that run directly counter to the institution of participatory development programming. By 1979, Cambodia was a country incapacitated by the four-year rule of a genocidal communist regime. A third of the country's population have been executed or starved to death, including almost the entirety of Cambodia's educated, professional, and ruling classes. The Khmer Rouge's tenure profoundly influenced individuals' identities as they systematically destroyed all social and family structures over their four-year rule as part of their mass social reengineering project aimed at purifying Cambodia of all modern influences. The result was the destruction of almost all social bonds outside of the immediate nuclear family, with an extreme distrust of individuals and institutions alike rising in the general population, greatly influencing citizens' proclivity to engage in collective development efforts. The refugee experience of many Cambodians who languished in border camps for upwards of a decade also promoted a victim mentality in the returnee population (O'Leary & Nee 2001). In general, Cambodians have come to exhibit extreme cautiousness in any public activities.

Over the next decades, patrimonial tendencies strongly embedded themselves in the governance culture, resulting in a civil service intent on resource extraction from donor projects at the peril of producing a responsive and accountable administration. Administrative positions and structures have been set up by patrons who often exercise territorial or dynastic dominance through military or family power in order to enhance their authority, social status, wealth and/or other personal resources (Weber 1978, 1010-1015). These neo-patrimonial bureaucracies (Van de Walle 2001) and their patrimonial orientations⁷ to power and authority (Scott 1972, 1977; Hanks 1975; Neher 1981) have significantly shaped Cambodia's development environment.

The legacy of the Khmer Rouge and the dynamics associated with the deeply embedded patron-client networks have resulted in a general culture of fear. As well, a general fear of speaking or stepping out of expected behaviors coupled with traditional Asian conformist and 'face saving' tendencies has resulted in excessive self-monitoring activities and risk avoidance. Such behaviors have culminated in an unwillingness to exhibit ownership over activities perceived as risky or stepping out of the bounds of accepted practice. These odds make the successes of the Carere/Seila/PLG program that much more significant, and a study of the cognitive transitions made by local staff particularly poignant.

1.3. Study Overview

The Carere/Seila/PLG program was chosen as the organizational context because the program employs mid-level Cambodian advisors at the provincial level (SPPAs) who play a significant role in program implementation activities. The SPPAs are also expected to hold advanced English speaking skills as a requirement of their position, making it feasible to interview them in English. Field data was collected for this study through in-depth, semi-structured interviews; program and historical document analysis; ten months of formal intermittent participant observation, and two years of extended informal observation. Fifty two Carere/Seila/PLG program documents were reviewed and sixteen SPPAs working for the United Nations

Development Program-sponsored *Seila* program in Cambodia were interviewed for the study, in addition to twenty one external actors operating in the program's intermediate program environment.

The study details five socio-cognitive environments (SCEs) surrounding one policy program, the Carere/PLG/*Seila*⁸ initiative in the country of Cambodia, in order to answer the study's research question: *How do multiple environments interact to create local understandings of participation in a given international program?* The construction of these five SCEs allows examination of the influence various interactions have had on the sensemaking experience of the program's mid-level managers, the Senior Provincial Program Advisors (SPPAs). As a result, three macro-narratives highlight the complex interactions of international, historical, and cultural understandings of participation in the Cambodian context. This research also provides exemplars of how the interaction of multiple environments influenced the formal and informal processes occurring within the micro-programmatic environment.

Narrative *analysis* facilitated a response to the study's research question through: a) the construction of five socio-cognitive environments, b) provision of evidence of the content of Cambodian advisors' participatory schemas and their role as cognitive bridges, c) documentation of the process by which such schemas were developed, d) contrast of the Senior Provincial Program Advisors' (SPPAs) understanding of participatory development to general Cambodian participatory schemas and international understandings of participatory development, and e) consideration of the implications of how multiple environments' interactions have shaped local understandings of participation.

Although this study has bracketed a small slice of one program environment by focusing on the socio-cognitive dynamics underlying such implementation efforts and their relationship to mid-level manager sensemaking, it is in essence about the broader political economy of decision-making in such spaces. The issues explored hold relevance for a variety of program contexts, even as study findings are not immediately generalizable to the broader development portfolio due to the macro-historical and cultural complexities existing around such environments.

1.4. Program Overview

The program's human impact may be its most significant contribution, particularly its ability to develop a highly competent, autonomous, and proactive group of local staff. SPPAs' efforts as advisors at the provincial level have significantly reconciled the mandate with the realities of the local environment. However, the mechanics underlying the program's cognitive impact on Cambodian stakeholders has not been adequately explored. Of note is the fact that much of the mandate content has been heavily influenced by the same international thinking that is common across program environments in other countries. Thus, the Carere/*Seila* mandate does not contain any particularly innovative participatory objectives or activities which alone provide an explanation of the program's success in facilitating significant advances in SPPA sensemaking of participatory development, prompting further consideration of additional micro-programmatic dynamics supporting their sensemaking.

At the time of the study, the *Seila* program had evolved through four phases since 1992, each with a different name: Carere 1, Carere 2, *Seila*, and the *Seila* support structure, the Partnership for Local Governance. The Carere 1 acronym initially stood for the *Cambodia Resettlement and Rehabilitation Programme* but was renamed the *Cambodia Area Rehabilitation and Regeneration Project* to reflect the nature of the project's transition to Carere 2 in 1995.⁹

The *Seila* program,¹⁰ which translates as 'foundation stone' in the Khmer language, was instituted in late 2000, formalizing the Carere experimental project model into a national program.¹¹ The *Seila* program has been articulated in program documents as a concept, a set of principles, and operational activities, less so

than as a formal mandate. The following excerpt from the UNDP/CARERE Annual Report of 2001 illustrates this framing:

A concept embracing a set of principles that aim to: change people’s attitudes and perceptions of their role in development, decentralize planning and development to the level of province and commune, empower local government and communities to assume responsibility for development, facilitate broad participation in decision making, and promote transparency and accountability in all steps of the process. These principles are embodied in **a system** of methods and techniques for decentralized planning and development which cover: planning and budgeting, bidding and contracting, monitoring and evaluation, financial administration, and management of the whole process. Seila is also **a programme** which builds capacity of government line departments, local communities and others engaged in decentralized planning and development; establishes an integrated management structure linking actors at all levels – including the national government, the province, district and commune; provides funding for development projects; and delivers infrastructure and services to local communities. (Leiper & Robertson 2001, 20-22).

The *Partnership for Local Governance (PLG)* was developed as a separate but supportive entity from which advisement staff would operate.¹²

Table 1.1 below provides an overview of the Carere/Seila programs’ five key historic program waves (column 1) and program milestones (column 2).¹³ Key participatory activities are summarized in column 3. From 1996 through 2001, the Seila Program gradually expanded its coverage each year to an increasing number of target communes, based on capacity and resource availability. With the election of commune councils in February 2002, the Cambodian government at national and provincial level assumed responsibility for support to all commune councils in the country. By April 2003, the Seila Program was extended to all 24 provinces, in support of all 1,621 communes in the country (Smoke 2007).

The Carere period included a high degree of experimentation with a number of participatory strategies: a) developing community involvement in the community planning process, b) decentralization strategies, c) training and capacity development of program beneficiaries (both RGC staff and community members), and d) program staff development. Area-based community development strategies, community self-help and capacity building projects, as well as development of provincial support units to support local development initiatives were key programming initiatives. Village Development Committees and a supporting institutional structure above the VDCs were institutionalized until the commune level was designated the local government authority of focus for program activities towards the end of the Carere 1 period. With the commencement of Carere 2, a more formalized planning experiment was initiated which included the creation of a Commune/Sangkat Planning Forum. Local development funds were also introduced which increased attention to administrative reform and expanded partnerships to include actors outside of the RGC.

Table 2.1: Chronology of Program Waves and Participatory Elements

Waves	Time Period	Program Milestones	Participatory Elements
UNTAC	October 1991- April 1993	Peacekeeping and political stabilization efforts, hold 1 st national elections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency resettlement activities • Participation in election preparations
Carere 1	Phase 1: early 1992 - late 1993	Emergency resettlement and rehabilitation assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Area Development Schemes • Quick Impact Projects • Initial Self-Help Projects and Community Capacity Building
	Phase 2: early 1994 - early 1995	Institutional hierarchy for development formalized	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Village Development Committees established • Provincial Rural Development Departments established
	Phase 3: early 1995 - late 1995	Transition to rehabilitation and regeneration focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shift from village to commune focus • Planning hierarchy established, focus on institutional development • Capacity building of local leaders • Decentralization reform initiated
Carere 2	1996-1999	Local Development Fund focus (with primary accountability to donors), which then shifts to an integrated multi-level/actor planning system as method to shift accountability to government staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Systematic planning model formulated • Small-scale infrastructure rehabilitation to develop community • Local Development Fund introduced • Administrative reform focus
		Shift in focus from village to commune level as the appropriate level for development of local authority units	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commune Council development • Commune/Sangkat Planning Forum introduced

		Re-orientation of a micro-oriented community development-based model to a broader, more institutionally-focused "good governance" agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bridging towards civil society • Increased consultation and notion of building partnerships
		Transference of mid-level management positions (PPM positions) from international advisors to Cambodians	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on social inclusion of women, disabled, and ethnic minorities • Rural population expected to be fully participating members in development process • Development conceived as learning process
Seila	Phase 1: 1996-2000 ¹⁴	Project structure metamorphosis from an experimental pilot in select provinces to a country-wide, government-owned, nationally-mandated program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry staff actively involved • Increased trainings • Staff participation
	Phase 2: 2001-2003	Partnership for Local Governance (PLG) officially launched as separate support structure to Seila Elections of Commune Councilors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communes shift from appointed Local Administration Units to democratically-elected bodies, controlling funds
	Phase 3: 2004-2006	Decentralization reform focus expands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decentralization process strengthens • More advanced efforts to build participatory processes
PLG	2001-2006	Provision of support to Seila program as it institutionalizes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seila Taskforce created

The mandate content shaped SPPA sensemaking in several ways. Most obviously, it presented a vision for a democratic future and a chance for multi-level citizen participation. The program vision also provided tangible participatory activities at the local level which established a tangible link between the Cambodian state and citizens, ensuring that the poor and most marginalized had access to participation in local planning.

1.4.1. SPPA Positioning and Role¹⁵

The Carere/Seila/PLG intermediate program environment is made up of a complex set of relationships between a group of international donors, government actors, and program advisors operating from within separate organizational boundaries and cultures, working to meet collective development goals.¹⁶ As the Carere/Seila program spread across communities nationwide, local Carere staff were gradually promoted into positions with more responsibility. As a result, local staff working within the program have been some of the first Cambodians to be explicitly exposed to the democratic principles underlying the participatory and decentralization components of the program mandate. They have thus been required to be some of the first Cambodians to test their own historical experiences of authoritarian and genocidal regimes against notions of equality, participation, and democracy.¹⁷

The first Cambodians were placed in the SPPA position in 2001, when the Provincial Program Manager (PPM) was reassigned from an international to Cambodian position. Another second major hiring wave of SPPAs occurred in 2003. The Senior Program Provincial Advisor (SPPAs) role is a strategic position within the organization, imbued with a degree of authority, autonomy, and responsibility uncommon in the Cambodian context. SPPAs have thus played a vital role in the policy transmission and oversight process. As Figure 1.1 illustrates, SPPAs' primary role is to serve as a counterpart¹⁸ to the provincial governor and his staff. SPPAs are formally mandated to "assist the Seila Task Force to implement the Seila Program...by providing technical advice and management support to the PRDC and ExCom [at the provincial levels]...and assist the Senior Programme Advisor to ensure UN Cooperating Agency responsibilities are carried out in the province" (SPPA Job Description 2002). SPPAs report directly to the PLG Senior Programme Advisor, an international staff position, who is located at program headquarters in Phnom Penh. They also report indirectly to the Chairman of the Seila Taskforce, a Cambodian civil servant.¹⁹ In their role, they also oversee local PLG support staff and monitor provincial operations.

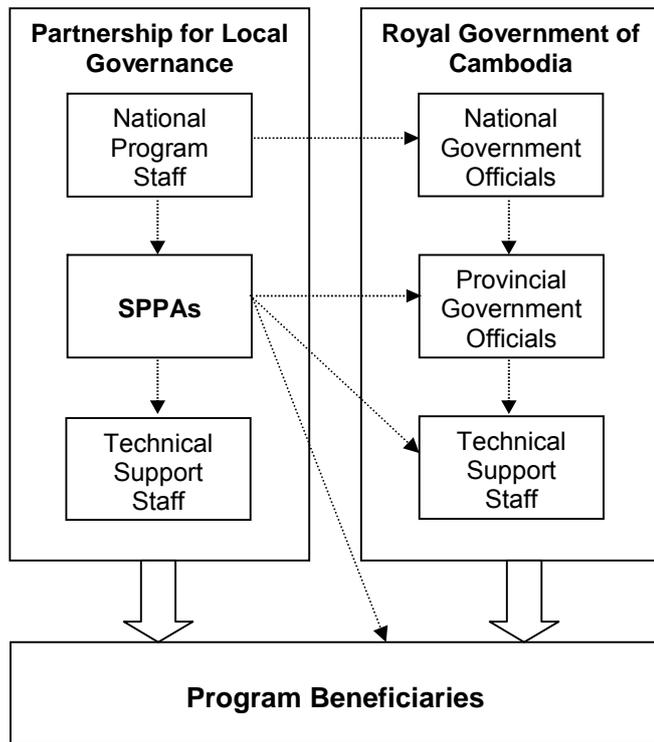


Figure 2.1: Locating the Senior Provincial Program Managers (SPPAs)

As part of their monitoring role, it is common for SPPAs to accompany government counterparts on field visits, attend Commune Council meetings to observe process, and visit sites of complaints. Other work activities include providing technical advice and management support to the Provincial Rural Development Committee (PRDC) and Executive Committee (ExCom) and providing general capacity building support and trainings to PRDC and ExCom members as needed. SPPAs are also expected to promote partnerships between Seila staff, donor agencies, and NGOs; encourage dialogue between RGC and local and international civil society actors; maintain contact with other organizations in the provinces; and share policy lessons learned with a broad range of program stakeholders.

Important to the objectives of this study, SPPAs' structural location and their assigned roles require them to proactively and repeatedly engage with the content of the mandate in order to interpret it to other Cambodians. Their role and location thus require an ongoing cycle of sensemaking, testing, making mistakes, reframing, and reenacting of understandings of their work. Understanding how these individuals took an abstract and foreign notion of participation in a post-conflict society with almost no experience of democratic development, and collectively negotiated the cognitive dissonance experienced with its introduction, provides insight into the social construction (Gergen 1994) of national development mandates in local organizational contexts.

SPPAs come from a variety of educational, geographic, work, and refugee backgrounds, representative of the wider Cambodia population except that the majority of SPPAs are men. More than half

of the SPPAs interviewed had been refugees, with many working their way up through the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) hierarchy as translators and drivers while still in the border camps. Two SPPAs identified themselves as former Khmer Rouge, working both within-country and refugee camps as both administrative and political officers. Many SPPAs also worked with the United Nation's World Food Programme before joining the Carere project in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Most of the longest-tenured SPPAs worked their way through the program ranks, assuming a number of program assistant positions related to community development and capacity building before being promoted to Deputy PPM and SPPA positions. SPPAs hold a variety of education levels, many receiving the bulk of their education in refugee camps and through their work with international NGOs. In more recent years, like many Cambodians living through the Khmer Rouge experience, many SPPAs have attempted to supplement their education along the way with college-level coursework in Phnom Penh and abroad.²⁰

1.4.2. The Seila Success Story

The Carere/Seila model has been framed as a policy success story by many, although it is more difficult to find documentation of this success. However, several tangible indicators of success do exist, primarily related to the Royal Government of Cambodia and donor's interest in scaling up the Carere project to a national decentralization model. By 1996, the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) had selected decentralization as the foundational methodology for the country's long-term development (Project of the RGC 1996, 9) with "the adoption, on a national scale, of a participatory rural development structure [with a hierarchical network of local bodies: Village Development Committees (VDCs), Commune Development Committee (CDCs), District Development Committee (DDCs), and Provincial Rural Development Committee (PRDCs)] which [would] encourage communities to become actively involved in the decisions affecting their own development" (Project of the RGC 1996, 9).

The RGC demonstrated local buy-in to program operations through the sharing of staff with the program, ongoing participation in Seila trainings, and modifying RGC agency structures to support the decentralized planning process. Since late 2006, Seila operations have been integrated within the Ministry of Interior under the title of the National Committee to Manage Decentralization and Deconcentration Reforms, representing even more significant ownership of the program by the RGC, a key indicator of success as outlined in numerous program documents. Most significantly, the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) passed several pieces of legislation in the mid-1990s in support of the nationalization of the program and continues to make it a cornerstone of its broader reform strategy.²¹

As well, the international development community has shown great interest in the program, both for the lessons its success holds for the Cambodian case, as well as for other international programs. At the time of the field work, the Seila program was described as the most well-evaluated and documented international donor program in the world by a number of external actors involved in monitoring program operations (Pre-study interviews with UNCDF staff; Interview 2), serving as host to numerous study tours by multilateral donors over the life of the program and eliciting significant attention from a number of external evaluators and theoreticians (Hughes 2007). As well, the UNDP commissioned a case study of program operations in 2001 to be disseminated across agencies to examine lessons learned from the Carere experience (Emergency Response Division, UNDP 2001). The program's external evaluating teams, the Permanent Advisory Group (PAG) and the Programme Advisory Team (PAT), have also highlighted program successes in a series of multi-year assessments (SPM Consultants, 1997-2005). The fact that a core group of donors has provided substantial long-term support to the program and new donors have joined in their support of the program in more recent years also reveals program success in the eyes of the international development community.

1.4.3. Backstage Politics

Historically, the program has operated both in tandem to, and as a key actor, in a complex political situation, as Cambodia has emerged from a war-torn history to a post-conflict nation, surmounting a number of political challenges. Although this study tends to frame the program rather positively, owing to the nature of the data collected and SPPAs' positive associations with the program, it is important to note that the program is not without its host of political challenges and critics.²² The implementation of the Seila model itself is part of a broader sensemaking experience for a host of actors, Cambodian and international alike, within and outside the program boundaries. A variety of perspectives underlie its implementation.

Some critics stress that the program did not begin as a well-formed and thought out national decentralization model but instead evolved over time as a piecemeal, emergency operation. In the early days, it appeared there was little likelihood that a program of this nature would ever work in the Cambodian environment. International advisors spent considerable time convincing international donor and government officials of the merits of the project even without being able to procure significant evidence of its potential impact on the policy environment. Because of the isolation of the project activities in the country's more dangerous Northwestern provinces, the Carere model appears to have been able to slip through several policy cracks (Smoke 2007a).

Although not explicitly addressed in this study, also of note is the fact that early international advisors were successful in making a strong case for the substantial infusion of vast resources to support a large-scale capacity development initiative in a programming era where infrastructure development received the lion's share of aid dollars. Managerially, the ability of program staff to achieve this agenda was significant (Smoke 2007a). It appears international staff were able to promote their agenda by sharing their deep belief in the project idea, engaging in a degree of salesmanship of the program.

The ability of early international advisors to understand and integrate themselves into the Cambodian political culture helped the program to negotiate a political minefield. Smoke's study of Cambodia's nascent decentralization process highlights a number of political factors which were at play as the Carere program came on board which facilitated its ability to become a major player in the Cambodian decentralization reform process. For one, the RGC was weak and in disarray throughout the 1990s, so the Carere experimental model was able to offer an alternative to an administrative vacuum. Second, a number of key ministries and the provincial governors saw opportunities embedded in the program model in which to improve their own influence, access to resources, and capacity, so were more than happy to cooperate (ibid., 67-68).

1.5. Overview of Study Contributions

The Seila program belongs to a small group of programming initiatives operating in post-conflict environments. These have been scaled up from experimental projects to national decentralization reform models.²³ Studies of these large-scale programs are typically not generalizable to other program contexts because of the macro-historical and macro-cultural complexities surrounding them. As well, they often owe success in large part to strong, committed leaders who have molded operations around these complexities over a long period. Thus, the heterogeneous nature of such program environments limits the applicability and political relevance of the Cambodian case. Nevertheless the findings emerging from this study do warrant similar attention to socio-cognitive dynamics undergirding other international program environments. Thus, although the context and particular dynamics are too specific, the socio-cognitive framework used to look at these dynamics provides a mapping tool to enhance future policy implementation. Potential lessons, as well as limitations, are further elaborated in the concluding chapter.

The study confirms that individual sensemaking of democratic and participatory development principles in complex international development environments is influenced by a multitude of socio-cognitive factors. Individuals are constantly engaged in, and influenced by human interactions which significantly influence their perceptions and actions towards policy mandates. Most evident from the data collected in this study is the importance of the flow of ideas in such environments, where local staff are often the first to make sense of imported development mandates, serving as critical cognitive bridges in the implementation process.

Exploration of the influence of the complex historical, cultural, and organizational environments in which local program staff are embedded allows deeper understandings of the process by which abstract ideas and values are delivered from agency headquarters to local contexts. Such a study also highlights the challenges local managers face as they negotiate between expectations from above and local needs from below as they attempt to support program operations which meet all parties' interests. Understanding the role of mid-level national program managers in the sharing of such ideas contributes to a more efficacious mix of upper management oversight and local autonomy, facilitating higher quality policy implementations in the future.

1.6. Presentation of Study

This study assumes that to understand managerial cognition, multiple levels of cognitive interactions must be considered and disentangled. Findings chapters are thus structured to represent a multi-level mapping of a participatory program in order to consider how people process macro-level forces in their organizational environments through micro-level sensemaking activities.

Chapter 1 identifies the study's significance, objectives, research design, and contributions to the sensemaking, participatory development, and international policy implementation fields. Chapter 2 examines the policy implementation and sensemaking literatures from which this study has evolved and presents the analytic model driving the study. Chapter 3 provides the rationale and design for this ethnographic-style organizational research in a qualitative, interpretivist, social constructionist tradition.

Chapter 4 introduces the study's first socio-cognitive environment, the macro-historical SCE within which Cambodian schemas of participatory development have formed. This material provides a snapshot of Cambodian history as it relates to Cambodians' collective understandings of citizen participation, offering evidence of the historical conditions which have led to obstacles to participatory development. It also provides insight into the reasons why Cambodians experience a high degree of cognitive dissonance as they have come in contact with the idealistic notions embedded in donor programming.

Chapter 5 elaborates the second socio-cognitive environment, the Cambodian macro-cultural SCE. This SCE has been constructed to include cultural orientations towards democratic development held by individual Cambodians. It also presents an overview of the traditional organizational structures and dynamics which support such orientations. Individual schemas of distrust and caution, as well as the patrimonial nature of traditional organizational environments are presented, offering insights into additional obstacles to participatory programming.

Chapter 6 presents the third socio-cognitive environment, the international participatory development SCE. This SCE examines the multiple layers of international development community understandings, experiences and program operations and provides examples of how they interact to influence local programming efforts. The chapter concludes by illuminating how donors' rhetoric exists in stark contrast to the realities of Cambodian cultural understandings, Cambodian traditional organizational environments, and even in contrast to international donor agency dynamics supporting participatory initiatives.

Chapter 7 provides an overview of the fourth socio-cognitive environment, the micro-programmatic SCE, which has been constructed to include both formal and informal organizational practices prevalent in both program documents and interview texts. Formal organizational practices include decisions related to SPPA positioning and the substance of the program mandate. The program's participatory mandate is detailed to explore its influence on SPPA sensemaking and action as well as highlight the significant challenges encountered as program staff attempted to transpose the ideas of participatory development onto the realities of the Cambodian context. Several informal organizational practices which further supported SPPA sensemaking are then presented.

Chapter 8 introduces a model of the socio-cognitive dynamics operating within the Seila program environment. Building from the organizational practices identified in Chapter 7, three sets of SPPA practices are elaborated which appear to have further enhanced the collective nature of the program's sensemaking environment. A number of tangible collective SPPA schema are then presented which support the characterization of their participatory schema as uniquely different than that of other Cambodians operating outside the program boundaries.

Chapter 9 scrutinizes the study's findings in terms of their application to broader practice. In particular, the chapter considers how the knowledge garnered can: a) enhance future sensemaking experiences of local managers across a variety of international development program settings, b) create enabling organizational environments to support and broaden donor mandates in more localized forms, and c) support the development of local staff to serve as vital cognitive bridges in societies where initial capacity and motivation to digest the principles undergirding democratic development are especially low. The chapter closes by reconsidering study limitations in light of the findings and elaborating a future research agenda which will further enhance this exploratory study's findings.

¹ For a list of related terminology and acronyms, please see *Abbreviations, Definitions: Local Terminology*, and *Definitions: Theoretical Constructs*.

² For an extended discussion of empowerment as a construct, related to participatory programming, see Gibson & Woolcock (2007).

³ See Lewis et al. (2008) for an interesting treatment of narrative as applied to development debates.

⁴ In the program studied, the interviewees are formally titled 'advisors.' However, their role and functions are similar to mid-level managers from a theoretical perspective. I use the terms interchangeably throughout this document.

⁵ See Annex 1.1: *Historical Milestones in Cambodia's Democratic Transition* for key events in Cambodia's history.

⁶ Cambodia ranked 153 out of 174 poorest countries in the UNDP's 1995 Human Development Report, having one of the "least developed pools of indigenous human resources available" (Project of the RGC 1996, 8).

⁷ Scott defines patrimony as "a special case of dyadic (two person) ties involving a largely instrumental friendship in which an individual of higher social-economic status (patron) uses his influence and resources to provide protection or benefits, or both, for a person of lower status (client) who, for his part, reciprocates by offering general support and assistance, including personal services to [the] patron" (Scott 1977, 92).

⁸ From this point forward, the Carere/Seila/PLG program super-structure will be referred to as the Seila program for brevity purposes. However, individual program components will be highlighted when making historical reference to Carere 1 and 2 or when consideration of the Partnership for Local Governance structure requires delineating it from the broader Seila organizational umbrella.

⁹ The long-term objective of Carere 1 was: "To assist the Government and the people of Cambodia to plan, implement, monitor and evaluate effective, efficient and sustainable development programmes that are relevant to Government

policies and local needs and that involve men and women in all aspects of the process and that raise the social and economic standard of living” (UNDP/CARERE, n.d.). Thus, projects were “designed to introduce decentralized, participatory planning procedures, creating opportunities for intensive consultation and joint action by local community groups and agencies” (UNDP/Carere, n.d., 6). The primary focus lay in “institution-building to strengthen the capacity of the public sector agencies to design and implement projects in a participatory manner” (Project of the RGC 1996). Carere Phase 2 program mandate was extended to be framed as: “an experiment in decentralized planning and financing of participatory rural development, which places its primary focus on alleviating rural poverty through a process of bottom up planning and implementation, with intensive capacity building, to shift the development paradigm in these five provinces from a donor (supply) driven external process to a participatory, people-centered (demand) driven internal process of change” (Project of the RGC 1996, 3).

¹⁰ In contrast to community-based projects, programs are composed of larger administrative units made up of a group of smaller community-level ‘projects’ that are designed to achieve a program’s mandate.

¹¹ For the purposes of this study, the PLG and Seila are seen as distinct organizational forms with separate organizational cultures but with significant overlaps in ideas and activities. My description of the flow of ideas often circumvents the formal organizational boundaries, highlighting the dynamism of the exchanges embedded in this collaboration, and supporting the case for the need to understand the dynamics at play in the broader socio-cognitive environment surrounding program operations. At the time of completion of this study in mid-2007, the program underwent an additional and significant transformation to the *Project to Support Democratic Development through Decentralisation and Deconcentration (PSDD)*, being brought under the Ministry of Interior’s direct supervision.

¹² The PLG program documents highlight: “a positive association between improved local governance and local development and poverty alleviation” (UNDP 2001b, 17) and the assumption that “voice, empowerment, and capacity of citizens are precursors to citizen action, a necessary ingredient to achieve sustainable poverty alleviation” (UNDP 2001b, 6-7).

¹³ See Annex 1.1: *Historical Milestones in Cambodia’s Democratic Transition* and Annex 7.2: *Program Milestones Relevant to Participatory Development Mandate*. The most cited accounts of this period include: Ablin & Hood (1990), Barron & Paul (1977), Chandler (1991; 1996; 2003), Doyle et al. (1997), Gottesman (2005), Heder & Ledgerwood (1996), Hughes (2003), Mayall (1996), Ponchaud (1977), Roberts (2001), Shawcross (1994), Thion (1983; 1993), and Vickery (1993).

¹⁴ Carere 2 and Seila overlapped time-wise. Carere 2 was geared towards the program transformation to Seila model.

¹⁵ The SPPA role is introduced here in preparation for later analysis in the findings section, where SPPA positioning and autonomy are examined in relation to the nature of SPPAs’ interaction with the multiple environments in which they were engaging.

¹⁶ See Annex 1.2: *Seila Programme Management Structure (National to Provincial Level)*; Annex 1.3: *Seila Programme Management Structure (Provincial to Local Level)*; and Annex 1.4: *Partnership for Local Governance (PLG) Organizational Chart* for further elaboration of the program structure and SPPAs’ positioning in relation to various other stakeholders.

¹⁷ Although this study provides evidence of isolated cases of sensemaking from the earliest days of the program, it is important to note that without a larger sample, it is difficult to assess the nature and proliferation of SPPA sensemaking, on the whole, over time.

¹⁸ *Counterpart* is a term used to refer to a work partner in the development process. For instance, a PLG technical advisor might serve as a counterpart to a Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) staff member or an RGC staff might refer to the PLG advisor as a counterpart.

¹⁹ See Annex 1.4: *Partnership for Local Governance (PLG) Organizational Chart*.

²⁰ The absence of more disaggregated information about SPAA demographics responds to the need to protect the identify of individuals, given the small sample size.

²¹ The RGC’s *Prakas/Declaration #31 on the Roles, Responsibilities and Organizational Structure of the Provincial and Municipal Administrations* (February 15, 1994) laid out administrative responsibilities from the provincial to commune levels, including participation in implement[ing] Commune development plans” (The RGC’s *Prakas/Declaration #31*, 106). The *Law on Administration of Communes (Khum-Sangkat)* (October 1994) explicitly detailed election procedures (Article 4:

93) and eligibility criteria for Commune Council (Article 14: 95), as well as established meeting schedules and processes for Commune Councils "according to democratic process" (Article 23: 97). Most significantly, the RGC established the National Programme to Rehabilitate and Develop Cambodia (NPRDC) in March of 1994 (Project of the RGC 1996, 4), which envisioned "the creation of an institutional capacity and knowledge base needed to prepare and implement long-term development strategies and investment programs for the sector" (ibid., 8). See Annex 7.1: *RGC Laws Defining Citizen Participation*.

²² For more critical analysis of the program, see SPM Consultants (1997-2003), Turner (2002), Blunt & Turner (2005), Rudengren et al. (2005), Smoke (2007a), and Smoke et al. (2007).

²³ For an example of a similar program environment, see the Indonesia Kecamatan Development Program website, Guggenheim et al. (2004), and Gibson & Woolcock (2007).

Chapter 2

Modeling Sensemaking in International Policy Implementation Environments: Literature Review and Analytic Framework

Theorists have proposed that the usefulness of participation as a policy tool relies heavily on the interpretation of the actors participating (Korten 1980; Sachs 1992; Thompson 1995). Responding to these calls, this study reconstructs five socio-cognitive environments (SCEs) surrounding a participatory mandate implementation in order to examine how interactions from the most macro to micro levels influence local staff's sensemaking of the mandate. This chapter highlights the gaps in knowledge in the policy implementation and sensemaking fields which prompted this study before presenting the study's analytic framework.

2.1. The Case for a Socio-Cognitive Perspective on Policy Implementation: Considering the Human Dimension

Policy implementation is defined as the period between which a policy mandate has moved beyond the initial formulation and legislation stages, to the point at which it is turned over to an institutional setting in order to manifest the policy's intended impact (see Figure 2.1). Since the publication of Pressman and Wildavsky's seminal work, *Implementation* (1979), which first pinpointed how local participants can fail to carry out program implementation, increasing attention has been paid to deeper considerations of the success and failure factors associated with the policy implementation process. Yet, a review of the empirical research related to American policy implementation processes elicits little understanding of the role of mid-level managerial sensemaking in the implementation process or the complexities of international development.



Figure 2.1: Traditional Policy Stages (Parsons 1995)

Most U.S. studies have engaged a traditional policy stage heuristic to examine policymaking. However, this broad bracketing, grounded in the rational paradigm, has not facilitated an in-depth exploration of the micro-level dynamics that make policy mandates a reality. For instance, U.S.-based policy studies typically define the *implementation stage* as the period from the initial introduction of the mandate to program staff until the intended service is delivered to project beneficiaries (Sabatier 1986; Stone 1997).

James Anderson defines implementation as, “what happens after a bill becomes a law” (Anderson 2002). Although these definitions are technically correct, they mask the menagerie of organizational systems, cultures, people, and layers of bureaucracy involved in implementation, particularly when multiple stakeholders are involved. As a result of this broad scope of activities, more attention must be paid to the micro-level human interactions which significantly shape the character of implementations. The role of the mid-level manager as a sensemaker has been similarly neglected, with the socio-cognitive dynamics underlying the interpretative process when confronting implementation inputs not being addressed at all.

Past studies addressing organizational dynamics have created descriptive typologies of hierarchical structures within and between policy actors (e.g. *iron triangles*) (Kingdon 1995). Hill and Hupe (2002) have recommended examining the inter-governmental relations existing around a particular policy in order to better capture the nature of “multi-layer policy formation” (ibid., 128). However, such modeling does not capture the complexity of the multitude of micro-level interactions that make up the human dimension of the policy implementation stage, particularly when considering international development environments, which entail a “methodological complexity inherent in multi-layer implementation research” (ibid., 126). This study responds to this call by expanding the parameters of international program implementation studies to include consideration of human interaction, interpretation, and action, as well as how common ideas in currency influence these micro-level dynamics.

Hill and Hupe (2002) propose that studies that focus on how mid-level staff “receive and transform the efforts of others to ‘mandate’ them” (ibid., 120) have the greatest potential to contribute powerful new information to the policy studies field. Two American researchers of note (Wilson 1989; Lipsky 1980) have already begun to identify the dynamics at play at the lower levels of the bureaucratic chain that are an important component of the organizational black box. As well, such empirical studies have begun to highlight how different types of problems will make the implementation phase more or less critical. In particular, Michael Lipsky has documented bi-directional influence streams in public agencies and highlighted how street-level bureaucrats’ attitudes, relationships with supervisors, and contacts with beneficiaries can be noteworthy influences on a program’s implementation process (Lipsky 1980). However, studies of this type have primarily focused attention on American civil servants working directly with program beneficiaries to provide services, such as police officers and teachers (Maynard-Moody & Musheno 2003). An array of staff work directly behind the immediate frontline, at the middle management level, also work to ensure successful service delivery by the frontline workers interacting directly with program beneficiaries. This sensemaking and acting on policy mandates, emanating from higher levels, can also have a significant influence on the nature of service delivery but the influence of the interactions between mid-level managers and front-line workers is poorly understood.

For those theorists who have focused on human behavior, they have tended to focus on the political dimensions of program administration and its susceptibility to political and bureaucratic capture. Most attention to implementation, including Sabatier’s contributions to understanding the “Top-Down and Bottom-Up Approaches to Implementation Research” (1986), do not adequately treat the human dimension of policy implementation, even as they identify it as an important component in the policy process. This has been due in large part to the difficulties of quantifying human behavior and decision-making choices. Two policy scholars in particular have delved into more socially-oriented analyses of the policy process. Deborah Stone’s *Policy Paradox: The Art of Political Decision Making* (1997) and Dvora Yanow’s *How Does a Policy Mean? Interpreting Policy and Organizational Actions* (1996) have framed policy studies through more interpretive lenses, pushing beyond the boundaries of traditional policy stage models. These studies move beyond measuring quantifiable variables to consider how the motivations and activities of individuals within the implementation process influence policy outcomes.

International policy studies have tended to focus on macro-level implementation challenges and the impact on beneficiary communities, neglecting the mid-level actors and program operations which are most active in enacting development objectives. There have been studies identifying the cultural and organizational diversity of the transnational environment (Lindenberg & Bryant 2001; Mohan & Stokke 2000), calls for increased participation by civil society and project beneficiaries to enhance decision-making capacity (Finsterbusch & Van Wicklin 1987; Rietbergen-McCracken 1997; Bamberger 1998; Blackburn & Holland 1998; Holland & Blackburn 1998), and studies considering the implications of Western-driven development agendas on poor beneficiaries (Korten 1980).

An expanding literature is examining institutional dynamics operating in service to local level implementations within international aid agencies (Blackburn & Holland 1998; Holland & Blackburn 1998; Freire 2000; Brock & McGee 2002; Easterly 2003; Lewis et al. 2003). Calls have subsequently been made for increased attention to: a) micro-level decision-making activities (Long 2001), b) the role of individual agency in meeting implementation outcomes (Cooke & Kothari 2001), and c) the consideration of the capacity of national program staff and government officials to implement development programs (Bhatnagar & Williams 1992). Blackburn and Holland (1998) have questioned how juxtapositions in organizational form (e.g. bureaucratic) and structure (e.g. non-participatory hierarchies) influence the nature of development programs. Other theorists have proposed that the usefulness of participation as a policy tool relies heavily on the interpretation of the actors participating (Korten 1980; Sachs 1992; Thompson 1995), calling for a closer examination of the overall participatory programming cycles of large aid agencies.¹ However, limited study has been made of the influence of agency structures and operations on individual and collective sensemaking in such environments. The complexities of the international policy cycle thus require an expanded lens to include consideration of how:

- 1) The involvement of a broad array of external and multi-cultural program stakeholders, including donors, international NGOs, and local civil society, influences program dynamics.
- 2) Historical and cultural realities of staff and beneficiaries influence implementation processes.
- 3) The intermingling of multiple realities influences the nature of program operations.
- 4) Community member participation plays a role in program activities (Cooke & Kothari 2001, 16-17).
- 5) Managers play a crucial communication role between headquarter executives (e.g. delivering program specifications) and beneficiaries (e.g. delivering inputs from the community).

2.2. Organizational Environments: Cognitive Obstacles to Implementation

Since the early 1990s, donors have attempted to introduce a number of development models into developing countries with similar dynamics experienced in the Cambodian case. However, recent studies show that assumptions driving good governance (UNDP 1997b; World Bank 1997; World Bank 2004) and capable state (World Bank 1997) development initiatives may not hold in neo-patrimonial organizational environments since they typically lack adequate political commitment, democratic processes, or a political middle class (Dahl 1971) to hold actors accountable. Accountability is readily undermined by a lack of rule of law, inadequate pay for civil servants, and the abuse and capture of contractual arrangements by powerful neo-patrons. Less obvious and more troubling, donor efforts can also come to contribute to negative organizational dynamics by providing a guise of participation and accountability behind which more perverse activities occur. In worst-case scenarios, good governance and capable state reforms come to operate in tandem to the neo-patrimonial processes without radically altering the dominance of the neo-patrimonial order (Van de Walle 2001; Craig & Porter 2006).

Minogue (2001) has highlighted the challenges related to Western donors' introduction of rational-bureaucratic organizational models to counter less efficacious aspects of traditional organizational cultures. In particular, Western management models can exhibit an excessive amount of rigidity, inflexibility, and unresponsiveness which can result in indifference to the interests and concerns of the citizens they are supposed to facilitate. As donors and beneficiaries increasingly work together in partnership to achieve participatory development goals, the process by which this occurs is as important as the content of the initial directives. Understanding the cognitive obstacles which arise when Western, rational bureaucratic styles of program management are transplanted into developing country contexts and conflict with indigenous orientations to leadership (Weber 1946; 1965; 1978), management styles, and bureaucratic hierarchy (Minogue 2001; Ackerman 2005) can help avoid these tendencies in the future.

2.3. Sensemaking in Development Programs: Exploring the Divide Between Front-Line Workers and Beneficiaries

Several studies (Lipsky 1980; Maynard-Moody & Musheno 2003; Evans & Harris 2004) have documented the experiences of workers who operate at the most localized levels of policy implementation. Of note is Lipsky's seminal work, *Street-Level Bureaucracy: Dilemmas of the Individual in Public Services* (1980), which details the experience of bureaucrats located at the 'front-line,' working directly with federal program beneficiaries in the United States. He considers the degree to which front-line workers have discretion and the degree to which discretionary activities shape policy. In a similar vein, Maynard-Moody & Musheno's study (2003) highlights how police officers and teachers maintain and reproduce society's normative order, examining the specific motivations and justifications such front-line workers use in their decision-making. They propose that the essence of street-level work is to make and act on judgments about citizens, demonstrating how "rules, procedures, and laws are put into play to enforce these judgments" (ibid., 93), enacting both government worker and citizen identities.

Even fewer studies have been conducted at the international level which direct attention to front-line workers. Of note are Tandler's (1997) study of front-line workers in Latin America and Joshi's (2003) critique of front-line worker commitment highlighted in the *2004 World Development Report: Making Services Work for Poor People* (World Bank 2004). Tandler provides evidence of government workers demonstrating an unusual dedication to their jobs, national governments making efforts to instill a sense of mission in the workers, and workers embodying increased flexibility and responsiveness in implementing policy mandates. From these findings, she makes the case for greater attention to policy successes at the local level instead of focusing solely on national-level failures.

Joshi (2003) proposes that the World Bank's *2004 World Development Report* represents a significant step forward in recognizing the centrality of politics to service delivery. However, he also critiques the World Bank's adoption of a principal-agent framework to analyze problems of improving services for poor people because it does not permit attention to the influence of the commitment of front-line workers who are involved in day-to-day service delivery. He proposes that framing public service workers within a principal-agent analytic framework questions their basic motivations as 'agents', framing analysis in such a way as to prevent a basic trust of such actors to do what they should be doing. In line with Tandler, he calls for increased study of front-line workers' apparent internally driven commitment to 'public service', decreasing focus on 'getting incentives right' and development of monitoring tools of such agents.

An additional challenge to studying front-line workers in international settings has been the difficulties of defining the "front-line" in such contexts. For instance, in the case of the Senior Provincial Program Advisors, the key sensemakers observed for this study, their formal advisory relationship is with the provincial governor and staff, although much of their informal time is spent engaging with Commune

Councilors and a variety of local actors. Is the front-line of the program the interactions between Senior Provincial Program Advisors (SPPAs) and provincial government officials or the beneficiaries who are recipients of improved government services? Field workers underneath the SPPAs' direction are charged with directly supporting local communities but SPPAs play a heavy handed role in supervising their activities, engaging in numerous informal interactions with communities in their efforts to monitor implementation efforts.

Mid-level managers operating in international development environments also fulfill many of the functions of front-line workers existing in single country program environments. These mid-level managers are vital to the success of program operations since they hold critical cognitive and linguistic capacities which enable them to serve as cognitive conduits between donors and beneficiary populations. Typical 'front-line' activities might include translating basic conceptual differences between the two populations, making sense of unexpected implementation challenges as they arise, role modeling foreign principles and actions implicit in program operations, and overseeing policy implementation activities to ensure they stay closely aligned to the original mandate.

The policy perceptions held by mid-level managers operating close to the front-lines hold significant clues as to how agency structures and operations, national history and culture, and broader program environment dynamics influence these actors' enactment of their roles. Studying the sensemaking of local staff operating at or near the front-line also makes a significant contribution to understanding what drives their internal commitment and motivation, providing new knowledge of how to best support the evolution of local understandings of development mandates in local program environments.

2.4. Human Social Interaction in Organizations: the Role of Schemas in Managerial Sensemaking

Focusing on a single policy mandate's implementation within one program structure allows a deeper exploration of the micro-level dynamics of implementation, however, new approaches are needed. Grounding this research in a social constructionist paradigm and engaging more interpretive methodologies allows a closer examination of human interaction and interpretation. Four key assumptions drive this research:

- 1) Individual and group sensemaking² are fundamental to the work of an organization since living, thinking, acting human beings are the vehicles by which organizational mandates are turned into tangible actions.
- 2) Regardless of the formal organizational structures and policies introduced to stimulate perfunctory action on such agendas, policy visions are not wholly actualized or sustainable unless they are internalized by those charged with their implementation.
- 3) Mid-level managers are a significant conduit for the transmission of policy ideas between local actors and headquarter administrators and donors, especially in international program environments where national staff hold significant responsibilities for communicating program objectives to stakeholders.
- 4) Individual sensemaking, which is shaped by participation in the socio-cognitive environment, influences actions taken on policy mandates.

The study of social dynamics in organizational environments has traditionally been rooted in studies of organizational culture (Ouchi & Wilkins 1985; Martin 1992). However, organizational culture is an inadequate heuristic for studying behavioral dynamics of international program environments since multiple

organizations are typically involved in program environments. *Inter-organizational culture* is another label used for studying the interactions between multiple organizations (Page 2003; Powers 2005). However, as local beneficiaries play an increasing role in program decision-making and operations outside of formal organizational environments, a new language and framework is required which more adequately captures the complexity of relationships across various institutional boundaries.

One field of organizational scholars has started to explore the influence of organizational environments as cognitive entities in and of themselves, as *enacted environments* (Weick 1979), as catalysts of the socio-cognitive experiences of human beings residing in such contexts (Daft 1984; Gray et al. 1985; Walsh 1995). Scholars interested in identifying the micro-level dynamics of social interaction have also explored how sensemaking connects to *organizing* and *action*, and how these linkages influence organizational outcomes (Burrell & Morgan 1979; Pfeffer 1981). This study draws from these traditions by assuming a view of the organizational world as an enacted environment of "socially constructed systems of shared meaning" (Burrell & Morgan 1979; Pfeffer 1981; Weick 1979 as cited in Smircich & Stubbart 1985; Ospina et al. 2007; Foldy et al., forthcoming). In this view, organizations offer multiple, converging realities which result in continually new understandings about the world for their members (Weick 1979).

Schemas, the organizing frameworks which result from sensemaking (Weick 1995; 2003), guide and give meaning to behavior (Moch & Bartunek 1990, 5), defining the actions the managers take to implement policy mandates (Weick 1995; Starbuck 1982). Schemas can be held individually or collectively, and are "the process by which people reconstruct a story to fit in with expectations based on prior knowledge and expectations. The original story undergoes processes of rationalization, deletion, elaboration, and distortion which...are shaped and guided by pre-existing schemata" (Bartlett 1932, 316).³ They are one analytic tool for entering the subjective world of human social interaction and interpretation supporting policy implementation.

Schema study originated in the 1930s when Frederic Bartlett demonstrated that memories and perceptions are shaped by prior expectations, which he labeled *schema*. In the recent past, schema theory has influenced a new field of organizational research - managerial and organizational cognition. Two researchers of note in this field have influenced this study's analytic framework most significantly. Jean Bartunek's research in this field was the first to highlight how *collective schema* held by a majority of an organization's membership influence the character of organizational processes, such as labor-management relations (Bartunek 1984; 1988) and organizational restructurings (Bartunek 1987). Stanley Harris elaborates Bartunek's notion of *organizational schema* to include the group construct individual members hold about their organizational context (Harris 1994).

Bartunek defines *individual schema* as "templates that, when pressed against experience, give it form and meaning" (Bartunek & Moch 1987, 484; Hastie 1981, 39-88; Markus & Zajonc 1985, 137-230). Bartunek defines *organizational schema* (OS) as "the process [that] participants undergo to develop common orientations towards events" (Bartunek & Moch 1987, 486). In her work with Moch, she defines schema as a function of group and individual choice, motivated by individual and collective interests (Bartunek & Moch 1987). Thus, these schemas are active organizational interventions, affecting the interpretive perspectives of the individual members, "giving coherence and meaning to experience" (Moch & Bartunek 1990).

Because they are held by a significant number of members, schemas are an integral part of organizational culture (Gray et al. 1985; Smircich 1983; Ouchi & Wilkins 1985; Shrivastava & Schneider 1984; Showers & Cantor 1985). Moch and Bartunek's (1990) study illustrates how schema development transforms the character of an organizational intervention. In their study, they found that the engagement of family imagery led to the perception of a paternalistic relationship between organization and worker. They also captured managerial control schemas which conveyed the sense that management must remain in control of events at all costs. The acceptance of these schemas by organizational members fundamentally changed the

character of the intervention's outcome in unexpected ways. The notions of *schema development* and *shared schemas, in-situation and organizational schema*, as well as *pre- and post-engagement schema* served as powerful perspectives to enter the study. These theoretical constructs became tools by which to explore the existence of shared understandings of the participatory mandate as well as their initial formation.⁴

2.5. A Conceptual Framework for Studying Human Interpretation and Action: Socio-Cognitive Environments

This research is designed to identify how socio-cognitive environments surrounding participatory policies influence local staff sensemaking related to the implementation of such mandates in developing country program environments. The following analytic framework incorporates the constructs of sensemaking, schema, and socio-cognitive environments to explore the collective socio-cognitive processes underlying policy implementations in complex, multi-cultural development policy environments. Five socio-cognitive environments have been devised in order to bracket a degree of the complexity which exists in such environments, allowing more detailed analysis of their interactional dynamics.

The *sensemaking field* provides a lens to consider individual actor's cognitive processing of development mandates, allows consideration of collective sensemaking as a contributing variable to individual cognition, and reveals the importance of collective cognitive processing in relation to multiple, converging realities. The *schema* construct provides a container and process for sensemaking which can be studied. The notion of *individual schema* and internal processing allows consideration of the individual level of cognitive processing, as well as reflections on how they fit into *collective sensemaking and schema formation* processes.⁵

Figure 2.2 represents the original model which drove data collection for the study. The horizontal row of yellow boxes on either side of the blue box, labeled *Socio-Cognitive Components of Policy Implementation Process*, represents a common depiction of a policy implementation process. To date, policy processes have been most frequently conceptualized as: a) a series of activities which begin with formulation of a policy, b) result in implementation, and c) culminate in a set of policy outputs and outcomes. This study is focused on the cognitive interactions occurring within the blue box, which represents the socio-cognitive environment of the participatory mandate under study. Pre-engagement and post-engagement schemas were highlighted in the initial model since it was predicted that certain understandings that staff bring to their work (pre-engagement schemas) and those which result from the work they do (post-engagement schemas) greatly influence the nature of the policy implementation process.⁶

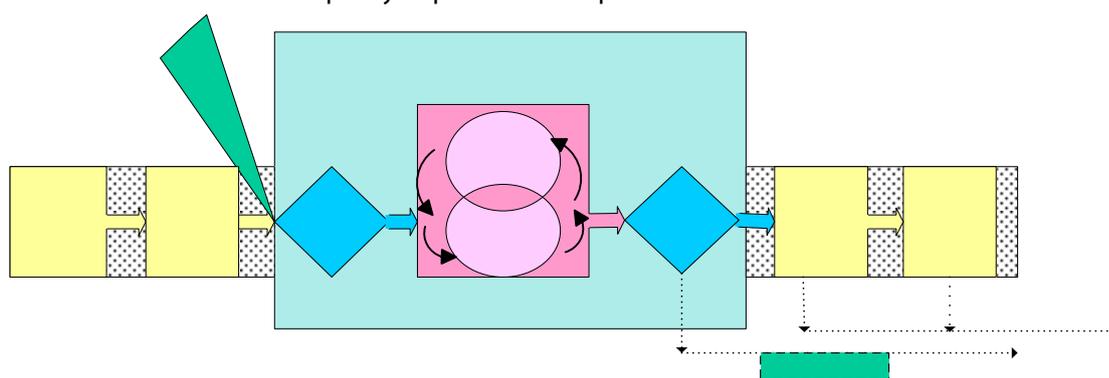


Figure 2.2: Managerial Sensemaking within Policy Implementation

The feedforward loops located at the bottom right of the diagram were introduced to exemplify how understandings resulting from participation in one policy implementation experience can feed into the sensemaking around future implementation efforts. Table 2.1 operationalizes the various components of the model.⁷

Table 2.1: Definitions

Label	Definition
Socio-Cognitive Environment	The space in which actors negotiate shared understandings of the policy mandate.
Formal Mandate	The written, formally adopted policy mandate that establishes the parameters of a policy implementation process.
Inputs	The resources, social interactions, conversations, ideas, and schemas that managers consult in their effort to make sense of a formal mandate.
In-Situation Schema	Containers which relate to the ways people collectively understand specific sub-components of their organizational environment and work tasks.
Managerial Sensemaking	The interpretive process by which managers create meaning around the policy implementation experience.
Organizational Schema	Perceptions of the organization as a collective entity which influence interaction patterns with others.
Schema	Mental models that are held, individually or collectively, that managers consider as they make sense of, respond, and act on the mandate they are charged with implementing.
Pre-Engagement Schema	Those schemas that managers hold about the formal policy mandate or inputs before they interact with the mandate, which influence how they will make sense of a policy idea.
Post-Engagement Schema	Schemas that emerge as a result of managerial sensemaking, response, and action to a policy mandate.
Managerial Action	The activities managers engage in as a result of the sensemaking process.
Feedforward Loop	The feedforward loop exemplifies the continual sensemaking that managers are engaged in as they operate in policy program environments. This continual looping is a non-linear process. The post-engagement schemas that emerge from managerial sensemaking and action related to one program mandate's implementation serve as the pre-engagement schemas of future policy sensemaking.

To capture the social interactions and cognitive processes which create the sensemaking foundation of a program environment, I introduce the broad sensemaking construct of *socio-cognitive environment* (SCE). SCEs are the cognitive spaces where social interactions and collective and individual schemas transpire which determine how managers make sense of their work and generate meaning around policy mandates. Importantly, the SCE label transcends the more limited organizational culture label to include managerial interactions with external actors and ideas outside of project and organizational boundaries to include external stakeholders,⁸ such as program beneficiaries, government staff, and international and local non-governmental organizations. As such, the conceptual framework encompasses the entirety of socio-cognitive processes relating to policy implementation, allowing consideration of a variety of experiences influencing local sensemaking of participatory development - international and local, cultural and historical, as well as organizational.

The model in Figure 2.2 guided the field interviews, which were conducted in order to identify individual sensemaking maps related to participatory development. From these individual maps, shared understandings of the participatory development components of the Seila/PLG program were extrapolated. The following propositions in Table 2.2 then guided the piecing together of the dynamics of the program's socio-cognitive environments.

Table 2.2: Research Propositions

	Revised Proposition Based on Data Review⁹
1	Managers enter project environments already influenced by various inputs, holding pre-engagement schemas about the substance of their work (i.e. formal mandate), as well as the actors and processes associated with this work.
2	Upon entry into the organizational culture, managers are exposed to additional inputs unique to the project environment, including the formal written mandate and collective sensemaking experiences (i.e. formal and informal socio-cognitive transactions).
3	These formal and informal socio-cognitive transactions may influence how managers make sense of the mandate, amalgamating individual sensemaking into a collective experience, resulting in sub-groups holding unique schemas about their work.
4	Therefore, variations in sensemaking influence the action of project managers.
5	The interaction between sensemaking and action can possibly result in the emergence of post-engagement schemas, new schema about the mandate.
6	Depending on the outputs of the processes described in Propositions Two and Three, post-engagement schemas vary by degree of empowerment, ownership, alignment, convergence, diffidence, divergence, or outright hostility from the written policy mandate.

After more detailed coding of the data, initial categories were broken down into content and process categories related to the sensemaking of the participatory mandate. Formal organizational processes and informal group dynamics, as well as descriptions of individual sensemaking were then sub-categorized as events within the socio-cognitive environment. New sub-questions emerged as I applied the data to the model, driving the analysis deeper, assisting me in answering my formal research question. These included:

- 1) What are specific transactions where organizational members come to hold shared meaning?
- 2) How do social interactions create shifts in interpretation?
- 3) How does collective sensemaking influence individual sensemaking and policy actions, and vice versa?
- 4) Are there any examples of participation being thought about or acted upon that diverge from the mandate to the extent that it has become a negative or manipulative force within the program's operations?

Through this additional analysis, five socio-cognitive environments were formulated which emulate the multiple sensemaking environments which I propose interact to create local understandings of participation for the Cambodian Senior Provincial Programme Advisors (SPPAs). The study's findings chapters are structured to provide overviews of the macro- and micro-level SCEs (represented in Figure 2.3).

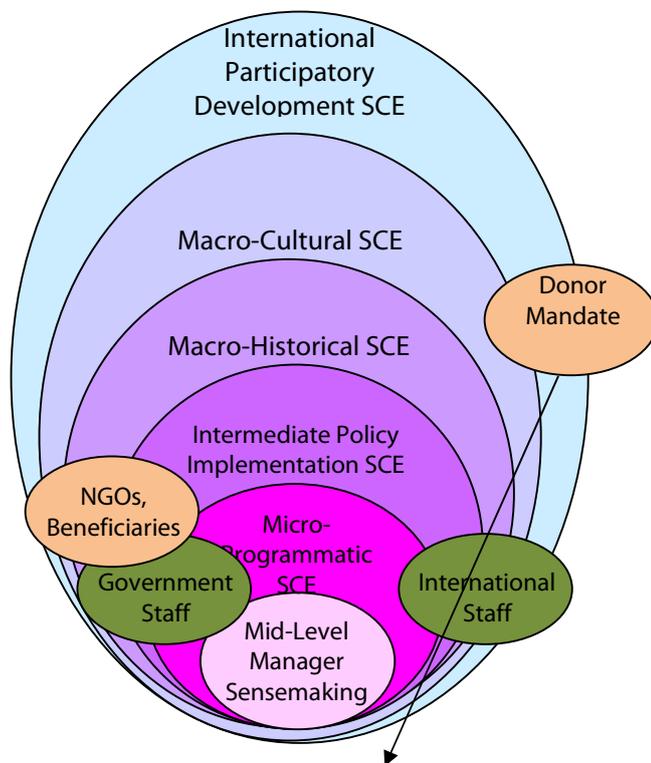


Figure 2.3: The Multiple Socio-Cognitive Environments Influencing SPPAs in Cambodia

To answer the research question, five 'socio-cognitive environments' (SCEs) surrounding the Seila program environment in the country of Cambodia were explored. This theoretical construct helped to disentangle the factors that influenced how one group of local staff negotiated complex cultural and historical realities in juxtaposition to donor conceptualizations of development. The five SCEs documented include the international macro-level environment, the Cambodian historical and cultural macro-level environments, the intermediate policy environment surrounding the program, and the micro-programmatic environment

composed of the program's internal operations and organizational culture. By employing the SCE construct, a complex picture emerged of how local mid-level managers, working to implement the program's participatory mandate, were influenced by their positioning at the confluence of these five socio-cognitive environments, providing new understanding of the forces which promote local staff's internalization of democratic governance principles.

The micro-programmatic SCE is defined as the activities and relationships occurring within the Seila and PLG cultures, as well as between Seila and PLG staff, including interactions with government counterparts and beneficiaries. Although not explicitly examined within the body of a single chapter, the intermediate SCE is conceptualized to encompass all activities related to international development efforts in Cambodia. This includes historical and present-day activities of donor agencies and government staff which influence the micro-programmatic environment and SPPAs' understanding of their work.¹⁰ The intermediate SCE also includes SPPAs' interactions with program beneficiaries and government staff as counterparts. The mandate itself can be perceived to be a result of the confluence of the international SCE and local SCEs within the intermediate SCE, as a variety of donor, government, civil society, and local staff were involved in its conceptualization.

1 Opening the "black box" of the inner workings of the aid institutions charged with the delivery of such programs requires locating the organization's socio-cognitive context within its larger ideological environment. A critical component of such policy contexts is the role organizational politics, culture, and external relations play within the larger development community. 2 Individual schema formation is at the heart of how organizational mandates are understood and enacted. Although a study of the subconscious, cognitive experience of managers would be optimal, it is methodologically impossible. Collective sensemaking serves as a proxy for understanding the dynamics of internal individual sensemaking experiences. 3 Schema has been one of the most popular labels for individual cognition in the management literature, although frame (Goffman 1974), knowledge structure (Walsh 1995), and mental representation (Von Eckhardt 1999) are all used interchangeably for the same phenomenon. A major debate in the field revolves around the need for additional definitional clarity of this process, while critics (Walsh 1995) counter that such a refinement process could be a potential distraction to the field's development. 4 Building on this tradition, but focusing on the individual level of sensemaking, Stanley Harris defines organizational schema as an individual's understanding of the organization of which they are a member, which influences the "knowledge and impressions regarding organizational groupings [e.g. sub-groupings] as entities [e.g. headquarter or field staff], somewhat extracted from their individual members" (Harris 1994, 312). Thus, individuals hold perceptions of their organization which influence their interaction patterns with others and the labeling of various collectives within organizational contexts. From a cultural perspective, these schemas serve as "individuals' repository for organizational culture knowledge, including the values and beliefs attributed to various individuals and collectivities, appropriate behaviors for various situations, traditional ways of doing things, reinforcement contingencies, peer and normative pressures, role knowledge, the meaning ascribed to verbal, physical, and behavioral artifacts, and the defining characteristics of the organization and its subgroups" (ibid., 313). In contrast to schemas related to the organization as a whole, Harris has also developed the notion of in-situation schema. Harris developed in-situation schema to encompass context-specific schema that "capture the range of knowledge needed for...sensemaking efforts: self, person, organization, object/concept, and event" (ibid.). He defines in-situation schema as "a merger of the schema for the stimulus domain with the schema for the situation or context in which it is encountered" (ibid.). For this study, I interpret a 'stimulus domain' to be those schema related to the organizational or process context. I use this notion to disaggregate the data during the collection process around policy-specific domains related to the Senior Provincial Program Advisors' (SPPAs) work since organizational schema is too broad a category to analyze complex sensemaking dynamics in program environments with actors from a variety of cultures. Harris' notion of in-situation schema thus refines the broader

notion of organizational schema to allow consideration of smaller chunks of sensemaking data. This counters the broader organizational schemas held both by individuals and organizational groupings, facilitating a more fine grained analysis of micro-cognitive processing within the five broader socio-cognitive environments used as analytic frameworks for this analysis. These two theoretical constructs assisted data disaggregation in the data collection phase, although are not explicitly included in the analytic model. 5 Several constructs were elaborated to help frame the data collection and initial analysis process. The construct of pre-engagement schema allowed for consideration of the influence of pre-existing understandings of participatory development on present-day interpretations. Post-engagement schemas are the outcomes of socio-cognitive processing. Organizational schemas contain understandings of the organizational environment (e.g. in this case, working within the Seila environment led to a collective organizational schema of operating within a bounded, safe space) while in-situation schemas are defined as containers which relate to the ways people collectively understand specific sub-components of their organizational environment and work tasks. 6 Pre-engagement schemas are operationalized as a combination of Bartunek's notion of organizational schema and Harris' notion of in-situation schema to represent the mental models mid-level managers held individually or collectively as they made sense of, responded to, and acted on the mandates they were charged with implementing. I propose that at each point that a human being receives or shares data, an active cognitive filtering process occurs as a result of the pre-engagement schemas that the manager is holding about the mandate or the inputs required for implementation. In a similar vein, post-engagement schemas are defined as the schemas that emerge as a result of a manager's participation in an implementation process. In long-term program implementations, these schemas can serve as future pre-engagement schemas in new program initiatives or organizational environments. It should also be noted that schema formation is not a given, nor is resulting action. Schema may change but individuals might not feel empowered to act. Pre-engagement schema might be so ingrained that no amount of new information will change them. 7 This early model, developed before fieldwork, promoted the initial sorting of data into basic categories such as pre- and post-engagement schemas, inputs, and the most obvious instances of organizational schemas. Pre-engagement schemas were operationalized by documenting the perceptions managers identified as being brought with them to their work. Experiences included refugee status, previous relationships with donor organizations, beliefs about access to resources and technical assistance, ideas about Cambodian capacity, pre-existing definitions of participation, and previous exposure to participatory development theory. Post-engagement schemas, which I defined as emerging as a result of the implementation process, were operationalized by documenting managerial responses and actions and analyzing what schema they represented. These categories served as excellent sorting devices in the early stages of data collection. Reconsidering data which did not fit under these categories led to further analytic clarity. 8 Understanding how such activities impact policy output will be saved for a future stream of research. This study is limited to the internal organizational processes that are engaged by policymakers as they contribute to policy outputs and outcomes. 9 These revised propositions represent the final version of the initial propositions which emanated from the original framework, which were updated to better match the realities of the program environment following the data collection phase. The original propositions did not account for pre-engagement schema held by staff upon entry into the program environment: 1) Managers will face varying inputs in their sensemaking processes as they begin to implement a participatory project, 2) As a result of these varying inputs, they develop varied pre-engagement schema about the participatory policy mandate, 3) The nature of the pre-engagement schema will influence how they make sense of the mandate, 4) Therefore, variations in sensemaking influence the action of project managers, 5) The interaction between sensemaking and action result in the emergence of a post-engagement schema, a new schema about the mandate; 6) The post-engagement schema vary by degree of alignment, convergence, diffidence, divergence, or outright hostility from the policy mandate. 10 SPPAs' historical activities in other development-related organizations before entry into the Carere/Seila program would also fall under this category.

Chapter 3

Research Design

Considering *how multiple environments interact to create local understandings of participation in a given international program* requires in-depth analysis of the human relationships and sensemaking which make up those multiple environments. The socially embedded nature of managerial sensemaking necessitates its study in a natural setting through the engagement of a social constructionist lens (Berger & Luckmann 1966; Bandura 1986; Wood & Bandura 1989; Gergen 1994). A qualitative research design holds the greatest methodological potential for a study of complex social interactions, having proven capacity to generate analytic categories and develop new theory (Bentz & Shapiro 1998, 60). After consideration of a wide array of qualitative research traditions (Patton 1990), I selected an ethnographic-style research design (Cassell & Symon 1994) which included in-depth interviews (Spradley 1979; King 1994; Rubin & Rubin 1995), observations (Angrosino & Mays de Pérez 1994; Waddington 1994), and a document analysis (Caulley 1983; Cassell & Symon 1994; Rigg 2006). More specifically, this study fits into the tradition of interpretivist, naturalistic (Ellis & Bochner 1996; Emerson, Fretz, et al. 1995; Hammersley 1992) organizational research embedded in the emerging social constructionist (Gergen 1994; 2000) epistemological orientations of recent decades.

This chapter provides a summary of the study's overarching research design and sampling rationale (Marshall & Rossman 1999; Cresswell 1998), data collection and analysis methodologies, and the philosophical assumptions which drove the research design. The closing section explores research design limitations and other challenges that emerged during the course of the study, including a discussion of the backstage quality (Goffman 1959, 111-112) considerations employed to ensure the study's trustworthiness. I remained in the field until reaching "theoretical saturation" (Glaser and Strauss 1968), which is defined as the point after which fieldwork yields diminishing returns (Taylor 1991, as cited in Scheyvens & Donovan 2003). The data were analyzed through a combination of grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin 1998) and narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly 2000; Ospina et al. 2007; Ospina & Sorenson 2007) techniques. In writing up, I attempted to follow the ethnographic tradition of "showing" not "telling" participants' stories (Van Maanen 1988) as much as possible. These methodological choices were made to accomplish the following goals:

- Ensure the primacy of research participants' voices.
- Study research participants in their natural organizational settings as much as possible.
- Create conditions which allow Cambodian research participants to feel as comfortable as possible in exploring their own sensemaking processes.
- Engage in dialogue as much as possible to encourage an active, inductive interplay with the data and research participants (Strauss & Corbin 1998, 6).
- Permit social constructionist (SC) epistemological assumptions to hold, a key assumption embedded in the study's theoretical approach which allows social interaction to serve as a proxy for studying the internal sensemaking processes of individual managers.
- Elicit descriptions of individual and collective schemas (Bartunek & Moch 1987; Bartunek 1988).

- Create a consistent, deep, respectful, and high quality engagement with research participants and the material in order to ensure reliability and trustworthiness.

3.1. Research Design Overview

Table 3.1 offers an overview of the research phases for this study. The fieldwork was expected to encompass a ten week initial data collection period, but extended into a three year journey to navigate the complexities of the topic and research context. The extension of the fieldwork period was due to the fact that before my arrival in Cambodia, I had developed a well thought out, but speculative (Strauss & Corbin 1998, 23) theoretical framework to guide my data collection. As I spent time in-country in phases 2 and 3 (research phases described in detail below), I became increasingly concerned with the analytic dangers of laying a pre-formed, Western theoretical framework over the research topic which might interfere with my ability to genuinely observe and understand what I was seeing.

Table 3.1: Research Phases

Phase	Descriptor	Process
Phase 1	Initial Topic Exploration	Internship within an international donor agency headquarters
Phase 2	Arriving on the Scene	Initial acculturation process; Entering the organization; Defining my role as a researcher
Phase 3	Diving In Deep	Conducting interviews & observations
Phase 4	Hanging Out	Informal discussions; Transcribing; & Initial Data Processing
Phase 5	Digging Deeper, Incubating	Travel to additional countries within Southeast Asian region; Consideration of the broader development environment in Cambodia; "On the ground" literature searches in various organizational archives and independent libraries; Observations and interviews with additional external actors as a reliability check
Phase 6	Filling in the Pieces	Last interviews and observations
Phase 7	Writing Up	Coding and initial analysis while still in Cambodia
Phase 8	Pulling Out	Return to U.S.; Bulk of analysis, Conduct Email Surveys
Phase 9	Returning and Re-Engaging	Return to Cambodia; Entry into a different organizational environment and position as an "insider" to deepen understanding of Cambodian administrative practices
Phase 10	Deepening	Continued dialogue and sharing of sensemaking framework; Refinement of initial analysis

3.2. Research Assumptions and Rationale for Design

A qualitative design was chosen as it holds the greatest methodological potential for a study of this nature due to: a) the opportunity it provides for the generation of analytic categories; and b) its proven capacity to generate new theory¹¹ (ibid., 60). Because of the complex assumptions rooting both the study's research design and analytic framework in this social constructionist orientation, I begin this chapter by defining the study's broader meta-lens (Bentz & Shapiro 1998) and the methodological considerations driving the research process. Qualitative, interpretivist research is an increasingly accepted type of inquiry in the post-modern (Calás & Smircich 1997), globalizing world, especially as recent researchers have taken great care to document the intricacies of such research processes, uncovering often hidden but important challenges in 'highly relational' research (Bentz & Shapiro 1998; Loewenthal 2007). Data collection and analysis methodologies were chosen to support an interpretivist and continually evolving understanding of the substance of the research. Combining interview, document, and observation data permitted the creation of tri-dimensional snapshots of the content of the study's proposed five socio-cognitive environments. A description of the research design choices I made which embody these traditions follows.

3.3. Research Frame: Thinking Narratively, Working Inductively

I began the research engaging an ethnographic lens in the tradition of Spradley (1979), Van Maanen (1988), and Chambers (1994). Although this was helpful in the initial analysis process, I found that thinking ethnographically was not pushing my conceptualization much past basic description (Hammersley 1992). I returned to narrative inquiry, selected to guide my final analysis, to consider how the metaphor of story could encourage theory development, as Clandinin and Connelly (2000) advocate. As I began to experiment with thinking narratively, this lens began to influence how I heard the data (e.g. as a series of stories), how I engaged with my research participants (e.g. relationally), and my ability to conceptualize the structure of my reporting strategy (e.g. the interweaving of individual and collective sensemaking). Along the way, my researcher identity shifted from "organizational ethnographer" to "story collector" (Martin, Feldman & Simkin 1983; Hansen, Barry, Boje & Hatch 2007). As I re-envisioned my role to that of grand narrator (Van Maanen 1988), a coherent plot began to emerge which united the stories of my participants with that of the organization.

I chose to intertwine the methodologies, as well as philosophies, at the core of Strauss and Corbin's grounded theory (GT) (Strauss & Corbin 1990; 1997; 1998) and Clandinin and Connelly's narrative inquiry (NI) (2000) approaches to promote, as well as balance, the somewhat conflicting objectives of maintaining both sensitivity, rigor, and objectivity (Dodge et al. 2005) when engaged in highly relational research. I had conducted a thorough literature review, developed theoretical categories and an analytic framework, yet the research subject and Cambodian context meant that a high degree of inductive analysis would also be required. My research process can best be described as a continued interweaving of deductive and inductive analysis. My study was structured deductively but the qualitative methods allowed me the freedom to think narratively and work inductively while also ensuring research rigor. In short, narrative inquiry served as an approach by which to: a) engage relationally with my research participants, b) guide my interview process, c) and keep my focus grounded on hearing and documenting stories. Although narrative inquiry and grounded theory come from different epistemological foundations (post-modernist in the former and objectivist in the latter) (Bryant & Lasky 2007), the juxtaposition of the two created a rich analytic process. Grounded theory served as an important methodological tool to structure the systematic analysis of over 10,000 pages of document text and 1,500 pages of interview data. The narrative spirit drove the telling of the story, making

sense of the fragmented data points which were the result of the grounded theory process. The construction of the socio-cognitive environments was the answer to the narrative question – *what’s the story?*

3.4. Data Collection

Data collection consisted of three sources: semi-structured open-ended interviews, observations, and documents. The combined review of these sources, particularly my observations of the policy environment, created a composite picture of the socio-cognitive environment surrounding the Carere/Seila implementation. I collected primary interview data from June 2004 to April 2005. I also conducted a round of ‘contextualizing’ interviews with NGO staff and civil servants external to the program in March and April of 2005 to test certain emerging interpretations. I left the field ten months after I arrived in Cambodia with completed transcriptions, ready to begin the coding process. I returned to Cambodia in October 2005, embedding within a different organizational environment as a policy research advisor for fourteen months as I completed my analysis, extending my observation of Cambodian organizational culture and providing a comparative frame from which to consider the Carere/Seila dynamics. For both data collection and analysis, I adopted a Narrative Inquiry lens that assisted me in engaging with my research participants much like Dodge et al. (2005) describe in their explanation of the contribution of narrative inquiry. Such a framing also influenced how I consider my own voice and signature on the work:

Narrativists like Clandinin and Connelly (2000) and Herda (1999) argue that even when there is no invitation to do co-research, participants in narrative inquiry studies are always part of a conversation rather than removed subjects of study. Hence narrative inquiry is by nature participatory. (Dodge et al. 2005, footnote 1)

Data collection was guided by elements of the conceptual framework operationalized in Table 3.2 below.

Table 3.2: Methodologies to Elicit Components of the Conceptual Framework

Components of Conceptual Framework	Operationalization and Measurement Process
Formal Mandate	Document Analysis: Evidence of formal mandate through review of U.N. General Assembly resolutions mandating this work, public policy statements, internal agency policy strategy documents, stated objectives delivered in program directives.
Inputs	Interviews: Interviewees share descriptions of their work environment and relationship to understandings of participatory development; describe things that have influenced their understanding of participation.
Managerial Sensemaking	Interviews: Interviewees share stories of their involvement with the participatory aspects of the implementation process. Observation: Observe managers on the job to identify whether differences exist between <i>implicit theories</i> shared in interviews and

	<i>theories in use</i> (Argyris & Schön 1974).
Individual Schema	Interviews: Interviewees share stories of their internal, individual framing of participatory aspects of the implementation process.
Collective Schema	Interviews: Interviewees share stories of ways in which collective framing of participatory aspects of the implementation process transpire.
Pre-Engagement Schema	Interviews: Interviewees describe their initial response to the participatory mandate, previous involvement with participatory program strategies. Document Analysis: Review of program documents identifies new information delivered in course of program formulation and implementation that differs from understandings of participation brought by Cambodian staff upon entry into program.
Post-Engagement Schema	Interviews: Interviewees ask to share stories of their involvement with the participatory aspects of the Carere implementation; share their current perspectives on the mandate and community activities. Document Analysis: Review of program documents identifies new information delivered in course of program formulation and implementation, which influenced SPPA understanding of participatory development.
Managerial Action	Document Analysis: Study program evaluations for descriptions of managerial action. Interviews: Managers explain how they act to fulfill the program's participatory mandate. Observation: Observe managers' activities while on the job.
Feedforward Loop	Document Analysis: Study program evaluations for descriptions of managerial action. Interviews: 1) Managers explain how they act to fulfill the program's participatory mandate, 2) Ask managers about "hypothetical" future participatory efforts (frame: 'what would you do differently?') and 3) Ask managers how their work on the Carere project has affected their work on the Seila program.

3.4.1. Case Sampling Rationale: Mandate, Cultural Context

I chose to focus on participatory development as the mandate of interest for this study since it is a politically important case (Miles & Huberman 1994), due to its ongoing and significant impact on current international development policies and operations. I was interested in studying the differences between internationally-promoted donor agency rhetoric and local understandings of such mandates, so I wanted to

focus on a group of staff working at the country-level, supported by a large international donor agency. On a practical level, the program I selected also required a long-term and well-documented trajectory of engagement with participatory development, as well as national staff operating in the English language as part of their work mandate in order to ensure the most reliable interview data possible. Because of the invasive nature of my ethnographic-style research, it was essential to have a degree of buy-in to my research topic by program management, as well as have permission to observe program operations for an extended period of time. These conditions were made possible by selecting the Seila program, which was facilitated by connections with mutual colleagues and time spent at the United Nations Capital Development Fund headquarters in New York City in Phase 1 of the fieldwork. The complexity of the Carere/Seila mandate operations, its documented success, the longevity of the program, its ten-year documentation stream, and the representativeness of the decentralized planning program design model justified its selection, as well as focus on a single program case.

My overarching interview, observation, and document sampling strategy was determined primarily by theoretical considerations (Miles & Huberman 1994, 28) underlying the conceptual framework's development. The topic of my study, managerial sensemaking, required a representative sample from the twenty-four mid-level Cambodian advisors working at the provincial level in order to engage in in-depth interviews. In keeping with Marshall and Rossman (1999), the sample was eventually expanded to include other actors working with these advisors in order to capture the settings, events, and actors needed to create a composite picture of the social phenomenon of collective sensemaking.

3.4.2. Case Sampling Rationale: Program Selection

After a pre-study observation at the New York City headquarters of the United Nations Capital Development Fund for four months as a project intern, I selected the Carere/Seila/PLG program in Cambodia for my study. A country program was selected as the site of the study, over international headquarter staff, after a review of UNCDF program operations while interning within UNCDF headquarters (Research Phase 1). After several consultations, it became clear that in-country managers exhibit the most direct influence over program operations and thus, their sensemaking would be of greatest impact on the implementation of a participatory mandate. An initial review of program documents and discussion with the deputy country administrator for Cambodia confirmed that Carere 2 and Seila were structured to give provincial-level advisors (SPPAs) a high degree of autonomy in advising and making most operational decisions. Thus, these individuals were positioned to serve as key intermediaries between beneficiary communities and program executives at the national level.

In order to study sensemaking around participatory development, a program environment where participation is a fundamental component of a significant democracy-building mandate was compulsory to the study. The Carere/Seila/PLG program has such a mandate, designed to support a nation-wide, bottom-up, decentralized planning model that empowers commune-level administrators to facilitate community-driven decision-making. The Seila mandate supports a twelve-step¹² local participatory process which determines the usage of the Commune Council's yearly allotment of development funds. In addition, the Commune Council is expected to promote local-level democracy (elections), participation of a range of community members (including civil society actors) aimed to build social capital, and provide transparent administrative procedures that empower local level actors to make planning decisions for their communities.¹³ As well:

- As part of the institutional reform process, local government authorities and community members are expected to select preferred inputs and activities to achieve desired reforms and participate in specific capacity building activities.

- There has been a degree of continuity in program management at both the province and country-level.
- The program has received extensive international inputs through a variety of donors, technical assistance, and consultant involvement.
- The program has been extensively documented and evaluated over its thirteen-year history.
- It has been acknowledged as a highly successful participatory planning initiative within the UNDP system (Emergency Response Division, UNDP 2001) and by a number of external evaluators (Guggenheim & Wong 2005; Hughes 2007).

At the time of this study, the longest-running provincial operations and staff with longest tenure were located in the five provinces included in the Carere pilot project implementation, so were of particular focus for the interview sample.¹⁴ I selected one province from the phase one implementation cycle: Battambang, two provinces from phase two: Pursat and Siem Reap, and two provinces from phase three: Pailin and Otdar Meanchey. These provinces are geographically located in the Northwestern region of Cambodia where the majority of external aid has been delivered historically. As well, two provinces (Banteay Meanchey and Rattanakiri) were selected because they are considered by national program staff to represent a range of cultural, political and administrative diversity. I was also invited to observe a provincial-level workshop in Mondolkiri later in my fieldwork so I opportunistically sampled Mondolkiri retrospectively since it is culturally (primarily made up of ethnic minority hill-tribe populations), politically (FUNCINPEC controlled governorship) and geographically (highly remote) unique from the originally selected Carere provinces in the Northwest of Cambodia.

3.4.3. Interview Sample

I conducted sixteen open-ended semi-structured interviews with current Senior Provincial Program Advisors (SPPAs) and their supervisors working within the Partnership for Local Governance (PLG) structure. The sample also includes international and Cambodian staff that formerly held SPPA and PPM positions but now hold national advisement positions. I also conducted interviews with Seila counterparts working within the government; as well as local and international NGO staff working in similar democracy and governance programs. The sample is detailed in Table 3.3 below.¹⁵ I constructed the interview sample to take into consideration an actor's geographical location, position within the organizational structure and hierarchy (Weick 2003), professional and personal relationships, and potential for significant interactions within and between organizational environments in relation to making sense of the participatory mandate (Bate 2003).

Table 3.3: Interview Sample Overview

Sample	Description/Rationale
16 current SPPAs	<p>Sampled for geographic and tenure diversity (start dates from early 1990s to 2003)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9 SPPAs hired as program staff before 1994 (majority were refugees, a variety of educational experiences within and outside of the country, most came in as assistants during UNTAC and Carere 1 period, working way up to SPPA positions) • 4 SPPAs hired between 1995 and 2001 (entered organization during Carere 2, most have had international coursework at university-level, still starting in assistant positions but more coming in at mid-level management positions, such as deputy PPMs) • 3 SPPAs hired since 2001 (diverse education and tenure within program)
8 International Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 of 8 were former PPMs or SPPAs (Similar position to Cambodian SPPAs, but held by Westerners and Cambodians during the Carere period before the position was placed under the Seila structure) • All hold international bachelor’s degrees from Europe, United States, and Australia; • Majority entered program during Carere 2 period, 1993-1997; Most had border camp experience)
2 former SPPAs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cambodian former SPPAs now in national advisory positions
5 Seila staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chosen for ministerial and geographic diversity, to serve as counter-sample for SPPA interviews. Three national staff and two provincial staff interviewed. Most did not complete secondary education.
3 donor staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 staff from major donor agencies funding program
5 NGO representatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 foreign director of a Western NGO association • 1 foreign director of a donor-supported project related to decentralization reform • 1 Cambodian staff member of international NGO • 1 foreign director of international NGO • 1 Cambodian staff of local NGO

Specifically, the SPPAs are charged with “providing technical advice and management support” to provincial-level Seila government staff located within the provincial governors’ offices and line departments.

They are also expected to “ensure UN Cooperating Agency responsibilities are carried out in the province” (SPPA Job Description *circa* June 2004).¹⁶ Formally, this means that SPPAs oversee PLG technical advisement staff at the provincial level, provide technical information and advice, and support government staff in their monitoring duties of other actors (*ibid.*). Informally, and most importantly, SPPAs serve as informational conduits for the flow of ideas related to the mandate implementation processes between actors at the provincial level (horizontally), and between the provinces and the national advising team and international donors (bottom-up). SPPAs are of particular interest for an empirical study because of their location between complex and overlapping inter- and intra-organizational interactions between a broad range of institutions, government actors, community stakeholders, and beneficiaries, which make up what I am terming the program’s *socio-cognitive environment*.

In order to capture the broader organizational context in which the SPPAs operate, I also developed a secondary sample of: a) national advisors (e.g. the country-level senior program advisor who has administered the program for over a decade and his three deputy administrators)¹⁷; and b) international and locally-based technical advisors charged with providing assistance to Cambodian staff (many of whom also served in similar positions to the SPPAs before the position was made into a Cambodian-only position in 2000). I also interviewed five RGC staff receiving salary supplementation under the Seila program, three donor liaisons, and five NGO actors to better contextualize the SPPA interview data, as well as provide a broader range of individual sensemaking experiences of participatory development as a reliability check on the primary data.

3.4.4. Interview Methods

The objective of the semi-structured ethnographic interviews (Rubin & Rubin 1995; Spradley 1979) was to document the form, content, and breadth of existing schemas in order to understand the sensemaking process (both individual and collective) by which schemas influence implementation activities. The SPPAs’ sharing of narratives of their personal experience with the participatory mandate was crucial, providing an intimate portrayal of how sensemaking operates within this development project; particularly in their descriptions of how their interactions with communities, upper management, and external actors contribute to sensemaking within an international program’s ground-level operations. The principles underlying narrative inquiry shaped the engagement between researcher and research participant (described in more detail below).

Two distinctive data streams emerged in the course of the interviews: the substance of the interviewees’ schemas of participatory development and the more implicit sensemaking process underlying the dialogue. This required that I, as the interviewer, listened “in stereo”: focusing on the participants’ voices while maintaining an awareness of the underlying socio-cognitive processes driving the subject matter of the discussion. This would greatly influence the structure of the analysis process.

3.4.5. Document Sample

To date, over three thousand Khmer and English-language documents associated with the program have been produced, making it difficult to ensure a comprehensive review of the program’s participatory mandate.¹⁸ Therefore, initial document collection focused on items identified by interviewees as holding participation-related content (e.g. a snowball document sample) and primary Carere/Seila/PLG program documents such as formal program documents, logframes, and workplans.¹⁹ At the end of the fieldwork, I settled on a primary document sample of fifty two Carere/Seila/PLG program documents and donor evaluations from which to document the evolution of the program’s formal participatory mandate, implementation objectives and activities. I also collected international donor policy documents most closely linked to the content of the Carere/Seila mandate (e.g. policy documents from primary program donors such

as SIDA, DFID, UNCDF, and UNDP and major multilateral donors located in Cambodia such as the World Bank, OECD, etc.) and research findings emanating from local Cambodian projects engaged in participatory development.²⁰

Documents for reconstruction of the program mandate were chosen according to the following criteria: documents identified on the website as key program documents, documents identified by interviewees as influential to their sensemaking, and formal internal year-end and mid-term evaluations, and annual project reports. All documents used for this research were publicly available, collected through a review of: public websites, UN documents housed within New York University's United Nations Document Depository, and project documents available in the Seila Library in Phnom Penh. I reviewed national *Prakas* (legal proclamation, regulation or decree adopted by a Minister in Cambodia) related to the decentralization reform process and Commune Council development to identify RGC-mandated perspectives on the decentralization process.²¹ The full document sample is included in Annex 3.2 and a document analysis strategy is described in Section 3.6.3 and Annex 3.3.

3.4.6. Observation Procedures

Formal observation involved two stages – a pre-study of UNCDF Headquarter operations and the informal field observation opportunities that emerged organically as I: a) traveled to the PLG provincial offices for the interviews; b) my research process paralleled the Seila planning cycle at the commune level; and c) invitations were extended by program staff to attend public workshops and training sessions. As well, I spent time in other organizational settings in Cambodia in later stages of the fieldwork to provide a point of comparison for the formal observation. The following sections detail these experiences and methods employed (Cresswell 1998; Silverman 2000).²²

Topic & Sample Exploration: Participant Observation at UNCDF Headquarters, New York

My observation process began before I arrived in Cambodia, starting with a pre-study I undertook at UNCDF headquarters from September 2003 until February 2004, where I participated as an unpaid intern in an organizational assessment of UNCDF operations. This experience was created in collaboration with a UNCDF staffer in order to explore my research topic from inside a donor environment, gain easier access to documentation, and explore various UNCDF programs which could serve as my program context. My formal role was as support staff for an evaluation of UNCDF, where I collected data and contributed to the final written analysis. During those five months, I typically worked five hours a week within UNCDF headquarters, which permitted me to establish familiarity with the organizational context without overly-immersing myself in the organizational culture and politics.

As a result of this internship, I directly observed how implementation is talked about, thought about, and enacted within an international donor environment.²³ My interactions with UNCDF program managers allowed me a first glimpse of manager mentality in practice. I also participated in a number of interviews with external stakeholders of the UNCDF, which gave me access to donor and external stakeholder perspectives and heightened my awareness of the political nature of the development environment. I was therefore able to refine my conceptual framework to better match the reality of the UN's organizational processes and implementation cycle. Finally, establishing a 'bird's eye' view before entering the field helped me hold a broad perspective during field-level observations.

Observation in Cambodia

At the same time that I undertook interviews, I observed national quarterly staff meetings, trainings, and Commune Council meetings to understand the substance of the SPPAs' work. I was particularly interested in observing the activities of the managers in their daily work experience to look for evidence of possible inputs coloring their sensemaking experience, or whether I could observe particular schemas influencing their work activities. Thus, observations in the field were primarily of an opportunistic nature. I traveled with teams of national workshop organizers; international consultants and advisors; SPPA and their staff as invited, using a general observation strategy. I recorded informal observations in field notes, using such information to crosscheck the reliability of the interview and document findings as they emerged.

Two informal observational experiences also influenced the analysis, which I documented in field notes as well. In the last months of the data collection, I engaged in a volunteer experience as country coordinator for the *Global Microentrepreneurship Awards* which required interacting with a group of national Cambodian staff working for a dozen microcredit organizations in Cambodia. This experience confirmed that the SPPAs in this study were engaging in their work with a consistently higher degree of capacity and motivation than Cambodians operating in similar positions. After six months of data analysis in the United States, I returned to Cambodia to work for a policy research organization which furthered my understanding of the dynamics existing in more typical public organizational cultures in Cambodia. For instance, in this organization, Cambodian and Western staff operated in dueling organizational cultures, with Cambodian staff operating underneath a tightly controlled triumvirate of three male Western managers, which greatly contrasted that which was observed in the Seila environment. Because of the advisory position I held within one research unit, I was privy to how Cambodian staff perceived their position and work experiences within this highly patriarchal and hierarchical culture which mimicked a Cambodian organizational culture, but with Western leaders holding top positions of authority.

3.4.7. Email Survey

As I began to review interview transcripts, I noticed a number of times Cambodian interviewees asked me to clarify, "Which type of participation was I asking about?" "During which period?" I recognized a need to dig deeper into the Cambodian history driving the diverse interpretations emerging in the course of the interviews. I therefore developed a brief email survey (Desai & Potter 2006) that I sent to four Cambodian researchers and professionals working in the development field. Email responses assisted me in understanding the evolution of the definition of participation in the Khmer language after my analysis of the SPPA interview texts uncovered a variety of interpretations of participation across various historical periods. Responses allowed me to examine the Cambodian vernacular surrounding participation, which I then further verified in informal discussions with several 'everyday' Cambodians who lived before and through the Khmer Rouge period.²⁴ I present these findings in Chapter 4.²⁵

3.5. Data Management

I employed three native English-speaking transcribers who were familiar with Cambodian accents in order to produce the most reliable transcripts possible. Research assistants and transcribers were employed at several stages to assist with non-analytic tasks (e.g. document collection, citation entry/checking, and transcribing), so data management also required ensuring that confidentiality procedures were understood and followed.²⁶ After transcriptions were complete, I spent three months reviewing and transcribing my field notes while simultaneously reviewing interview transcripts as I began to consider the coding process

(Saunders et al. 2000, 382). I produced analytic memos to record and synthesize ideas, which became the basis for the evolving coding strategy. A highly organized but transportable filing system which permitted easy but secure access to interview transcripts, field notes, and documents was required, both in Cambodia and the United States. Interview data was primarily organized and analyzed using *Atlas.Ti* qualitative software. Computer-assisted analysis was critical to manage thousands of pages of transcripts, documents, and artifacts associated with program operations. In addition, much analysis still occurred by hand, as traditional cut and paste procedures were often the most conceptually appropriate. Graphical analytic procedures provided by Miles and Huberman (1994) also played an important role in the analysis process.

3.6. Data Analysis

Richmond highlights that “stor[ies] [are] a meaningful way of organizing thinking...the form of a story is a pattern known to both storytellers and listeners, allowing the mind of both to reconstruct and make sense of what is being told or heard” (Richmond 2002, 2). Writing through this lens helped me unite my participants’ and the broader organizational history, carrying me from data collection, to analysis, to final reporting. As well, an ongoing interpretive dance between the conceptual framework and data ensured that the framework did not talk over the actual data. I would consult the analytic framework frequently to ensure my theoretical categories were driving the analysis, but also created new ‘holding’ categories of information that resonated analytically as I moved through the interviews.

3.6.1. Initial Interview and Observation Analysis

From the beginning, the narrative inquiry orientation assisted me in creating research relationships of mutuality, respect, and trust (Ospina et al. 2004) as I collected data. Narrative inquiry principles promote attention to appropriateness, authenticity, credibility, intuitiveness, receptivity, reciprocity, and sensitivity in the research relationship (Bentz & Shapiro 1998, 6). Narrative analysis strategies presented by Boje (2001) and Clandinin and Connelly (2000) also deepened my engagement with my initial findings and created hermeneutic spiraling with my data (Bentz & Shapiro 1998). Perhaps most importantly, narrative inquiry principles and methodologies counteracted the inherent potential to become too rigid in the Grounded Theory analytic process (described in detail below). Grounded Theory coding procedures can result in highly detailed disaggregation of data and the loss of the ‘big picture.’ By conducting the Grounded Theory coding process with the explicit intention of thinking narratively, I was able to keep an ear open to the stories of my research participants while pushing my analysis to a more abstract, theoretical level.

I chose Grounded Theory to guide the inductive analysis process because of its demonstrated ability to materialize new theoretical insights in uncertain research environments where new questions are being asked, minimally-tested theoretical concepts are being applied, and conceptual relationships between variables are poorly understood (Strauss & Corbin 1998, 40).²⁷ Three data levels were considered simultaneously during analysis: a) the data; b) the actors’ interpretations of events; and c) the interplay between the data and myself as the researcher, since I am the one who was “actively reacting to and working with the data” (Strauss & Corbin 1998, 58). Data analysis occurred iteratively, through nine interrelated activities:

- The formal participatory development mandate was reconstructed through the document analysis (Caulley 1983; Forster 1994; Hodder 1994).
- Interviews were entered into *Atlas.ti* qualitative data analysis software.
- The transcribed interviews were coded using grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin 1998).

- Propositions and sub-group samples were used to form bundles of information that could be plugged into the propositions emerging from my research questions to explore the existence of collective schemas, broader sensemaking processes, and reported managerial actions.
- As socio-cognitive processes began to become evident in the data, I developed several typologies that represented processes related to the propositions.
- I used this data to hypothesize how these processes might influence managerial sensemaking and action in international development implementations.
- I aggregated my responses by four sub-groups to assess their frequency in order to judge whether shared schemas existed, providing evidence towards establishing the validity of my six propositions.
- I revised my initial conceptual framework to represent my deeper understanding of the processes embedded in the socio-cognitive environment surrounding the Carere/Seila program which assisted me in answering my research question.
- My analysis of the document text was driven by the common themes that emerged during the interview data analysis.

3.6.2. Coding Procedures

Following Strauss and Corbin's procedures, I constructed a base coding protocol over a three month period before beginning open coding, which continued for an additional three months. Strauss and Corbin advise to ask many questions and consider alternative explanations to avoid laying a first interpretation on the data (1998, 58). Sticking close to Strauss and Corbin's strategy, I first attempted to identify what the central phenomena were, and then questioned how the phenomenon related to the events and happenings being observed. Finally, I continued to ask *how* and *if* questions that demanded a theoretically oriented inquiry, which helped me to achieve a coherent theoretical formulation (Strauss & Corbin 1998, 71-83). After six months, I was sorting my data in several ways, beginning to re-combine or collapse categories, and further sub-categorize through axial coding.²⁸

Strauss & Corbin highlight the importance of noticing differences around structure and process, as well as using the constructs of phenomenon and paradigm to direct the coding. Phenomenon refers to *what is going on*. In this case, this refers to *how SPPAs are making sense of the participatory development mandate*. Paradigm refers to the organizational scheme for the analysis that contextualizes the phenomenon, locating it within a conditional structure and identifying the "how" (e.g. the means through which a category is manifested). The structure/condition sets the stage, creates the circumstances in which problems, issues, happenings, and events pertaining to the phenomenon are situated, or arise. Process denotes the actions and interaction, over time, of persons, organizations, and communities in response to certain problems and issues. The who, why, when, etc. questions relate structure to process, which are inextricably linked. An analyst must understand the relationship between the two to understand what is going on. Simply stated, Strauss and Corbin propose that understanding structure is *understanding why, but not how*. *Understanding process you learn how, but not why*. However, combining the two leads to a complete understanding of the "dynamic and evolving nature of events" (Strauss & Corbin 1998, 127-128). The following Table 3.4 gives several examples of how the iterations in coding protocols between June and August 2005 led to the structure of the final analysis.

Table 3.4: Examples of Evolution from Axial to Micro Codes

Original Axial Code Categories (June 2005)	Micro Coding Categories (August 2005)
<p>I identified pre-engagement schemas by asking: "Did interviewee draw on a past experience as they described a current example of their sensemaking of participation?"</p> <p>I first bracketed them as basic inputs (previous positions, education, etc.).</p> <p>I then went back and explored the substance of these influences, resulting in substantive categories. One example category was: 'Beliefs about Cambodians.'</p>	<p>Upon a third review of the data once bracketed by process and substance, more nuanced categories emerged. The 'Beliefs about Cambodians' category was further broken down into identifying information about interviewees' views of self as Cambodians, such as 'concerns about own capacity,' and concerns related to 'saving face.' This led to the development of individual schema categories.</p>
<p>I first identified 'organizational schema' examples as descriptions of sensemaking related to internal organizational processes. Examples included: 'views of international advisors,' 'role of PLG in Seila implementation,' and 'beneficiary trainings.'</p>	<p>I then revised the organizational schema category to include process-oriented schemas such as 'relationships with external actors in the SPPAs' wider SCE,' 'schema about RGC staff,' and 'schema about interactions with PLG staff.' As I compared across these categories as a group, particularly the schema category related to relationships with staff, new understandings of the differences in SPPA engagement with the mandate emerged, as did the analytic category, 'embodiment of the mandate.'</p>

Grounded theory's axial and selective coding procedures were particularly well-suited for bracketing the two very different streams of data which emerged from the interviews: the substance of the participatory schemas individuals hold, as well as the description of the various processes by which sensemaking occurs. In the final stage of selective coding, I was abstracting out the most critical properties and dimensions at the heart of my data which responded to my propositions. At the same time, I developed several working hypotheses that had emerged from the interplay between the collected data and the original six propositions that emerged from the literature review. A narrative inquiry-lens was reengaged in the final analysis to avoid an 'over-deconstruction' of the individual texts (Strauss & Corbin 1998, 20), as well as to provide a methodological container (e.g. 'narrative') for aggregating individual stories into collective organizational schemas.

I first identified common themes across interview texts and then amalgamated interview texts into 'shared stories' by grouping them by theme and presenting them as passages representing collective sensemaking (Osland & Bird 2000). I then re-grouped interviewees' narratives related to participatory development into substantive themes, such as 'views on beneficiary participation,' 'government staff

participation,' 'descriptions of relationships between participation and accountability,' etc. and into process themes, such as 'views of SPPA role,' 'views of program role,' 'need for flexibility,' 'learning by doing,' 'role modeling,' etc. Once I had initially grouped the similarly themed material, I began to re-group around the analytic framework categories, using the operationalized definitions found in Table 3.3, such as 'pre-engagement schema' and 'organizational schema.'

The interview quotes I have used are representative. There is no doubt that some interviewees expressed notions more completely than others due to their command of the English language, so they may be quoted more frequently than others. However, quotes were checked against code tabulations frequencies to ensure that they were representative of the broader data set.

3.6.3. Document Analysis

The document analysis was not a review of all program documents, but a selective sample of fifty two documents chosen with the intention of: a) reconstructing the historical evolution of the participatory mandate; and b) establishing a narrative of the program's milestones associated with the implementation of participatory development.

The documents provided evidence of the formal written mandate, creating a comparative frame against which to analyze the interview data. Several donor organizations (primarily SIDA, DFID, and UNCDF) have funded and overseen operations of the Carere and Seila development programs, contributing technical advisement and resources to the development program, as well as varying interpretations of participatory development. Thus, donors' primary policy documents provide a picture of the broader organizational environments contributing to the evolution of one policy mandate within one program context. This highlights the importance of expanding conceptually beyond the limitations of single organizational cultures and inter-organizational relations in order to consider the relevance of socio-cognitive environments surrounding international policy mandates.

The study focuses on Cambodian managers' current thinking as it relates to achieving stated development objectives of participatory democracy and good governance. Thus, the lens adopted for the document review was limited to focus on participation as explicitly connected to governance and democracy-building objectives. In particular, participation relates to the government's objective of creating "an institutional capacity and knowledge base needed to prepare and implement long-term development strategies and investment programs for the sector" (Project of RGC 1996, 8).

I employed the document analysis methodologies of Caulley (1983), Forster (1994) and Hodder (1994) to review program and international donor documents for content related to participatory development mandates.²⁹ Forster (1994) proposes that development of the *perception* of thoughtful engagement is a critical aspect of establishing the credibility of a document analysis. Identifying documents to be included in the analysis before engaging in document collection, as well as creating a structured evaluation strategy (Caulley 1983) with the documents, assists in establishing this credibility. Narrative inquiry drove my efforts to elicit narratives from the document texts.

I grouped documents into three categories, depending on their significance to the content of the study. I chose primary documents that most closely related to policy formulation, implementation, and evaluation activities, such as UNDP policy pieces, workplans, budgets, and training manuals. I identified secondary sources as those related to the work of programming partners such as the Royal Government of Cambodia and donor partners. Tertiary sources included academic studies, donor and NGO reports, and news media sources that provided relevant information about the political and social environment surrounding the organization. I designed the document analysis protocol to ask a number of questions which assisted in identifying the nuanced substance of the formal participatory mandate and its evolution over time.

3.7. The Backstage Negotiations of Research in a Foreign Culture

This section details the “backstage” efforts I employed to: a) ensure high quality research findings; b) maintain sensitivity to my Cambodian research participants; and c) prevent undue bias as a foreign researcher. Although this assessment might be beyond the traditional bounds of a research methodology chapter, I include it in keeping with the epistemological principles of participation and openness I identified at the outset of the research.

3.7.1. Philosophical Groundings

The study of socio-cognitive dynamics has been limited because of a lack of appropriate methods to capture the process. Even though this exploratory research has design limitations due to the ability to operationalize the inter-subjective process of sensemaking, it is nonetheless worth pursuing because of the potential it holds for expanding knowledge of a poorly understood process in an understudied policy environment. To counter the design limitations, I maintained an interpretive research process so that I could amend my framework during the data collection process to reflect emerging knowledge of this process.

Because research of human processes in organizations is fundamentally relational, knowledge acquired in such relationships is socially constructed and not value free (Reason, n.d., 1). The knowledge created in such studies is inherently transactional, subjective, and politically determined (Berger & Luckmann 1966; Burr 1995; Gergen 1994, 2000). Thus, as the researcher, my personal preferences, value commitments, and intellectual partisanship influenced both the methodological choices being made (Bentz & Shapiro 1998, 67) and the interpretation of the data.

Throughout the study I engaged specific tools to remain vigilant of my own interpretive processes and their influence on it. To address these challenges, I placed my work within what Bentz and Shapiro describe as a *culture of inquiry*, “the chosen modality of working within a field, an applied epistemology or working model of knowledge used in explaining or understanding reality” which acknowledged this subjectivity and provides tools for counteracting it (Bentz & Shapiro 1998, 83).

This study’s culture of inquiry is best defined as interpretivist, inductive, naturalistic, qualitative inquiry, having been most significantly influenced by a combination of social constructionist (Berger & Luckmann 1966; Burr 1995; Gergen 1994, 2000; Ospina & Dodge 2005a), Action Research (Reason & Bradbury 2001), and narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly 2000) philosophies. These epistemological choices resulted in a set of principles, values, and intentions which fashioned the research space into a participatory, supportive, and mutual inquiry between researcher and research participant (ibid., 54-55).

Engaging an inductive approach allows the multiple actors, perspectives, and processes that make up an organization’s socio-cognitive environment to present themselves to the researcher. Action Research promotes a spirit of active interchange and testing of ideas with my research subjects, as well as providing a defined research objective of making a knowledge contribution back to the practice of my research participants. Narrative inquiry provides a vehicle for developing a respectful relational engagement with my research subjects and provides a powerful analytic vehicle for interweaving the individual life stories of my interviewees within those of the broader organizational environments. The data collected provided a previously undocumented Cambodian perspective on development, highlighting individual struggles to build adequate capacity and empowerment to participate successfully in Cambodia’s development process.

There are nevertheless, limitations to making significant claims about the generalizability of my findings to the broader development program environment. For one, there was not a strong empirical base of previous studies from which to root this study theoretically. In my effort to make a solid empirical contribution, I limited the focus of the study to documentable propositions related to the policy

implementation cycle. However, this bracketing means I may have missed some important inputs into the sensemaking process which might arise during the policy formation or output stages. Moreover, methodologies to access the internal sensemaking of managers in a natural setting do not exist, so studying collective sensemaking is the closest proxy to studying internal sensemaking. To bolster the usefulness of my findings, I developed detailed descriptions of the organizational processes I was studying so that others might be able to determine the applicability of the research findings to other development programs.³⁰

3.7.2. Initial Grounding and Key Limitations Encountered in the Field

I arrived in Cambodia with well thought out guidelines for how I would define my researcher role, evaluate my own ethics, and establish my own trustworthiness with my research participants. I chose to limit the study to one program environment in order to maintain a high-quality research process. I selected an organization that had extensive exposure to external evaluators so that I minimized staff discomfort with participation in the research. To minimally disrupt agency operations, I limited observations to the most relevant. Establishing a rapport with participants during the data collection phase, I was privileged to find myself privy to politically sensitive information, critical conversations around the challenges of program operations, and treatment as an “insider” during informal chats outside of the formal work setting. I believe such access revealed a successful relational engagement with participants. I still faced challenges in my fieldwork that were not always easily navigated.

Limitations in the field fell into three areas: a) access to data; b) my status as a foreign researcher; and c) Cambodian socio-cultural orientations. Challenges due to the limited access to data included the gate-keeping nature of the UN and multilateral donor hierarchies, the parameters of NYU Ethics Committee regulations,³¹ and inclimate weather during the rainy season that made travel to some remote provinces unreasonably difficult. Challenges related to being a researcher in a foreign culture included the fact that although the majority of the interviewees spoke proficient English (or I employed a translator), language barriers still limited the interactions and the quality of responses at times. The complexity of the Khmer language (e.g. many words for one concept, limited verb tenses and connecting words) and associated thought processes also meant some constructs were lost in translation into English.

A number of limitations related to Cambodian cultural orientations were also evidenced. Some individuals were distrustful of the interview process since I was an “outsider.” This meant that I was unable to adequately explore some of the more sensitive issues related to participatory development (e.g. orientations towards gender policies, relationships and personal histories related to the Khmer Rouge period, etc.). As well, it was sometimes difficult to engage managers in a free sharing of their own perspectives on formal organizational policies and processes, although many were able to restate such policies almost verbatim to the written mandate. It was therefore difficult to ascertain the degree to which negative experiences related to implementing participatory development were also excluded from the interviews. As my understanding of Cambodian culture grew, I was increasingly aware of the limitations of what I was able to access in a relatively short period of study. While I did extend my stay considerably, I also recognized that I would have to live in Cambodia for many years to develop the skills necessary to completely negotiate the culture. Thus, I continually checked my perceptions with others, including everyday Cambodians, Cambodian researchers, and international researchers with long engagements in Cambodian studies.³²

3.7.3. Ensuring High-Quality Policy Research on Human Beings in International Settings

I used Golden-Biddle and Locke’s (1993) “authenticity, plausibility, and criticality” framework as an overarching guide for assessing the trustworthiness (Guba 1981; Lincoln & Guba 1985; Guba & Lincoln 1994) of the data obtained during the course of the study. Golden-Biddle and Locke define authenticity as the

ability of a researcher to transport the reader vicariously to the research context, convincing the reader that the researcher has been in the field (ibid., 149). Piantanida and Garman (1999) define authenticity as evidence of movement “from narrow and superficial understanding to deeper, richer conceptualizations” (ibid., 148). Authenticity is thus conveyed through the researchers’ depth of inquiry as represented by the procedures and accounting of reactions related to data collection and analysis³³ (ibid., 149). Plausibility refers to the face validity of the findings – whether the conclusions seem reasonable and understandable. Yet, at the same time, a high quality study challenges the reader to think deeply, question status quo, and examine their own assumptions about the subject or setting under study.³⁴

Establishing quality and trustworthiness in relational research entails providing a clear logic to the research and analysis process, defining a clear ethical orientation, and establishing tools for ensuring sensitivity and objectivity towards the research subjects and material throughout the data collection and analysis phases. Narrative inquiry provides a set of quality indicators for such research. It holds as its standard the “creation of a new sense of meaning and significance with respect to the research topic, less so to yield a set of knowledge claims that might incrementally add to knowledge in the field” (Clandinin & Connelly 2000, 42). Narrative studies are thus judged by whether, when read by others, they “provide vicarious testing of life possibilities by readers” (ibid., 42).

My ethical orientation to my research subject and participants was a foundational component of my research (as described in the Philosophical Groundings section above). I continued to battle a need to stay close to my research participants as I engaged highly relational methodologies (participant observation, in-depth interviews, and ethnographic hanging out), but also maintain objectivity in my processing of the data. To maintain a heightened sensitivity to my research participants’ experience, as well as my own, I engaged in an extended first person inquiry, which I describe below.

3.7.4. First Person Practices to Ensure Objectivity and Sensitivity

Studying social interactions between human beings, relocating to a foreign country, and embedding myself within an organizational culture required special attention to my role as an instrument in the analysis. I wanted to serve as a reliable conduit for reporting Cambodian managers’ lived experience. This required a great humility, openness to their vastly different life experiences, and a willingness to navigate my own acculturation process in the midst of the research. As an American researcher studying a policy environment in an international context, I had to ensure my ability to identify differences between my cultural view and the perceptions of Cambodians. I studied the political history of Cambodia, as well as personal histories of Khmer refugees. Formally, I extended my fieldwork to almost one year as I realized the analytic challenges I was facing as a Western researcher in an organizational environment in Southeast Asia. I later returned to Cambodia to live for an additional two years during the write-up of the study.

I engaged first person inquiry practices, which have evolved within the Action Research tradition, to assist me in maintaining vigilance of my inner world, in order to avoid projecting preconceived interpretations and biases onto the research topic (Marshall 1999, 2001). Paradoxically, although my Westerner status created a range of expected analytic challenges, it also presented a lens where I was able to more deeply consider routine interactions that individuals embedded in their own culture might take for granted. To facilitate this reflection, I had to regularly “step out” of my fieldwork and consider how my Western lenses were influencing my ability to observe and interpret Cambodian organizational life. I used first person, or ‘I’ research to do this. First person research is self-engaged reflection, which contrasts second person research, which is defined as “the ways two or more persons interact face-to-face, verbally and non-verbally” (Chandler & Torbert 2003, 142).

I selected five reflective activities to support systematic reflection of my field experience. First, I kept a brief running log of my daily activities. Secondly, I maintained written notes of all research activities, from library research, to observations, to interviews. Thirdly, I wrote up more structured post-interview and observation memos, as well as wrote reflective personal memos around particularly powerful interactions or challenging issues. Fourth, I maintained a record of all of my email correspondences to friends and close colleagues, which represents some of my most intimate personal processing. This included a 'mutual first person virtual inquiry process' (e.g. two first-person inquirers supporting their individual first-person processes via email) that operated in tandem with the data collection phase (Porter & Knowles, *unpublished* 2004). Fifth, I maintained a "free flow" personal journal, which served as a critical outlet for my acculturation experiences around the more challenging aspects of my fieldwork and living experiences in Cambodia.

3.8. Conclusion

Qualitative, interpretivist research is emerging as an increasingly accepted type of inquiry, primarily because of the care recent researchers have taken in documenting their research process. These efforts have uncovered often hidden, but important challenges around maintaining objectivity in relational research. Researchers have also explicitly highlighted their assumptions and personal biases, which intermingle with their research to ensure their credibility, paralleling more traditional constructs of reliability and validity. Following the qualitative tradition, I have explained the rationale behind the interweaving of several cultures of inquiry into my research process, paying particular attention to defining social constructionist (SC) principles driving this research, which make the study of collective managerial sensemaking possible. This chapter has thus spent considerable space describing my explorations of the "backstage" of my research process.

From this overview of methods, the study now turns to a review of empirical findings, presenting five socio-cognitive environments. Chapters 4, 5, and 6 present some of the challenges to the sensemaking environment more immediately surrounding the Seila program – the cognitive dissonance experienced by individual local sensemakers as a result of their historical and cultural understandings of citizen participation. Organizational obstacles existing in both traditional Cambodian and donor environments which appear to have challenged the successful implementation of participatory development are also highlighted. Chapters 7 and 8 highlight ways that the micro-programmatic environment supported SPPAs to overcome cognitive challenges that the vast majority of their fellow citizens have not been able to overcome.

¹¹ The lack of theory associated with administrative culture in Cambodia obliges an iterative, theory-generating design.

¹² The number of steps in the process has fluctuated over the years.

¹³ The program's structure demonstrates a tangible commitment to Cambodian participation in, and ownership of, their own development course. As an example, the program is, in principle, designed to be overseen by Seila government officials, with the UN-funded advisement team operating under Cambodian supervision.

¹⁴ See Annex 3.1: *Interview Sample Rationale: Carere Pilot Provinces, Seila Additions* for details.

¹⁵ Missing demographic data is a function of a conscious choice not to overly-press interviewees about details of their work, education, and refugee experiences since many interviewees expressed a high level of discomfort when describing their personal and work histories.

¹⁶ The label of ‘advisor’ in the SPPA title, as well as in that of national-level executives, appears to have been chosen to enhance a sense of empowerment of government officials. Much of the work that SPPAs do would be considered to fall within the role of a mid-level manager, including the management of provincial-level technical advisors and support staff.

¹⁷ These positions are charged with operations, oversight of SPPAs, and monitoring and evaluation functions. At the time of the study, one Cambodian and two international advisors occupied these positions.

¹⁸ Documents sampled were limited to English-language documents although at the time of the study, the majority of program documents were produced in English language before being translated to Khmer so this was not a significant limitation.

¹⁹ See Annex 3.2: *Document Sample*.

²⁰ See bibliography for documentation of all sources.

²¹ See Annex 3.4: *Relevant National Legislation*.

²² A description of the fourteen formal observation experiences is included as Annex 3.5.

²³ It should be noted that several UNCDF managers mentioned that my proposed research topic had generated discussion of the need for assessment of the participatory development agenda as it now stands.

²⁴ I am particularly indebted to Kim Sedara’s review of this material to assess the accuracy of my translation and interpretations.

²⁵ This information was further verified in informal discussions with several Cambodians who lived before and through the Khmer Rouge period. I am particularly indebted to Kim Sedara and Pich Sophal’s review of this material to assess the accuracy of my translation and interpretations.

²⁶ Confidentiality agreements are on file.

²⁷ An example of the power of grounded theory in my research process is illuminated through my efforts to validate the notion of *pre-engagement schema*. Interviewees were typically unable to reconstruct past work experiences, making it difficult to operationalize this concept. I had to take a step back and question whether this was due to a misapplication of theory, a limitation in research design, or a variable that required deeper consideration. I used grounded theory techniques to examine responses related to past work experiences and then informally ask questions of everyday Cambodians to test out ideas. Through several cycles of this process, examining the data more closely, I was able to identify that the unwillingness or inability of interviewees to access information related to their past was most likely due to a combination of a cultural inclination to live “presently” and a tendency to block out the Khmer Rouge and civil war periods.

²⁸ Axial coding is a process by which concepts are reassembled into related categories and subcategories to create statements about the nature of their relationship, enabling systematic specification of hypotheses and propositions about how phenomena might be related, which is expected to result in the development of theory (Strauss & Corbin 1998).

²⁹ See Annex 3.3 for additional details related to document analysis procedures.

³⁰ These are available by request to: jenknow@gmail.com.

³¹ For example, I was not allowed to observe certain community processes without signed consent forms. However, this was not congruent with the Cambodian culture at the time of the study, as many communities were distrustful of outsiders and being required to sign an official document would have, in my estimation, created an unacceptable degree of discomfort.

³² I also presented my preliminary findings to several Cambodian audiences, including a university-sponsored research conference through the Royal University of Phnom Penh (RUPP).

³³ Such procedures also include engaging in deliberative discourse with one’s dissertation advisor and committee members throughout the course of the study.

³⁴ A useful paradox thus lies in this process, as the more the author’s conclusions challenges the reader’s reality, the more compelling is the learning that occurs if the persuasion succeeds (Brower et al. 2000, 381).

Chapter 4

Navigating Multiple and Complex Sensemaking Environments: Historical Influences on Local Understandings of Participatory Development

Contemporary versions of the international participatory development mandate currently coalesce around rights-based, democratic development where empowered stakeholders are actively involved in decision-making related to resource procurement and management. Participation in development initiatives is also seen as a learning tool to shift citizens' understandings of their rights, roles, and responsibilities and for enhancing service delivery quality. However, as one OECD document points out, there are still challenges to dealing with the socio-cognitive dimensions of implementing participatory approaches: "Translating participation objectives into reality calls for changes in attitudes and practices concerning the way activities are conceived, designed, financed, and timed" (ibid., 9).

Local donor interpretations and efforts to make this translation however, encounter Cambodian understandings of the notions of citizen participation and participatory development. These are deeply influenced by cultural and historical developments that must be taken into consideration for mandate implementation. The stark contrast of donor understandings of participatory development against the reality of the Cambodian psyche over the past century will offer evidence of the conditions that have resulted in Cambodians' experience of cognitive dissonance as they come into contact with the idealistic notions of democratic development embedded in donor programming.

The political, historical, and cultural influences on SPPAs' participatory schemas represent what I label as *pre-engagement schemas* in this study's conceptual model. Documenting it thoroughly is the first step to understand how SPPAs make sense of the participatory mandate. This chapter describes generalized schemas of *participation* (Khmer root word: *Chol-Ruom*)¹ as they have evolved through eight distinct historical phases in the life of the country²: a) Pre-Cambodian independence (pre-1953), b) the Sihanouk era (1953-1970), c) Lon Nol's coup and rule (1970-1975), d) the Khmer Rouge period (1975-1979), e) the Vietnamese occupation (1979-1989), f) the refugee camp experience (1979-1999), g) the UNTAC oversight period (1989-1993), and h) the first national elections (1992-1993).³ Material is interwoven from interviews, email survey responses, and historical accounts of the country's past half century.

The schemas developing from Cambodia's traumatic history inform the multiple and competing understandings of participatory development which exist today in the Cambodian development arena. This chapter and the next together reconstruct the two most influential macro-level socio-cognitive environments operating at the local level - Cambodian historical and cultural orientations, respectively. Together, they offer a view of the macro-level policy environment that color the emerging local understandings of the Senior Provincial Program Advisors charged with the implementation of the participatory mandate at the provincial level.

4.1. Evolution of Understandings of Participation (Chol-Ruom) in Cambodia

Citizen participation is far from a historical reality or an intuitive principle in the minds of Cambodians. Since 1950, the Cambodian people have lived through two monarchies; a series of military struggles for control of the national government; a secret bombing campaign by the United States; genocide and mass starvation at the hands of the Khmer Rouge; Communist Vietnamese occupation; a protracted civil war; displacement of hundreds of thousands of Cambodians (both abroad and internally); the destruction and rebuilding of the nation's physical, social, educational, and political foundations; and in the past decade, a transition to a democratic system of governance. Each of these experiences has influenced Cambodian sensemaking of citizen participation.

4.1.1. 'To Enter in Togetherness': Pre-Independence Conceptions of Participation (Pre-1953)

For centuries, Cambodia has been primarily a peasant agricultural society characterized by a generally complacent rural population of subsistence rice farmers (*Neak-Srei*) living in villages composed of small extended family and kin units. The main building blocks of Khmer peasant village relationships have been, and still are, social networks which are based on kinship affiliation, patronage (Ebihara 1968, 186) and continuity of residence at the local level (Boyden & Gibbs 1997, 101). According to Boyden and Gibbs' research, "an elaborate if informal, leadership network at the local level in Cambodia [existed], based largely on religious authority, seniority in age, family prominence, healing powers or other civic skills" (Boyden & Gibbs 1997, 101). The word participation (*Chol-Ruom*) in that period was most likely akin to a notion of *community togetherness* or *solidarity*. *Chol* is defined as "to enter, such as into a room, house, or a meeting" and *Ruom* expresses a sense of "togetherness, uniting, joining, or sharing."⁴

The patron-client relationship has dominated and continues to dominate Cambodian economic and social life. The social hierarchy embedded in Buddhist beliefs related to karma and virtue means that solidarity is also embedded in notions of reciprocity (Ebihara 1968; Kim 2001). Scott describes "the norm of reciprocity" as embedded in "the normative order of the village, [which] imposes certain standards of performance on its better-off members" (1977, 26-27) and "provides a set of moral expectations which applies to their exchanges with other villagers" (Scott 1977, 27).⁵ Although village hierarchy and social rules were clear, Boyden and Gibbs' work on psychological impacts of the Cambodian conflict document that notions of community were historically weak, even before the outbreak of conflict. They describe collaboration among community members as informal and opportunistic, with reciprocity deeply embedded in self-interest on both sides of the equation (Boyden & Gibbs 1997, 101). The status of being connected to a powerful patron brings a degree of emotional stability to the poor (Ebihara 1966). These patron-client relationships are still very strong.

Scott (1977) describes these relationships as formed through a "legitimacy of dependence" (ibid., 24). In other words, people must decide if they see their dependence as "collaborative and legitimate or as primarily exploitative" (ibid., 24-25). This is calculated by what a recipient must give in relation to what he or she receives. Anyone outside of such "interlocking pyramids" (Scott 1972; Kaufman 1974) is viewed with great suspicion (Heder & Ledgerwood 1996). Such patron-client orientations mixed with notions of "saving face" result in a zero-sum view of power which exacerbates a sense of distrust, fear, and uncertainty in public transactions, be they political or economic.

National politics have always been the domain of the powerful (Pak et al. 2006), with local village unit's typically falling under the control of smaller princedoms in ancient times (Chandler 2000, 26). "The majority of Cambodians [have existed as] parochial subjects who consider political participation an alien concept" (Kim & Un, n.d., 2). As the realm of the powerful, "politics are outside the realm of ordinary folk" (ibid., 2). Cambodian rulers enforced (and continue to enforce) this "submissive culture" (Martin 1994), treating

political spheres as their personal domain and an uncontested space (Chandler 1996). Thus, in the pre-colonial period, the rural population remained complacent, ruled by traditional local authorities and a distant, 'benevolent monarchy' (Ebihara et al. 1994) operating from Phnom Penh which was supported by a merchant class comprised largely of Chinese descendants.

The French's imposed bureaucratic system of the late 1960s melded with traditional Cambodian patron-client orientations, resulting in a neo-patrimonial administrative environment. In the process, the French administrators degraded the status of the monarchy from a once all-pervasive source of power to a puppet role (Chandler 2000, 144). The French also created authority structures at the communal level in their attempt to administer the country – the first effort to decentralize authority to the local level - a level of governance which was foreign to Cambodians but common in Vietnam, France's other major territory (Chandler 2000, 145).⁶

One SPPA interviewee describes how history influences current participatory meeting practices: "We have hundreds of years [of] a kind of feudalism, where the bosses, the upper class used to be the people who have the orders and the other classes do what they are told to do" (5, 512:531).⁷ Intricate patron-client networks were maintained by the French as they colonized the region. Structurally, the general Cambodian population was positioned within the political culture in such a manner as to be discouraged from proactive engagement with authorities. Such structuration reverberates into current democratic, participatory practices. As one SPPA explains: "The training, planning process is new to leaders in Cambodia. They never have this kind of managing before now...because we have France colonization for one hundred years. Everyone always wanted to have guideline, wanted to be told what to do. People not really active, more passive. Scared." (5, 512:531). As another Cambodian elaborates, "the Indianized dictatorship, the French dictatorship, and the Communist dictatorship" have created "an uphill task to remove the remnants of the layers of these dictatorships" (Boyden & Gibbs 1997, 105).

4.1.2. 'Community Solidarity, Togetherness': The Sihanouk Period (1953- 1970)

Cambodia won limited independence from France in November of 1953. From 1952-1955, Norodom Sihanouk, the French's appointed monarch, exercised direct rule. During this period, he dissolved his Cabinet and National Assembly, suspended the constitution, assumed control of the government as prime minister, and proclaimed martial law. This set the stage for decades of ongoing manipulation of the political system by a variety of actors.

The 1950s and 1960s were generally perceived by Cambodians as an era of development and prosperity. Social interactions were driven in large part by a desire to maintain a sense of community-level *cooperation or collaboration (Sa-Ha-Ka-Knea)* on the heels of independence - which was the closest term in the Cambodian vernacular to community participation at the time (Confidential email survey respondent 2005). Although no first-hand documentation exists of conceptions of participation in this period, Cambodian descriptions of this period reveal this sense: "Many of the village traditions showed an extraordinary degree of trust even where people were not close friends. Our families had lived together for generations and imagined always living together; there seemed to be nowhere else to go" (Nee 1999, 16). In keeping with this cooperative spirit, "there was a wide variety of *provas*, the loaning of belongings and labor. One family would exchange what they could spare for something else that they needed" (Nee 1999, 17).

Geographical roots created a sense of solidarity (*Sa-Maki-Pheap*) which prompted collective participation in projects of benefit to the greater community, such as planting rice or building a road (Confidential email survey respondent 2005). One SPPA who lived through this period invokes a tree root metaphor to explain the contrast in interpretations between historical and current participatory practices: "The community, it means that it's led or managed by the people, and [it] also mean[s] that they work

together, they love each other, they know each other - something like that. In Khmer, we call it '[to] have the roots of the people.' Generation to generation" (12, 1213: 1261). He goes on to describe community participation in the 1960s as a highly organic process: "We never had a kind of organization [that] comes to build a road for people...The people themselves do the work by themselves...It's free you see. It's from the heart." (12, 1193:1261).⁸

In contrast, another SPPA describes community development efforts under the period of the Sihanouk monarchy as highly participatory experiences, but particularly for the poor, who contributed the majority of the labor:

It seems like full participation because when we build up the road, or we build up some infrastructure work, there [were] always people contributing...If the project site is close to the people's village, most of the people participate and help each other to construct that road. But if the road is far away from the village, the poor people still go and work and then the rich people pay the money to the poor to work for their profits. (14, 368:401)

De facto decentralization occurred in rural Cambodia, as there was little community interaction with the government beyond paying taxes. The government provided little to communities and in return, communities didn't expect much, so community development was a localized experience.⁹

Three levels of grassroots organizations or self-help groups formed the basis of community participation: the pagoda level, (which could include a constituency of parishioners from several villages), the village level, and a sub-village level (comprised of several families).¹⁰ Community-oriented activities traditionally originated from Wat Pagoda Committees (also described as Monk Associations) (14, 368:401), which before 1975 had administrative committees made up of priests, monks, Buddhist disciples, and older men subject to the congregation as members and leaders (Kim et al. 1997, 5). Such a process was participatory in the sense that they were supported by community funds, since the government was unable to support such development) and typically involved community members' labor¹¹ (ibid., 6). Often, activities were "relief-oriented" (interview 30) but "had an important function in the work of developing Cambodian society, such as building schools, hospitals, bridges, sidewalks, digging wells and ponds" (Kim et al. 1997, 6).

Collins describes informal mutual-help groups as the most influential and significant grassroots organization in Cambodia¹² (Collins 1998, 14). Cow exchange, labor exchange, emergency help, pond digging, pots and dishes exchange, and cooking groups are what "knit the households of Cambodian rural society together in a complex web of shared values, reciprocal assistance and recognition and community participation for a common good" (Collins 1998, 30). He proposes that the relationship between the Wats and villagers played an important role in village-level democratic processes: "...a profound commitment to Buddhist values in Cambodian villages provides the discourse in which appeals for support can be made and understood" (Collins 1998, 27).

Recently, debate has revolved around the participatory nature of such groups. Returning to considerations of dependency and reciprocity, Kim proposes that self-interest in economic well-being are at the root of social transactions (*informal conversation*, October 10, 2006), which is supported as well by Ebihara's studies of a Cambodian village Ebihara 1968, Ebihara et al. 1994). Grunewald (1990) also points out that around 1955, a clear deterioration in production conditions occurred at the same time as the rural economy became increasingly monetized. Both phenomena resulted in a process of social acceleration which Grunewald attaches to the accumulation of small herds of oxen for some lucky villagers. He explains that such asset accumulation resulted in "mutual aid" opportunities where villagers "could make more profitable use of larger land areas, employ seasonal workers at the busiest times, and lend draft animals to peasants on the following terms: 'I lend you my oxen for one day, and you transplant rice seedlings or harvest two days for me'" (Grunewald 1990). Grunewald points out that such arrangements, which might be labeled 'mutual aid'

by some, were in fact based on unequal exchanges of human for animal labor to the benefit of the better off participant (ibid.).

4.1.3. Sliding into Darkness: Lon Nol's Coup and the First Khmer Republic (1970-1975)

By the mid-to-late 1960s, the U.S. Army would drop over one hundred thousand bombs on Cambodian soil in response to the U.S.-Vietnam War (Gillison 2006). This marked a new era of ongoing political interference by a range of Cold War actors. This created greater social friction and enhanced a growing sense of powerlessness and victimization in the minds of the Cambodian people. By 1968, the Khmer Rouge had launched a national insurgency, as political tensions rose against Sihanouk. In March, 1970, Sihanouk was deposed by General Lon Nol, and consequently, Sihanouk realigned with the communist Khmer Rouge rebels. With the suspension of U.S. aid to Cambodia in 1973, the Khmer Rouge's influence furthered, culminating in their capture of Phnom Penh on April 17, 1975. Their rule would dramatically undermine the country's development and alter Cambodians' perceptions of their country and self for decades to come.

The Lon Nol period created a great amount of confusion for everyday Cambodians as national allegiances rapidly shifted and interference by outside forces escalated. An increasing sense of insecurity was rising in the rural population as a result of the guerilla war being waged in the countryside. As well, the Vietnamese were encroaching on the Eastern regions of Cambodia and introducing Communist ideology. Rural Cambodians came to be trapped between opposing forces, required to pledge allegiance to each, or suffer dire consequences. To avoid trouble, a village might move arms for the government during the day and then do the same for the Vietnamese forces in the evening. When the Khmer Rouge arrived, they also demanded similar expressions of loyalty and support. As a result, villagers must have felt powerless to manage their own security, let alone engage in community development or governance activities. Such activities foreshadowed the devastation to come once the Khmer Rouge took over the country.

4.1.4. 'Forced Togetherness, Sharing, Putting Together': The Khmer Rouge Period (1975-79)

O Solidarity Group, working in unison, happy and self-assured! Dry-season rice, wet-season rice, light and heavy varieties of rice: our husbandry is successful everywhere. O Solidarity Group, you are the new kind of family, special, beautiful, and unique. Our happiness is enormous, and we struggle to expand and solidify it even more. (*quoted in* Gottesman 2004, 90 *referencing* Kiernan & Boua 1982, 326-327)¹³

April 17, 1975 was a defining moment in Cambodian history. Still referred to by the Khmer Rouge (KR) designation, 'Year Zero,' this is the day the Khmer Rouge began a forced eviction of all inhabitants (whether through mass exodus or execution) from Phnom Penh. This moment has served as a stark cognitive dividing line for Cambodians as they make sense of their country's dynamic political trajectory. By 1979, one to three million people had died through execution or starvation, depending on various counts.¹⁴ The Khmer Rouge undertook a nation-wide social reengineering project which was to transform Cambodia into a 'cleansed' agrarian, peasant-controlled society. During this period, every aspect of the population's behavior was regulated as part of the Khmer Rouge's psychological programming, focused on creating a compliant population. This process created a sense that "danger was everywhere, nameless, faceless, and ever-present" (Bit 1991, 82), which resulted in "almost total paralysis engendered by fear and terror" (ibid., 81). These events greatly influenced Cambodians' understanding of their political culture, as well as of community participation.

Meas Nee's book, *Towards Restoring a Life: Cambodian Villages*, further illustrates the impact the Khmer Rouge had on the Khmer psyche. Although Cambodian citizens exhibited a lack of allegiance to the various political factions that emerged in the late 1960s and early 1970s, trust within villages and kinship groups was

still quite high (Ebihara 1968). However, with the arrival of the Khmer Rouge destruction of trust was “almost total” (Nee 1999, 20) Meas Nee explains how because “the Khmer Rouge recruited people to spy on one another, in the place of trust was a terrible fear of being betrayed” (ibid., 20). He explains how, “a friend would be asked to spy on a friend, and the next day the second of the partnership would be asked to spy on the first” (ibid., 21). Bonds of cooperation within communities disintegrated:

As trust was broken we reached a time when we could think only of ourselves and our great needs; the dignity and pride in our identity, formerly an important part of our lives, entirely disappeared....Our life had narrowed, narrowed, narrowed to think only of survival. In those hungry Khmer Rouge days we sat in endless meetings to be lectured and criticized and betrayed but all that could occupy our minds was to think where our next food could be found. Self reliance, hope for the future, and dignity, were drained away. (Nee 1999, 23)

Nee goes on to explain the impact on the Cambodian psyche, “In war and in the Pol Pot time people became the equipment of the organization, they could be used like animals, like machinery. It was as if they were not human. The fact that they were hungry or tired or grieving meant nothing to those who controlled their lives” (Nee 1999, 24). Zucker’s research supports the notion that “in the aftermath of Pol Pot, Cambodian communities were left atomized with few or no social or moral bonds between members outside of the nuclear family” (2006, 528).

Boyden and Gibbs’ research on the psycho-social effects of this period describe a period of widespread social engineering and cultural reconstruction, including the elimination of existing religious beliefs and social customs (1997, 115), and a requirement of unquestioning loyalty to the militarized state. “Violence and corporal punishment became the norm” (ibid., 103). As a result, one SPPA interviewee¹⁵ describes the lack of ‘authenticity’ of the Khmer Rouge notion of participation in this period: “...talking about the Pol Pot [time], there is no participation. Everything is on the top of Khmer Rouge...Hundred percent is no. The people work together, but by force. This is not participation. Participation is from heart and mind. It’s not like what they did” (12, 1213:1261).

Participation took on particularly negative connotations when uttered by Khmer Rouge leadership. *Chol-Ruom-Chea-Muoy-Ang-Ka* most directly translates into English as ‘participate with the Khmer Rouge leadership’ (e.g. *Ang-Ka* translates as ‘organization’). Participation under their tutelage entailed the whole of the able-bodied population being rounded up into mobile work force units and sent to the fields to work in agricultural communes and live in labor camps. The urban population was known as the “New People” and was considered most dangerous to the regime’s vision of turning Cambodia into a rural, classless society. Mobile units of young teenagers were considered ‘salvageable’ ideologically as well as strong workers, so were removed from their parents to ensure the purity of their ‘education’ (Grunewald 1990). The whole population was overworked and starved in an effort to meet the Khmer Rouge goal of producing three tons of rice per hectare.

As one SPPA interviewee reflected on his teenage years during the Khmer Rouge period, he explained how *Ruom* transformed from a sense of togetherness, uniting, joining, or sharing to a sense of force: “*Ruom* was used in my village and all over the country. For the people, Khmer Rouge (*Ang-Ka*) was forcing them to do what they are not willing to do” (Confidential email survey respondent 2005). Another survivor explains that to survive in this time meant “to keep a low profile by feigning ignorance...: ‘There is a Cambodian saying learned in Pol Pot times: ‘plant the Kapok tree.’ It is a play on the words, *Dem-Kor*. The allusion is to a deaf mute. The meaning is that you will get further if you pretend to know nothing, hear nothing, say nothing” (Nee & Healy 1995, 30 as quoted in Boyden and Gibbs). According to Mollica, “The Khmer learned to obey orders without asking questions or complaining.¹⁶ If they appeared to be ‘smart’, they knew they would be tortured or executed” (Mollica et al., n.d., 96).

Another term, *Dakk-Ruom*, provides a similar example of the manipulation of the notion of community participation in this period. *Dakk-Ruom* means to 'put together' but as used by the Khmer Rouge, it referred to forced sharing with others. This forced sharing might be of space, food, materials, Khmer Rouge philosophy, or even participating in an arranged marriage by and for the good of the regime. A particularly frequently used term was *Bay-Ruom*, which translated as *having a meal together in a common canteen*. This sharing required all cooking utensils confiscated from households, meals served together in a common location, and monitoring of meal rations. Sneaking or growing food could be punishable by death. One SPPA interviewee explains the effect of such forced participation: "I learn[ed] that people are, especially after the Khmer Rouge, focus[ed] on their own interest, [they] don't care about the other. During the Pol Pot time, people try to have their food to feed their own need. So [it] start[s] from then, lost community participation, a loss [of] social sense and public interest...so the war not only destroy[ed] physical infrastructure, but destroy[ed] the mentality of the people" (22, 1248:1261).

Interviewee responses exhibit the reality for Cambodians, which is that participatory ideals and actual participation can be quite different notions, heavily influenced by context. As one SPPA interviewee explains the difference in the historical transformation of the word, "Participatory decision making, if you translate, not very well, is like Pol Pot regime word. They say 'we have to be a collective'" (18, 565:567). Another interviewee expresses the problems with using the same terminology as the Pol Pot era: "So we have a lot of concerns to get this misunderstanding of this new approach, people coming to do 'participatory decision making,' not 'collective decision making'...If you understand Khmer, the new Khmer terminology employed or translated, under this new participatory [approach] is trying to be different to what Pol Pot used. In conversation, it creates a lot of problems: 'Why you use this word again? It's too bad.' But in fact, many things are the same" (18, 568:584). Another SPPA interviewee, reflecting on the Khmer Rouge period, makes a poignant point by referencing the fact that the Khmer Rouge (KR), like the donors, thought they were doing the right thing:

People who worked for the Khmer Rouge, who actually have position within the KR, they thought their policy [was] made, actually based on local knowledge and all that these people come from very rural, the local people in the beginning join the KR...If you ask these people, they would say that the KR never produced any policy without local knowledge and they think they have very strong support from local people. (5, 1278:1295)

Interview excerpts such as these hint at the outcome of four years of a genocidal reengineering project: a nation paralyzed by fear, victimization, and grief; the almost complete destruction of any community solidarity; and comprehensive distrust of anyone outside of the immediate family unit.

Seanglim Bit's research on the psychological trauma experienced by Cambodian refugees living in America in the 1980s highlights two troubling outcomes of this period that directly relate to collective development efforts. First, the Khmer Rouge experience provided a damaging blow to the collective Cambodian self esteem by leaving the country 'weak and defeated,' which was in direct contrast to a centuries-old national identity of a 'proud and powerful people' (Bit 1991, 84). Individuals and communities were left questioning their capacity for future development. Second, Bit explains that "shared experiences do not necessarily lead to closer relationships" (ibid., 87). In the case of Cambodia, the Khmer Rouge experience fractured the community, leaving residents trapped in suspicion and distrust (ibid., 87).

Boyden and Gibbs explain how attitudes and practices learned as self-protective mechanisms during this period actually resulted in socially dysfunctional activities in times of peace, such as individualistic behavior and a lack of desire to participate in problem solving at the community level (Boyen & Gibbs 1997, 126). One email survey respondent for this study sums up the destruction of community trust as the most damaging outcome of the Khmer Rouge period: "I find the word participation is important as you raise [it] because development work in Cambodia cannot be done without participation from the community or the

people. But another word that always keep[s] people for not participating is the word 'trust building,' as many people have had bad experiences during [the] Pol Pot time. It is very difficult to build trust among people and the development workers" (Confidential email survey respondent 2005). Trust would be further eroded with the arrival of the Vietnamese.

4.1.5. 'New Solidarity' and 'Forced Contributions': The Vietnamese Occupation (1979-1989)

On December 25, 1978, Vietnamese troops invaded the Khmer Rouge's 'Democratic Kampuchea,' renaming the country the People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK), occupying Cambodia until the early 1990s. This period was marked by an extremely complicated struggle for control of Cambodia, both internally and externally. A protracted civil war lasted for more than a decade, displacing hundreds of thousands of Cambodians. At the same time as the Vietnamese ruled, refugee reception centers were established at the Thai border to accommodate the hundreds of thousands of refugees amassing at the border, which would continue for over a decade.¹⁷

The ten year occupation by the Vietnamese has been described as an "intervention [which] realign[ed] the social fabric [of Cambodia], further weaken[ing] social alliances and networks" (Boyden & Gibbs 1997, 101). During the Vietnamese control of Cambodia, *Chol-Ruom* came to be understood as a "contribution of forced labor or fighting forces' or in-kind, food, or cash contributions to Vietnamese and Cambodian civilians, soldiers, and government officials serving on the front line of the battle to extinguish the remaining Khmer Rouge presence" (Confidential email survey respondent 2005). During the Vietnamese military campaign, Cambodians were obliged through state policy to *Chol-Ruom* (participate) in *Kar-Pram* working groups, which were charged with clearing one kilometer of trees on either side of roads throughout the country between 1984-1986. Many people died from accidental land mine detonation, malnutrition, and malaria during these 'participatory' yet actually forced, work excursions (Kim *informal conversation* 2006; Vickery 1993).

As Gottesman observes, "Beneath the ceremony and expressions of solidarity" (Gottesman 2004, 118) were serious tensions between the Cambodian leadership, the Vietnamese, and administrators. Cambodians had expected a "more open and democratic country" with the arrival of the Vietnamese but "instead faced an onslaught of political education" (Nee 1999, 118). Grunewald highlights that the "egalitarian" jargon associated with this period "did nothing but disguise the development of significant inequalities" (Grunewald 1990, 1).

The Vietnamese abolished the government of the Pol Pot regime and replaced it with elected 'people's self-management committees' (*Krum-Samaki*) which were composed of victims of the Pol Pot regime, respected elders, and persons of 'meritorious service to the people' (Kamm 1979). *Krum-Samaki* were cooperatives organized to sell rice to the state, as well as used as a tool to encourage community infrastructure projects. In reality, these groups were micro-level control mechanisms of the Vietnamese-controlled government apparatus, promoting the one party Communist state's ideology. Meas Nee explains that the *Samaki* experiments in the years after 1979 were in large part a failure because of the fear that such communal work schemes engendered in villagers, still scarred by the Pol Pot period. As one refugee explains, "The *Samaki* groups failed in the villages we know because trust and honesty had not been rebuilt. The poor did not yet have confidence in each other. The people were not ready for that word, solidarity. We need to know that in the beginning this word will simply irritate their ears" (Nee 1999, 51-52).

The Vietnamese-organized community-level *Samaki* authorities served more as ceremonial functionaries than as governing units. This lay in contrast to the role of the local level Khmer Rouge leaders who oversaw, reported on, and exacted punishment against all village-level activities in the late 1970s (22, 957:965). Although community participation could be interpreted as more authentic than during the Khmer Rouge period, the Vietnamese control of such processes meant that true expressions of community

participation were still limited. One important foundation for future participatory development was laid in this period, though, namely the local authority structures put in place in 1979 by the Vietnamese,¹⁸ which eventually transformed into the Village Development Committees (VDCs) that became an integral component of the Seila program (Collins 1998, 13).¹⁹

Politically, the Vietnamese administrative period was one of ongoing struggle for control of Cambodia, with allegiances continually shifting (Berdal & Leifer 1996). Great levels of suspicion continued across the country. 'Participation' was synonymous with 'allegiance' for Vietnamese administrators. Citizens were expected to 'participate' in support of the Vietnamese leadership in a similar fashion to the 'forced participation' required by the Khmer Rouge, although such conceptions were transformed overnight into action *against* the Khmer Rouge (Confidential email survey respondent 2005). One SPPA interviewee explained how such radical shifts in meaning had a long-lasting effect on community attitudes towards governance, as well as confusing current understandings of participation (18, 543:550).

Several excerpts illuminate local perceptions. One SPPA interviewee explains, "Communists have their own level of participation from the people. They always try and influence us" (7, 1052:1056). Another describes the fear imposed by this system:

We pass a lot of bad time that makes the people...try not to react very much, don't try to find out if good or not, and don't really trust the leader, so I think the [participation] value is hard. People in this society are very confused by the past - the Khmer Rouge time and the Vietnamese socialist time. People get in the habit of doing what they are told to do if others are more powerful. And if you don't like to do, or try to react, [you] have to, well, assess the situation. Sometimes it is dangerous to object. (7, 866:885)

At the same time as the Vietnamese were engaged in reshaping Cambodia into their Communist vision, opposition was growing to their administration of Cambodia by various Cold War actors. The first donors and peacekeeping forces arrived as the Vietnamese withdrew and the first vision of developing a free, open, democratic, and participatory society arrived. Cambodians would experience another significant cognitive shift in their conceptualization of participation, this time as beneficiaries of development projects.

4.2. The International Socio-Cognitive Environments Make their Mark: Donor Ideals and Cambodian Realities Meet in the Early 1990s

Donors began their first significant engagement in Cambodia's democratic development in three waves, each having a significant impact on Cambodian understandings of their own participation in development: a) through emergency humanitarian assistance to the border refugee camps between the late 1970s and 1990s, b) with the arrival of the UNTAC forces in late 1991, and c) in preparation for the first national elections that were held in April of 1993. As the following section and chapters will highlight, broad donor ideals were overlaid onto the Cambodian environment, often diverging significantly from Cambodians' present reality, historical experiences, and deepest cultural value orientations. Cambodian and donor perspectives on these three periods are presented below to further juxtapose the different perspectives with which these two groups of actors were viewing the development process. The obvious contrast in perspectives between these two groups makes the Carere/Seila program success in the following periods that much more of an interesting phenomenon worth understanding.

The Carere project officially came online in 1992, amid what was one of the most complex and volatile periods in Cambodia's history. Large numbers of Cambodian refugees were beginning to return to the country amongst considerable ongoing political and military infighting. The country was almost completely devoid of physical infrastructure, a functioning government, or adequate resources to support the refugee

population. Most Cambodian's day to day realities lie in stark contrast to the rhetoric and programming initiatives of the period. Traumatized refugees were wholly focused on individual and immediate survival activities, engaging in donor-funded projects out of necessity, not because of buy-in to democratic principles or an inherent desire to engage in collective development activities in service to rebuilding communities.

4.2.1. 'Powerlessness and Degradation': The Refugee Camp and Resettlement Experience (1979-1999)

In September 1976, Ban Thai Samart Camp (also known as the Aranyaprathet Camp 15) opened as the first refugee camp to accommodate the Khmers who had been amassing at the Thai border since mid-1975 (Thai/Cambodia Border Refugee Camps website 2006). The 1980s saw the largest exodus of refugees and buildup of refugee camps on the Thai border,²⁰ with estimates of somewhere between three hundred thousand to six hundred thousand refugees gathering at the border by 1979. In 1991, 325,805 refugees were living in six refugee camps controlled by various Cambodian factions,²¹ with 15,236 refugees living within the only UNHCR-supervised camp, Khao I Dang.²²

The refugee camps were cramped, constantly under-supplied and often under the threat of violence by nighttime bandits and incursions from a variety of political factions attempting to control the camps. Yet, perhaps the greatest challenge was to the spirit of the Cambodian refugees as they lived for years in such conditions. One refugee describes how a sense of community did eventually form in the camps, even under such extreme conditions, as Cambodians were able to recognize their shared suffering in the post-Khmer Rouge period. She describes the biggest challenge as "the problem of thinking, of hoping" of the future. She explains that people wanted to talk, to organize, but they could not. People became "nervous, upset" and "frustrated" (OSRSG 1992, 55). Experiences in the refugee camps further exacerbated the lack of trust engendered by the Khmer Rouge, since camps were highly politicized as refugees arrived from all sides of the conflict. Meas Nee's perceptions of this period provide an additional, powerful lens into refugee sensemaking:

This is the refugee experience: eat if you are fed, stop if you are told to stop, move if you are told to move, do not move out of one small allocated area. There is no planning for one's own life. There is total dependence...when they treated me with suspicion, as they often did, I felt no longer human...This message that we were less than human was repeated over and over. I recall from time to time Site 2 was shelled and all foreigners working there were taken out to safety. We were left inside...I ask myself why I felt these degradations even more than in Pol Pot times, and realize that at this time I was emerging from the numbness and beginning to feel. I recoiled from all the added humiliations, but the move back to dignity is long and slow. (Nee 1999, 28-30)

The first international humanitarian assistance assessment mission by the International Committee of the Red Cross and UNICEF representatives arrived inside Cambodian territory in July 1979. Of note is the great movement of people which occurred in this period. At least 186,000 internally displaced people were resettled in this period (OSRSG 1992), many into new communities. As a result, refugees were unable to rely on traditional community bonds based on kinship networks, which further disintegrated traditional norms of trust (Boyden & Gibbs 1997, 102; IPSE 1993). In later years, great tension and resentment would manifest between the Cambodians who stayed in the country and returnees from the refugee camps and abroad.²³

Those working closest to the Western UN relief workers, typically as interpreters, drivers, and assistants, were positioned to facilitate Cambodian sensemaking of the reintegration and re-development process. Such individuals not only served as language interpreters for donor staff, but in the process, were required to translate the development process into Cambodian-accessible frameworks. Many of the more

senior SPPAs began their UN careers in these positions. They became a first significant link between donor's concepts of development, the actual implementation of such ideas, and Cambodian's interpretations.

Examples of this translation process were described by several SPPAs during interviews. One SPPA explains how they translated development efforts in ways that made sense to fellow citizens: "During 1992, it is an emergency phase, so we didn't talk much about the development until later. We discuss[ed] about the peace, the peace process..." (3, 1956:1962). Another elaborates, "during that time it's like that... whatever we're doing, we think peace building, [we're] not thinking of good governance" (3, 2053:2058). Such perceptions of donor efforts as emergency response projects, as well as beneficiaries' ongoing sense of victimization, also made it difficult for returnees to accept ownership over projects in their community. In addition, political tension followed the war-weary refugees back to their resettlement communities in Cambodia, having quite tangible consequences. For example, initial shelters were often repeatedly burned down by both Khmer Rouge and government forces (15, 365:373).

Early donor involvement also confused beneficiary participation. As one SPPA explains: "When we [started] a project, [the community] would say 'It's not our project'" (15, 254:256). He details how this was an easy interpretation of the process since "the donors came [for] emergency relief, and would pick a spot and say, 'Oh, build a school there'" (15, 257:260). The same interviewee goes on to explain the confusion for the beneficiary communities:

The people used to come to meet the foreigner, the organization: 'May I have one school, one work, one pump, [a] drill well?' It's always like this. And the donor come[s] to think the people should plan for themselves and we have to change [the language] from '[we] come to request you for the assistance,' to 'you present the plan.' This is our plan, the village development plan. (15, 263:285)

Another explains how later, as the donors explicitly "turn[ed] the project to development, participation, ownership, accountability, transparency..." a new level of confusion and suspicion was added to the development process: "People say, 'Why? Why are you *Ang-ka*, organization? Before, you come to assist me [for] free...I did not do anything and let's say you give me a rice project from the World Food Program. Free! Other programs [are] free. School is free. Why [do you] now need our participation in terms of labor, in terms of local contribution, in terms of idea? Maybe you are cheating?'" (12, 1278: 1299).

As Chapter 5 will further explore, in the early 1990s, the Cambodian population as a whole was struggling with a debilitating loss of trust at both the societal and individual levels. As Cambodia tentatively moved from civil war to a post-conflict nation at peace, individuals were trapped in patterns of thinking and acting that emphasized taking great caution in relation to public action, especially related to political action. During the same period, refugees were attempting to reintegrate into society, but with a profound sense of victimization and powerlessness following them back to Cambodia. These same refugees were often relocated far from their home communities upon their return and faced significant resentment from those who had stayed in Cambodia (Eastmond 2001, 5-13). As UNTAC forces arrived, ongoing violence and the repeated breaking of cease fires further exacerbated distrust of anyone outside of the immediate family unit (Bit 1991; Boyden & Gibbs 1997), most likely solidifying a sense of need for extreme caution around all public activities to avoid the possibility of retribution by fighting forces.

As later sections of the study will elaborate, restoring trust has been identified by many interviewees and other Cambodian researchers as the most important foundation to succeeding in participatory development initiatives. Nee describes the challenging cognitive position from which Cambodians were operating, emphasizing the need to build trust:

I have met Cambodians working in villages who feel pressure not only from the difficult task of creating relationships in the village but also from balancing the expectations of foreigners

who have set up the objectives of the project. This is a very stressful situation because hurrying projects to meet outside expectations takes away the emphasis of the more important task of restoring the good relationships. When there is trust and dignity in the way that the people relate (to), good projects follow very quickly. (Nee 1999, 55)

Beneficiaries of outside interventions remained generally distrustful of others and crippled by a sense of victimization, both as survivors of the Khmer Rouge regime and as refugees. This mindset resulted in Cambodians choosing to employ a high degree of caution over certain areas of their lives. This has created significant challenges for the creation of a Cambodian-directed development process. Most significantly, Cambodians tended to view Carere as an emergency relief effort controlled by outsiders. Yet, even in the midst of these challenges, the Carere project gained a foothold as an experimental policy model. Many of the Cambodians who joined as project staff began a long-term cognitive transformation towards a more proactive and empowered development mindset through their participation in the program.

4.2.2. Emergency Resettlement and a Tenuous Peace: The Arrival of UNTAC (January 1989-April 1993)

Several rounds of coalition governments and ongoing struggles for power between Prince Sihanouk and Hun Sen marked the mid-1980s to 1990s. The Vietnamese eventually withdrew from Cambodia on September 27, 1989 (Findlay 1995) and the State of Cambodia was born. The United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) maintained oversight of the peacekeeping process and in March 1990, twenty two thousand peacekeeping forces had arrived in the country (Mayall 1996). During this period, a number of peace talks failed and the Cambodian government refused to disband or allow UN administration before the elections. Eventually, UN permanent members came to an agreement to manage the first national post-conflict elections and rebuild the government of Cambodia through the support of UNTAC.²⁴ An indefinite ceasefire began in late June, followed by a period marked by political wrangling. Alliances at the highest level shifted repeatedly, broke apart and came back together, leaving the Cambodian population questioning national actors' credibility and unsure who could be trusted.

On October 16, 1991, a UN Advance Mission in Cambodia (UNAMIC) was established and the Paris Peace Agreement was signed on October 23, installing Prince Sihanouk as provisional leader of Cambodia.²⁵ The arrival of UNTAC administrators represented the arrival of a significant Western presence and donor agenda focused on the economic, social, and political rehabilitation of the country. Obstacles would continue to present as ceasefires were signed and broken²⁶ and the Khmer Rouge increased their territorial control in this period. However, the development process began in earnest when on June 22, 1992 the Ministerial Conference on the Rehabilitation and Reconstruction of Cambodia met in Tokyo, pledging \$880 million American dollars to assist reconstruction. By July 15, UNTAC civil administration offices were established in all twenty one provinces.

The primary objective of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia's (UNTAC) was to establish enough order to be able to move towards a longer-range development process. Provision of emergency relief, encouragement of political stability, and preparation for democratic elections were the primary foci, particularly the reconnecting of communities to a national authority (UNRISD July 1993a, 24). These efforts required victimized citizens to transcend barriers of extreme fear in order to participate in their government, society, and local communities again.

The few publicly available documents from this period lay out the UNTAC proposal for engaging Cambodians in their own political development.²⁷ UNDP-Cambodia framed participatory local development in 1993 as follows: "A democracy begins with the participation of citizenry in the life of the country. [At] the local level, it is operative within the decentralized collectiveness" (UNRISD July 1993b, 24-25). This idea of

focusing attention towards local actors and processes was mirrored in the UNDP Human Development Report (HDR) of 1993, which cited *political participation* - the relationship between citizens and state as one step beyond *electoral participation* - a required step in "widening and deepening" democracy (UNDP 1993a, 65). As well, public projects were considered to be more relevant and effective if the communities concerned had a "real say in their planning and implementation" (ibid., 66), bringing decisions closer to the people they affect (ibid., 79), particularly in countries which lack strong democratic institutions (ibid., 66).²⁸

The donor arrival represents the first major external influence on Cambodian understandings of democratic governance and development. Donors engaged participatory language early on, encouraging refugees to actively engage in resettlement activities. Because there was no direct translation for such activities, translators reintroduced the word *Chol-Ruom* to refer to requests for community participation in emergency relief projects, apparently oblivious to the former usage of *Chol-Ruom*.²⁹ Implementation was quite challenging on the ground. Donor documents from the period identified a high degree of unease of both Western and Cambodian staff around the lack of Cambodian participation in the actual policy making process. There was a growing perception that there was "a lack of sensitivity on the part of many agencies and donors to the question of Cambodian participation" which was considered to be "hinder[ing] participation in decision-making" (UNRISD 1993b, 23) and resulting in "Cambodians los[ing] control over their own development process during the transitional period" (ibid.). Lack of a deeper understanding of participatory development language by local participants was also an emerging challenge as more local stakeholders were brought in to the process.

A difficult juxtaposition existed, as it was also acknowledged that there was still a "lack of capacity to understand and apply the more sophisticated and flexible ways of working in a pluralistic democratic society" (Neou 2000, 9-10). These obstacles created a deficiency in Cambodian participation in policymaking. To begin to remedy the shared perception that development activities were "conforming more to donor agencies than the Cambodian people" (UNRISD 1993a), greater training and participation of Cambodians was encouraged. This would allow for "increased responsibility for the shape and direction of the rehabilitation and reconstruction process, including prioritization of needs and approval of donor-funded development projects and programmes" (UNRISD 1993a, 26).³⁰

Through these activities, *Chol-Ruom-Chea-Muoy-Ang-Ka* (participation with 'the organization') was transformed from a negative association with *forced participation* by the Khmer Rouge and Vietnamese administrators, to a more positively-associated contribution, but nonetheless to a foreign donor-directed project. Such a conceptual transition was far from easy for Cambodians. Western donors were even more alien than the former groups, and thus considerably less trustworthy. From a villager perspective, the dynamics of 'participation' must have felt similar to the Khmer Rouge period. Villagers received a directive from a powerful externally-located organization to 'participate' in work. They then completed the work in exchange for a resource or reward which was seen as belonging to an outside entity.

One such effort was the UN World Food Program's Food for Work program, which was the earliest example of a beneficiary participation-oriented project. In this program, food was distributed according to the quantity of work done by individuals after "communities decide[d] as a whole whether they would participate in the project" (15, 240:250). On the surface, this would appear to be a participatory process to enhance community ownership over the work. However, great animosity existed within beneficiary communities between Cambodians who had stayed in Cambodia and returnees, so such decision-making was tenuous at best. One SPPA interviewee who observed community relations during the period explains that Cambodian beneficiaries thought some donor activities were "just [to] make people change their ideas" (15, 177:179). According to several SPPA interviewees employed as assistants and translators during the UNTAC period who observed trust building processes between community members and donor staff first hand, as well as amongst Cambodian staff working for the program, trust was a fundamental component of

community acceptance of emergency relief projects (Interviews 3, 7, 12, 16, and 25). Shifts in empowerment and ownership required time to develop, as “the old passive ways [became] history” (Neou 2000, 3).

4.2.3. The Institutionalization of Democracy: Towards National Elections (1992-1993)

Democracy building efforts were enacted in tandem with Carere’s emergency relief efforts. Participation in elections was one of the first tangible participatory activities for Cambodians. The end of 1992 saw the promulgation of large-scale voter and political party registration, in support of the first national democratic elections in May 1993. Over four million Cambodians (about 90 percent of eligible voters) participated in the May 1993 elections, although violence barred some people from participating. As one Cambodian explains the mood of the period, these elections were seen as a turning of Cambodia’s political future back over to Cambodian ownership, to offer an opportunity for Cambodians to engage in democratic activity, and create a sense of empowerment over the process, even though they were highly regulated by UN peacekeepers (3, 1471:1472).

Many interviewees defined the elections as an integral part of Cambodia’s democratic development. One SPPA explains “democracy is people [engaged] in [a] participatory approach...involved in the elections, good governance, [and] human rights” (21, 1076:1080). Another elaborates how such activities were a significant shift in typical Cambodian governance processes: “Cambodia experience [is] not to have more people involved [but usually] just two or three people decide and implement...” He explains how, “participatory democracy building efforts in the long-term can build up the responsiveness in government because people will question, because they know the process” (22, 465:471). Another elaborates the logic he tried to instill in officials: “We try [to get the] Commune Council to understand that at election [time], you have to listen to the people. It’s democracy” (23, 1098:1099).

In addition to basic emergency relief provision (e.g. food distribution and community infrastructure), this period included efforts by international donors to restore community-based Pagoda Committees to oversee pagoda reconstruction and their functions. These Pagoda Committees were expected to reestablish social services, build schools, and provide other manners of local development (Soksary, n.d., 20). Such grassroots efforts were largely unsuccessful in generating large-scale development activities since they usually relied on local funds (Neou 2000, 20). However, grassroots initiatives were viewed as critical to “rebuilding fractured communities” (ibid., 38) and “contribut[ing] to peaceful resolution of conflict” (ibid., 20).

The juxtapositions of this period were numerous as wrangling continued between political factions. The Khmer Rouge actively fought and attacked UN troops and Vietnamese civilians (13 killed), refused the UN peace plan, and boycotted the SNC and other meetings aimed at salvaging the Cambodian peace efforts. As a result, UN Sanctions were adopted against the Khmer Rouge by a number of Western countries. Three days before the election campaign started on April 7, Khmer Rouge officials announced they would not participate in the elections.

Months of political wrangling at the national level would follow this first expression of democracy, including a government coup, making it clear democracy was far from a reality. On June 3, 1993, Prince Sihanouk proclaimed himself president, prime minister and military commander of a transitional government coalition made up of FUNCINPEC and CPP, but one day later the coalition government broke down. Within weeks, FUNCINPEC and CPP agreed to form an interim government, with the Khmer Rouge offering to act as advisors. The provisional government was sworn in on July 1 but by August 18 three government factions had attacked the Khmer Rouge. On September 24, the King was enthroned and a new constitution passed, officially beginning the Second Kingdom of Cambodia - a parliamentary, representative democratic monarchy.³¹

UNTAC officially ended its peacekeeping mission on September 26, 1993, but in mid-October, fighting erupted so UNTAC extended its deployment until December 31, 1993. In December, the National Assembly passed legislation creating the *National Programme to Rehabilitate and Develop Cambodia* as government forces launched a major offensive against the Khmer Rouge on December 22. It was within this political context that Carere 1 would make its debut.

4.3. Conclusion

This chapter's narrative illuminates why present day conceptions of citizen participation are fraught with confusion for most Cambodians. The material reveals a multitude of complex perspectives exist as a result of Cambodia's history, influencing Cambodian sensemaking in a variety of ways. This chapter has offered insights about the contradictory nature of attempting to inject a participatory development process into a Buddhist society with strongly hierarchical social norms based on traditional patron-client relationship structures. The contradictions are deepened by the country's complex history which has included monarchies, authoritarian regimes, secret bombing campaigns, genocide and mass starvation, occupation by external forces, involvement in complex Cold War politics, and ongoing internal political infighting. For those living through the past fifty years of history, their life experiences have directly contrasted the foundational principles at the heart of many donor mandates introduced into the country since the early 1990s.

In addition, Cambodia has a long history of social and political domination by a small elite class, whether under the leadership of ancient god-kings (*deva-rajās*), French colonizers, Vietnamese administrators, more modern monarchs, or the current political leadership. As a result, Cambodian political culture has exhibited little affinity for sustained efforts towards building a democratic political foundation, especially at the local level. Accounts of Cambodia's history vividly narrate how these historical events have severely weakened Cambodian capacity and motivation to engage in self-governance, as well as have dissolved a sense of trust between Cambodians outside of their immediate family structures. The Khmer Rouge experience left Cambodians victimized and fearful of actively engaging in community development themselves. The Vietnamese re-engaged solidarity as a community organizing principle embedded in Communist ideology, but at a psychological cost to a war-weary population. The donors' arrival and transformation of *Chol-Ruom* to describe beneficiary participation in community development projects during the UNTAC phase had further implications for attitudes and activities. The oftentimes negative associations many Cambodians hold towards participation make the unique sensemaking of SPPAs on this subject even more poignant.

Practical experiences in 'participation' with authoritarian, elite, and external actors have left Cambodians wary of actively jumping into new programs orchestrated by outside forces and delivered to communities under the auspices of 'development.' Cultural forces will be elaborated in Chapter 5, examining how internalized schemas of distrust and caution have emerged as a result of the country's history, severely hampering communities' ability to engage in collective action towards their own development. Such is the reality that local donor implementers have faced as they try to translate participatory mandates into localized understandings. This chapter and the next offer insights into the complexity of the macro-historical and cultural socio-cognitive environments interacting within the local Cambodian context, surrounding the participatory policy implementation process of the Carere/Seila/PLG program.

¹ See Annex 4.1: *Evolution of Terms Related to Citizen Participation in the Khmer Language*.

² Cambodia's name has changed repeatedly. It was the Kingdom of Cambodia under the rule of the monarchy from 1953 through 1970; Khmer Republic under the Lon Nol led government from 1970 to 1975; Democratic Kampuchea under the rule of the communist Khmer Rouge from 1975 to 1979; People's Republic of Kampuchea under the rule of the Vietnamese-sponsored government from 1979 to 1989; State of Cambodia (a neutral name, while deciding whether to return to monarchy) under the rule of the United Nations transitional authority from 1989 to 1993; and the Kingdom of Cambodia (re-used) after the restoration of the monarchy in 1993.

³ See Annex 4.2: *Overview of Historical Periods and Key Influences on Cambodian Participatory Socio-Cognitive Environment* for summary chart.

⁴ All definitions of Cambodian terms have been developed through dialogues with numerous Cambodians, checked against Jetra and Leang's *Modern Khmer-English Dictionary* (2003) and two editions of Headley's *Cambodian-English Dictionary* (1977; 1997), with final translations confirmed by two Cambodian translators.

⁵ Scott continues by questioning whether or not the wealthy actually live up to these minimal moral requirements of reciprocity (Scott 1977, 27).

⁶ See also Penny Edwards' (2006) historical account of the construction of colonial stereotypes for further information related to this period.

⁷ Interview references are organized to present interviewee number, followed by the lines of text as coded by Atlas.ti.

⁸ The vision of Cambodia before the Khmer Rouge has been somewhat mythologized. Several interviewees and many of the 'popular' local histories reviewed describe the pre-Khmer Rouge period with adjectives such as 'happy, loving, cooperative, peaceful/non-conflictual, Buddhist (particularly in reference to the non-violent nature of the culture), and prosperous.' For further examples, see Nee and Healy (1995).

⁹ However, government officials might exert 'state power' as needed, enlisting the efforts of village or sub-district leaders, capable of motivating their charges (Kim et al. 1997, 11).

¹⁰ These groups were (and are) defined as self-help because they traditionally relied on internal resources (Collins 1998, 14).

¹¹ Kim describes that historically, Wat funding has "come from provisions donated at festivals, help from disciples, and from the kindness of various people that have helped to support it" (Kim et al. 1997, 6).

¹² The Wat Committee process is elaborated by Collins (1998): "When a project is decided upon, a Wat Committee is constituted to mobilize the necessary resources and oversee the execution of the plans, under the guidance and final authority of the abbot." (ibid., 20) "When the *Achaar* and *Wat* Committee need something they speak to the *Chas-Tom* or write a note to the *Prittiechaar* in the villages to explain and discuss the need. Later an announcement is made by loudspeaker to inform the entire *Parish* of the *Wat* need for assistance" (ibid., 21).

¹³ Henri Locard's *Pol Pot's Little Red Book* (2004) is a comprehensive documentation of Khmer Rouge sayings and proverbs used to control the population.

¹⁴ The Vietnamese-sponsored Phnom Penh regime, the People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK), provided a figure of 3,000,000 deaths occurring between 1975 and 1979. Ponchaud (1977) suggests 2,300,000 perished. The Yale Cambodian Autogenocide Project estimates 1,700,000 died. Amnesty International estimates 1,400,000 deaths and the United States Department of State, 1,200,000 (Heder 1999). Khieu Samphan and Pol Pot, Khmer Rouge leaders, cited figures of 1,000,000 and 800,000, respectively. Other most cited accounts of this period which provide estimates between one to three million dead include: Ablin & Hood (1990), Barron & Paul (1977), Chandler (1991; 1996; 2003), Doyle et al. (1997), Gottesman (2005), Heder & Ledgerwood (1996) Hughes (2003), Mayall (1996), Roberts (2001), Shawcross (1994), Thion (1993), and Vickery (1993).

¹⁵ Interviews cited simply as 'interviewee' without additional descriptive information refers to a SPPA interviewee. All other interviewees are labeled by a descriptive title, such as 'international advisor,' 'RGC staff,' or 'NGO representative.'

¹⁶ Such acting out of a *dummy personality* by appearing foolish or confused is known as "*Ting-Moong*."

¹⁷ The refugee experience is presented in detail below.

¹⁸ It is believed that the first introduction of local authority structures was during the French colonial period, although no documentation of this could be found.

¹⁹ Collins describes the VDCs as "moderat[ing] the power of the state apparatus at the grassroots level by broadening citizen participation in development planning within the Seila planning process" (Collins 1998, 13).

²⁰ Emergency operations at the border were initially managed by UNICEF until they withdrew in 1981 (OSRSG 1992). The Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary General of the United Nations for Coordination of Cambodian Humanitarian Assistance Programmes (OSRSG) took over until January 1982, when emergency operations would be packaged under the auspices of the United Nations Border Relief Operations (UNBRO).

²¹ Camps included: Site B (controlled by Sihanoukists), O'Trao (under Khmer Rouge control), Site 2 (under KPNLF control), Khao I Dang (UNHCR camp), Site 8 (under Khmer Rouge control, Site K (under Khmer Rouge control, and Sok Sann (under KPNLF control) (Jennar 1998).

²² The last camp closed officially on March 24, 1999 (Thai/Cambodia Border Refugee Camps website)

²³ The UNHCR reports that over 230,000 Cambodians were resettled in third countries (OSRSG 1992).

²⁴ Main parties involved in negotiations in 1991 included the external powers of China, Vietnam, Soviet Union, United States, Japan, and Western Europe, as well as the members of ASEAN, which included Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand. The final Paris Peace Agreement was signed on October 23, 1991 by all four Cambodian Parties; the five permanent members of the UN Security Council; the six nations of ASEAN; and Vietnam, Laos, Japan, India, Australia, Canada, and Yugoslavia (Kamm 1998, 205).

²⁵ See UN Resolution 717.

²⁶ In late April 1992, the Khmer Rouge and other Cambodian factions signed the UN Convention on Human Rights and the UN was invited to inspect limited areas of the Khmer Rouge zone. In June, a Phase II Ceasefire began, but the Khmer Rouge refused to demobilize factions outlined by the Paris Peace Accords (Mayall 1996).

²⁷ Ascertaining the degree to which international donor mandates actually influenced Cambodian development is not possible based on available documentation. However, the UNDP's *good governance* agenda was beginning to take solid form in the early 1990s as a result of shifting ideological tides. As well, evidence was amassing that initial projects incorporating beneficiary participation were making a difference in the appropriateness and thus, community buy-in, of development projects (Long 2001; UNDP 1993a).

²⁸ Devolution, the actual granting of decision-making and financial power, as well as the authority to design and execute projects and programs, to local authorities (1993a, 67), is promoted as the solution – “[it] should lead to fuller political participation” (ibid., 78). The importance of political participation is defined as the “potential to improve government decisions with increasing democratic participation” (ibid., 79).

²⁹ Ironically, the donors became known as *Ang-Ka*, the same label adopted by the Khmer Rouge to describe their organization. Later *Ang-Ka* would be used to describe any NGO, of local or international origin.

³⁰ The surrounding text to this quote discusses the need for the international aid community to expand the opportunities for the training of Cambodian counterparts to plan their own development and facilitate Cambodian participation in sectoral meetings, coordinating and policymaking bodies, information gathering processes, and numerous fact-finding missions undertaken by international agencies.

³¹ The Prime Minister is appointed by the King upon the advice of the National Assembly and is head of the government, which is a pluri-form multi-party system that has resulted in a coalition government between the two dominant parties: the Cambodian People's Party and FUNCINPEC (Unified Front for an Independent, Neutral, Peaceful and Cooperative Cambodia). The King serves as the head of state.

Chapter 5

The Challenge of Reconciling Disparate Socio-Cognitive Environments: Cambodian Cultural and Organizational Realities

This chapter begins by presenting cultural orientations existing in the current Cambodian psyche which influence understandings of participatory development, completing the cultural picture painted in Chapter 4. This chapter also examines a set of negative organizational dynamics found in both Cambodian and donor agencies which hold the potential to reinforce individual orientations such as distrust, cautiousness, and disempowerment. Through these two explorations, the Cambodian macro-cultural SCE is further juxtaposed against the international SCE, highlighting a number of contradictions between the principles underlying participatory mandate and the environments in which they are supposed to be enacted.

By highlighting organizational dynamics surrounding the Carere/Seila/PLG program, another dimension in which multiple, converging realities influence local understandings of the mandate is examined, expanding understanding of how the local macro-cultural SCE influences local understandings of participatory development. The analyses in this and the previous chapter support the notion a high degree of confusion exists between donor discourse and organizational realities. In addition, a number of negative organizational dynamics exist that result in negative schemas which lay in direct opposition to participatory principles. This analysis suggests that the characterization of the Seila program environment as unique in its ability to claim a participatory foothold in the midst of such negative organizational and cultural dynamics. The specifics of the program mandate and SPPA experience is further detailed in Chapter 7.

5.1. Cambodian Cultural Influences on Modern Day Understandings of Participatory Development in Cambodia

Even after the first national democratic, multi-party elections were held in 1993 and the first emergency relief projects were in place, national-level leaders continued to manipulate democratic engagement to best suit their maintenance of political power. This included keeping local-level leaders deeply embedded in a vast web of political party control to ensure that power remained highly centralized and in the hands of a small elite (Than 2004).¹ Thus, even if there were some isolated local experiences of community decision-making processes, such as self-help groups or Pagoda Committees to build community projects, a political culture of citizen participation, connecting into a broader political apparatus that included elections to establish public officials' legitimacy and accountability (Edwards & Hulme 1996a), was basically non-existent.

In such an environment, Cambodian understandings of citizen participation as related to development continue to be limited. The Ministry of Interior's *Department of Local Administration Handbook* (2005) provides the only definition for *citizen participation* in a government document found in the course of this research:

Participation means the involvement of citizens, both men and women, in decision-making process, and the implementation of those decisions. It simply means being a part of something. It implies the opportunity for people to freely express their views on decisions affecting them. The importance of participation is to make sure that all information about the problems, needs, and purposes of people are collected and analyzed before decisions are made. (ibid.)²

The Centre for Peace and Development's *Peacebuilding Lexicon* (CDRI 2004) provides a translation of participation as a noun, *Ka-Chol-Ruom*, but does not provide a definition for the term. However, the same local dictionary defines *participatory decision-making* as: "A way of making decisions that involves all stakeholders. It is based on the understanding that when people participate in making a decision, they are more likely to support its implementation"³ (ibid., 101).

Results from an email survey conducted at the conclusion of the field work highlight how the term *Chol-Ruom* has continued to expand in usage, being used as a root word in combination with a number of political and development activities. Emerging terminology with *Chol-Ruom* at its base illustrates that participation is increasingly present in the Cambodian vernacular. *Chol-Ruom-Ak-Phi-Wat* translates as 'participation in a development project.' The act of villager participation in a local development meeting is termed *Chol-Ruom-Praa-Choum* (participate in a meeting). *Tuon-Chol-Ruom* refers to a (local) cash contribution made towards a community development project. *Ka-Chol-Ruom-Robos-Pra-Chea-Chun* literally translates as the 'joining (or participation) of people' and is language that would typically be used in a request by the government for residents to make a shared contribution to a public infrastructure project (e.g. the community 'joins together' by sharing the expense).

More modern and still emerging conceptualizations of participation related to political culture include *Chol-Ruom-Yoo-Baal*, which refers to 'participation of an opinion' and *Chol-Ruom Maa-Toeak*, which means to 'share an idea.' *Chol-Ruom-Patu-Kam* refers to participation in collective demonstrations, such as occur in response to frequent "land grabbing" by private developers or by factory workers in activities related to labor-management negotiations.

Although *Sa-Ha-Ka-Knea-Pheap* continues to express "people's collaboration," *Chol-Ruom-Robos-Pra-Chea-Chun* is the most widely used definition of participation today (Kim *informal conversation* 2006) (although *Chol-Ruom-A-Pi-Wat* is still the specific namer used for 'participation in development'). Several variants relate to more specific development activities, such as to participate in a meeting, *Chol-Ruom-Praa-Choum*; participate an opinion, *Chol-Ruom-Yoo-Baal*; or participate an idea, *Chol-Ruom-Maa-Toeak*. One Cambodian researcher consulted for the study also noted the use of the term for "ownership" "*Pheap-M'chas-Ka*" as an important indicator of people expressing a sense of true ownership over a project or activity.⁴

Based on current usage highlighted above, a Cambodian collective definition of citizen participation in a development context would most likely include: a) community buy-in of participatory principles underlying the proposed project, b) a sense of ownership over the process to implement the project, and c) a sense of empowerment as a result of involvement in the activity. Yet, these conditions are often wholly absent in current community development efforts, making participatory experiences difficult to generate. Namely, the ongoing lack of trust in Cambodian communities and challenges related to maintaining strict social hierarchies are key blockages to building democratic participation.⁵

Cambodians' history has left individuals disempowered and victimized, directly influencing the population's willingness to participate in their own development. Hughes & Öjendal (2006) support Grant Curtis's characterization of a general 'fatigue' in Cambodia, "expressed in the reluctance of rural communities to enthusiastically rally around participatory development projects" (Hughes & Öjendal, 417). However, these authors note that this 'fatigue' is not "an absolute condition" but a "response triggered by certain

circumstances" (ibid., 417). The following section elaborates these obstacles and provides illustrations of how such understandings have influenced participatory programming at the community level.

5.1.1. 'Don't Trust Anyone, Don't React'

We pass a lot of bad times that make the people come to the behavior that they don't try to react very much, [they] don't try to find out if [something is] good or not, and [they] don't really trust the leader, so I think the value [of participation] is hard. (7, 867:871)

The Khmer Rouge regime profoundly influenced individuals' identities (Martin 1994) as almost all social and family structures were systematically destroyed over a four-year period, executing thousands as part of their mass social reengineering project aimed at purifying Cambodia of all so-called 'modern' influences. The result was the destruction of almost all social bonds outside of the immediate nuclear family and an extreme distrust of individuals and institutions alike. Survivors report an ongoing struggle for survival, which one Cambodian describes as "a constant switching of obsession between having enough to eat and [his] imminent death" (Boyden & Gibbs 1997). The violence, the unknowing, the malnutrition, and the fear left survivors with strong feelings of victimization which are not easily shaken. Cambodia's current political culture has been described as a 'winner-takes-all' environment based on "endemic trust" (Chandler 1998, 43).

Various researchers have documented Cambodians' psychological tendencies towards behavioral strategies related to generalized senses of distrust and fear which have emerged since the Khmer Rouge period (Bit 1991, Ovesen et al. 1996, Boyden & Gibbs 1997, Kiernan & Hughes 2002, Öjendal & Kim 2006, Öjendal et al., forthcoming 2008). This section provides several exemplars of such orientations emerging from the data collected for the study to provide a lens into factors influencing SPPAs' sensemaking of the participatory development process.⁶

Issues of individual and community empowerment are complexly intertwined with feelings of distrust and cautiousness. An entire generation of the Cambodian population now between the ages of thirty five and forty five, who remained in Cambodia, had virtually no access to education at any level from the arrival of the Khmer Rouge until the early 1990s, creating even deeper feelings of disempowerment. Refugees living in border camps for more than a decade did receive some education, but refugee status and recent large influxes of aid have further promoted a sense of victim mentality for many of the Khmer population (O'Leary & Nee 2001).

Cambodian's loss of trust of each other, of outsiders, and even of themselves as individuals continues to produce cynicism towards the participatory development process. Meas Nee, a survivor of the Khmer Rouge period, provides a perspective on Khmer Rouge survivors' reticence to participate in community development efforts:

How do the villagers understand when outsiders come in and begin to talk about community development? Possibly the outsiders begin to explain as our team did at first, 'We want you to co-operate. We want you to work together.' The people feel sick at the sound of these words. They open their eyes wide. Do you want to bring back something like the Pol Pot times? (Nee 1999, 51-52)

The impact of lack of trust on contemporary development efforts is best summarized by one SPPA interviewee observing program operations for almost a decade: "[The] villager has to feel comfortable to say to Commune Councilor what he or she feels, what he or she thinks. And the Commune Councilor has to feel comfortable listening and take that [idea] to implementation. It is a change in attitude and behavior. It is very difficult" (5, 512-531). Thus, a keen focus on individual relationship building and an understanding of

community values and dynamics must be included in participatory development activities. Meas Nee provides an illustrative example:

Another mistake is to start with meetings...They come because they are forced to come. The people, especially villagers in rural areas, have learned to expect criticism and political propaganda at a meeting...A meeting where there is not yet a true relationship drives people apart, it does not bring them together. (Nee 1999, 51)

This is not a matter of building rice barns and organizing pig banks. It is a matter of rebuilding spirit, life and relationship. The community worker is creating a delicate relationship of trust so that the people move beyond their numbness, think and make choices and begin to act together in their own way. (ibid., 53)

Daubert's research in the mid-1990s elaborates the loss of trust in communities which appears to still be quite prevalent today: "solidarity is merely circumstantial, on a precise, limited, voluntary and contractual basis," that it "rarely extends beyond the limit of the [nuclear] family...living under the same roof" and "seems to be merely a conjunction of individual interests commonly experienced" (Daubert 1996, 5-6). Further, he proposes that "solidarity is also of a very particular kind in Cambodia. Accepting the constraints of belonging to the group is only opportunistically justified. Accepting such constraints occurs only because it is unavoidable to do so in order to gain access to an individual service."

He goes on to explain that communities' norms related to compliance and interaction can rapidly undermine externally imposed development projects. Distrust of outsiders and officials, and an unwillingness to accept any discipline or social regulation is also prevalent, due to years of forced collectivism. Daubert points out: "Any fresh attempt at social regulation, internal or external, today quickly becomes fraught with difficulties" (Daubert 1996, 5). He does propose that it may not be that villagers are rejecting collective organization per se, but rejecting the form in which it is being suggested/delivered (ibid., 7). For instance, externally imposed models might be imposed, but "the local community has their own norms of compliance and interaction that can undermine the scheme as envisioned" (ibid., 5). Feelings of excessive cautiousness stemming from disempowerment are another critical challenge, as highlighted below.

5.1.2. 'There's Safety in Silence'

Cambodian economic and by default, oftentimes social, relations, are still dominated by a patron-client model where "relationships are established between individuals of different status, between a client who places himself under the protection of a boss in exchange for his loyalty or his services. Society is thus made up of a multitude of groups within which protection and promotion are organized under the leadership of a head to whom allegiance is given" (Llewelyn-Davis 1994, as quoted in Daubert 1996, 7). However, at the same time, it must be noted that inactivity in the population represents Cambodian's enactment of their human agency as much so as more proactive engagements with their development process.

Kim (forthcoming) explains in his study of government responsiveness that poor rural citizens thus place leaders on a pedestal, particularly if they are urban dwellers, have white skin, and have any degree of education. This self perception as 'lowly' means people are willing to be controlled, to sit in meetings and listen passively in deference to a leader who is perceived as 'all knowledgeable'. Several interview excerpts illustrate this kind of dependence on individuals of higher status to make decisions related to community development: "Even now the citizen...we bring them to the meeting but...they just say 'yes, we agree [with] what the well educated people say, or the high-up people say. We have to follow and they are right..." (23, 1116:1134). Another interviewee describes participation as an 'unnatural' phenomenon in Cambodia: "If we

look at before [the] war, before 1970, people, they depend on the top. So what the top decides is correct. What the top wants, the bottom has to follow" (23, 1116:1134). Another SPPA explains how he observes beneficiary perceptions of development:

If they like it, they may feel, if they get some small role or authority in it, then probably it makes them feel that they own some of [the project]. But if they don't really like it and have no authority or no big responsibility in the process, they may say, "that is not my business." That is what some people said when the villages are invited to join the planning process. They say, "You do the planning. You get the money to build the road or to build the public services. That is your job, Commune Council. Why don't you just do it?" (7, 720:742)

Furthermore, the fear of loss of face in public leads to a habitual silence or verbatim repeating of the meeting leaders' perspective through blatant sycophancy, in order to protect one's self from a loss of face. Interestingly, to 'show face' by simply attending a meeting is highly respectable since Cambodian cultural norms dictate presence is equivalent to active participation (*informal conversation with Kim 2006, citing Pye 1985*). Further, if an individual asks the 'right question' during a meeting, then no face is gained or lost, so there is no incentive to speak out. However, asking a 'wrong question' or inadvertently offending the leader can be deeply shaming, resulting in a high degree of lost face, particularly if perceived by other meeting participants as speaking out of turn. For example, if a woman speaks out, she might be chastised by other meeting participants outside of the meeting for such active participation. Such social regulation reinforces a sense of extreme cautiousness in acting out into the present day.⁷

One study by a local Cambodian research organization (Rusten et al. 2004, 100) further highlights the implications of internalized schemas expressing a sense of distrust or cautiousness, suggesting that local leaders view participation as holding two different meanings: (a) just being present, not necessarily interacting, and (b) active participation, asking questions and sharing comments. They explain that leaders believe that most villagers who attend meetings see their role as one of simply being present and listening. One commune chief explains why this happens:

Based on my personal observation of many years working directly with villagers, people do know that they are supposed to share comments and raise questions during meetings. But it is a habit that they take things for granted and they suppose that the chair of the meeting already knows everything. (A commune chief in Pailin, as quoted in Rusten et al. 2004, 120)

Several explanations by Cambodian SPPAs highlight how such orientations create challenges in the development process:

I don't think the capacity [is the biggest problem] but... a kind of attitude or behavior, an attitude to wait to receive information from the top before doing anything [is the problem]. (22, 1144:1146)

You need to be careful about the process. People very easy give the ball to you to answer the question if you not involve them if you do not ask them to talk in the beginning. (22, 930:935)

In addition to the influence that orientations of distrust and cautiousness have had on the implementation process, possibly even more problematic is the fact that traditional Cambodian organizational environments have reinforced such understandings. As an example, Öjendal & Kim (2006) elaborate how villagers are expected to demonstrate *Korob, Kaud, Klach* – 'respect, admiration, fear' – towards the local authorities and their civil servants. These authors also describe how, in interviews, "Commune authorities proudly emphasized that the balance among the three words has shifted. Villagers' dealings with

these authorities used to be characterized by *Klach*, and in good cases some *Korob*, but very little *Kaud*. Now, there is a lot of *Korob* and some *Kaud*, but not so much *Klach*" (Öjendal & Kim 2006, 518).

5.2. Traditional Cambodian Organizational Environments as Contributors to Cambodian Sensemaking

Blunt (1995) has described Cambodia's public organizations as negative, fragmented organizational cultures. These dynamics were amplified following the Khmer Rouge period, when civil service members became increasingly focused on resource extraction from donor projects rather than producing a responsive and accountable administration (Horng et al. 2006). Neo-patrimonial administrative arrangements (Van de Walle 2001), coupled with low civil salaries and the common practice of lower-level civil servants contributing a portion of their salary upwards to political leaders (Eng et al. 2007) has resulted in a parallel, informal governance system; severe limitations on civil servant autonomy and power (Roberts 2001; Gottesman 2003; Curtis 1998); and structural violence between government and society (i.e. land grabbing by public officials, suppression of freedom of speech, etc.) when the economic stakes are high enough.

Cambodian governance is steeped in a fear-based respect for authority (Öjendal and Kim 2006)⁸ and has been characterized by absolutist rule of "deva-raj god-kings,"⁹ monarchs, colonial administrators, a genocidal regime, and Vietnamese Communist authorities (Chandler 1991, 2000; Heder & Ledgerwood 1996) for almost the entirety of its history. Traditional Khmer management is authoritarian, male-oriented, and firmly entrenched in broader patron-client social networks, which have historical roots in Buddhist karmic beliefs (Horng 2006; Pak et al. 2007) which discourage any efforts at empowerment or social movement for any but the highest echelons of elite Khmer society (Horng et al. 2005). One SPPA interviewee describes how such absolutist behaviors are interpreted by Cambodians without such power:

The high ranking people [are] powerful, [and are] the one [who] normally say [what is] right... And they never feel [the need to] apologize to what has been done wrong. Because no one dare enough to criticize them or say "it's wrong, it's not correct." (12, 1600:1692)

Authority is first and foremost deeply hierarchical and attached to wealth (Pak et al. 2007). As one Cambodian government staffer describes such orientations, "It is all about money, which equals power, respect, and authority in the minds of Cambodian civil servants" (Interview 7). Such orientations have particular implications for engendering ownership and creating quality in administrative processes. As this administrator further describes, "It comes down to attitude and commitment" (Interview 7). Another senior SPPA interviewee explains how lower-level staff experience such leadership in government environments:

It's a matter in Cambodian culture [that] we respect the top. Sometimes when ordinary people participate in meeting[s] and they think their view is right, but it [conflicts with] the elders or the boss, they don't want to say. [Cambodians hold] a very negative [understanding of] participat[ion], as in, 'I am your boss. I decide something... [You] cannot ask me why we respect that. But outside, [you] can say why the boss or father do [something] not good. It is the culture which affects the decision making. (21, 769:778)

As a result, few activities can occur at the lower levels of government agencies without "coordinat[ion] with their [immediate] boss. [Staff] still have to implement through the [very] top of the hierarchy" (15, 632:639). One SPPA compares the Cambodian system to a spoiled cooking pot that always burns the rice. To him, it is clear that a new pot (e.g. the government) needs to be bought, "because this one is already spoiled" (3, 1332:1337). Another SPPA describes how such authoritarian leadership styles embedded in traditional civil service operations play out in the minds of citizens, blocking efforts to engage ownership and empowerment:

If the people do and you want to know if it's true or not. If they like it is true, that is the hard point I cannot say, some people they may like it even they ordered to do it because what you say is like an order, just tell this is this and you have to do like this do it this way so it is like an order they don't have choice the y don't have option. (7, 711:716)

Several other quotes elaborate the influence such government cultures can have on Cambodian staff, particularly when located in low-level support positions.¹⁰ One SPPA describes how organizational dynamics impeded his efforts to engage in full-time work when working for the government in the early 1990s:

It is different for me because I study and have very strong motivation. I want to work, but [do] not have any work, so [it is] hard to stay...They gave me some job to do. My boss says 'one month' [to complete the job]. I do it in one week so the rest of the three weeks, I have nothing to do. So that is hard for me. At the time we are young, strong, and are full of motivation. We want to work full time. (7, 154:161)

As with most Asian cultures in the region, and even more pronounced due to the Khmer Rouge experience, social conformity is highly valued in Cambodian culture and supports those holding power. Less powerful members of society express a deep concern for not stepping out of the bounds of social norms, known colloquially as *losing face*, which, as explained by one SPPA, is expressed more frequently as an inability to refuse a request to someone's face or an extreme aversion to public confrontation (23, 220:226). Such perspectives result in excessive self-monitoring activities, discouraging pushing new ways of operating. As the previous quote reveals, a fear of losing face publicly, combined with negative organizational dynamics, can firmly entrench a Cambodian civil servant in a position with low productivity, further reinforcing already-held sense of inferiority being supported by the vertical social hierarchies surrounding such an actor.

My observation and others' have shown that in such environments, transparent, participatory, or democratic organizational processes are often non-existent (Hughes 2006; Hughes & Öjendal 2006; Öjendal et al. 2008). In contrast, resource extraction, attaining personal power, and maintaining the necessary informal networks to support such activities are guiding forces. Elite patrons are expected to operate with extreme favoritism towards their closest family and friends, aggressively expanding and protecting their domains for the benefit of their entire network. Lower level staff find themselves deeply embedded in complex patrimonial hierarchies, dependent on a central patron (Pak et al. 2007), and unable to extricate themselves easily. Observations have also shown how individual sensemaking, problem solving skills, and testing of perceptions outside of the organizational norm is discouraged, for fear of rocking deeply ingrained administrative forms which support more powerful actors within such environments.

The legacy of the Khmer Rouge, current authoritarian leaders, and deeply embedded patron-client networks have further promoted a culture of fear and extreme risk avoidance tendencies in individual staffers, which can culminate in an unwillingness to exhibit any degree of ownership over any activities perceived as risky. A SPPA expresses his own distrust of the government: "In my knowledge and experience, I don't really like to trust and give them more power" (7, 1136:1138) while other SPPAs describe national government leaders as focused on keeping power and resources for themselves (23, 1895:1903) with "very strong, ingrained [antiquated] ways of working" (25, 555:566). A Western advisor describes how even the brightest staff who exhibit advanced thinking and work approaches "get flattened by the older men because in the Cambodian organization, they think you should know their place" (interview 34).

Thus, an additional outcome of operating within such environments is a feeling of disempowerment. Several SPPAs describe the disempowerment they have experienced and observed:

Ordinary staff can't talk to their boss. They have to listen more than speak. (24, 408:411)

So if I work with the government for this whole period I think my attitude would remain the same, which is making things in a quick manner and just obeying the commands or orders of the high government officials. (5, 1104:1115)

5.3. Participation: Doomed to Failure?

In many ways, implementing a participatory development mandate in Cambodia should have been doomed to failure from the start. The previous review of the historical and cultural associations with participatory development highlights the following participatory schema:

- Trusting anyone outside of your immediate family nucleus is dangerous.
- Acting out in public is dangerous.
- There's safety in silence.
- Losing face publicly is untenable.
- Saving face is a top priority above all else in social settings.
- Participation is being present and listening respectfully to community leaders.
- It's not proper for women to speak out in meetings.
- Leaders are all knowledgeable and not to be questioned.
- People at the top of the vertical hierarchy are privileged because of their karmic past and thus deserve to be leaders and are therefore inherently better than me.
- Dependency on the top of social and organizational hierarchies ensures my financial and social status

These schemas provide a lens into the cognitive challenges present as donors attempted to introduce good governance and participatory development mandates in the early 1990s, as highlighted in Chapter 6.

Chapter 4's historical overview describes a relationship between citizen and state that has tended to be radically different than that of the UNDP's vision of good governance. Cambodia's tumultuous history has left a population holding internalized schemas promoting distrust of and extreme cautiousness which have disabled staff and program beneficiaries alike. Thus, as Cambodians returned to work within traditional Cambodian organizational structures reemerging in the 1980s and 1990s, they struggled with the dual proclivities of distrust and extreme cautiousness. At the same time, donors were introducing new ideas about governance and development that directly contrasted the Cambodian experience. Democratic ideals brought by international donors, even if theoretically sound and empirically tested, still represented extreme shifts in understanding of governance and development. The donors' arrival also brought new organizational models and operating procedures. Organizational dynamics of both Cambodian organizations and donor agencies alike hold potential for reinforcing pre-existing negative orientations towards democratic development. The combination of new ideas and ways of working created a high degree of cognitive dissonance for those Cambodians moving into development positions.

The following chapter provides an overview of the theory and practice driving donor understandings of participatory development at the highest levels of development agency headquarters. It also considers how the four core donors most involved in the formulation of the Carere/Seila/PLG program interpreted the broader development discourse into the local context. The remainder of the chapter is devoted to considering how the donor organizational structures and cultures contributed to Cambodians' cognitive dissonance of participatory development principles. Juxtaposed against the examination of Cambodian historical and cultural understandings of participatory development, a clearer characterization of the extreme dissonance which could occur at the confluence of these experiences emerges.

¹ In this neo-patrimonial administrative environment (Van de Walle 2001), political power is highly related to economic power since the informal networks operating in parallel to the current bureaucracy enable resource extraction.

² This same definition is also cited in DoLA (2005) and National Committee for Support to Communes/Sangkats (2005).

³ Dictionary readers are instructed to see also collaborative problem solving, decision-making processes, and problem-solving.

⁴ Other variants now refer to a number of common social, but communal activities, including “(Ka) Chol-Ruom” in a savings group, village activity or meeting; “Chol-Bon” or “Chol-Louy” to contribute funds to a ceremony; or “Chol-Ruom-Bon-Kaam-Nart” or “Chol-Ruom-Chooup-Leang” to refer to participation in a party.

⁵ See Meisburger (2001) for additional information related to the Cambodian electorate’s perceptions of democratization efforts.

⁶ For an argument opposing renderings of post-conflict populations as dysfunctional, while casting international rescue interventions as functional, see Hughes & Pupavac (2005).

⁷ I am indebted to several informal conversations with Kim where he shared descriptions of his personal observations as part of his dissertation study, *Government Responsiveness at the Local Level in Cambodia* (forthcoming).

⁸ *Korob, Kaud, Klach* translates as respect, admiration, and fear. In their article of a similar title, Öjendal and Kim (2006) detail the relationship between these terms.

⁹ Jacques & Freeman (1997) and Pak et al. (2007) document the existence of the *deva-raja* god-king cult historically, which resulted in Cambodian kings being seen as possessing god-like qualities and thus, above reproach (Horng et al. 2006).

¹⁰ See Jamil (2002) for modeling of similar power dynamics in Bangladesh and Betancourt (1997) for overview of bureaucratic contexts in developing nations.

Chapter 6

The International Socio-Cognitive Environment of Participatory Development

This chapter introduces the macro-level socio-cognitive environment that encompasses the theories and practices driving international donors' participatory development programming from the international headquarter level. For this study, this environment is conceptualized as a factor influencing SPPA sensemaking as it interacts with other SCEs. The international SCE is composed of not only international-level thinking and development program agendas, but also as locally-constructed policy manifestations at the country level as it passes through local donor agents on the ground. The international SCE also includes the organizational structures and cultures that enter local contexts concurrent to program mandates.

6.1. The Theory, Policies and Practices of the International Development Community

The global trend towards participatory development is most likely due to the "win-win" scenario such development schemes are supposed to deliver to almost all stakeholders in the development process (OECD 1995; ADB 2002; Mansuri & Rao 2004). For one, theory drives the notion that the poor's participation in decisions affecting their livelihoods will result in more contextually appropriate program outputs which are more readily accepted by communities, thus engendering a greater sense of ownership and longer-term sustainable outcomes (Narayan 2002). Secondly, participatory theory and rhetoric responds to a desire among donors and their constituents to feel like beneficiaries are authentically engaged in the development process, not just passive recipients of externally-imposed development program ideas (Holcombe 1993; Cooke & Kothari 2001). Lastly, fiscally conservative donors can be assured, at least in theory, that their development aid is not delivered as a one-time hand out to passive beneficiaries, propagating a long-term dependence on Western aid.

Even more influential is theorists' linking of participatory development activities to the attainment of increasing degrees of self-governance (UNDP 1993a; World Bank 2003). This linking fulfills one of the most intrinsic motivations of multilateral donors -- the broadest proliferation of the global democratization project possible (OECD 1995; Stanley 2002; Sida July 2002a). Yet, even with these various rationales supporting the implementation of participatory programs, rarely are these desired outcomes obtained (Cooke & Kothari 2001; Long 2001; Brock & McGee 2002). Understanding the micro-level dynamics of how participatory development projects are implemented might explain why there are fewer participatory programs fulfilling good governance objectives than expected.

In recent years, development paradigms related to governance programming (World Bank 2002; UNDP 2001, 2002, 2003; Cooke & Kothari 2001) have been increasingly geared towards creating fundamental sea changes in populations' understanding of, and relationship to, their governments. Program implementation often includes trainings for both local staff and beneficiaries that are aimed not only at influencing program activities, but also citizens' basic value orientations towards citizenship and the role of the state. Theoreticians and aid agencies alike increasingly highlight the importance of the process of beneficiary participation in delivering governance programming as a means to achieve sustainable

democratic outcomes (Hickey & Mohan 2004; Sida 2002a). Importantly, the participatory nature of the process means few mandates in development history have had as broad an influence on so many different levels of program delivery for the poor. However, the implementation of participatory programming entails a complex management experience, fraught with sensemaking challenges, for donor agency staff and program beneficiaries alike.

6.1.1. Historical Perspectives on Participatory Development

The Carere/Seila program has evolved alongside a series of paradigm shifts around the notion of participation. The program's present theory is located firmly within the participatory decentralization field, where citizen participation is rooted within conceptualizations of democratic development, decentralization, and good governance efforts, following international programming trends. The following narrative provides an overview of the key theoretical evolutions of the field since the emergence of participatory development as a driving development mandate in the early 1990s.¹

During the colonial period and onwards into the 1960s and 1970s, community participation was often used as a tool for maintaining rural stability through infrastructure development. Participatory activities were also used as a tool for strengthening new states as they emerged from colonial rule (Hickey & Mohan 2004, 6). For three decades prior to the integration of participatory development as a development methodology within multi-lateral development agencies in the early 1990s, the idea served as a liberal model of grassroots development. Participatory development was reintroduced by grassroots advocates in the 1960s and 1970s as an opposing model to the expert-led, top-down technocratic development which had dominated multilateral assistance strategies to that point (Moore 1997).

In the 1960s, more political notions of participation related to building community empowerment began to emerge (Freire 2000). The idea initially stemmed from grassroots experimentation with local participatory practices, evolving into an "ideological commitment towards people-centered development and to participatory modes of intervention" (UNDP/MDGD/BDP 1995, 87). The 1970s and 1980s saw populist visions of participation rising from field workers and Southern voices, with the notion of social capital greatly influencing the evolution of participation to its most common contemporary definition, as a right and obligation of citizenship (ibid., 8). Putnam (1994), the initial theorizer of the notion of social capital, proposed that democratic development requires trust, norms, and networks. Social capital facilitates coordinated action and civil society is the conduit by which such collective interactions are best expressed in the public sphere. Thus, citizen participation in civil society organizations is fundamental to social capital development (Harris 2006).

From these earliest understandings of citizen participation, the field has evolved to embrace decision-making related to community development and governance as a right of citizenship, and a vital component of decentralization efforts. *Participatory citizenship* is thus defined as people "playing an active role in shaping the future of his or her society through political debate and decision-making" (Miller 1995, 433). Such activities are considered fundamental to the development of social democracies, composed of responsive states and strong civil societies, and essential to the development process (Hickey 2002, 8).

Hickey & Mohan (2004) point out that citizenship undergirds most approaches to participation, although camps differ as to form and content. These authors elaborate, "The concept and practice of citizenship is increasingly viewed as the means by which to capture both popular agency in a more political sense and the convergence between participatory development and participatory governance" (ibid., 9). Thus, citizen participation is vitally linked to citizens' relationship with their government agents and agencies, forming the impetus for shifting government and services closer to the people, such as in the Carere/Seila program.

The concept of participatory citizenship has also come to be intrinsically linked to decentralization. Manor (1999) and Crook and Manor (1998) define decentralization (paraphrased) as a process connected to the flow of information from the bottom up which improves the quality of development projects, government performance, responsiveness of government to citizen demands and interests, and increases popular participation.² They propose that a fundamental component of the decentralization of government structures and services is to locate them as close as is feasibly possible (e.g. taking into account capacity, resources, and economies of scale) to the people they are meant to serve, in order to enhance citizen participation and empowerment.

6.1.2. Theoretical Evolutions of Participatory Development Knowledge

A review of theoretical explorations of participatory development identifies three frameworks which together conceptualize participation along a continuum of activities.³ Long (2001) groups participatory theories under four labels: instrumental, transformational, convergent, and emergent. She defines instrumental participation as “participation as a means to an end to meet short-term policy needs, but with focus on achieving secondary, longer-range impacts” (ibid., 18). Transformational participation refers to participatory activities defined as important processes in and of themselves. Long proposes that instrumental and transformational views are now converging into efforts to bring participatory development activities of marginalized populations into the nucleus of development approaches. More recently emerging participatory activities include views of participation as a fundamental human right (ibid.) as well as conceptualizations of participation as an experiential/felt process inherent to the human condition (Reason 1998; Reason n.d.).

Rahnema, taking a more critical view, proposes four axes to consider types of participation, which she defines as “the action or fact of partaking, having or forming a part of” (Oxford English Dictionary 2005, as quoted by Rahnema 1992). She categorizes participation as: transitive or intransitive; moral, amoral or immoral; forced or free; and manipulative or spontaneous (Rahnema 1992, 116). Transitive participation refers to participation “oriented towards a specific goal or target” (ibid., 116), while intransitive participation refers to activities where “the subject lives the partaking process without any predefined purpose” (ibid., 116). Her additional categories define the degree of free will with which participants are able to act versus manipulation from external actors.

Hickey and Mohan’s historical typology is organized along four axes which are also useful to highlight the different kinds of participation discussed in this study: locus and level of engagement (e.g. individual/institutional, micro/macro), ideological/political projects (e.g. political, community development, rights-oriented approaches), conceptions of citizenship, and links to development theory (e.g. how approaches to participation reflect broader development trends) (Hickey & Mohan 2004, 9).

I combined these three typologies into a conceptually reorganized continuum⁴ which scales participatory activities from: a) those that are imposed on beneficiaries, b) to more proactive ‘instrumental’ components of beneficiary participation invoked to meet community development ends, c) to more transformative, socially liberating activities emanating from communities or individuals without influence by outside forces. The combination of these three typologies covers the spectrum of participatory activities currently engaged in development efforts. *Least participatory activities* include more manipulative forms of participation which use community members’ participation as a means to meet external ends without concern for the actual development aims of the community. *Beneficiary participation* includes more passive forms of participation, including participants used primarily as providers of information. *Participation as a component of community development* includes activities focused on local organizational development, community consultations, and participation required in exchange for material incentives.

Participation as a means to a separate end includes activities engaged to meet project or democracy-related outcomes but not as an end in itself. *Participation as an end in itself* includes more interactive forms of participation where communities are actively involved in analysis and development of action plans focused on building sustainable capacity for future development. More self-mobilized efforts generated by communities and grassroots organizations without outside involvement are also included under this category. Finally, *emergent views* consist of development efforts which define participation as a right of citizenship or as a fundamental process inherent to the human condition. Annex 6.2 is a summary of the range of understandings of participatory development as defined in the literature. For the purposes of this research it provides a lens into the potential variety of understandings of participatory activities that can be held by various stakeholders involved in policy formulation and implementation.

6.1.3. International Donor Conceptualizations of Participatory Development

Sometime in the mid-1990s, participatory development moved from primarily existing in the minds of theorists and as something primarily enacted by community development workers and Southern citizens, to becoming a key component of the global development paradigm. It was first picked up by international NGOs and more progressive bilateral donors, such as the Nordic countries. In this evolution, participatory development was sometimes transformed into a helpful methodology to elicit community engagement in the development process. In other cases, participatory development became a convenient tool, captured by powerful elites at both the international and local levels, to manipulate the framing of development processes to serve oftentimes hidden agendas.

Participatory development emerged as a legitimate development construct formally embraced by the largest multilateral development agencies in the mid-1980s. By the late 1990s, it was a guiding force in development practice (UNDP 1993a; 1997a), and today it is an almost universally mandatory component of most aid agency missions (Korten 1980; Bamberger 1988; Kothari 1988; Chambers 1997; Veltmeyer 2001). Several multilateral donor agencies drove the participatory paradigm shift, namely the World Bank, the OECD, and the United Nations Development Programme. Two fundamental questions have influenced the donor agenda in particular and continue to drive ideological and donor debates: *whose objectives do participatory policies meet? What activities warrant inclusion under the participatory methodology umbrella?*

The following description of World Bank understandings of participatory development serve as an exemplar of the broader development community's evolution (Bebbington et al. 2006a; 2006b).⁵ In 1986, participatory development was defined at a World Bank Economic Development Institute workshop as "...an active process whereby beneficiaries influence the direction and execution of development projects rather than merely receive a share of project benefits" (Bamberger, quoting Samuel Paul 1988, vii).⁶ The World Bank's Operations Evaluation Department (OED), like most aid agencies of the time, integrated participatory development into project principles as a means to achieve project objectives, not as an inherent right of citizens but rather a methodology for enhancing project sustainability.⁷ By 1994, the Bank had expanded its definition to include beneficiary empowerment as an explicit component of participatory development, "a process through which stakeholders influence and share control over development initiatives, and the decisions and resources which affect them" (Van Wicklin 2001, 3).

By 1997, the World Bank expanded their definition of beneficiary participation to a fundamental component of democratic development (Narayan 1997, 25). Other large-scale multilateral and bilateral donors like the UNDP, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and Asian Development Bank (ADB) followed suit. Many members of the international community also began to expand the notion of participation into more rights-based development strategies as well, promoting participation as

an integral tool for shifting citizens' understandings of their rights, roles, and responsibilities (Eyben and Ferguson 2000; Crawford 2002; Gaventa 2002).

The OECD and Development Assistance Committee (DAC) communiqués from 1990 and 1991, respectively, link “participatory development” to human resource development, equity goals, and enhancing sustainability of services (<http://www.oecd.org>: n.d.).⁸ The OECD saw democratization, human rights and good governance as partially dependent upon participation of the people (OECD 1995). This was similar to the social capital perspective Bebbington (2006a), but continued to frame participatory development as a tool to enhance program objectives: “[Participatory Development] strengthens civil society and the economy by empowering groups, communities and organizations to negotiate with institutions and bureaucracies, thus influencing public policy and providing a check on the power of government; and, enhanc[ing] the efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of development programmes” (OECD 1995, 8).

These representative excerpts reveal the most common components of the international participatory development mandate, which currently coalesces around rights-based, democratic development where empowered stakeholders are actively involved in decision-making related to resource procurement and management. Participation in development initiatives is also seen as a learning tool to shift citizens' understandings of their rights, roles, and responsibilities and for enhancing service delivery quality. However, as one OECD document points out, there are still challenges to dealing with the socio-cognitive dimensions of implementing participatory approaches: “Translating participation objectives into reality calls for changes in attitudes and practices concerning the way activities are conceived, designed, financed, and timed” (ibid., 9).

In the Carere/Seila case, implementing agencies like the UNDP and UNCDF, and bilateral donors such as the Swedish and British development agencies (Sida and DfID) often take responsibility for creating the local program strategies to meet these broader objectives emanating from the international level. Local donor interpretations of international mandates are now highlighted, showing how cognitive dissonance is reinforced at all levels of program formulation and implementation.

6.2. Perspectives of International Donor Agencies Supporting the Carere/Seila Program: The Immediate Socio-Cognitive Environment

Influenced by these international understandings, four donor partners played a fundamental role in the shaping of the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) Carere/Seila program: the UNDP itself, the Swedish International Development Co-Operation Agency (Sida), the British Department for International Development (DfID), and the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF). Even though they exhibited a strong commitment to localizing understandings of international participatory development, their efforts still contributed to the gap between donor conceptualizations and Cambodian realities.

UNCDF played its strongest role during program formulation, while Sida and DfID have played an ongoing advisory and monitoring role, particularly through the implementation of an ongoing permanent advisory group (PAG) that has conducted regular program evaluations. These Seila partners, including the UNDP and United Nations Office for Programme Support (UNOPS) as administrative authorities, compose the program's more immediate socio-cognitive environment. Each of these donor agencies holds an ideological position on participatory development which international donor agency staff are expected to contribute towards the participatory agenda of the Seila/PLG program. The overarching participatory policy strategies engaged by the four donors transformed more theoretical programming initiatives emanating from the international level into targeted local interventions.

Donor descriptions of their involvement in the participatory development process in Cambodia come from a sample of program documents identified by donor interviewees as key program documents driving their agency's involvement with the Carere/Seila/PLG program. Passages related to participatory

development were reviewed in aggregate, with the most representative text included below. Document analysis suggests that UNDP promoted general strengthening of the relationship between state and citizen while UNCDF targeted local-level relationship building to meet this aim. Sida encouraged participatory development activities to be viewed as inherently political, regardless of their nature and DfID pushed for participation to be accepted as a fundamental human right. These four participatory foci resulted in a mix of four tangible program activities: a) active community participation in the community planning process, b) efforts to begin decentralization of some functions and create local government authorities, c) formalization of the planning experiment into a national decentralization model which included extensive training and capacity building efforts directed at program beneficiaries, and d) development of formal partnering arrangements among a broad range of actors.

6.2.1. UNDP

Carere 2 was identified as “an integrated and comprehensive response to the commitments and plan of action adopted at the World Summit for Social Development (WSSD) which took place in Copenhagen in 1995” (United Nations 1995, 4, 30). Participatory development was at the core of the WSSD and UNDP agendas at this time. As such, the WSSD organizers proclaimed anti-poverty programs needed democratic participation and changes in economic structures (United Nations 1995, 42), and recognized the “mutually reinforcing relationship between democracy, development and respect for human rights, and [the need to] make public institutions more responsive to people’s needs” (ibid., 69). In short, “people living in poverty and vulnerable groups were to be empowered through participation in organizations, in particular in the planning of policies that affect them” (Project of the RGC, 1996, 30). In keeping with this thinking, the UNDP’s primary interest lie in considering “how effectively the state serves the needs of its people” (UNDP 1997a, 3), with “decentralization serving as the delivery mechanism” (ibid., v).

The UNDP’s first discussion paper, “Public Sector Management, Governance, and Sustainable Human Development” brought greater focus to what they term as “inter-organizational avenues for bringing about increasing participation,” namely decentralization and civil society institutions (UNDP/MDGD/BDP1995, xvii). The publication promotes “development by the people” through increased participation, which requires a wide dispersal of political, economic, and social power throughout the community. This power allows people to influence the social, economic, and political functioning of society, which the UNDP defines as a cornerstone of human development. The publication advocates that people should thus “have access to a variety of avenues for exercising power and that participation serve as both a means and an end” (ibid., 4).

By 1997, the UNDP’s *Reconceptualising Governance, Discussion Paper 2* had identified accountability and transparency as “effective democratic forms of governance” beyond public participation (UNDP 1997c, 9). The agenda shifted to focus on national political systems which could elicit a minimum public consensus on social and political goals (ibid., 10). Decentralization of responsibilities and resources to local communities was identified as a tool for restoring participation and people’s confidence in the state (ibid., 84-85).

In the *Governance for Sustainable Human Development* policy report, the UNDP defines the act of participation as something which occurs when group members have “an adequate and equal opportunity to place questions on the agenda and to express their preferences about the final outcome during decision-making” (UNDP 1997a, 34). Two indicators of successful citizen participation are cited: the ability of a broad consensus of society to place political, social, and economic priorities on the public agenda and the state’s recognition of the voices of the poorest and most vulnerable in decision making over the allocation of development resources (UNDP 1997a, 3).

The United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) was one of the earliest United Nations agencies on the ground in Cambodia, assessing development needs in preparation for delivering an

emergency response to the refugee crisis. UNRISD defined participation in the Cambodian context as “organized efforts to increase control over resources and regulative institutions...on the part of groups/movements excluded from such control before” (UNRISD 1991). An early policy paper, “UNDP: Cambodia, Public Administration and Civil Service Reforms” (UNDP 1993) describes the expected donor role: “participate substantively, side by side with service seekers, in works identifying and defining programs and projects, in critical analysis of proposals and/or requests for projects, as well as in negotiations between the Cambodian side and contributing organizations” (ibid., 45).

UNDP-Cambodia viewed Carere as a primary vehicle to carry the development agenda forward: “UNDP is uniquely placed to use the Carere capacity and machine as a tool to making a catalytic contribution to the national dialogue on such essential issues as democratic participation, the relationship of civil society to the state, decentralization, and a host of other issues central to the future development of the Cambodian administration and socio-economic structures” (Project of the RGC 1996, 30-31).

6.2.2. UNCDF

The United Nations Capital Development Fund’s primary role in relation to the Carere/Seila program has been participation in program formulation. The Carere 1 experimental model was formulated based on the main methodological principles developed by the UNCDF Programme for Displaced Persons, Refugees and Returnees, Central America (PRODERE) Project in Central America⁹ (UNDP and UNHCR 1992, 12). As well, a number of senior staff have served as technical advisors intermittently throughout the life of the program, managing, as one staff member describes it, “the nitty-gritty of working with local governments and community organizations” (UNCDF 1999b, 29).

The UNCDF specializes in local-level participation and empowerment, with policy goals focused on “promot[ion] of active participation of beneficiary communities at all stages of the project cycle” (ibid., 71) in order to “improve the livelihoods and quality of life of the poor in a sustainable manner” (Stanley 2002, 2), by empowering the poor “to take initiatives and participate in the decisions and processes that shape their lives” (UNCDF 1995, 2). Participatory development is seen as a primary vehicle for the empowerment of local government and civil society, and good governance (Stanley 2002, 2), with two vehicles promoted in particular: political participation through representation and public participation in service delivery (Stanley 2002, 2). A primary contribution of UNCDF to the Carere project was the implementation of Local Development Funds (LDFs), which are small-scale local investments for poverty alleviation which finance local government provision of infrastructure and services or finance the provision of technical support to local authorities (Romeo 1996, 2). Such programs are designed to help “open up local government through increased transparency, participatory planning, and budget allocation procedures; increasing community interest in local democracy and local government through direct involvement in developing financing” (ibid., 38).

6.2.3. Sida

In 2002, Sida produced a series of studies and reports aimed at synthesizing lessons learned in their support of good governance and participation across the globe (Sida 2002a, 2002b, 2002c). Local Sida staff referenced these reports as their guiding directions for policy implementation. These documents are significant in that they link participation to democratic governance (Sida 2002a; 2002b), shifting participation from a purely non-political activity, limited to community activities or development programs (Sida 2002a, 5), to a process through which “people take part in and have influence over political decisions in society” (Sida 2002a, 5). Human rights are the “guiding principles for the substance, as well as for the process of sustainable development” (ibid., 5). For Sida, participation is both a result and a process. Participation can occur on an

incremental scale - from being informed, to being directly consulted, to having genuine influence over decisions, to being fully engaged in decision-making through voting (Sida 2002b, 17). Also of note is Sida's perspective that participation is a conduit for "strengthening the institutional and cultural relationship between the state and society" (ibid., 1). Further, Sida holds that participation needs to take place "within formal government structures, only not in civil society organizations" (Sida 2002b, 17). Sida's participation agenda thus attempts to "create conditions of an enabling environment for development whereby people can collectively decide on the priorities and policies of public life" (Sida 2002a, 4).

By framing development around democratic participation and political equality, Sida links the rights of people and the responsibility of the state in a framework for understanding participation (ibid., 5), firmly transplanting citizen participation into the realm of governance (Sida 2002b, 6). "People need to feel that their participation is regarded as valuable and leads to real influence on the decisions taken by their political representatives. Experience shows that the more influence and access to power over decision making people have, the more prone they are to get involved and to participate" (Sida 2002a, 2). Finally, another key component of Sida's strategy is to create capacity in order to access opportunities for citizen participation (ibid., 7), which has been translated into a critical component of the Carere/Seila program.

6.2.4. DfID

The British Department for International Development (DfID) policies related to citizen participation are less formally articulated than Sida's and leave a wide berth for interpreting how participation is expected to play out. DfID describes participation as a right which "requires that people should have the opportunity to choose their level of involvement in decisions and actions which affect their lives" (DfID 2004, 18). DfID policy documents connect participation in decision-making to human rights, proposing that effective participation occurs when the poor's voices and interests are heard (ibid., 25).

These various perspectives have been detailed in order to illuminate the complexity of donor thinking around program formulation, even after being localized by international staff operating at the country level. Table 6.1 summarizes each donor agency's particular view on participatory development and its influence on the Seila program mandate. The third column corresponds to the typology presented in Annex 6.2. Such views of development significantly diverge from Cambodian cultural, political, and organizational realities during the same historical period they were in currency within international development circles.

It is worth noting that in practice, community development efforts at the local level have far from empowered local citizens or provided incentives for engaging in sustainable development as envisioned by the UNCDF. Political activities are typically the domain of the elite, discouraging mass participation, unlike the Sida vision of citizen participation as an inherent component of the governance process. Citizen participation is rarely seen as a human right by Cambodian leaders. Instead, Cambodian leaders tend to view the poor as ignorant and necessarily dependent on the powerful. In contrast to the DfID vision, citizen participation is typically not defined by local officials as a key component of successful governance.

Table 6.1: Summary of Key Donor Strategies for Participatory Development

Agency	Key Focus	Location on Typology	Summary
UNDP	Focus on relationship between state and citizen critical	Participation as a Means to a Separate End; Democratic Participation	The UNDP strategy could be summarized as an effort to create the widest dispersal of political, economic, and social power throughout the community as possible in order to create opportunities for citizens to express their preferences. At the same time, efforts need to be made to restore the capacity of the state to serve the needs of its people, thus restoring citizens' confidence in the state.
UNCDF	Local-level efforts most strategic	Participation as a Means to a Separate End; Transformational	The UNCDF strategy focuses on local, micro-level implementation strategies which increase community interest in local democracy and local government through direct involvement in financing, political participation through representation, and public participation in service delivery. Active participation of beneficiary communities at all stages of the project cycle empowers the poor to participate in the decisions and processes that shape their lives.
Sida	Participation is inherently a political activity	Participation as a Means to a Separate End; Democratic Participation Emergent View; Participation as a Human Right	Sida defines citizen participation as a human right, as both a result and process (with a variety of activity levels), and foundational to sustainable development and the entire governance process. Thus, participation is inherently a political activity (Sida 2002a, 5) which allows people to have influence over political decisions in society, as well as priorities and policies of public life. The more people see that their influence and access to power influences public decision making, the more they will be involved.

			Capacity to enact these strategies is critical.
DfID	Participation is a human right. The ability to bring the poor in defines success	Emergent View; Participation as a Human Right	DfID defines participation in decision-making as a human right, whereby people should have the opportunity to choose their level of involvement in decisions and actions which affect their lives. Effective participation is defined by the degree to which the poor's voices and interests are heard.

6.3. Donor Organizations as Contributors to Cambodian Sensemaking

A number of cognitive obstacles resulted from Cambodians experiencing a double discourse between the participatory mandate and actual activities associated with implementation. The complex principles embedded in participatory governance and social capital initiatives, shaped by theoretical perspectives en vogue in the early 1990s, drove local program formulation in ways that did not resolve local staff's dissonance. This lends support to the proposition that something unique was occurring at the micro-programmatic level which led to SPPAs' localized understandings of participatory development. Chapters 7 and 8 provide examples of micro-programmatic dynamics which resolved much of the dissonance maintained in other organizations.

The Cambodian political environment was in many ways impervious to outside intervention. However, over time, international development paradigms began to influence Cambodian orientations towards development as the various socio-cognitive environments had time to interact, forming new understandings from all involved parties. The following Figure 6.1 highlights the chronological evolution of sensemaking related to participatory development at both the international and local levels from the arrival of the first donors in Cambodia to the present day.

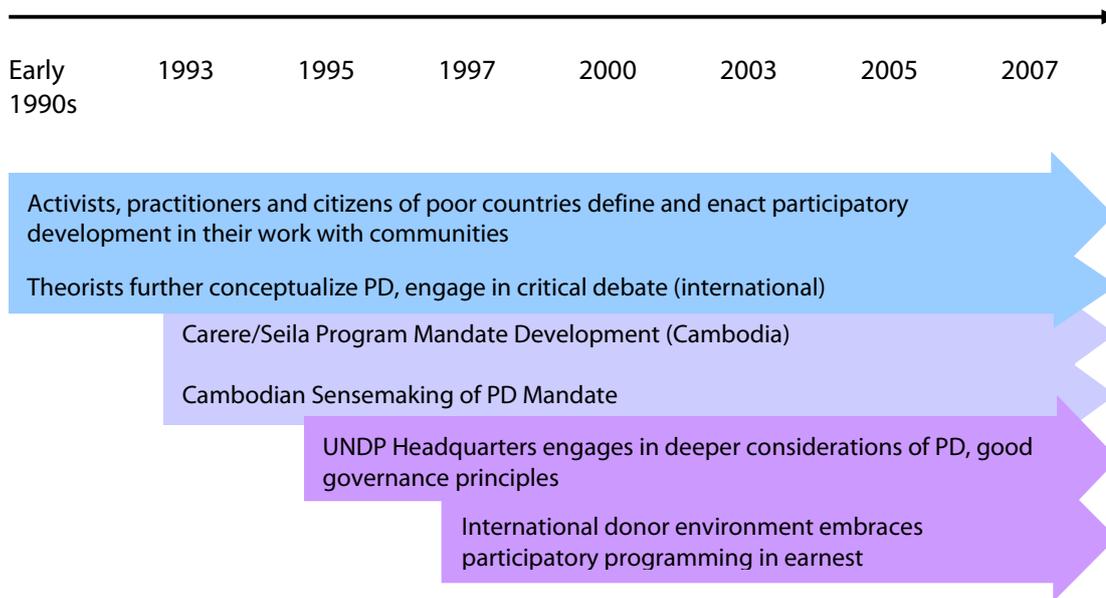


Figure 6.1: Historical Trajectory of the Evolution of Participatory Development in Relation to Seila Program

By the late 1990s, participatory governance was emerging as a key component of the emerging sustainable development movement. In particular, two key streams of development theory were driving thinking in international donor circles as the Carere 1 project was evolving: populist participation and social capital. As a result, participation in governance was increasingly viewed as a fundamental right of citizenship. These two driving ideological streams trickled down from the international level into a wide range of participatory programming activities across country settings. Populist participation proponents reacted to the failure of top-down project planning activities of the past which they critiqued for failing to engage communities' empowerment, capture their local knowledge, or create sustainable development (Hickey & Mohan 2004, 6-8).

In contrast, the early social capital movement focused on building support for local institutions as well as building networks of civil society organizations within and between communities (Bebbington et al. 2006a, 36). Within this movement, the communitarian view focused on developing local-level organizations such as associations, while the network view directed attention at building vertical and horizontal associations between both individuals and organizations (ibid., 37). In later evolutions of the social capital framework, the institutional view would become dominant, promoting the need to strengthen political, legal, and institutional environments in order to ensure the vitality of community networks and civil society (ibid., 41).¹⁰

6.4. Cognitive Obstacles Resulting from the Double Discourse of Participatory Development: Principles vs. Procedures

The second noteworthy dimension of the donor's arrival was their introduction of development models and operating procedures to meet donor objectives. In contrast to the participatory rhetoric promoted by the international donor agencies, organizational dynamics emerged which existed in direct

contrast to participatory principles.¹¹ Across development environments, donor structures and operating procedures tend to be strongly hierarchical, patriarchal, and bureaucratic in order to meet program objectives emanating from headquarter levels, ensuring consistent operations across a variety of program environments and cultural contexts (Blackburn & Holland 1998). Such structures do not typically encourage flexibility or autonomy at local levels of program operations. This may be a necessity of the task-orientation and scope of operations of these agencies, but such environments can also discourage local staff's motivation or capacity to make sense of the programmatic mandates they are charged with implementing (Hornig et al. 2006).¹²

Observations related to this study have highlighted the tendency for donor program environments to marginalize Cambodian staff operating within them (Pearson 2005; Leng & Pearson 2006). The introduction of donor development models in the post-conflict period, where strong interventions were required to bring stability to the country, created the structural conditions for *social marginalization* of Cambodians and Western donor staff, terminology employed by Bell in her study of similar organizational environments in the United States (1990). Although donor agencies have hired many Cambodians during the country's development process, observation of numerous donor agencies in the course of this study have demonstrated how, over time, donor environments have tended to rely heavily on high-dollar technical international advisors, while local staff remain relegated to primarily supportive positions.¹³ As Pearson (2005) has similarly documented, this positioning has required Cambodians to defer to Western executives and advisors who hold the majority of decision-making and operating power within such organizational structures.

A picture of a troubling socio-cognitive dynamic between Western and Cambodian staff emerged in the course of this study. Because of Cambodia's lack of development because of the Khmer Rouge period and civil war, as well as Cambodia's status as a developing country in the North-South equation, it is commonly observed that Western donors have been viewed by both Westerners and Cambodians alike as possessing superior norms, values, traditions, and cognitive and affect patterns. In extreme but fairly common cases observed in the course of this study's field observations and interviews, Cambodians are viewed as inferior, and even deviant, in comparison to Western culture, by both Cambodians and Western development workers alike (O'Leary 2006).

In addition, donor agencies have been documented to impose a heavily patriarchal hierarchy onto the Cambodian context, again emanating from standardized practices from headquarter levels (O'Leary and Nee 2001; Leng & Pearson 2006). One donor advisor working for a bilateral donor supporting the Seila program, who self-identifies as a participatory development expert, inadvertently emulates such a patriarchal orientation as he describes his advisement efforts in Cambodia:

We're all here for three years and what are you going to do? Are you going to spend three years sensemaking or understanding the context, or are you going to try to move the agenda forward? I hope we're getting that balance right by using sufficient consultation and participation. But this will probably be one of the least participatory processes I've ever seen. Well, it is/will be the least participatory process I've ever been in, in any country. And am I proud about that? No, but in a Cambodian context I'm happy to justify that for now. (31, 1667:1676)

He concludes by comparing his work in Cambodia to other participatory development programs he has supported in his career, describing his agency's efforts towards participatory development as "not very participatory, but better than the alternative" (31, 1685:1688).

Patriarchal environments can be demoralizing, as is the case in Cambodia. In such environments where leaders at the top of organizations, whether Cambodian or international, are considered all-powerful, lower staff tend to experience a sense of disempowerment relative to the degree to which they raise leaders

onto pedestals. One SPPA expressed feelings of disempowerment as a low-level worker, unable to request computer skills training while working in a support staff position for an NGO at a time when computers were considered an exclusive tool for high-level officials.

“...when I worked with [one international private relief agency] there was a computer but I cannot use it because they don't allow me to use it because I don't know how to use it...” (6, 428:430).

Although this quote can not be explicitly connected to this individual's internalization of a patriarchal environment, it is worth questioning whether a more egalitarian organizational environment would have encouraged her to ask for training. Through informal discussions and observations of other organizational environments, it becomes obvious that Cambodian staff quickly hit a glass ceiling within their organizational environments, even as leaders speak of empowering and promoting Cambodians into leadership positions in the distant future. Cambodian staff across organizational environments were observed to express frustration for the few opportunities afforded to them to build creative problem solving or analytic skills, or a sense of individual empowerment or ownership over the work since it is being formulated, directed, and monitored by outsiders. Because of the focus on pleasing and performing to outsiders' expectations, Cambodian cultural orientations towards their work are typically ignored, if not denigrated, by Western and Cambodian staff alike.

Thus, Cambodian's structural disempowerment in donor agencies can potentially reinforce feelings of inferiority, passivity and distrust which were gained through personal experiences before entering donor organizations. This material, stemming from personal observation of many Cambodian agencies, and from work within one internationally-supported policy think tank over a fourteen month period, has been included as an example of how donor discourse often directs Cambodian staff to act in certain ways while personal and organizational realities lie in direct opposition. Individuals who hold passive and distrusting schemas and a limited sense of ownership and empowerment over the development experience can bring cognitive obstacles to implementation efforts. The divide between the lofty visions of long-term democratic development and everyday Cambodian experiences of development as members of donor agencies holds the potential to entrench cognitive dissonance, not alleviate it.

¹ Annex 6.1: *Participation in Development Theory and Practice: A Selective History* provides a summary of the evolution of knowledge surrounding participatory development as a theoretical construct.

² At the same time, they warn that opportunities for participation do remain unevenly distributed. These same authors warn that it is wrong to assume that local governments will become automatically more responsive and accountable to citizens as a result of the decentralization process.

³ Annex 6.2: *Theoretical Lenses of Participatory Development* integrates these frameworks into one overarching framework which encompasses the various manifestations of participatory mandate presented in this study.

⁴ See Annex 6.2: *Theoretical Lenses of Participatory Development* for further details.

⁵ The UNDP organizations also served as key institutional environments for the incubation of PD, particularly as related to the evolution of notions of good governance. The UNDP mandate is detailed in a later section since it is more closely related to the evolution of the Carere/Seila mandate.

⁶ The executive summary goes on to elaborate the difference between community participation (beneficiary involvement in the planning and implementation of externally initiated projects), local organizational development (external assistance in strengthening or creating local organizations), and indigenous local participation (the spontaneous activities of local organizations (p. viii).

⁷ For a critique of this perspective, see Cooke and Kothari (2001), Long (2001), or Holcombe (1993).

⁸ The OECD website contains the *Policy Statement on Development Co-operation in 1990s*, the communiqués of the 1991 OECD Ministerial Council, and the 1990 and 1991 DAC High Level Meetings.

⁹ As quoted in Emergency Response Division (UNDP 2001). The broad development objectives set forth included: promoting reconciliation and reintegration of the population, creating mechanisms for communities to access basic services, economic reactivation, and advancing popular participation at the provincial and district levels for sustainable human development.

¹⁰ The most recent incarnations of the social capital field integrate the network and institutional views to create what is known as the synergy view, where both are given primacy in development initiatives.

¹¹ See Joshi & Moore (2000) and Roberts et al. (2005) for documentation of such dynamics across donor and International Non-Governmental Organization (INGO) organizational environments. See Moore (2000) for an elaboration of undesirable forms of inter-organizational competition specifically related to competition for competent senior staff and foreign aid (p. 94-97).

¹² See Roberts et al. (2005) for further elaboration and critique of the qualities of 'managerialism' in international NGO and donor cultures.

¹³ See also Greenhill (2006, 34).

Chapter 7

Formal and Informal Organizational Practices Supporting SPPA Sensemaking of Participatory Development

This chapter details the formal and informal organizational practices influencing SPPA sensemaking of the participatory mandate.¹ The goal is to provide insight into how SPPAs' structural positioning within the program environment and their mandated roles place them at the confluence of a multitude of sensemaking environments surrounding the program. The content provided SPPAs with a broad programmatic vision and proffered a specific roadmap for engaging in participatory activities. SPPA interview texts emphasize a set of principles and activities introduced by international advisors which, in the SPPAs' own words, significantly shaped their perceptions of the program as a supportive, learning-oriented environment.

For the purposes of this analysis, the micro-programmatic SCE is defined as the activities and relationships occurring within the Seila and PLG cultures as well as between Seila and PLG staff, including interactions with government counterparts and beneficiaries. Presentation of the participatory components of the program mandate is thus important to understand how the interaction of multiple environments influenced local understandings of participation in two ways. For one, the mandate is the local operationalization of abstract ideas that exist at the international SCE level. Secondly, the mandate content, presented around four chronologically evolved themes, significantly shaped SPPA sensemaking of participatory development.

7.1. SPPA Positioning and Role

The structuration (Giddens 1979b) of Cambodian staff in the Senior Provincial Program Advisor (SPPA) role in 2001 gave them a degree of responsibility and autonomy which facilitated their ability to emerge as cognitive bridges between local and donor stakeholders. Further, international staff supported the creation of a program culture which was imbued with a sense of safety and support which appears to have been an essential component of the program's informal environment. Without such support, it is doubtful that SPPAs would have had the success they had in engaging in complex sensemaking and testing of their emerging understandings of participatory development, particularly in the early years of the program.

The following excerpts provide insight into how giving SPPAs autonomy in their positions at the provincial level, empowering them with the title and responsibilities of 'advisors' to the provincial Governors and staff counterparts, and creating an expectation that they were to role model, train, and share their own learning with others, facilitated their cognitive alignment with the participatory mandate by requiring a high degree of proactivity in sharing and acting out the mandate.

Throughout the early 1990s, Cambodian staff typically served in supportive roles to international advisors, with only a few being promoted to the Provincial Program Manager position before 2001. Interviews with SPPAs who were former Carere staff highlight the cognitive challenges experienced by most Cambodian staff upon entry into the program. As they were hired into translator, driver, and assistant positions, they

describe beginning to absorb the notion of self-help as a key program principle while simultaneously experiencing a high degree of general confusion, unable to grasp the vision of a long-term, institution-building strategy, and reticent to act out on their growing understandings.

Quotes in Chapter 4 illustrated how current SPPAs equate their high levels of distrust of other Cambodians, international staff, and development agendas in this period to these cognitive challenges. As one SPPA explains: "During that time frankly, I [didn't fully understand], [I was] not very sure about the process just yet, we just learn and then we do it" (3, 2125:2126). Senior SPPAs described feeling a sense of inadequacy when first presented with the mandate in the early days of the Carere period: "The term of participation is already here before, but the deep understanding of the meaning of the term is not much" (22, 957959). Another SPPA explains the challenges experienced by field staff and beneficiaries alike: "They receive documents, but the interpretation of the work in the documents sometimes makes people have different understandings...[There are] a lot of technical words in Khmer that local people do not understand..." (15, 939:970). Another SPPA describes how the Senior Program Advisor had to inspire Cambodian staff in the face of uncertainty in the early days of the program, as they were being promoted into the provincial advisory position²:

He said, "You know, you will be the first Cambodian team, the first group to face this! When you become provincial managers, you have to commit. This job will bring you to another level." At that time, decentralization was not coming out, so we weren't very sure how much we could influence the government. But when it came, oh we were so happy! [We were] all together, at one level! (18, 1478:1484)

As staff were given increasing responsibilities, particularly in conducting Participatory Rural Appraisals (PRAs) and other grassroots activities with communities, they began to gradually test their own sense of the mandate and their own perceptions of citizen participation. As Cambodian staff moved into roles with increasing responsibilities, their sensemaking challenges simultaneously grew. One SPPA described the difficulties he experienced when, in the early days, it was difficult for him to judge the authenticity of community involvement in the participatory processes. He expressed conflicted feelings around observing how communities were 'ordered' to participate, while at the same time he believed that the people 'ordered' to participate enjoyed their involvement in the process:

Some people, they may like [participating], even [though] they [are] ordered to do it. Because what [they are told] is like an order, just tell, "This is this and you have to do it like this, do it this way!" So it is like an order; they don't have choice; they don't have option. (7, 711:716)

SPPAs' structural location within the program also helped them to understand the broader program objectives and their role in achieving them. Two SPPAs describe their observations related to the benefits of the program structure:

If you compare to a long time before, the beginning...not so much structure...Before we do here a bit, bit, bit, but no real shape at all. Right now we have real shape, real structure, and we can see the future more clearly than at the beginning. (17, 2191:2199)

I think the process is what Seila has achieved greater than anything. The process and the output. The output is the system, the structure, the capacity, and the experience. (16, 668:669)

Another SPPA describes how being assigned a high degree of responsibility, as well as autonomy, in his work activities enhanced his sense of empowerment:

The first six months I have to deal with a lot of projects remaining [that are] not yet closed. More than thirty six projects, around two million dollars plus. At the same time, I had to deal with the provincial government counterpart. They used to deal with the expat and they [were] not used to a Cambodian...They look at us like, "This is only a small step from the Barang,³ but now he sits in the expat position!" At the same time I deal with the staff who look at me and say, "He was in the same position as me before, and now he is my boss!" (25, 281:317)

As the most senior Cambodian staff, SPPAs are often the first local staff to engage with external ideas as they are considered in relation to program implementation. Their structural location and assigned roles require them to repeatedly engage with the participatory mandate as they interpret it to other Cambodians. They are required to engage in an ongoing cycle of sensemaking, testing, reframing, and reenacting of their understandings as they interact with beneficiaries and a variety of support and line ministry staff in the course of their duties. As they travel to villages in order to educate beneficiaries on new implementation processes or to monitor community activities, they are responsible for sharing the mandate and making autonomous decisions related to how to best instruct communities to engage in participatory development activities. SPPAs describe this experience and how they must act autonomously as problems emerge:

So in my role, I have to care about the financial and administrative management as they do their work. I have to see what is the participation from the Sangkat counselor and from the village chief and village representative/ (13, 1185:1191)

It's up to how serious it is. If it is serious, we try and meet with the Commune Council or find out the root cause. If it is not really serious, they apply not full commitment and try to restore. The other way [is] that we check [if] our trainer in the province did not provide real training to them or did not bring the full meaning to them. We can also use the government staff to check it out and correct it. (7, 304:310)

The problem [is] the quality of the [Commune Council] presentations, the ability of the people's skills to present their report, and [their ability] to brief the people...We face difficulty in how to prepare for them to say the correct word, to implement what we want them to comment on. Difficult. And you see, even the Seila staff and provincial facilitator or district facilitator staff have limited ideas, so it's difficult to have quality ideas or many skills [which assist] the needs of the community...[They] just present according to the material they have. But to reflect the guidelines into the specific needs of the commune, they face a gap. (15, 741:769)

Although a significant degree of cognitive dissonance might exist as a consequence of SPPAs' autonomy and positioning, within this dissonance lays opportunities for SPPAs to contribute their own interpretations of the development process. This sensemaking and testing process further enhances SPPA empowerment and capacity to assess the program environment at the same time as SPPAs transform the mandate into a set of locally accessible activities. It is important to note that SPPAs perceived being given significant autonomy in tandem with significant support as key to their sensemaking success, which will be elaborated more in subsequent sections:

Scott and Joanne are like our friends, not our bosses. When we have issues or problems we just call them directly... Usually Scott gives us information only, not really instructing us. We say we become [like] a team, not like a boss and staff. (3, 1526:1531)

[Because international advisors are] committed to support, it makes it easy to do our job. We can encourage or push field staff to do something because we have their support. (19, 1804:1806)

7.2. Four Themes on Participatory Development: Excerpts from the Implementation History of the Carere/Seila/PLG Program Mandate

The following material represents a summary overview of the four themes which most significantly drove program structural decisions, implementation activities, and local staff sensemaking, derived from an extensive document analysis of key program documents developed over the history of the program. They are detailed below to shed light on the components of the mandate which appear to have shaped SPPA sensemaking most significantly, particularly in terms of SPPAs' understandings of specific work activities and the program's role in the broader development community in Cambodia. Of note is the fact that the basic content of the mandate was not uniquely different from participatory programming across developing countries in this period. Although there is no doubt that its substance shaped Cambodian SPPAs' understandings, its similarity to other program mandates in other international environments highlights the need to examine the program's socio-cognitive environment in more detail to ascertain other influential factors which shaped Cambodian staff's sensemaking of participatory development.

The program document excerpts that follow, organized chronologically and around four key participatory themes, demonstrate the substance of the SPPAs' work objectives. The first programmatic theme relates to efforts to frame the program's earliest emergency relief efforts in the guise of self-help projects. This effort represented a concerted effort to shift refugee perceptions from a sense of victimization to one of empowerment within the development process. A second prevalent set of activities are related to the shifting of the nexus of program activities from the village level to Commune Development Committees, including the creation of the supportive vertical hierarchies surrounding them. The third programmatic theme is associated with the formalization of the planning experiment into a national decentralization model, which included significant support to capacity building efforts. The final theme is the engagement of partnership as a driving methodology for the delivery of the program mandate. In Chapter 8, SPPAs' descriptions of their activities associated with the mandate provide further insight into their understanding of its substance.

7.2.1. Theme 1: Community Self Help

Authorized in 1993, Carere was an outgrowth of the emergency resettlement and refugee assistance stabilization efforts occurring in the northwestern provinces of Cambodia. The program was designed to help communities recovering from long years of displacement to "regain confidence by improving their lives, by and through, their own means" (UNDP/Carere, n.d., 42). Because of the challenging implementation environment, the project model was framed as an experiment and was marked by its openness to modifications of structure, mandate content, and staff roles. As a result, significant space was made for input by a variety of stakeholders.

The two Carere implementing authorities, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), established two overarching objectives: to provide assistance for the rehabilitation of villages and the reintegration of returnees and to establish capacity-building among local communities and institutions (UNDP/Carere, n.d., 1). Through these earliest donor initiatives, beneficiaries and staff alike were introduced to development as a collective and participatory experience. However, as explored in Chapter 4's presentation of the refugee perspective and in material below, the rationale for why this was the case from the Cambodians' perspective was often far from clear.

Carere would evolve through three distinct phases between 1992 and 1995. Phase 1 (mid-July 1992 to late 1993) was mandated to provide emergency resettlement assistance, establish minimal order, and transition Cambodia into a post-conflict society in preparation for the first elections. Phase 2 (early 1994 through early 1995) was focused squarely on building a foundation for future development efforts in the northwestern provinces, specifically the repatriation of 350,000 border camp returnees, relocation of some 170,000 Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), rehabilitation of basic infrastructure, and improvement of agricultural outputs⁴ (Project of the RGC 1996, 3). Phase 3 (early 1995-1996) represented a concerted shift towards focusing on longer-term development objectives, the beginning of provincial department revitalization, and critical shifts in program ideology in preparation for the transition to Carere 2.

Area-based community development was a foundational element of the initial participatory approach of the Carere experiment, in keeping with populist participation ideologies driving international development during this period. However, as one SPPA's description highlights, the Carere project had to create conditions for ongoing community involvement in the construction and maintenance of infrastructure projects to build a sense of community ownership:

The repairing is the responsibility of the community. For example, right now, this year we're building [a] school. The next year or two, the school [will be] broken. They are not allowed to use [project] money again to rebuild it, and to repair it. This community is the one to rebuild it. Why do we have a condition like that? [To encourage] ownership. (12, 1300:1315)

An important component of the overarching community development strategy was helping community members to engage in a sense of self-assistance in meeting their development needs. As such, Carere staff were to be seen as providing necessary capacity building to community members, but not driving the process. This 'self-help' concept was conceived of as "inter-sectoral, mutually supportive activities, such as agricultural production, job creation, education, communication, health, support to private enterprises, and social services. Emphasis was placed on small-scale infrastructure rehabilitation or economic development activities as the primary means of developing the community" (UNDP/Carere, n.d., 4).

Training was given to form self-help groups in 37 villages to coordinate community labor needs (UNDP/Carere, n.d., 26) in an effort to create opportunities for "intensive consultation and joint action by local community groups and agencies" (*ibid.*, 6). Thirty nine sub-projects emphasizing participation were supported in three provinces, with the following objectives:

- Build up local-level organizations which, for the first time, represented the interests of the communities and which could serve as a basis for their increasing involvement in development activities.
- Establish links between these organizations and existing government or other local agencies.
- Develop a small cadre of field workers experienced in working with the rural communities in a manner which promoted their interests and concerns.
- Introduce general dynamism in development work.
- Strengthen the activities of NGOs and give them a more central role in development. (*ibid.*, 26)

As this excerpt reveals, from the earliest efforts, staff were being trained to focus on establishing strong local-level processes to facilitate self-help oriented community development. As part of the self-help concept, Medium-term Area Development Schemes (ADS) were also developed which focused on engaging the full participation of government and target communities in geographic areas with the highest returnee density to improve institutional capacities at the provincial and district levels (UNDP/Carere, n.d., 40). A primary goal of the program was to “develop awareness among the communities of the importance of local organizations...” (UNDP/Carere, n.d., 26), which was initially done through what were termed ‘Process-Oriented Forums’ in 18 communes in which Buddhist monks, government officials and local communities participated. One program document elaborates on how the notion of self-help was ingrained in such experiences: “The essence of all negotiations was based around the community meeting their own needs with the help of an external agency like Carere. In most cases, this entailed the community initiating the project proposals, drafting project documents, and contributing labor and possibly some materials to the construction project” (UNDP/Carere, n.d., 28-29).

Quick Impact Projects (QIPs) were another key policy output of the area-based community development implementation, intended to rehabilitate damaged or provide new infrastructure such as wells, bridges and schools. However, these projects involved limited participation, typically in the form of beneficiary labor or a small cash contribution. As a result, the projects were criticized for their lack of sustainability due to the poor or complete lack of maintenance they received. Oftentimes, this was linked to a lack of ownership or empowerment on the part of the recipient communities (UNDP/Carere, n.d., 38). As one SPPA describes his perception of the QIPs:

[At] that time [late 1992] we call “quick project,” so we do things very fast...we build one hundred wells and many school buildings...we start to work with the commune at that time but not very well structured. We do not have an elected [official] to talk to...Carere just put all the staff by [themselves]. (18, 143:152)

However, as the security situation in Cambodia deteriorated, donors withdrew support of projects in embattled zones and direct implementation in communities had to stop. Program emphasis shifted from direct community interventions to “planning and assisting the government and the people of the province in project identification, design and implementation. Technical support to provincial departments increased and they, in turn, became the major implementing partners, [enhancing] the participation of local officials in the planning and decision-making process” (UNDP/Carere, n.d., 40).⁵

7.2.2. Theme 2: Establishment of Development Committee Hierarchies

By 1994, donors in Cambodia were generally engaging in projects with more explicit democratic orientations. The creation of Village Development Committees (VDCs) and a supporting vertical hierarchy of development committees were the foundation of the program’s institution-building strategy. The structure was designed to “facilitate a bottom-up planning process” which would “begin with the articulation of development needs and priorities at the village level” and be progressively consolidated upwards (Project of the RGC, 1996: 9). VDCs were envisaged as a “forum for communities to make decisions to solve their problems by mobilizing their own resources, as well as to make decisions on the use of external resources....As the first link in the rural development structure, VDCs were seen to be important... structures...to motivate and empower communities” (UNDP/Carere, n.d., 42). Program documents described the quality of beneficiary participation at the village and commune level they were attempting to create as:

- Driven from the bottom-up.
- Engag[ing] a broad spectrum of local participants (i.e. socially inclusive).

- Focus[ing] on ensuring community ownership.
- Promot[ing] proactive involvement in decision making.
- Build[ing] up local participatory institutions (i.e. commune and village level organizations are expected to facilitate participation (Project of the RGC 1996, 35).
- Includ[ing] contribution[s] to the management and capital and operating costs of the projects. (ibid., 2)

Cambodian staff were heavily involved in operationalizing these ideas. “The focus of technical support was to assist communities to meet their own needs, including initiating project proposals, drafting project documents and contributing labor and materials to projects (ibid., 28-29). Carere’s community development staff visited villages and made initial contact with commune and village chiefs to introduce the idea of the VDC (UNDP/Carere, n.d., 43). Carere staff explained the role envisaged for the VDC, and assisted villagers in the election of seven representatives (ibid., 12).⁶ Although communities were consulted during the needs assessment and project formulation phases of the projects, and participated in implementation activities, this did not appear to be a sufficient condition for instilling a sense of ownership. Program advisors believed that community involvement in more significant decision making processes was needed and Cambodian staff were consulted to provide local input in order to refine the project model (Interview 24).

Shortly after designating the village as the key focus of programmatic support, an internal program debate commenced and communes emerged as the primary local government authority. With this shift, the Carere project was developing a long-term rural development structure which allowed the widest possible participation and dialogue (UNDP/Carere, n.d., 8) and encouraged involvement of both returnees and local communities (ibid., 6). Commune Development Councils (CDCs) were designed to ensure villagers still participated and expressed their needs and priorities in the structure (Leiper & Robertson 2001, 5). CDCs were expected to serve as mechanisms for achieving consensus regarding community needs and priorities at a higher level, thus serving as vehicles for peaceful dialogue and reconciliation (Project of the RGC 1996, 31).

In large part due to the Carere work, the government adopted a new development hierarchy on a national scale in 1995. A hierarchical network of local bodies (Village, Commune, District, and Provincial Development Committees) was created which resulted in a structure that was expected to facilitate a bottom-up, representative planning process. The process was designed to identify development priorities at the village level which were “progressively consolidated upward into commune, district, provincial, and eventually central, plans for development” (Project of the RGC 1996, 9). The PRDC was envisioned to be the coordinating body for integrated area development in the province, and the core structure for Carere 2 support, creating a sustainable institutional model to support development in the long-term. Provincial Departments for Rural Development (PDRD) were also established, representing the first time departments had input into planning preparation (ibid., 14-15). As a result of these changes, capacity building of a range of community and government stakeholders at all levels was initiated (UNDP/Carere n.d., 44).⁷

7.2.3. Theme 3: Formalization of the Planning Experiment into a National Decentralization Model

The final phase of Carere 1, from early 1995 until 1996, was marked by the emergence of a more systematic planning model, which would eventually be adopted as the nationally-implemented Seila mandate. Carere 2 was framed as representing a complete transition from a project oriented towards relief and rehabilitation to one focused on creating the knowledge and capacity necessary to plan and support structural development initiatives at the local level (UNDP/Carere n.d., 46). The Carere 2 program was envisioned to “provide an opportunity to test, in an applied environment, a variety of capacity building and participatory development approaches that [could] inform national policy in the future” (ibid., 20). The

envisioned planning process included capacity building activities, the institutionalization of the planning calendar, and a bottom-up participatory component to “elicit maximum participation from all villagers” (Project of the RGC 1996, 21).

A more formalized planning model, the Commune/Sangkat (C/S) Planning Forum, was developed by international consultants to respond to the specific requirement of the RGC, *Law on Administration of Communes (Khum-Sangkat)* (Kingdom of Cambodia 1994),⁸ which laid out “minimum institutional requirements for public participation” (i.e. economic and social planning) (UNDP/Carere, n.d., 46; Romeo 1999, 7). Participation as a mandate revolved around the development of these C/S Planning Forums, which enabled “residents of the Commune/Sangkat (C/S) to participate in the entire process” of preparation, implementation and review of the Commune Development Plan (CDP) (Article 64: 33). The process was eventually formalized into twelve steps,⁹ which remains a foundational element of the decentralized planning model today. Provincial department staff were to be trained in the application of Participatory Rural Development (PRD) techniques, “assisting VDCs and their members to determine priorities and elicit maximum participation from all villagers” (ibid., 21).

Concerted institution building to support the planning process commenced in parallel to developments at the local level. In early 1995, Carere revised its approach to emphasize human resources and the development of institutions, including (UNDP/Carere, n.d., 40), a primary focus on “institution-building to strengthen the capacity of the public sector agencies to design and implement projects in a participatory manner” (ibid., 27). By this stage, the program and its staff was engaged in quite intricate and tangible implementation activities within an increasingly complex system. Carere staff had to evolve alongside the system, increasing their capacity to offer the necessary training to counterparts and communities to ensure effective participation in the evolving planning system. Part of the implementation challenge included negotiating newfound authority as Carere staff.

Mechanisms and incentives to create partnerships were a critical component of development strategies. A key challenge of the period was creating a financing mechanism that was impervious to corruption by long-established patron-client networks embedded within the state structure at all levels, intended to divert state resources away from their intended purposes. To counter this long-standing administrative orientation, Local Development Funds were introduced as a tool to funnel development funds to the Commune Development Committees and fiscally empower local administrators to deliver needed projects. The engagement of the LDFs and the shift from Village Development Committees to Commune Development Committees were the primary conduits for building the multi-level planning system. LDFs were seen as a mechanism for linking local development and poverty alleviation to the decentralization process, thereby increasing local citizens’ empowerment (Project of the RGC 1996, 20). LDFs also provided resources to the provinces to “respond to the needs and aspirations of its citizenry” (ibid., 20), and “ensur[e] that community projects identified by villages and communes receive[d] support while planning capacity [was] being built” (ibid., 26). They were also expected to “promote partnership with many local civil society organizations to participate in the planning, financing and management of such programmes” (UNDP 1997c, 80-81).

Administrative reform required a careful synergy between the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) and the Carere/Seila model. The national government agreed to further support the planning model by establishing a Seila Taskforce (STF) “to appraise the policy implications of project-related issues as they arise, and develop the national policy framework for decentralized participatory rural development” (UNDP/Carere, n.d., 10). This shift marked the beginning of the formal decentralization reform process with increasingly active involvement by the RGC. As the RGC took on more responsibility (even if still only on paper), the role of Cambodian program staff to interpret, act, and build capacity of colleagues would increase, eventually

resulting in the formalization of the PPM role into a Cambodian-held advisory position, the Senior Provincial Program Advisor, in 2001.

Because Cambodia had experienced “destruction of traditional social structures and cohesion that encourages self-help and solidarity”, there were no mechanisms by which civil society could effectively interact with Government to take part in decision making (Project of the RGC 1996., 16-17). This strengthening of the bonds between civil society and the State was expected to empower the Cambodian rural population to become fully participating members in the development process (CARERE2 website, n.d., 1)The Carere 2 strategy was based on the following specific assumptions (paraphrased):

- The province is a critical focal point and should control funds and receive high priority for capacity training.
- If rural development planning is not to remain a government-driven, top-down process, local capacity for planning and project formulation needs to be enhanced.
- Providing local bodies with limited funds (e.g. LDFs) empowers them to plan and prioritize community level projects.
- National structures need to be built up in such a way as to promote the rightful roles of the State, the private sector, and civil society. (Project of the RGC 1996, 20)

At the same time, it was believed that rural populations would also benefit from identifying project priorities, being members of the projects’ target communities, and as recipient workers of credit, food-for-work, and other income-generating activities (ibid., 19).

Because many of the target groups for services had spent years in refugee camps, they were socialized to receiving aid rather than participating in community development efforts (ibid., 17). To counter this perspective, beneficiaries were expected to make a local in-kind contribution of ten percent, often through provision of labor (ibid., 44). However, at the same time, one of the most important staff activities was building trust of the process:

There [was] a need to build up a sense of hope; confidence and trust among the rural population; for this it [was] essential that both participation and tangible improvements in the quality of life take place as quickly as possible at the village and commune levels through sustainable local projects, while the overall rural development framework [was] being built up. (Project of the RGC 1996, 7-8)

Creating a sense of ownership of the development process by all involved was a key focus during this period. It was recognized that the program would need to begin to scale down the intense international advisement, which would not only lower programming costs or enable the redirection of funds, but also ensure knowledge of the Cambodian situation (ibid., 48). The phase out process was to be gradual and include training of counterpart staff and eventual transfer of responsibilities to them (ibid., 45). A salary supplementation system for RGC staff working on Seila activities was an additional incentive included in this process.

7.2.4. Theme 4: Partnership

With the Seila program being scaled up to national coverage, a more formal partnership structure emerged, both between the newly established Partnership for Local Governance support structure and the RGC’s Seila Taskforce and between the program and Cambodian citizens as a whole. The acceptance of the Seila program was a significant, tangible step towards RGC policymakers' embracing of democracy and

decentralization as guiding political principles. The next decade would focus on institutionalizing the successes of the Carere experiment into formal RGC structures and better prepare the Cambodian population to learn about and embrace more advanced forms of democratic governance that were to be introduced in coming years. In tandem with the emergence of the Seila framework, poverty alleviation was increasingly framed as objective increasingly dependent on engaging good governance strategies (UNDP 2001b, 9). As a result, the emerging vision of Cambodian democracy within the Seila program documents was of a society embracing local governance principles and participating in authentic 'representational politics' (Project of RGC, PLG 2001, 29).

In keeping with general international development trends, this period revealed a shift in program focus to the social capital network focus (Bebbington et al. 2006a; 2006b) of building partnerships (Penrose 2000) and networks (Harriss 2000). Local level participation was now seen as "part of a clear and nationally defined curriculum – integrating into a national identity" (Carere 2 June 2001, 61). The PLG and Seila staff held different, but inter-linked roles. Central level government officials were to mandate local planning processes and the institutions of popular participation (Project of RGC, PLG 2001, 26), while Seila staff were expected to foster a participatory culture through the introduction of participatory planning platforms (UNDP 2001b, 27). RGC staff were expected to form the supporting framework of the Seila reform process including "facilitating contacts and dialogue between the state and civil society and giving all actors clear roles and responsibilities" (UNDP 2001b, 12).

In a similar manner to the Partnership for Local Governance and Seila programs forming a macro-level partnership structure, members of local governance authorities and civil society members were encouraged to create local-level partnerships in support of the development process. Commune/Sangkat Planning Forums were developed as a tool to bring about more partnerships between the RGC, community members, and civil society institutions. Emerging foci were building and maintaining partnerships in support of the reform process, as well as developing consensus on policy issues related to local governance and development (Kingdom of Cambodia Seila Program 2004, 50). Seila program documents described local-level partnerships as a critical link in stimulating this process, identifying such experiences as:

Having the potential to bring about social cohesion, behavioral changes and organization in villages and communes in regions where the social fabric and farm-production organization has been largely disrupted or dismantled by the country's prolonged war. (CARERE2 website, n.d., 1).

The program focused on intertwining the decentralization principles of participation and social inclusion in order to ensure that the structures established under Seila did not serve to entrench existing power relationships within communities, and between civil society and Government authorities (Project of the RGC 1996, 23).

Much of the experimental activities at the province and village level became key design features of the next phase, representing the "best tradition of bottom up planning" (ibid., 4). However, to ensure sustainability, "communities had to be brought into the process at all levels, requiring contributions to the management, capital and operating costs of the project" (ibid., 17). It was determined that civil society engagement in development decision making was also an integral part of enhancing community ownership, so efforts were made to strengthen civil society's capacity to interact effectively with the government. Program advisors felt that "close involvement of local NGOs would minimize risks" (Project of the RGC 1996, 53) to the development process, so NGOs were brought in to "participate in collaborative relationships as partners and recipients" (ibid., 32).

As part of the partnership building process, national consultative meetings were held with key Ministries with which the "UNDP expect[ed] to maintain consistent dialogue on policy issues" (ibid., 4).

Government staff were trained to engage with civil society and beneficiary populations as partners, less so as aid recipients. More clearly articulated roles for all stakeholders were defined. "One hundred staff from development-related departments [would receive] training in participatory development planning techniques to act as extension agents for Seila" (ibid., 36). Ministries would make in-kind contributions – staff, time, premises, equipment (ibid., 44) and sign off on work plans to ensure agreement (ibid., 25). As well, a key expansion of the program's development was increased consultation with Cambodian officials at various levels (ibid., 4).

7.3. Driving Principles Serving as Mediating Forces

Although program structuration and mandate content were consciously designed to facilitate SPPAs' successful negotiation of the complexities of their work environment, the informal micro-programmatic dynamics presented below appear to have been significant complementary forces in the building of a sense of safety and support for SPPAs. In particular, two guiding principles emerged which most influenced SPPAs' holding of collective schema of the program as a safe and supportive space: a) notions of team¹⁰ and partnership embedded in the program mandate and reinforced through explicit framing by international advisors, and b) the introduction of a set of four principles - 'dialogue, clarity, agreement, and respect' by the Senior Program Advisor in late 1996.¹¹

The team/partnership principle appears to have established a spirit of camaraderie between international and local staff while the introduction of the 'Seila 4 Principles' gave local staff a behavioral blueprint for modeling participatory development. Together, these principles appear to have provided SPPAs with a collective sense of working within a supportive organizational environment which motivated them to engage in increasing experimentation with their sensemaking of participatory development.

7.3.1. Invoking a Sense of Team and Partnership¹²: The Power of the Four Seila Principles (Dialogue, Clarity, Agreement, Respect)

The development of a sense of team and the building of close personal relationships between local staff and international advisors were critical components of creating a sense of safety for local staff. This was key in order to encourage experimentation in a culture where many had been reticent to speak or act outside of social norms. As one SPPA explained the evolution in the organizational culture, he described how the program staff came to feel "like a family" (24, 325:330). Another explains how team principles pervaded implementation efforts: "I'm working in an atmosphere of promoting the participatory decision building and a team spirit belief is a part of the world" (18, 1249:1252).

The most tangible manifestation of partnership principles are found in the Seila 4 Principles, introduced in late 1996 and early 1997 to disseminate the Senior Program Advisor's broad vision of project operations. In an interview, the Senior Program Advisor described how at the time, a simpler mantra was needed to bring participatory development into a simple formula to assist staff in conceptualizing their actions in relationship to the broader democracy mandate (Interview 2). The 'Seila 4 Principles' were this tool:

- **Dialogue** is essential to make decisions and achieve development that benefits local people. An aim of Seila is to improve the communication within and between the state, civil society and the private sector. Also those who are usually excluded should take part in discussions and decision-making.

- Genuine dialogue gives **clarity**. All actors need to be clear about their own and others' roles, responsibilities and relationships, so that the development process can be easily and efficiently managed.
- When things have been discussed and clarity achieved, the actors can reach an **agreement**. What has been decided must also be clearly expressed and widely known, so that everybody is familiar with others' commitments and expectations.
- All parties must **respect** the agreements. Clarity and transparency ensure that there is accountability between the state, civil society and the private sector. That in turn increases mutual confidence, and the process of cooperation and development can continue. (Carere2 website, n.d., 1)

The 'Dialogue, Clarity, Agreement, Respect' slogan was later broadly disseminated to local stakeholders to provide them with tangible activities which promoted positive participatory interactions. The four principles were initially used to steer meeting protocol and transmit expectations of ethical behavior. The Seila Principles evolved to serve as a major vehicle for role modeling and learning by doing: Cambodian staff were exposed to the four principles as participants in group meetings, they 'learned by doing' and then applied the principles in their own meetings, introducing them to other staff and beneficiaries. As one SPPA elaborates the process:

Yeah, before starting to work in the province we have to provide training to Seila staff, especially to the ExCom Governor. Otherwise he will use his style to manage the work. First we say, "We manage not by one person, but by using the committee. There are too many to decide, so we have to have a dialogue, have clarity, and then respect [the agreement]." (21, 1362:1371)

Numerous SPPAs described how the introduction of the 'Seila 4 Principles' created a significant guiding beacon which shaped the program's socio-cognitive environment by providing tangible expectations for personal behavior and operations. One SPPA describes their very straightforward application: "When we have any conflict, we use the Seila principles" (23, 1625:1628). Another SPPA explains how the principles detailed his work with RGC staff:

When we address any issues, for example concerning the selection of the project or priorities, what we have been telling the people, to our counterparts is you have to make sure what we will do is based on the results of the needs identified by the people, meaning what we got from the dialogue. When we agree on something you have to respect the Seila principles. If you decide on things not based on the participatory [method], the dialogue, we cannot agree. For example if the unit chief wants to decide on something we have to wait because we need more ideas from different people, meaning we want to have agreement from ExCom member, so we can also use that in practice. This is usually how we use dialogue, clarity and then respect. I think agreement and respect we use to monitor (in the meeting), and then for next agreement, we check. (8, 1456:1470)

Informal observations further elucidated the power of the 'Seila 4 Principles.' In one observed training meeting, the four principles were shared at the opening and participants were instructed to use them to guide their participation. By having an opportunity to act on these principles, participants experienced a model for participation in action. Those who acted out became role models for such new behaviors, demonstrating their effectiveness to others around them. Such a framing of group process is significant in a culture where lower-ranking Cambodians are used to deferring to more powerful people in such environments.¹³

Partnership imagery was increasingly invoked to influence program efforts, framed as a 'win-win situation' for all stakeholders:

This management style we call motivation, to make the staff close to you. We work in the team spirit, [but] sometimes they [e.g. government staff] don't understand. We say, "Team work or team spirit in all organizations! We have to build this because we have common goal and we have to work closely together to achieve the common goal." (21, 420:425)

Yes, here now we say, "the win-win situation." Right now in Seila we have one big word, partnership, because we know that we cannot achieve this goal alone. We need other people who will be in partnership with us. The big partnership with Seila is with the NGO. That's why we are building a partnership, so they can contribute a lot to the process. (3, 393:399)

Other SPPAs defined their understanding of the rationale for creating partnerships, considering it a tool to achieve the work of the program:

Partnership means you have a common goal, common purpose. Then you can share the job or share the strategy with a clear deal or agreement so you can work together, complement and achieve the same goal and purpose. (7, 611:614)

When we have the habit of discussing what we do, what we agree to do...then it becomes like a common change. (3, 2453:2455).

Some SPPAs explain how the notion of team expanded their view of their role as simply an advisor to government staff to considering themselves as a member of a partnership with provincial level government officials. In this way, the notion of team became a tangible tool for doing their work, as one SPPA describes:

Before we advise to POLA, we have discussion among our advisor so we get the idea from the people, not just from myself. (6, 1546:1562)

At least every month I have to spend at least one or two times in the field...Then when I got this information, I tell to the ExCom and Chief of the Unit and then we discuss how we can do, how we can address the issue or problem. For example, if we found there was a lack of participation or if the selection of the project was not really based on the needs of the people, we discuss and agree and take action as a team. (8, 363:371)

Thus, the Seila 4 Principles in particular gave SPPAs a powerful tool for facilitating effective participation of meeting participants as well as provided SPPAs with experience in modeling democratic engagement. The use of partnership helped SPPAs to frame their relationships within and outside of program boundaries in more egalitarian terms, creating a sense of mutual support.

7.3.2. Informal Practices as Mediating Forces: The Role of International Staff in Creating a Sense of Trust, Safety, and Support

At the time of the introduction of the participatory mandate in the early 1990s, Cambodian staff expressed high degrees of distrust and caution, particularly towards non-Cambodians. After existing in virtual isolation for over a decade, Cambodians' perceptions of donor agendas and organizational models were greatly influenced by the behavior of the Western staff that arrived with the first donor projects. The importance of feeling a sense of trust for Cambodians to establish comfort in their activities in support of development projects cannot be overstated. In contrast to the analysis of traditional donor environments in

Chapter 6, the set of unexpected actions and attitudes of international advisors detailed below appear to have supported local staff understanding of international conceptualizations of participatory development in distinctive ways. In particular, international staff's efforts to ensure the implementation process was rooted in local understandings appears vital to the creation of an organizational culture perceived by Cambodian staff as supportive to their sensemaking process (e.g. trust and safety were experienced by members of the organization).

International advisors appear to have created a supportive organizational culture which was accessible to local staff, as well as infused with a sense of equality between international and local staff. As an example, one SPPA praises the Senior Program Advisor for creating a sense of equality between Cambodian and international staff:

Scott is a very strategic manager, not really a very strict manager. Mostly he is compromising. Most people are satisfied with the way he deals with people differently. He looks at them as if they are the same rank or an expat. Scott is very open; he gives them the authority to make decision. (25, 1015:1020)

Another SPPA illuminates how international staff's trust of him helped him to see how trust makes for successful implementation of participatory development activities:

The participation [has] to be honest and people [have to] trust each other. When they trust you, you'll have good participation. (17, 777:784)

In the Carere case, international advisors' efforts to engage with Cambodians in culturally sensitive ways significantly influenced how Cambodian staff responded to the program. Since most early international advisors had worked in the border refugee camps or were former Provincial Program Managers, they were able to identify with the Cambodian experience, especially the SPPA role, in ways that less tenured international advisors were able to do. Such efforts shaped how new international and Cambodian staff alike interpreted the organizational culture upon their arrival (Interviews A1, 4, 27). An example of such a nuanced understanding is illustrated through one international advisor's description of the Cambodian experience:

The way to survive for the past twenty five years has been to remain quiet, to blend in, and to not stand out, and not to show any independence or leadership except within the framework of rigid ideologies imposed from the top. For almost anyone over forty, the habit of conformity and caution is probably unbreakable. As the post-trauma generation comes into its own over the next ten years or so, we will see if they are comfortable building a new society based on participation and independent thinking. (Charny 1998, 2)

Thus, the early international advisors were uniquely qualified to introduce Western rational-linear methodologies to meet program objectives while simultaneously honoring Cambodian perspectives. International advisors' efforts to position themselves as equal learners in the experiment also created a program culture infused with a sense of sharing and equality. International staff's ability to role model their own openness to learning and their ability to adapt to change permeated the entire organization, influencing the nature of the sharing of the mandate to beneficiaries as well.

Senior international staff described how they made efforts to ensure Western cultural assumptions were not automatically privileged. For instance, international advisors encouraged local staff to speak in Khmer as much as possible (Interview 4), and held regular staff meetings where Cambodian staff were broken into small groups where they could discuss among themselves and then provide their feedback on the appropriateness of proposed changes to mandate content and program operations (Interview 2). Giving primacy to the Khmer language was a significant departure from previous donor strategies, increasing accessibility to core program functions by staff and beneficiaries, and enhancing Cambodian staff's feelings of

support by international staff that were making tangible efforts to enhance their learning experience as much as possible (9, 1684:1689). The Carere and Seila programs have also been marked by international advisors remaining with the program for long tenures, demonstrating a strong commitment to Cambodian development, as well as to the program, its staff and its processes. International advisors' expressions of commitment were cited by many SPPAs as important to developing an environment of trust. One SPPA describes the importance of international staff's longer tenure and experience in provincial-level positions to the success of the program: "[Joanne] has experience as a SPPA so she knows about that and the situation at the provincial level" (19, 1702:1703).

Other SPPAs describe how being given leeway to make mistakes while receiving adequate international staff support to work through them was highly beneficial in their testing of their capacities. In support of this idea, two SPPAs describe how the Senior Program Advisor's leadership efforts, particularly his willingness to delegate activities to the SPPAs, supported their belief in their own capacity:

Scott is a very diploma[ti]c man. He understands more culture of the staff. (15, 1303:1304)

He is very delegating to the SPPA, with the staff management, with the problem, when we deal with the counterpart. He really delegates and without a lot of doubt about staff. (16, 859:861)

Scott is not a person like bureaucratic. No. He normally delegates the work to each of those under his level. (12, 1884:1887)

His cultural sensitivity and ability to create a strong emotional connection with Cambodians is noted by another SPPA: "I like the words Scott uses. Very strong. They touch the heart, touch the feelings of subordinates" (18, 1475:1476). In fact, the Senior Program Advisor's acculturation experience, marrying a Cambodian, and learning to speak the Cambodian language fluently¹⁴ created a tangible expression of his commitment to the country which further enhanced Cambodian staff's sense of trust. Another SPPA describes his admiration for the Senior Program Advisor's commitment to the reform process and support of his personal career choices, even as he told him he was leaving his position to move to a government ministry:

I informed Scott, "Sorry. I have already accepted work from the Ministry. If you don't mind, [I] will go ahead and do the work." And Scott is a very good manager. We've been together for some time. He never said, "You cannot do this. [It] is not our PLG work." [Instead] he said, "Ok, everything is for [the] benefit of local governance." (5, 68:76)

Another SPPA describes how Scott's attitude drew him back to the program after he took a more senior position elsewhere:

Many people say Scott is very nice and if they have opportunity to leave they don't want to leave because we have such a good boss. I come back from [another program] because Scott is very good compared to other managers. (16, 899:901)

Thus, it appears that Cambodian staff experienced a collective sense that international staff, particularly the program leader, cared about them and their country's development in a deeper way than experienced in other program environments. This created a virtuous circle where trust and respect of international staff also grew in exchange. Interestingly, this happened even though international advisors held a dominant position in the organizational hierarchy due to the power and authority they held, management was still necessarily top down and dictated by compliance to a range of performance indicators required by program donors, and the program rhetoric matched that of other similar program environments.

Carere documents increasingly framed community participation in planning as a learning process, since "the concept of integrated area planning based on community participation is new in Cambodia and

much more needs to be learned...The project strategy therefore included provisions for a built-in learning process as an integral component of the project to enable lessons to be drawn as implementation proceed[ed], and the proposed strategy revised as needed..." (Project of the RGC 1996, 26). It appears that as international advisors role modeled participatory and egalitarian behaviors in tandem to the mandate's elaboration of a learning environment,¹⁵ the more a solid organization-wide learning culture¹⁶ appears to have developed. The SPPA interviews contain numerous descriptions of ways in which the sense of a learning culture simultaneously motivated Cambodian staff, who in the early days were beneficiaries as much as the rural villagers they were charged with supporting. From the early days, staff meetings were organized to elicit opinions, create debate, and find mutually acceptable solutions (Interview 2), instilling a "participatory approach to leadership whenever [it was] decided something needed to be discussed..." (21, 132:137).

As well, the program developed a hierarchical system of national trainings, cascading trainings, and training of trainers as conduits to spread policy directives broadly and rapidly. Involvement in trainings and regular staff meetings, particularly when SPPAs were selected to lead provincial trainings, was frequently described as a major conduit for SPPAs developing more understanding about the participatory mandate (6, 979:983; 16, 960:962). One SPPA explains the importance of Cambodians learning to lead such trainings:

If the expat can make the Cambodian [trainer] understand well, then training by Cambodians is better...They can understand the language, they can communicate well, they can ask questions because not all the participants understand English. If not speaking Khmer, it will limit the participation. We must make sure the trainer understands the concepts and theories. If the trainer in Phnom Penh [doesn't understand], the whole country is lost. (16, 964:969)

Two other SPPAs describe how they emulated similar learning environments at the provincial level in their own offices, spreading the sense of a learning culture. Their framing of these behaviors demonstrate their novelty in the Cambodian experience:

Sometimes I have a meeting with my PLG staff. Sometimes, they feed back to me, "Oh my boss, I think that something you do is not really good." And I accept it, because it's my learning process. (12, 1611:1617)

Another thing, I appreciate when my staff do something right. When they do something wrong, I just discuss and say ok, because usually when I come up with report, it will not be perfect either! I do research, and then I give them what I think should be done. For example, even for office assistant when she hired I try to find the telephone lesson, I try to search on the internet, this is how you should do when you first receive phone calls, introduce yourself, your company. I write a small text for her, when you are at the telephone you should have a notebook ready and if they want to talk to anybody write their name down. This type of thing...it is small, but it is meaningful for life, the Seila work. If they go somewhere else, it would be hard for them. (3, 2458:2471)

As the idea of a supportive learning culture spread, so did collective schema of the program as a supportive, safe space where SPPAs could confidently continue to experiment with emerging sensemaking of democratic development principles.

7.4. Conclusion

This chapter has shed light on how the program's sensemaking environment was influenced by a set of structural decisions and the content of the program mandate, as well as a set of principles and supporting activities. It also highlights how SPPAs' engagement with the mandate provided tangible exemplars of

participatory activities which facilitated other staff's ability to test their evolving sensemaking of participatory development. The presentation of the informal practices supports the characterization of the Seila micro-programmatic environment as an organization viewed by SPPAs as a safe and supportive environment in which to make sense and test such sensemaking, representing a counter-culture in contrast to the traditional Cambodian and donor organizational dynamics previously described.

¹ This is the first component of a model of organizational sensemaking dynamics which will be fully presented in Chapter 8.

² The decision to promote a group of Cambodians in the position at the same time must have further enhanced the sense of group camaraderie.

³ *Barang* is a slang Cambodian word for Westerner.

⁴ This period was characterized by deteriorating security, decline in donor support, and limited institutional capacity.

⁵ Provincial Support Units (PSU) were established in four provinces in support of the emerging "purposeful rural development strategy" (UNDP/Carere, n.d., 5). PSUs were composed of "technical and management staff able to launch district or community level projects of simple and standard design, [producing] immediate and quick impact... focused on raising the capacity of district and provincial officials to respond to needs of repatriated refugees" (Lanjouw et al. 1999, 235)

⁶ VDCs were the only committee whose members were elected, with forty percent of VDC positions designated for women.

⁷ For more information on additional capacity building models in the Cambodian context, see Ngim 2002.

⁸ See Chapter 4 text for additional information. See specifically Article 64: 33 of the *Law on Administration of Communes* (October 1994).

⁹ Detailed in Annex 7.3: *The Commune Development Planning (CDP) Process*.

¹⁰ For a theoretical treatment of team dynamics in organizational settings, see Katzenbach & Smith (2003).

¹¹ For theoretical elaborations of 'principled management' styles and techniques, see Covey (1990), Blanchard & Peale (1988), and Blanchard & O'Connor (1997). See Hofstede (1980) for empirical evidence of differences in work-related values across international organizational settings.

¹² For further consideration of the notion of partnership in the Cambodian context, see Yonekura (2000). For elaboration of partnership as a theoretical construct within international development settings, see Brinkerhoff (2002). For treatment as it relates to the notion of 'social partnership' (e.g. "hybrid social spaces formed when a range of interests/partners work together for mutual benefit") see Seddon et al. (2004, 123).

¹³ As will be defined in Chapter 8, this type of experience also resulted in a collective 'seeing is believing' experience.

¹⁴ Speaking fluent Khmer is a rare experience for Western development agency executives in Cambodia.

¹⁵ The study and definition of organizational learning cultures has been extensively treated by the following sources: Eden et al. (1979), Fiol & Lyles (1985), Dodgson (1993), Schneider et al. (1996), Gherardi et al. (1998), Hayes & Allinson (1998), Easterby-Smith et al. (1999), Marsick & Watkins (1999), Lakomski (2001), Seo (2003), and Rainbird et al. (2004). For a study of organizational learning as occurs in international project cycles, see Biggs & Smith (2003).

¹⁶ See Lakomski (2001) for elaboration of construct of learning culture in an international setting.

Chapter 8

Narrowing in on the Immediate Socio-Cognitive Environment: Mediating Forces of the Seila Program Environment

The previous chapter's findings have produced a summary overview of a complex program environment. This material provides enough evidence of the influence of the formal and informal practices on SPPA sensemaking to propose a model which captures the dynamics undergirding collective socio-cognitive processes within the micro-programmatic environment. Such modeling is useful since it provides insight into possible socio-cognitive dynamics which might be reproducible in other program environments. Although this program is not reproducible in a 'development template' kind of way (Roe 1991; Pritchett & Woolcock 2004), nor is it this study's intention to create such a template, the model serves to alert the development community to possible process dynamics to be more deeply considered in future programming decision-making.

Figure 8.1 models the elements of the counter-culture dynamic present within the program. The first component was presented in the previous chapter (Box A below) and represents a stream of sensemaking activities further elaborated in this chapter. Box B represents three collective SPPA practices prevalent in interview texts – role modeling, learning by doing and 'seeing is believing' experiences.¹ Box C depicts a set of collective SPPA schema in contrast to generalized schema previously presented. Box D presents 5 individual SPPA practices which appear to have supported SPPAs coming to serve as vital cognitive links in the transmission of international understandings into locally accessible frames of participatory development. These 5 activities are labeled as 'linking' (Box E) and 'bridging' (Box F) mechanisms to differentiate between what appears to be deeper internalizations of the mandate principles, as evidenced by the degree to which SPPAs describe proactive engagement with such principles in the interview text.²

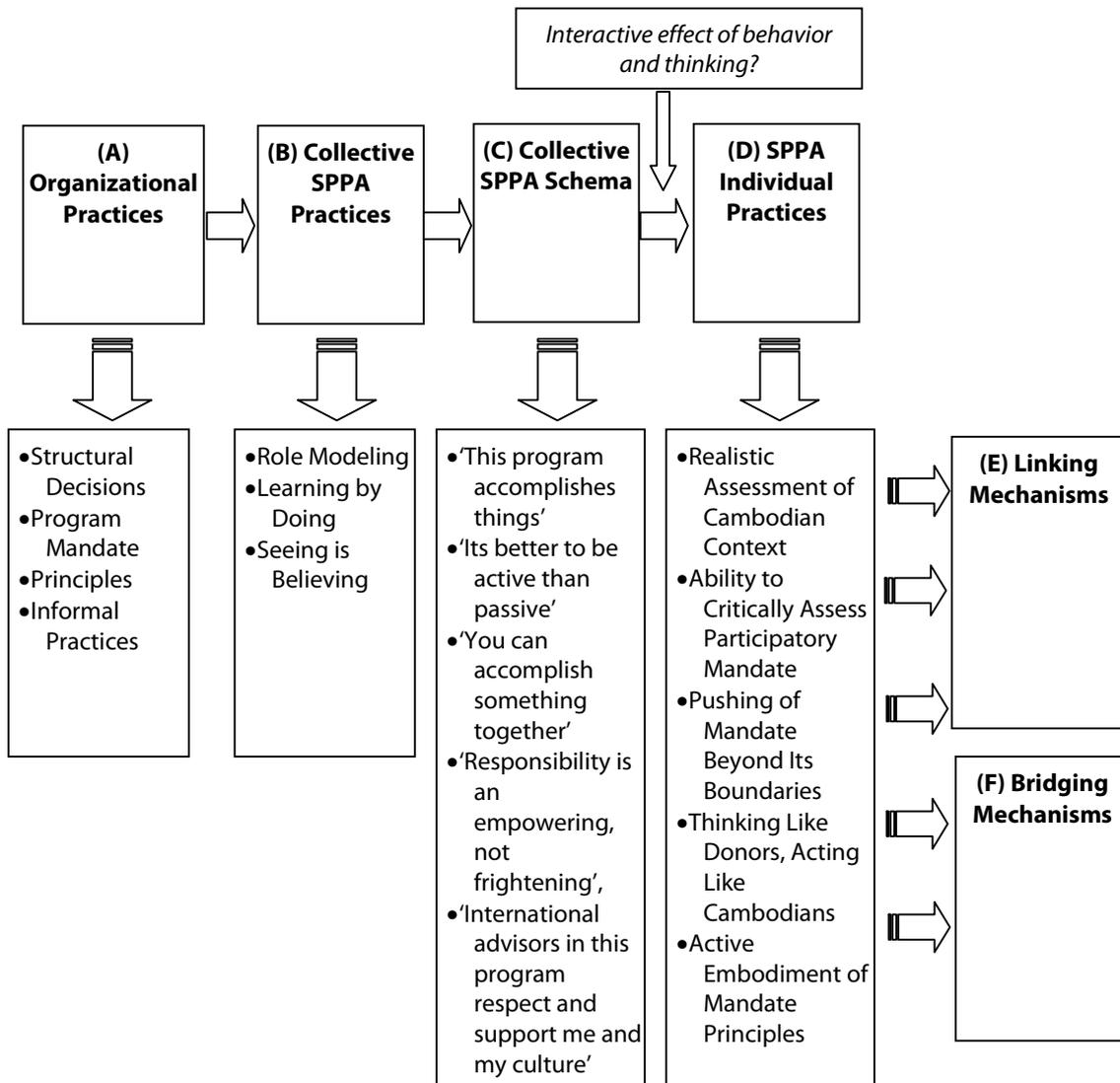


Figure 8.1: Counter-Cultural Practices Serving as Mediating Forces, Diverging from Donor and Government Environments

8.1. The Collective Power of SPPA Practices: Role Modeling, Learning by Doing, and Seeing is Believing

As a sense of safety grew for local staff, so did individual sensemaking efforts. One interviewee differentiates the Seila program from other organizational environments in Cambodia, describing how the program invokes a participatory ethos in program operations and implementation activities:

It's easy to solve the problem but if there is no participation, you start to do it...and then, no ownership of the project at all! It's like we can be the other donor again! (13, 892:896)

Another SPPA describes how over time, he became more comfortable to speak out in staff meetings to discuss the policy mandate: "We learn we can talk, we can react to what the manager is discussing... We tell them our opinion, our thinking" (16, 490:493). However, individual experiences of building capacity to interpret the mandate or expressions of individual empowerment in the SPPA role were not the only ways sensemaking was occurring. In tandem with the proliferation of individual sensemaking experiences were powerful collective sensemaking experiences which dramatically altered micro-programmatic dynamics.

Three collective SPPA practices broadly present in interview texts appear to have played a significant role in expanding SPPAs' understandings of participatory development and their role in its enactment - 'role modeling,' 'learning by doing,' and 'seeing is believing'. In particular, these practices shaped local views of the space as one where experimentation and creativity were encouraged. Local staff's observations of such collective practices over time further permeated the organizational culture with a sense of safety.

8.1.1. SPPAs Serving as Role Models³

Based on the country's political history and the resulting sense of distrust and cautiousness being experienced by a large portion of the Cambodian population, lower-level and newly hired staff typically arrived in their work roles with limited experience of the democratic principles undergirding the mandate. A strong sense of disempowerment was also held by most. Because of this disempowerment, their poor English language skills, and international advisors' inability to communicate in Khmer, the most obvious conduit for learning about the mandate and their role was by observing more experienced Cambodian staff. One SPPA describes how his own attitude and actions served as conduits for others' behavioral changes:

I learned that to be an effective advisory team - not because of SPPA alone - it strongly required [staff] to have a common value of the team. The team must have discipline[e], common team, common value, [and] also have [a] good attitude. [It is] required to work with counterpart. They will look at advisory team carefully, "How is this man advising? How is this man managing?" (22, 603:619)

As staff took on increasing training responsibilities, they in turn engaged in more advanced cognitive processing, enhancing their role as cognitive bridges between the donor mandate and local beneficiaries. Thus, placing Cambodian staff in charge of overseeing others' capacity building required SPPAs to engage a high degree of motivation to build their own capacity and make their own sense before demonstrating new ways to do things to others.

SPPAs describe how they supported RGC staff in the building of the decentralization system. For instance, one SPPA describes her role as a 'listener' which helped her understand how to best support RGC staff with low capacity. This positioning as a listener was an activity which she was role modeling to both her support staff and government counterparts:

We have to listen to the department member, what is their technique what they want to do because if you set with the projects send the projects to them, sometimes they don't have the capacity enough to manage their projects so it will be difficult in control and management. (13, 902:907)

Others explain efforts to change the political culture at the provincial level, role modeling their sense of empowerment to directly engage in dialogue with senior government officials:

I have the chance to talk to Secretary of State, to the Minister when they are visiting the province. I also try to sneak in my observation at the Provincial level: "This is how it works, this is what I think, and this is how it should be." (3, 2513:2517)

Two SPPAs explain how they transfer the program rationale to counterparts through role modeling, not always an easy task as individual SPPAs made their own sense of their work simultaneously:

I think it is our attitude and facilitation skills. We have to inform government staff that this process is for the good of the country, not that this is for the PLG. I explain that PLG is temporary, here for building their strength. (24, 88:93)

The quality of the service that we provide to the people can illustrate good participation. (22, 523:525)

Other SPPAs describe their realization of the power of their position to influence others:

As advisor or manager, we have to be clear first before we tell everybody this is the concept. (6, 1584:1586)

The other staff may need to apply my style, when they ask you to train the training process to the commune and you read the planning process you have to ask yourself why you have to prepare a plan through this process and if they think like that and try to find out why so they will know about this participation purpose. (7, 958:963)

SPPAs also describe how such role modeling is particularly significant in their role as advisors to government staff. To create a sense of equality and respect in such environments was a great challenge for government staff experiencing a high degree of disempowerment in lower level civil service positions:

I treat them as, like, really partners, like we go together. Everything that we have, we share with them. (6, 516:517)

Whenever I start to work my first priority is building relationship and strengthening good communication with the people I work with from the top to the lower staff and from counterpart to PLG colleague...The first step is we go there and then [ask], "If there is any issue or problem, can I ring you?" This is how we open. (21, 73:84)

It's a check and balance, the entry and exit. We have to know where they are. They have to be proactive. The PLG advisor is much more proactive than the ExCom counterpart. We are talking about a lot of skills to transfer. (18, 327:330)

Role modeling might have begun as a one-on-one activity, but it quickly became a powerful conduit for spreading participatory objectives, evolving into an expected activity for all experienced local staff to engage in as a collective organizational front. Several interviewees described this role modeling as putting on a 'white hat' to contrast the 'darker' (e.g. more negative aspects) of traditional Cambodian organizational cultures.

8.1.2. 'Learning by Doing' Activities⁴

'Learning by doing' here refers to a methodology for capacity building utilized in the Seila program by program beneficiaries and staff alike. It includes cycling through observations of activities, followed by acting out and testing knowledge of such activities, as well as adjusting actions based on such learning (Leiper & Robertson 2001: 20-22; Rudengren & Öjendal 2002).⁵ This moniker is also an apt description of the primary method by which program staff were inducted into program processes in their first few months, observing

“how things are done around here” (Interview 2) before being assigned significant responsibilities. It has been repeatedly identified by program staff and external evaluators as a critical component of the program’s success.

Several senior SPPAs identified immersion in a ‘learning by doing’ process in the early days of Carere as important to understanding program objectives:

I observed what senior management or expat managers did in the province. (22, 391:392)

Yes we started very small. From that activity we learned by doing and expanded and improved. (17, 2129:2130)

Through an incremental ‘learning by doing’ process, new staff were able to slowly absorb the organizational culture without the pressure of performing in their new positions. Several SPPAs describe how ‘learning by doing’ is enacted:

I usually tell them, “one to three months just learn. Don’t worry about output.” (16, 697:698)

There was no official session on participation, but the processes we are doing everyday all imply participation. That’s what we learn from...The way of having meetings is a participatory approach. (18, 1046:1053)

Another SPPA explains how observing program activities was a more beneficial learning strategy for him than reading program documents. When taking Cambodia’s history into account and recognizing its lack of a reading culture, the cultural appropriateness of a ‘learning by doing’ educational strategy is apparent:

I gain a lot of what participation means from practice...I can remember from people better than books...But from experience in the planning process, especially the facilitators and PLG staff, they also learn from when they do any kind of work at the community level, the local level. So what are the main points they have to take into consideration? I agree in the book they did not write very clear, but from the practical work, the field, people learn and then keep in their mind and remember what they did before. (8, 789:796, 1106:1113)

This is not to infer that learning by doing is a passive approach. SPPAs also describe how they try to provide a sense of the organizational culture in which new staff are arriving as part of a broader organizational ‘learning by doing’ strategy:

First I explain the process. The LCB should facilitate or should perform PLG staff to only understand the [planning] system to be able to facilitate the process well. They must [also] have the big picture about the program. (22,355:363)

Sometimes for the staff, they cannot adjust because this one, when you learn, you also learn about the change management, so it is a big thing. So that’s why in Seila, we say “learning by doing”. It means you have to be ready for the change. (3, 906:910)

These examples highlight the significance of ‘learning by doing’ in shaping sensemaking of program content and operational procedures.

8.1.3. The ‘Seeing is Believing’ Experience

I describe to my staff, I think trust can happen in three ways: Witness, you observe it, you see it is, you believe it is like this. The other one, probably majority, you don’t see it, [so] you cannot

demonstrate it, but the majority of people say so and believe so. The first demonstration, probably nobody said it. You did not witness it. But when they say so and you try to prove it by demonstration or experiment and it happens like they said, then you believe it. (7, 1397:1401)

This comment by a senior SPPAs illustrates the point that SPPAs' focus in interviews often revolved around describing such 'seeing is believing' experiences (e.g. activities which produced demonstrable results) as vital to trust building. For most Cambodians, trust of the Cambodian authorities appears to be negligible at best. Historically, in best case scenarios, citizens have typically experienced a deficiency in government action. In worst case scenarios, citizens have been the recipients of aggressive and negative acts by the state. In contrast, SPPAs described how 'seeing is believing' experiences built local staff and beneficiary trust in an unfamiliar, alien policy environment driven by external donor edict. The predominance of descriptions of such experiences by SPPAs, even though often in reference to policy outputs related to the delivery of beneficiary services, reveals their significance in forming a SPPA schema of belief in the program concept and operations.⁶

Because of the history of limited output by the state, be it services to a community or salaries to civil servants, tangible outputs such as provision of a sustainable salary, delivery of capacity trainings, and providing SPPAs significant responsibility and autonomy in their work expanded belief in the participatory mandate. Seeing other local staffs' transformation in activities in support of the delivery of the program mandate further reinforced a collective schema that the Seila program was indeed producing change, that it was indeed safe to trust personal observation. One SPPA provides a tangible example of 'seeing is believing' by beneficiaries and describes how such experiences support the implementation of participatory development:

They're learning and they really can see by their own eyes. For example, the development project or activity in their village, they can see a Commune Council. They plan like this, and then after they plan, they can see the real concrete output. They can see [and] this encourages them to participate. (17, 1062:1069).

Another SPPA explains how villagers saw that local government officials were capable of procuring resources, which changed their attitude and behaviors related to the planning process:

I really see that the visible community development really influences people's minds. The quick infrastructure that we did made the local government respected. When they return to the villages, it is easy to engage them, the people start to listen. (18, 896:906)

Another SPPA describes how even if one community has not had a successful participatory planning experience, they can be exposed to others' successes, thereby emulating a 'seeing is believing' experience:

Here with the Seila program, you want the people to believe "I can apply this one and this one." At first you have to demonstrate it, to give good output for the cycle/year. If you do this plan and apply it, people will trust you and you will get participation. But, you have to go for a year to see if it comes true and if not true, [consider if] it is a failure of the process of implementation. [They must] witness it. Let them see it. See that it is like this. If they don't see it, they don't believe it, so we bring people from the place that was not successful to meet people that are a successful. (7, 1408:1417)⁷

A SPPA describes how engaging in partnerships became a 'seeing is believing' experience:

Partnership is the way that we work by using the people around you, who know how to use the plan. They can share any experience. For example in the commune, we encourage the

commune to have the money meeting with all the other donors in the commune [to understand] what kind of thing that they do in the province and what kind of thing they can do to support the [process]. (6, 1026:1032)

SPPAs also elaborate how 'seeing is believing' experiences have influenced government staff, creating belief and buy-in by citizens and government staff alike:

I think right now the program has transferred this kind of style of the management from the PLG to the government. One thing I see [is] a changed attitude [in] the government, even [when] they have ministry level meeting group discussion. We need participation of people's ideas. Not only representation. Like this idea of the group discussion... Before they are sitting and quieting. (12, 2083:2104)

More and more decision making the local government can not do according to their want because people will watch their work. So I see that participation is important not only to observe, to see the process of commune work, but [also because people] contribute their resources to development. Some place they contribute up to 100%. Some 50%. It is a higher percentage of their resources going to the development project, so participation is very important. (22, 264:271)

'Seeing is believing' might be the most important collective sensemaking process observed operating amongst local staff since it is an experience of observing tangible results of program activities. As a result, it has the potential to build a high degree of trust in a disempowered, war-weary, and untrusting post-conflict population.

Together, these three collective SPPA sensemaking experiences provided important conduits for deepening staff understandings of participatory development through both observation and enactment, facilitating more proactive engagement with the mandate in the future, creating a collective 'virtuous circle' of rising belief and trust of the program mandate and process.

8.2. Examples of SPPAs' Collective Schema

The schema examples previously detailed for Cambodian citizens are noteworthy in their embodiment of fear (e.g. *acting out in public is dangerous, there's safety in silence*), distrust of others (e.g. *trusting anyone outside of your immediate family nucleus is dangerous*), caution (*saving face is a top priority above all else in social settings, participation is being present and listening respectfully to community leaders, it's not proper for women to speak out in meetings*), and deference to the top of social hierarchies (*leaders are all knowledgeable and not to be questioned, people at the top of the vertical hierarchy are privileged because of their karmic past and thus deserve to be leaders and are therefore inherently better than me, dependency on the top of social and organizational hierarchies ensures my financial and social status*).

In contrast, the schemas represented in SPPA interview texts include a sense of trust, proactivity, hope, and belief in the Seila process. Although the degree to which the mandate content influenced SPPAs' sensemaking is not directly measurable, a number of collective SPPA schemas were frequently evidenced in interview texts (paraphrased below):

- 'You've Got to Have Trust'
- 'This Program Accomplishes Things'
- 'Its Better to Be Active Than Passive'
- 'Attention to Process is Important to Meeting Development Objectives'
- 'You Can Accomplish Something in Partnership'

- 'Responsibility is Empowering, Not Frightening'
- 'International Advisors Respect and Support Me and My Culture'

The following examples from this broader grouping of schemas support the notion that SPPAs have shifted away from more distrustful and cautious belief systems to trust in collective activities as positive experiences. For instance, two SPPAs describe how they understand the SPPA role as one of interpretation of the program rationale to villagers, requiring an adjustment in their own behaviors to become more proactive in the development process:

To support a hundred percent, after we start up the process, our process, we have the village meeting and we explain to them why we need this. [We explain why they] have to maintain, what the activities in the village [do]. The roads, the well, the schools, it belongs to them. We explain the reason why they need to maintain. (6, 1487:1492)

So [for] the Commune Councilors especially, we really have to...provide the understanding in particular [for] what are the roles and responsibilities, the functions so then they are clear on what they're supposed to do in the controlling. Controlling within the framework, in the framework of law in they're supposed to do. If people don't know very clear[ly] what they're supposed to do, what are the roles and responsibilities, how can they actively be involved in the process? So the first thing is to make them understand what are the roles and responsibilities and then give them a chance to express their ideas. And also to [invite people to] join in a different work implementation at the commune level. It's a way that the people can feel that the work is something that belongs to them. (8, 134:150)

When comparing SPPA interview texts to those of RGC and NGO staff operating outside of the program environment, it became apparent that SPPA descriptions of the Seila/PLG environment as an emotionally safe space represented a unique perspective for Cambodian staff. SPPAs describe how efforts by international advisors within the Seila program to acknowledge, value, and maintain Cambodian culture as a component of program operations assisted Cambodian staff in maintaining, rather than abandoning, their culture as they attempted to assimilate into the dominant donor culture (Interviews 18, 24). One SPPA's description of the trust-building process provides insight into the importance of SPPAs feeling a sense of trust from international advisors:

Usually I don't talk much with the management in Phnom Penh, maybe because of my behavior or character. I am also very happy to work with PLG. I got trust from the management from Phnom Penh. I really have the right to do anything at the Provincial level. (8,976:980)

Maybe something like this makes me and other staff within PLG feel very confident in working within PLG and also in supporting the project. Also people from time to time, based on their roles and responsibilities, they realize this is the way to work as the advisor of the UN project, like that. (8, 1024:1035)

Two other SPPAs describe how building trust has driven program success:

To gain and to ensure the momentum of the project, that it goes on, [you have] to build trust. (25, 281:317)

I give a very high priority in management to trust. What we want from the management in Phnom Penh is trust. Working with Carere and PLG for almost ten years, I never got any

questions from Scott or Joanne. "What are you doing? Do you know our policy?" Something like this, never! (3, 1638:1639)

Another SPPA explains the vigilance he maintained as he helped communities modify their focus from solely on output:

In some places you can judge if one leader always wants to have an end product rather than ensure the process. There is a problem when the product is perfect but you cannot maintain this product. Nobody has really understood the process. It depends on whether you are pushing for understanding or just pushing for the product. It is different. (5, 1414:1421).

Another SPPA explains the importance of building a high degree of participation into all stages of program design, particularly public meetings, demonstrating a driving schema that activity is better than passivity:

We should discuss together, then agree what we discuss, and then do what we agree to do. In this program it is very dangerous and very difficult if you do a lot [of activities] without discussion and without clarity from your partner. For example, in a small meeting, you prepare the agenda and need many people to speak. [During] the process you need people to intervene. If you don't ask people to comment on what you draft and the people involved in the process are not clear on what you said, it will turn [out] like this: "It's your draft. It is your paper, not my paper! You take responsibility for any issue when the problem happens." (22, 914:924)

While another Cambodian staff explains how he has learned that the establishment of processes is much more important than delivering output:

We rarely count[ed] the number of dykes, the number of roads, or the number of schools. We rarely do that. So you know what I mean, the process is really important. We believe by doing this process it will really ensure the transparency. Good governance will happen if the transparent people are accountable to something, if they're doing the work that they're supposed to do. (18, 884:895)

Another SPPA demonstrates his shifting understanding of the need to focus on building development partnerships and create a sense of equality in the work process. He describes how historically, he had to gently reframe a new notion of professional respect based on position, not personal power, to some Carere staff, especially as their position and personal power increased in relation to their advisees (e.g. government counterparts):

Work is work, but outside the work we are the same. Respect, you are not to respect me as the "boss" [e.g. because of his personal power], but respect my role as the manager. It's not me as manager, but my role as manager. It's the same even with the counterparts....I told [PLG staff], you know the counterpart who works very closely with you, they have a much lower capacity than you. Because they are your counterpart and director of the department, you should not disrespect them because they do not have the same capacity as you. What you should consider is their role. You respect their role and responsibility. (8, 1766:1775)

Interview data on the whole reveals surprising differences between general Cambodian orientations towards development and SPPAs' understandings of participatory development. The aforementioned ones give a sense that the SPPAs interviewed for the study were holding more proactive and empowered understandings

of the work of the program and their role in achieving it. The remainder of the chapter provides examples of five ways in which SPPA individual practices were reflecting a counter-cultural dynamic.

8.3. Individual Sensemaking and Practices Promoting SPPAs as Cognitive Links and Bridges

The following manifestations of SPPAs' individual practices illustrate the impact multiple policy environments surrounding SPPAs had on their ability to serve as cognitive 'links' and sometimes even as 'bridges' in support of Cambodians' sensemaking of participatory governance. Possibly less tangible shifts in SPPA individual sensemaking include what I describe as 'linking' activities: a) SPPAs' highly realistic interpretations of the Cambodian cultural context and its relationship to program operations, b) SPPAs' capacity to competently and critically assess the mandate's content, c) SPPAs' following the spirit, rather than the letter of the project rules. Two more solid transformations, which I refer to as 'bridging' activities include: a) SPPAs thinking like donors while acting like Cambodians, and b) SPPAs' personal embodiment of the mandate in personal and work relationships beyond required roles.

8.3.1. SPPAs' Realistic Understanding of the Participatory Mandate

SPPA interview texts frequently displayed ways in which SPPAs have moved beyond more pessimistic and disempowered understandings of development as a result of their work with the Carere/Seila program. Yet, some SPPAs exhibited lingering schemas representative of the cautious and distrusting schemas held by the Cambodian population.⁸ Such negative perspectives can be interpreted to be expressions of SPPAs' holding of a realistic view of the culture they work within, recognizing the components which need to be confronted in the development process.

For instance, SPPAs ability to articulate their early disbelief of participatory development and their observation of others' highly passive engagement provides insight into highly detrimental cognitive blocks against efforts to create sustainable development. As they struggled with their own cognitive dissonance, SPPAs served as cognitive linkages, understanding and articulating others' feelings of a similar nature, turning them into productive inputs which greatly assisted the formulation of program operations into a manner accessible to local beneficiaries.

As another example, the Khmer Rouge left Cambodians over the age of 35 with a tendency towards exhibiting extreme cautiousness, with many citizens averse to personal change or implementation of innovative or foreign ideas. This makes implementation of Western policy mandates particularly challenging. Yet SPPAs were able to articulate the feelings of disempowerment held by stakeholders and express how it might influence the success of local governance authorities, helping international staff to best frame program activities: "...after prolonged wars, etc. people are mostly afraid to express their ideas, afraid of talk[ing] openly, afraid of going and challenging the local authority" (25, 903:914).

Several SPPAs describe wavering beliefs in participation, even as they acknowledge the expectation that they are to engage a participatory approach: "I used to think to get things done, we d[id]n't really need participation because participants slow down everything" (5, 1104:1108). Such negative or partially formed understandings of the development process still serve as beneficial inputs into program decision-making by providing access to a more generalized schema about the process by Cambodian staff and beneficiaries. In a similar manner, another SPPA supports the value of traditional autocratic leadership styles, a common value held by many older Cambodians who have not experienced any other kind:

Sometime I compare the democratic way and the autocratic way. If we are too open to democracy, we will face difficulty in this style. The autocratic way can also solve problems sometimes. (15, 856:858)

Similarly, a third SPPA explains that sometimes he just can't manage to be fully participatory and has to engage a combination of "four different managerial authorities. Sometimes you have to use them...autocratic, authoritarian, democratic, and participatory" (3, 694:714). Although such realistic assessments are not wholly aligned with democratic principles underlying the participatory mandate, these realistic understandings can help international program formulators create participatory processes more closely aligned to traditional understandings of power and authority.

SPPAs also articulated other blockages present in Cambodian cultural orientations related to power. One SPPA explains that it's "probably not necessary to hold a community meeting, talk to people, or get updates on their needs" since Cambodians "think the [National Ministers] know all the answer and they don't want to check whether their opinion is correct" (5, 1327:1340). Although his perception is rather pessimistic, it provides a realistic insight into how local beneficiaries might view community meetings, a vital component of the Seila planning model.

Another key challenge SPPAs identified in creating a participatory planning process is the lack of ownership communities feel over the infrastructure built during the planning cycle, demonstrating a realistic assessment of how the mandate is playing out on the ground. One SPPA describes cognitive challenges experienced by villagers in the implementation process:

Why we do this participation? The participation at this time [is engaged] because we want the villagers in the Commune Council to be the owner of planning and implementation as well...We say that okay, this place needs a school. This place needs a building...Why did this happen? Because [there was] no participation. No decision making. It's not their project! [There was] no ownership... So it means that from about 20 cubic meters [of wood] that [was] transported there, five cubic meters was stolen. (12, 1126:1175)

SPPAs' realistic assessments of Cambodians' low capacity and minimal empowerment, as well as recognizing how such orientations serve as tangible blocks against program operations, also serve as vital inputs:

The Seila program is a part of democracy because they, we, encourage people to participate in the planning system. We encourage the people to say what they think, [identify what is] a good thing or a bad thing [regarding] the authority in the commune level. We encourage the villager to say, for example, if the project implementation in the commune is not good. They have a right to say [but] the people in Cambodia [believe] they are still not allowed to say the true thing. (6, 1131:1140)

Highlighting Cambodians' orientations toward meeting basic survival needs before they can commit to program principles, provides a different insight into what might drive low capacity beyond typically considered structural and historical factors:

I think this is difficult - commitment. It's not because they don't know about the program or understand, but I think the main issue is the benefit. If we look at government policy before, maybe the salary increment for the government staff, maybe we can also [see an increase in commitment]. I think we cannot say [it is] about commitment. I commit, but first I have to survive. (8, 848:853)

Other SPPAs provide rather negative assessments of stakeholder capacity, but in service to efforts to shape the program into a realistic and accessible model. For instance, one SPPA proposes that beneficiaries "are not ready for full rights" (5, 1965:1968), while another SPPA explains that the participatory process is "too complicated for beneficiaries" so the program should "maybe find something that's simpler" (9, 355:356). Others describe specific challenges to the implementation process:

We try to build [RGC staff] even though we know they're incompetent, have no commitment, and they're corrupted. (23, 1836:1839)

To learn how to convince those people [e.g. provincial staff] to work is very difficult. (22, 406:407)

Even at the moment, the Commune Council likes us to tell them what is the way to do it. "Just tell me and I will do it." They don't really understand why they need to do this way. (7, 880:885)

Although such views express a high degree of distrust of Cambodian capacity to engage in development activities, they provide a much needed realism to the program formulation process which might be missed by international advisors.

SPPAs' interpretation of how empowerment and ownership are intertwined are given below, illustrating how SPPAs are positioned to be able to make observations of the micro-level dynamics playing out at the community level. For instance, one SPPA describes how the disempowerment of lower level officials resulted in failures in the hierarchy supporting the local government authorities:

They work already two or three years and they have not been given much power. They still have to work with some of the old system. Like, [for example] they have to go to the District Governor to ask permission and they cannot reject the invitation of the District Governor or Provincial Governor. Many decisions have not yet been given to the Commune Council so at the moment they are not fully empowered. (7, 1125:1131)

These excerpts expose the existence of a realistic lens to interpret beneficiary perspectives in relation to program formulation efforts. Such understandings would also be expected to facilitate SPPAs' ability to interpret the mandate back to beneficiaries in a locally accessible manner.

8.3.2. SPPAs' Critical Assessment of the Mandate's Shortcomings

In contrast to less formed perspectives, many other SPPAs express highly competent understandings of the participatory mandate in interviews, defining the mandate in nuanced terms. Some SPPAs even provide highly critical assessments of the implementation process, showing their ability to recognize the mandate's shortcomings and partial nature of its implementation. In the Cambodian context, critical orientations are rare. Several examples of each are provided below in order to highlight how SPPA competence and criticality can serve as important inputs into program operations. For instance, SPPAs competently define participation from the beneficiary perspective:

Participation means that they are involved, they communicate, they make decisions on what affects them...We try to make sure that every decision made has been agreed...by all the people who are participating. (3, 584:588; 3, 668:670)

Good participation [means] everything is decided by the people by [themselves], not someone [else] decid[ing]. (6, 967:970)

Express[ions] of their voice, their idea, and send[ing] their voice to the top...[so that] the leader thinks to help them. If they think to help, not their decision, but people's decision. (21, 618:626)

In a similar vein, other SPPAs include empowerment as a component of participatory development, providing a lens into how a core principle of participatory development is operationalized at the community level:

Participation means they contribute the idea to us, the vision, [and] also share their knowledge. (23, 710:717)

What is important is the idea of the people that [are] raised, to contribute to the output. (19, 492:494)

Involve[ment of] people to appraise their community and to collect information on the community, and analyze the information and find their own solution. (19, 888:890)

Another SPPA explains how building local ownership can invoke a sense of honor within a community, highlighting a cultural orientation ingrained in the Cambodian psyche:

Because I believe that if people are involved enough, [they will feel] they are also part of the program - what happens in the program or what approach we will take and decisions, I think they will feel a sense of honor together...I see this leadership and participation plays a very important role. It's very important to interact using participatory [approaches]. (18, 1274:1308)

Other SPPAs provide more critical lenses of the process, providing a uniquely Cambodian orientation to the program evaluation process. One SPPA expresses his distress over not knowing where the program mandate is coming from, alluding to the importance of modifying and enacting participatory development from a truly Cambodian frame: "Even the ideas about the participation we don't exactly know where they come from. The donor? The government? Or who?" (8, 764:766). Other SPPAs express a similar concern about the lack of ownership which results from imposing external systems on communities without active consultation:

No one goes and checks out the opinion of the people, if they like decentralization or not. You just apply it and put it and ask them to implement. And if they don't implement, probably you will say they are not participating. But they never have been asked if they like decentralization or not. (7, 662:671)

We have to also think, if we force them too much, they lose their responsibility, their ownership. Sometime in the province there is time pressure, sometimes it has to be done immediately. If we force them, "you have to do this", this makes them feel this is not their job [and] this becomes our job and falls on our shoulders. (8, 1273:1288)

Other SPPAs' descriptions of their efforts to engage community ownership provide critical insights into the micro-level dynamics underlying such efforts:

So what we want is to make sure they understand [that] they could find the problem themselves and [define] what they want to do. And from outside [of the process], that we can provide support to them. It means they start to own the process. (3, 2079:2082)

Even younger SPPAs are able to express the challenges of spreading a sense of empowerment to lower-level government staff. They are also able to articulate how they are forced to confront the unwillingness of higher-level government staff to acknowledge their power as SPPAs. Again, such understandings provide critical input to the design of program operations, including providing appropriate support to less experienced SPPAs:

It's difficult to convince counterpart. I feel maybe I'm too young to deal with them, for example the governor, the deputy governor...But after six months I feel more confident that I can work in this environment. (23, 185:195)

8.3.3. SPPAs' Following of the Spirit, Rather than the Letter of Project Rules

In keeping with a cautious approach, Cambodians' willingness to express creativity or flexibility have been stymied by their country's past history. Stepping outside of certain boundaries was very dangerous during the Khmer Rouge period. Thus, SPPAs' descriptions of their need to embrace flexibility in implementing the mandate, expressing a high degree of enthusiasm, and identifying creativity as an indicator of authentic participatory development represent examples of SPPAs pushing the mandate beyond its boundaries. As well, SPPAs' identification of beneficiary understanding, contribution, and output as representative of a high quality participatory process also support characterizations of SPPAs as more deeply considering the dynamics underlying the successful implementation of the basic mandate.

As a first example, some SPPAs describe how they've learned to embrace flexibility within their role as SPPAs. Such a shift is significant in Cambodia, where rigid obedience to the Khmer Rouge dictums was the only chance for survival. One SPPA explains that flexibility is essential, as they are constantly negotiating between donor expectations and Cambodian ways of doing things in order to ensure participation at the local level (18, 1184:1185). Embracing flexibility in approaching one's job can be interpreted as a significant turning point in a Cambodian's perception of self and their sense of empowerment. Several other SPPAs describe how adaptability is an emerging necessity in the Cambodian development environment:

Before you see, I just sit and prepare the reports by myself when we work in Carere...Sometimes we read the contract and we try to think what is going on at the project site, but now it's different. We do the project, we go to the site, just observe or monitor [the] process: How is it? ...I am really proud of myself, it's like everyday when I reach or I support the ExCom to review the final reports or the final contracts then I'm thinking what was going on at Carere...Sometimes we just ordered them to do it, but now we listen to what they want to do. (13, 624:666)

What we try to manage in the program based on day to day learning, is how to be flexible according to the different situation. This program requires people to change attitude. Changing attitude is not easy. We can not convince them in one day, but be patient. Keep convincing and try to be very good, rational. Especially in my position, [we] try to have enough reason to convince people. (22, 1216:1222)

In a similar vein, some SPPAs describe their belief in participation with a high degree of enthusiasm, including descriptions of the 'extra' efforts they employ to ensure the mandate's implementation:

I believe in the Seila concept. I believe the way this program works very closely with the government official, [such officials] will take responsibility in the future for the better life, for the development of the country. (8, 1069:1074)

Participation for me is not like I offer people some incentive and people come. This would probably meet participation requirement. But for me, I still work for full participation. [This] means people ask for it, require their voice to be heard - not necessarily just to contribute money. There are many ways to participate. (5, 1115:1140)

In the Cambodian context, which has traditionally been a highly conformist and socially hierarchical society, expressions of creativity can represent a significant departure from socially bounded behavior. SPPAs' acknowledgment of creativity by beneficiaries as an important component of participatory development represents a pushing of the boundaries of their own passive orientations:

[Participation includes] expressions of creativity, active dialogue, sharing of leadership with Deputy Chiefs, and [creating] knowledgeable leaders. (16, 752:758)

Participation is very important because participation gets more ideas, to explore ideas, to analyze ideas, to see if one idea is better than another idea, [to evaluate] the positive and negative of that idea...[This assists] in avoid[ing] mistakes. (19, 203:209)

Other SPPAs express their understanding of the importance of achieving a high quality output, not just to engage participatory activities for the sake of meeting the mandate:

Good participation is not only the number of people attending a meeting or contributing resources to commune project, [but] good participation also depends on the quality of ideas and [the] responsiveness of the local government to the people, [as well as] the quality of the service that they provide to the people can illustrate good participation. (22, 519:525)

As well, identifying the importance of the application of training concepts when trainees return to home communities reveals how SPPAs are able to assess the process through a long-term, sustainable development lens:

For the commune level, if they go back and they start to formulate the plan for their own commune, using the system and the theory and the guideline that we train [them on], that would be part of participation of this program. (7, 211:217)

You can look at the products. If everyone is happy with the products, the outcomes of anything, if everybody just endorses it but without understanding, at the end of the day people still not happy and cannot implement it. So that's a lack of participation. (5, 1073:1077)

A final example of SPPAs pushing the mandate is in their frequent, collective focus on maintaining political neutrality in the Seila process, counter to the highly politicized environment in which they operate, a significant evolution in Cambodian perceptions of their work role. SPPAs describe how political neutrality was most often achieved by ensuring all counterparts were properly informed, avoiding appearances of playing favorites, and by assisting staff to develop similarly neutral stances:

I think the governor and the head of units in ExCom, like Finance, they trust us. They trust us and from this, they know that we at PLG are neutral...In Cambodia, there are a lot of political parties in conflict like that. (17, 277:288)

I always tell the PLG staff, "You have to observe if they go to the commune and share the Seila program as the CPP's [Cambodian People's Party]. You have to report to me so I can deal with that in the ExCom." (23, 1238:1246)

These examples of SPPAs pushing the mandate beyond its initial conceptualization provide prime examples of the critical nature of SPPA sensemaking between multiple sensemaking environments. Such pushing facilitated the localization of the international mandate into accessible frames for everyday Cambodian beneficiaries. The remaining two categories of SPPA individual practices represent deeper engagement with the participatory mandate, and are thus conceptualized as 'bridging' mechanisms.

8.3.4. SPPAs 'Thinking Like Donors, Acting Like Cambodians'

Several SPPAs with longer tenure in the Seila program environment expressed thinking much more in line with donors, while at the same time describing ways in which they acted in a manner accessible to Cambodians. These SPPAs thus represent a unique cognitive bridging experience, facilitated in part by SPPAs' location within the program environment. When contrasted against the distrusting and cautiousness schemas previously presented, the following examples provide additional support for the proposition that individual SPPAs were sensemaking in a manner significantly different from everyday Cambodians.

The first example is of a SPPA engaging donor-like thinking. The quote shows that the SPPA acknowledges that regardless of his own personal gain, his primary role is to work himself out of a job: "I'm always thinking about my role as one of leaving. At first, you do the work and then the governor takes over" (24, 205:207). When considering that this SPPA is holding a much esteemed and highly paid position in a poor, post-conflict country with a very limited supply of such opportunities, his perspective presents a very mature understanding of the development process, including his need to sacrifice for the good of the country's macro-level development.

Another SPPA describes how he has engaged 'patience' and 'rational logic' in his efforts to convince people to accept the program mandate. A facilitative approach is uncommon in a country where people are often told what to do, not asked for an opinion. Yet, the following SPPA quote reveals his understanding of the need to employ methods which create beneficiary buy-in to the process:

What we try to manage in the program, based on day to day learning, is how to be flexible according to the different situation. This program requires people to change their attitude. Changing attitude is not easy. We can not convince them in one day but we must be patient, keep convincing them. We try to be very good, rational, especially in my position. We try to have enough reason to convince people. (22, 1216:1222)

A third SPPA describes his attempt to dialogue with lower levels of staff in order to garner new insights into his work and to become a more effective leader. His expression of interest in engaging opinions from people below his social status is noteworthy, as is his concern for the guard's feelings. He also expresses a desire to build the guard's self-confidence, exhibiting concern for him on a personal level. Someone holding a SPPA rank would typically not be concerned with the perspective of a guard:

Staff can offer different inputs. I used to talk at the end of the day and talk to the guard and see how he feels. I bring his confidence and ask him to talk to me...I talk to many people, learn about them. I want them to feel free to come and talk to me anytime. I never have that chance, to be frank, so I want to sit with the staff. (5, 406:420)

Finally, a fourth SPPA describes his efforts to create more transparency in information sharing. In the Cambodian culture, free sharing of information is rare, as holding information is usually equated with holding more power. Something as simple as sharing program documents with others represents a loosening of concern for maintaining power, since withholding information would require staff to explicitly ask for such information, reinforcing the SPPA's personal power (Pak et al. 2006).

It means I leave out all the documents because they might not have time to read them. So we help them to understand, and then when the people talk, they start to understand and then discuss. This becomes transparency, a demonstration, becomes accountability. (3, 1034: 1039)

The preceding examples show how several SPPAs are making sense of donors' assumptions related to participatory development, transcending their culturally-rooted orientations towards issues like personal power and security and are thus evidence of increasing understanding of the mandate's core principles.

8.3.5. SPPAs' Deep Embodiment of the Mandate

Some SPPAs describe applying participatory principles in their personal lives, in their families, and as a guidepost in their relationship with subordinates. While less common, such expressions represent much deeper embodiment of the principles underlying the mandate since SPPAs are applying them in situations beyond their assigned work roles.

One particularly expressive description of a personal transformation linked to being a staff member of the Seila program was made by one of the longest-tenured SPPAs. It is reproduced below as an example of a journey towards a deeper understanding of the principles underlying the mandate:

When I graduated from university...I tend to very aggressively defend my idea. If you do not agree with any idea with your participants, mostly you react and sometimes you can even get into conflict from that idea. When I learn and see the picture, that this is a people environment, we change our ideas and attitudes from learning, from participation. Respect people and don't react and try to find the way around. Talk and reason your idea. That is most important...One of the main things is that we are human and we can develop ourselves and become better people if we receive all [of] the feedback, even if you don't like it...With feedback – you have a chance to know about yourself and correct yourself. If you always object, then people are afraid of giving you feedback and we lose those ideas... When I came out with [one international advisor], I learned to see the bigger picture from a program point of view, rather than the people point of view...We need to plan our future, we cannot rely on the external environment. We need to create, plan it...[have] a better idea of how things are related to one another and work together to achieve that goal. (25, 180:221)

Two descriptions of SPPA's application of participatory principles in their relationship with subordinate staff also represent a similar enactment of the mandate:

One thing that I think is important in my work is [to assist] with staff empowerment so staff can make decisions, participate...And I also think that because I'm the SPPA, I can access more information than the other staff, so I copy information received from the national level to all of the staff. (12, 1978:1986)

[Participatory leadership] means any decision that affects the staff should be discussed in advance, before the decision is made. Whatever, however we are doing (something); it should be a group discussion. Usually you just make your own decision and say, "You do this, you do that", (then) it's not participation. (3, 2431:2445)

SPPAs speak of transferring the mandate's principles beyond required work activities to their own personal lives, showing how they have ingrained participatory schema into the fabric of their closest personal relationships:

I use [participatory principles] in training; but I also apply it in my family because it is very good...The first [Seila principle] is dialogue, it's clear...You have to discuss with your family so everyone agrees, is happy. Even with the children, you have to discuss so that everyone has a common understanding. (3, 1775:1785)

I value the participation, even in my daily life in the family. I treat my children in a way that they should have a voice too. They should think that's what I believe in. (18, 1266:1274)

I think the Seila principle is very good when I talk to the people, like the opening ceremony I never leave it out because it is so important. The principle is: first it's dialogue and two is clarity and the third is agreement and the fourth is the implementation of the respect. So it mean this principle you cannot just use only for the program, but you can use it for the individual family also. (6, 1730:1755)

As a final expression of embodiment, several quotes below describe SPPAs' expressions of their belief that the whole system is changing. Their acknowledgment of this process and their role in it makes obvious their active embodiment of the essence of the mandate's principles:

My incentive is one big one. Is this work contribut[ing] to my country's development, peace and democracy? (3, 2473:2474)

Yeah I think it can be changed, or improve[d] because through development work, coordination, we have the participatory approach that mean everybody, every political party, come together. (17, 2151:2155)

Before Seila program doing, a lot of change in terms of attitude of the people... Before we have difficulty in terms of participation with the villagers, contribution... ownership. But right now okay... because the planning process, again and again, you see that the process ha[s] been important for them... benefi[cial] to them... encourag[ing] to them... They can benefit from [the] project. So it means that right now, we can change attitude. Even though they have no root at this moment. But now the root is start[ing] to grow. (12, 1600:1692)

Embodiment of the mandate represents the deepest engagement with the mandate, serving as a goalpost for program efforts. Although only a few SPPAs appeared to actively embody the mandate, it is possible that in a few more years' time, many more SPPAs would hold similar viewpoints to those expressed in this study.

8.4. Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to narrate the dynamics of the micro-programmatic socio-cognitive environment as embedded within a multitude of broader macro-level policy environments. Figure 8.1 has modeled the program's socio-cognitive dynamics in an effort to provide new understanding of how they influence local understandings of participatory development. The Carere/Seila/PLG program has emerged as a counter-culture to traditional Cambodian and donor agency environments, particularly through the relational qualities of program operations. Specifically, this study provides insight into how this counter-culture was imbued with a sense of safety and support, gave SPPAs the freedom to enact and test participatory behaviors, and how organizational dynamics came to reinforce emerging understandings of democratic development.

The collective sensemaking processes involved in 'role modeling,' 'learning by doing,' and 'seeing is believing' seems to have created a virtuous cycle which greatly increased SPPAs' understanding of the mandate, facilitating their ability to realistically understand the mandate in the Cambodian context, critically assess its shortcomings, push the mandate beyond its most basic formulation, and personally embody its principles.

Although findings are tentative and data does not support more explicit linkages between the components detailed in this chapter, enough evidence does exist that it is reasonable to propose that the relational dynamics present in the program's micro-level socio-cognitive environment produced interactive effects which are responsible for Seila emerging as a unique, counter-cultural environment. In particular, the

introduction of partnership principles in combination with informal manifestations of those principles (through the activities of international advisors) played an important role in demonstrating relationship dynamics. Such tangible demonstrations of respect built trust and as a result, a sense of relationship pervaded the organizational culture. With this came a deeper sense of security, which in turn permitted local staff to further experiment with their emerging sensemaking of participatory development. This allowed more experiential learning as SPPAs could more easily 'feel' their way through the process of individual testing of understandings of participatory development. Such experimental sensemaking might not have occurred in more traditional Cambodian or donor environments with more rigid social stratification.

SPPAs' structural positioning and their resultant responsibility, authority, and autonomy, in tandem with international advisors' support created a sense of a broad learning culture across the organization which also supported more risky sensemaking and testing than might have otherwise occurred. International staff's own often very public experimentation and failing of their own sensemaking related to the complex programmatic environment, provided an additional role modeling for SPPAs' efforts.

If future research is able to better document that these relationship dynamics have indeed produced these types of effects, more attention is warranted to building new knowledge of the dynamics occurring within these relationships. The application of these findings could produce future models of the types of relationships formed between international advisors and locals. If the relational process itself helps people to understand development mandates, we must increase knowledge of how such relationships are initially established and how such dynamics might be role modeled. This would facilitate the extension of the principles underlying participatory mandates into broader social settings.

Finally, previous studies have provided evidence of how the development of individual bicultural framing strategies can mediate experiences that could result in a high degree of cognitive dissonance into opportunities for cognitive alignment (Bell 1990). Biculturalism was first coined to depict how black minority members interact with white society, defined as an individual's ability to function in two socio-cultural environments and negotiate between them (Darder 1991; Barrett et al. 2003, 111).

Biculturalism has typically been used to refer to minority groups existing as sub-group within a larger mono-culture (e.g. Black Americans existing as a subset of Americans as a whole). Nevertheless, this notion might help explain how SPPAs were able to negotiate the interaction of the complexity surrounding their position. Dimensions of bicultural competence can include: knowledge of both cultures' beliefs and values (general cultural awareness); positive attitudes toward both cultural groups (acceptance); confidence that one can live effectively within two groups without compromising one's cultural identity (bicultural self-efficacy); ability to communicate effectively with both groups (dual fluency); possession of a continuum of acceptable behaviors for both groups (broad role repertoire); and stable social networks in both cultures (groundedness)" (Bell & Harrison 1996, 52).

As well, by framing organizational dynamics as the intersection of dominant/non-dominant groups' realities (Calvert & Ramsey 1996, 469), there is further support of Cambodian SPPAs, as outsiders within the Seila donor-driven program environment (Collins 1986, 1999), negotiating two worlds, much like Muller's American Indians (1998) and Bell's black professional women (1990). In such cases, non-dominant groups are located in a subordinate "social location or border space occupied by groups of unequal power," thus required to negotiate between two cultures in their work and professional lives, (Collins 1986, 87). As such, "inequalities are often 'hidden' from dominant group members, but quite apparent to non-dominant group members. Experiences of non-dominant group members in operating in 'mainstream' organizations and overcoming barriers often leads to an understanding of power and power relationships and other aspects of organizational life that dominant group members do not or, perhaps even, cannot see" (Edwards & Polite 1992; Miller 1976; Calvert & Ramsey 1996, 474) In such environments, "many non-dominant group members have learned to listen carefully to the language of others, tuning into non-verbal messages, listening for

underlying intent, and unearthing hidden assumptions and meanings" (Case 1990; Miller 1976; Tannen 1994). "A great deal of energy and attention is given to assessing levels of meaning – this is part of the bicultural expertise. (Calvert & Ramsey 1996, 476)

The Seila case seems to lie in contrast to such "assimilationist cultures [which] require one-way adaptation to minimize the expression of values, norms, and practices that differ from those predominating in the organization" (Linnehan et al. 2003, 1336), instead creating a pluralistic culture. Linnehan defines a pluralistic culture as one which "emphasize[s] mutual appreciation among different cultures and recognize[s] the importance of preserving group identities that differ from the organizational norm" (ibid., 1336). Harquail and Cox (1993) elaborate: "Cultural exchange resulting from interaction among diverse groups is valued in organizations with pluralistic cultures" (quoted by Linnehan et al. 2003, 1336). "Pluralistic organizations also desire their members to engage in cultural exchange or discussions of the values, norms, and issues faced by different identity groups" (ibid.).

Thomas quotes DuBois, who suggests that "bicultural people are able to see outside of themselves and exist within two realities, thus providing them the ability to predict the attitudes or behaviors of culturally different others, understand and interpret their realities, and thus adjust one's own behavior while not feeling that one's esteem is at stake or that one's identity is threatened" (DuBois 1903, as quoted by Thomas 1996, 221). Other authors explain that "marginality is not inevitable; it is likely to occur when a person feels pulled in the direction of the new culture, yet psychologically tied to the former or old culture" (Marger 1985, as quoted in Thomas 1996, 221).

In the case of the Seila organizational environment, it appears that the micro-programmatic dynamics promoted a biculturally-oriented, pluralistic program environment which supported SPPAs adaptation to their bicultural positioning between donor and Cambodian worlds. This appears to be due in large part to the efforts of the long-term international advisors who appear to have made conscious efforts to ensure a sense of social equality within the program environment.

¹ I define collective SPPA practices as such due to the prevalence of activities cited related to these three types of cognitive processes.

² SPPA individual practices are differentiated by the strength they appear to hold to influence others' understanding of participatory development. Although it is unclear the degree to which these differentially enacted activities exist in aggregate, examples are provided later in the chapter to consider how they might represent deeper internalization of participatory principles.

³ For an overview of theoretical understandings of role modeling see Weiss (1977), Kram (1985), Chao et al. (1992), Mullen (2000), Filstad (2004), and Gibson (2004).

⁴ For an overview of theoretical understandings of experiential learning see Kolb (1984). For a treatment of organizational socialization activities, see Shapiro et al. (1978); Feldman (1981), Falcione & Wilson (1988), Senge (1990), Ostroff & Kozlowski (1992), Saks & Ashforth (1997), and Chao (1997). For reference to specific work group socialization, see Anderson & Thomas (1996), Bauer et al. (1998), and Anakwe & Greenhaus (1999). For theoretical considerations of worker entry into organizational environments, see Louis (1980). For empirical studies of newcomer's initial involvement in work-related activities and influence on their organizational fit, see Bauer & Green (1994) and Ashforth & Saks (1998). For treatment of such dynamics in international development environments, consult Analoui (1994).

⁵ See Heng et al. (2004) for examples of how 'learning-by-doing' has been used by some Cambodian managers and their counterpart technical advisors.

⁶ Because of the prevalence of this theme's emergence during the data analysis phase in relation to examples of beneficiary sensemaking, it has warranted further examination. However, there are few examples of SPPAs describing it in relation to their own sensemaking experiences. It is safe to assume that with a redirected line of questioning, SPPAs would interpret their own schema formation process through a similar lens.

⁷ See Scott Guggenheim's chapter in Bebbington et al. (2006b) for considerations of similar perspectives in the Indonesian KDP program.

⁸ Traditional schemas are elaborated in Chapters 4 and 5.

Chapter 9

Conclusions, Recommendations for Practice, and Future Research Agenda

At the heart of Seila/Carere, the vehicle for promoting participatory development is the Local Planning Process (LPP)... The local project is however not the only, or even the main purpose of the LPP. The process leading to the project sets something in motion. Questions are being asked, solutions are being sought. The project is important as a tangible result of the time and energy that have been put into it. But the process also shows to the villagers that their opinions and knowledge are valuable, that they are able to solve their own problems. It stimulates women to take an active part in decision-making, and it makes it clear that it is the villagers who own the project and are responsible for it. The process thus helps to make people's needs and desires known, to put forward solutions, and to mobilize resources. (Carere Pamphlet 1998, 8)

This text provides a program vision for participatory development that is not unlike what might be found in similar program environments across the planet. The program logic is apparent. First, develop a process to elicit participation which will provide a vehicle for beneficiaries to state their demands. This will then create a free flow of information which will result in an improvement in general understandings of the governance process. This will empower participants and lead to an enhanced capacity to enact democratic principles at the community level. In the end, the process itself will fuel long-term understanding and embracing of participation, resulting in sustainable development.

However, such seemingly straightforward programming objectives rarely lead to sustainable development. Measuring and supporting activities such as *promoting a sense of value in villagers' opinions and knowledge, ensuring active participation in decision-making, promoting responsibility, publicizing people's needs and desires, putting forward solutions, and mobilizing resources* is far from straightforward.

Regardless of the formal organizational structures and policies introduced to stimulate perfunctory action on such agendas, policy visions are not wholly actualized unless they are internalized by those charged with their implementation. Sustainable development inherently requires local ownership, which necessitates local buy-in to the principles underlying the development mandate. Achieving local buy-in requires delivering external mandates in locally accessible formats, tailored to address the complexities of local development contexts. Implementation complexity resides in the manner in which multiple and complex forces meet as programs attempt to harness the power of global development trends at the same time they ensure democratic values are appropriately contextualized.

Sustainable development requires grounding – both in the sense that understandings of the principles underlying participatory development must be held by local and international staff working on the ground, but also grounded in the local culture. If not, development agendas remain externally-driven and sustainable development remains an elusive goal. As this study has illustrated, a complex web of sensemaking environments surrounds such implementation processes, creating the potential for a high degree of cognitive dissonance by local staff if such interactions are not understood and mediated by micro-

programmatic efforts. The gap in knowledge of what best mediates such complexity remains vast, requiring greater attention to the human dimension of complex, multi-cultural program environments.

Focusing on one international development program site provides an opportunity to unpack the complex interaction of macro- and micro-level forces which have shaped local understandings of international participatory development. Although this study has been limited to one program environment, its success is particularly poignant because it offers important lessons on how to overcome these obstacles.

This research sought to grasp how to close the cognitive gap between international and local perspectives on participation by considering *how multiple environments interact to create local understandings of participation in international development environments*. To answer this question, five socio-cognitive environments (SCEs) surrounding the Carere/Seila/PLG program environment were identified and documented to examine how they influence local sensemaking of participatory development. These included the international macro-level environment, the Cambodian historical and cultural macro-level environments, the intermediate policy environment surrounding the program (e.g. interactions with government and civil society actors), and the micro-programmatic environment (e.g. the program's internal operations and organizational culture).

This study's primary objective was to make a theoretical contribution to understandings of sensemaking processes in international development. This required the bracketing of a range of factors to be able to deeply consider the socio-cognitive dynamics playing out in policy environments. Thus, little from this study is generalizable to the broader development portfolio without additional empirical testing of the theoretical constructs emerging from this research. As a result, convincing policy formulators of the value of spending time and money to enhance focus on process-oriented activities will most likely require additional research to strengthen these claims. Advocating for the integration of socio-cognitive dynamics as explicit components of future structuration and evaluation activities will require efforts beyond the bounds of this study.

Regardless, these findings do make an important contribution to broader, global policy debates. Large-scale development programs are part of a global 'neo-liberal' project that, despite claims to the contrary, continue to silence and marginalize the poor. Although there are familiar Weberian reasons why large-scale development projects will struggle to incorporate local knowledge (Guggenheim 1998; Pritchett & Woolcock 2004), programs like Seila show that 'big' and 'context specific' can go together.¹ Thus, documentation of the Seila program's socio-cognitive dynamics speaks compellingly to the debates occurring around how to scale-up programming in order to serve a larger swath of the planet's poor, while at the same time grounding such efforts in locally accessible frames (Ferguson 1990, Escobar 1995, Mitchell 2002, Li 2007, Lewis & Mosse 2006, Mosse 2005, Fine 2001, Harriss 2000).

The case can be made for the importance of associating these more theoretical findings with practical policy decision-making concerns if they are to have a significant impact on the shaping of future policymaking activities. Even as the study's findings are not generalizable *per se*, the constructs and frames which have emerged from the research are. It is not this study's intention to oversell the *socio-cognitive environment* construct as an all-encompassing tool for considering such efforts, but instead to recognize that it is one possible approach by which to explore the unique political, cultural, and historical complexities of international development programming environments. *Socio-cognitive environments* should be considered as a framing tool in a larger policy toolbox, as a methodology for mapping and navigating socio-cognitive complexities in other program contexts.

9.1. Study Contributions

The research has drawn from three fields of knowledge to make connections across the macro- and micro-level environments which influence local understandings of participatory development: managerial sensemaking and schema literatures, studies related to domestic and international policy implementation and theoretical conceptualizations of participatory development. Alone, each of these fields has not been able to address the complexity of the socio-cognitive dynamics of international policy implementations. Current sensemaking terminology has not provided sufficient analytic flexibility to capture the various participatory schemas being held in multi-partnered, multi-layered development programs operating across vast hierarchical and geographic distances. Limited knowledge exists of how macro-cultural and historical understandings interact with micro-programmatic framing of policy mandates to influence individual perceptions of the mandate.² There is limited insight into how theories of participatory development interact with local practices in service to implementing participatory programming. However, together these three fields of knowledge have contributed to the development of the study's analytic framework.

This research attempts to examine the micro- and macro-level arenas surrounding the Seila policy implementation environment simultaneously, illuminating how micro-level forces mediate the obstacles delivered by the macro-level forces at play. In addition, the research suggests that the theoretical construct of *socio-cognitive environment (SCE)* is a powerful construct to help bracket complex interactions into analytically manageable components, facilitating new understandings of participation in local actors. This bracketing also clarifies the factors that help one group of local staff negotiate complex cultural and historical realities in juxtaposition to donor conceptualizations of development.

Study findings also suggest that even in program environments with high degrees of cognitive dissonance due to macro-historical factors, and where international development mandates tend to create additional cultural and organizational blockages, micro-programmatic interactions can significantly influence the ability of local staff to surmount strong cognitive obstacles. The unveiled knowledge offers a number of lessons for theorizing about the human dimension of policy implementation and for structuring future policy interventions, particularly regarding strategies for appropriately engaging local staff in ways that could make the mandate more accessible to local beneficiaries, and thus more sustainable.

9.2. Summary of Key Findings

In attempting to answer the study's research question, a complex picture has emerged of SPPAs' sensemaking of the participatory mandate, given their location at the confluence of five socio-cognitive environments (SCEs). The reconstruction of the Cambodian macro-historical SCE, as related to understandings of participatory development, indicate that introducing participatory development could generate a high degree of cognitive dissonance for Cambodian staff of development programs. In addition, examination of the collision of multiple macro-cultural SCEs (donor and Cambodian alike) as the participatory mandate was operationalized has presented a set of additional cultural and organizational obstacles to the policy implementation process.

Against this adverse environment, SPPAs' unique positioning within program operations appears to have facilitated their ability to act as cognitive links between multiple and competing understandings of participation operating in the Cambodian development environment. The participatory components of the program mandate provide examples of how SPPAs' involvement in its implementation further shaped their sensemaking of participation, as well as facets of their organizational environment. Finally, at the level of the program's micro-level SCE, micro-level interactions between international and local sensemakers within the program boundaries further influenced SPPAs' local understandings of participatory development.

The following key findings offer a first approximation of answers to the research question through the juxtaposition of the macro-level forces, which created cognitive dissonance, against components of the micro-programmatic environments which facilitated cognitive alignment.

Key Finding 1: Cognitive dissonance may result from the collision of multiple sensemaking environments in the implementation of international participatory mandates, particularly in post-conflict countries where citizens have historically experienced a high degree of trauma. This represents a key human factor to be considered in the theorizing and management of policy implementation in such contexts.

The ideas and abstract language of the international community's understanding of participatory development starkly contrasts the concrete reality and experience of Cambodians. In particular, Chapter 4 findings provide evidence that citizen participation is far from a historical reality in Cambodia. Cambodia's existence as a Buddhist society with strongly hierarchical social norms (based on traditional patron-client relationship structures) means participation is poorly emulated outside of donor-driven projects and has not evolved into a guiding value for community development or local governance activities.

The introduction of participatory development programming into the Cambodian development experience has been a highly contradictory process. Historically, practical experiences in participation with authoritarian, elite, and external actors have left Cambodians wary of actively jumping into new programs orchestrated by outside forces and delivered to communities under the auspices of development. The ongoing lack of trust in Cambodian communities, strict social hierarchies, and individual senses of victimization and disempowerment represent key cognitive blockages to building democratic participation which can only be overcome through paying explicit attention to localized sensemaking processes. In short, evolving interpretations of citizen participation are a fundamental component of Cambodians' ongoing struggle to identify their relationship to the state and their role as citizens. This is especially the case as the basic concept remains fraught with confusion for many, even as it has emerged as a foundational principle of many donor programs in the country.

Key Finding 2: At the country level, contradictions between traditional organizational cultures, mandate principles, and locally-based donor environments that operationalize the mandate may further enhance the cognitive dissonance of local staff.

Early relief efforts administered by Western aid agencies during the UNTAC period influenced Cambodians' sensemaking related to democratic development for years to come. Refugees and returnees remained generally distrustful of others and crippled by a sense of victimization. Experiences in the refugee camps further aggravated the lack of trust engendered by the Khmer Rouge since camps were highly politicized as refugees arrived from all sides of the conflict. This mindset resulted in a high degree of cautiousness which produced significant challenges to the creation of a Cambodian-directed development process. Because of the non-participatory manner in which early aid efforts were managed, Cambodians viewed donor aid projects such as the Carere emergency relief effort as externally-led initiatives, delivered and controlled by outsiders.

This study's findings describe donor and local government cultures in Cambodia as exhibiting a high degree of bureaucracy and vertical hierarchy. Donor cultures express a high level of patriarchy, while local government authorities are composed of extreme patrimonial networks. From within these relatively dysfunctional organizational environments, local development programs are expected to create program operations which integrate multicultural staff and implement the mandate in a highly participatory manner.

However, organizational cultures surrounding donor programming have exacerbated Cambodian social hierarchies and the marginalization of lower Cambodian staff, both already deeply embedded in traditional Cambodian organizational environments.

Key Finding 3: The Seila organizational model can be viewed as a hybrid program environment which significantly departs from traditional Cambodian government and donor program environments. The mandate and operating principles blended traditional Cambodian cultural orientations with international donor structures and processes. This created an alternative ‘counter-culture’ supporting cognitive alignment between international and local sensemaking of participatory development in unique and productive ways.

Figure 9.1 graphically represents the three organizational types most commonly found in the Cambodian context, showing how a hybrid program environment like Seila can play an important bridging role between traditional and donor organization models while decreasing the potential for negative dynamics present in purely Cambodian or donor organizations.

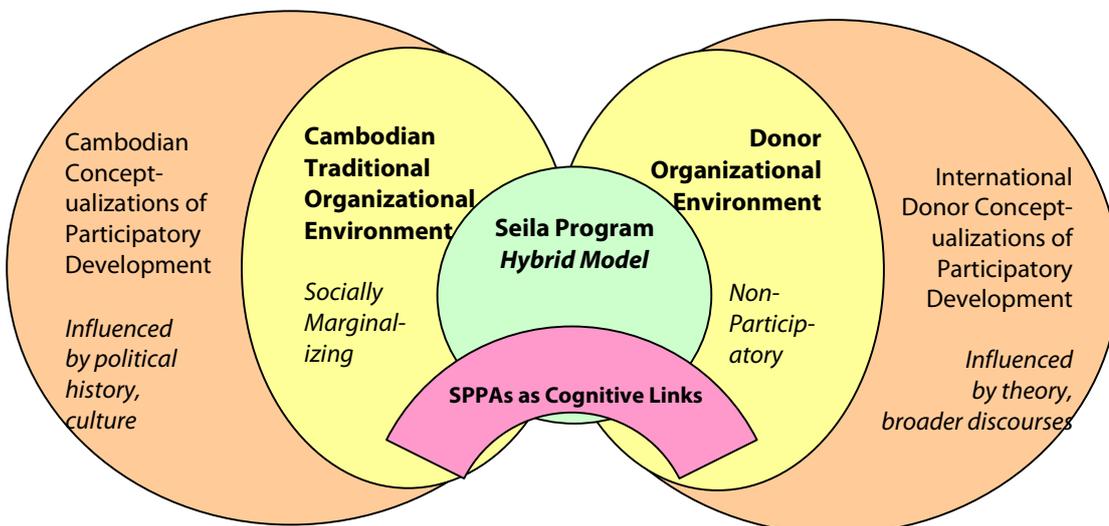


Figure 9.1: Summary Model of Organizational Models in Cambodian Development Context

In the worst-case scenario, local staff are unable to cognitively connect with the foreign mandate. Three scenarios can be hypothesized. First, a high degree of confusion about the content of the mandate results in implementation failure. Second, staff might acquire an ability to regurgitate the mandate’s most superficial tenets without an ability to buy-in to the deeper principles underlying the mandate. Third, staff might retreat into their own mono-cultural frames as a defense mechanism, unable to engage with foreign ideas at any level.

In the best-case scenario, donor program environments within developing countries would represent a hybrid mix of the best qualities of both organization types. Donor models would introduce rational-linear program frameworks while maintaining sensitivity to local cultural realities. This would create an organizational culture where staff could operate in a bicultural manner (Bell 1990; Bell & Harrison 1996),

grappling with and testing their own sensemaking, resulting in their ability to serve as a cognitive bridge between donor ideals and their own cultural interpretation of development mandates.

The case of the Seila program in Cambodia suggests that bringing in local executive managers at key authority levels would facilitate the development of donor-driven organizational models more congruent with local history and culture. In addition to structuring the program as a hybrid model, promoting a sense of a learning culture could lead to the incorporation of 'lessons learned' from staff's previous cognitive alignment experiences. As such, this could facilitate new processes for transferring such learning experiences to beneficiaries.

The organizational environment surrounding the Carere/Seila/PLG program represents a best-case model, marked by a sense of collective and mutual trust and team spirit. The creation of high levels of trust and team spirit are still challenging in cases like Cambodia's, who's history of genocide and civil war virtually destroyed community social capital, beyond tight social networks centered on primary family units. Team building is an important outcome for any participatory programming, as building strong internal work teams is congruent with broader global 'partnerships for development' efforts, a notion which is significantly shaping international development in the present day.

Key Finding 4: Given an appropriate program design, structure, and culture, SPPAs developed a bicultural framing of their work that allowed them to operate and maneuver their way between multiple, contradictory, and complex sensemaking environments. This bicultural framing was essential to facilitate the cognitive alignment process with a participatory mandate that, given unique historical and cultural factors, was foreign to the Cambodian people.

Three sets of conditions within the micro-programmatic environment appear to have facilitated the emergence of a programmatic 'counter-culture' which in turn facilitated the cognitive alignment efforts of local staff. Findings can be grouped by: a) mandate content and program design (e.g. mandate directives related to decentralization, planning, and participatory development), b) broad program principles, structures, and processes, including SPPAs' structural positioning; and c) components of the program culture (e.g. the creation of conditions that allowed testing of SPPA's emerging understandings without fear and leadership activities of international advisors).

With respect to mandate program and design, the Carere 1 and 2 periods included a high degree of experimentation with a number of participatory implementation strategies during its evolution. Cambodian staff members were involved in conceptualizing and enacting the mandate, providing early sensemaking and experiential learning opportunities. This empowered local staff as well as gave them an early sense of ownership over the program mandate.

The Seila program also placed Cambodian staff in centrally structured roles at the provincial level which naturally increased their authority and autonomy while anchoring them in the dominant donor organizational culture. SPPAs' positioning at the confluence of multiple SCEs required an extended engagement with the mandate. This positioning also endowed SPPAs with a sense of responsibility for the transmission of its content to others, thus deepening their understanding at the individual level.

Placing Cambodians in such high profile but non-politicized positions also provided significant role modeling opportunities to other Cambodians, requiring SPPAs to first build significant capacity and empowerment. Thus, much like Bell's documentation of a bicultural frame among professional black women in some US organizations (Bell 1990, 468), the SPPAs' positioning required them to operate biculturally as well. Instead of negotiating between two mutually exclusive worlds, SPPAs interpreted the donor mandate simultaneous to performing in a manner accessible to their Cambodian counterparts and beneficiaries.

Program principles, structures, and processes created an institutional safe haven for Cambodian staff to make sense of the participatory mandates, away from traditionally disempowering government and donor organizational cultures. This unique socio-cognitive environment produced collective SPPA schemas of safety, support, trust, and respect which enabled individual testing and sensemaking of democratic principles. Framing the development process as an ongoing learning experience motivated SPPAs to test understandings of themselves, the program environment, and the participatory mandate in ways which influenced their core participatory development schemas. This micro-program environment offered a cognitive space to address the cognitive dissonance emerging from the participatory mandate vis a vis Cambodia's multiple macro-level environments.

The findings also highlight the importance of proactive international advisors committed to forming a supportive organizational culture within which local staff could test their sensemaking of new development ideas. International advisors demonstrated participatory principles in their engagement with others, actively modeling these principles. They held highly developed relational skills, cultural awareness, motivation, and commitment to support the human relationships at the foundation of the policy implementation process. More importantly, they purposely crafted an organizational environment in which Western cultural assumptions were not automatically privileged and Cambodian cultural orientations were given significant consideration. Cambodian staff were thus able to uphold, rather than abandon their culture as they attempted to assimilate into the donor organizational culture.

It appears that emerging individual senses of empowerment and ownership enabled SPPAs to examine and process newly presented values differently than Cambodians trapped in distrustful and cautious orientations. This processing occurred even when ideas ran strongly counter to traditional Cambodian thinking about governance and citizenship. In the supportive Seila program environment, where a sense of trust and support had already been cultivated, it seems SPPAs were able to give primacy to donor views over their own pre-engagement schemas of participatory development. It could be interpreted that SPPAs adopted a 'corporate identity' as members of the Seila counter-culture which facilitated their ability to cognitively negotiate direct conflicts with core Cambodian cultural values, promoting cognitive assimilation.

9.3. Significance of Study Findings to Theory and Practice

While tentative, the study's findings promise to have important theoretical implications for the sensemaking and policy implementation fields, providing new evidence of the human dynamics undergirding these processes in the international context. They also offer some implications for practice in the particular context of international participatory development programs.

9.3.1. Implications for the Sensemaking and Policy Implementation Fields

This study contributes new language and thus, new ways of conceptualizing activities surrounding complex international policy implementation processes. In particular, this study promotes the elevation of human input, especially cognitive processes, as a significant factor to be considered in future policy implementation research.

Suggesting that organizational culture is an incomplete descriptor to understand the human dimension of complex international policy environments, this study has offered the alternative construct of *socio-cognitive environments (SCEs)*, which more realistically characterizes the socially-constructed nature of the international policy implementation process with its nested and interdependent environments. Introducing the SCE construct facilitated the multi-level mapping of participatory programming efforts in one

national context, to help explore how micro-level sensemaking activities are linked to macro-level forces within organizational environments.

This study's empirical focus on mid-level managers' responsibility for policy implementation innovates both the policy implementation and cognition literatures. Hill and Hupe (2002) propose that new knowledge of how mid-level staff "receive and transform the efforts of others to 'mandate' them" (Hill & Hupe 2002, 120) holds potential to contribute powerful new information to the policy studies field. Taking up this invitation demands an approach that considers the cognitive dimension of implementation. This is particularly true in the context of participatory development, where studies have proposed that the usefulness of participation as a policy tool relies heavily on the interpretation of participating actors (Korten 1980; Sachs 1992; Thompson 1995).

Review of the sensemaking and schema literatures highlights the lack of study of mid-level managerial sensemaking in international policy implementation environments, particularly in geographically and culturally dispersed development environments (Nelson & Wright 1995; Blackburn & Holland 1998). Bringing the sensemaking literature into the complex reality of development, this study takes up Hill and Hupe's call and applies it to an international context, thus illuminating the implementation process beyond single country studies' contributions of the past. The findings suggest that agency structure and operations, national history and culture, and broader program environments intermingle to influence these actors' enactment of their roles.

The study also hints at the numerous potential clashes of perceptions around the policy implementation process that can result from great geographical and cultural distances between the introduction of an idea at the headquarters level and the actions taken by staff in local field settings. Findings suggest that consideration of both macro-cultural and historical as well as program- and organizational-level factors may be essential for understanding managerial sensemaking and thus a factor to consider for international policy intervention design. This is particularly true in environments without histories of democratic governance or suffering from traumatic conflict.

The study also provides insight into how agency structures and operations can significantly influence individual and collective sensemaking in such environments, even serving as mediating forces against obstacles generated by the macro-level environments surrounding the micro-level policy environment. This contributes new insight into three knowledge gaps related to these environments: the role of micro-level decision-making activities (Long 2001), the role of individual agency (Cooke & Kothari 2001) in meeting implementation outcomes, and the capacity of national program staff and government officials to implement development programs (Bhatnagar & Williams 1992).

9.3.2. Implications for Theorizing about the Human Dimension of Participatory Development

Minogue has highlighted the challenge of Western donors' introduction of rational-bureaucratic organizational models to counter traditional organizational cultures since they can exhibit an excessive amount of rigidity, inflexibility, and unresponsiveness (Minogue 2001). This has enormous implications for theorizing about the human dimension of implementation and points directly to the contradictions that local staff and beneficiaries may experience when trying to make sense of their experience.

This study documents the kinds of cognitive obstacles to implementation which can arise when Western styles of program management are transplanted into developing country contexts. This is particularly the case when they conflict with historical and cultural experiences that influence indigenous orientations to leadership, management, and bureaucratic hierarchy. Non-participatory environmental dynamics, such as those found in traditional Cambodian and donor organizations, hold the potential to undermine the implementation of participatory programming by enhancing cognitive dissonance of local

staff grappling with the core principles underlying participatory development initiatives. Even in participatory-leaning environments, local staff must negotiate a complex labyrinth of participatory development initiatives.

When local staff find themselves working in foreign administrative cultures, charged with implementation of donor models brought from outside their base culture, they can suffer from a high degree of cognitive dissonance. Poorly executed multicultural environments can result in overwhelm, confusion, discontent, and social marginalization of all actors, but particularly for those from the local, and thus subordinate group, who will try to fit into the dominant international agency organizational culture.

In the U.S. context, Bell highlights the relevance of considering the dynamics of subordination that arise from racio-ethnicity and historical processes influencing the position of people in organizations (Bell et al. 1993, as quoted in Muller 1998, 6). Collins developed the notion of '*outsiders within*' to illuminate "how a social group's placement in specific, historical context of race, gender, and class inequality might influence its point of view on the world" (Collins 1999, 86). Hence, it is important to locate organizational experiences within socially and historically specific contexts (Segura 1992; Segura & Pierce 1993), as this study has done.

The sensemaking literature offered lenses to better understand local perceptions of participatory development which helped to inadvertently uncover a bicultural framing effort within the organizational process. Although minorities in dominant society have been studied in the US and expatriates operating in foreign cultures have been researched in the international arena, the notion of biculturalism as an organization-specific experience in international work environments has not been applied (Barett et al. 2003, 111). Even though the notion of biculturalism has developed out of a different context, it may prove to be a powerful construct to analyze organizational dynamics in multi-cultural environments that are essential to implementation. This is important because international public management theorists have acknowledged a lack of understanding of how cultural and organizational diversity in transnational environments influences program outcomes (Lindenberg & Bryant 2001; Mohan & Stokke 2000).

The bicultural literature can also provide insights into how dominant and subordinate groups interrelate in such environments and how such relationships among individuals in these groups can influence program culture and dynamics. For example, this literature highlights how, at an individual level, many non-dominant group members expend a lot of time and energy "trying to figure out how to assimilate" (Calvert & Ramsey 1996, 475). In contrast, LaFromboise et al. (1993) proposes that the understanding and effective behavior in two different cultures of a bicultural individual, termed *bicultural competence*, better enables him or her to cope with the stress of acculturation. In the Seila case, international advisors' efforts to incorporate Cambodian cultural understandings into program operations may have lessened the effort Cambodian staff had to put forth to assimilate into the donor program environment. The international advisors' efforts also seem to be an expression of their own bicultural competence, as well as their concerted effort to transfer similar competencies to their Cambodian counterparts.

Applying the bicultural lens to the organizational level provides insight into how the Seila program's emulation of a bicultural environment contrasted the Cambodian government and donor environments to such a degree that it can be considered a *counterculture* to these models. The Seila program environment seems to have emulated many of the conditions LaFromboise et al. (1993) identified as critical to building bicultural self-efficacy. This author describes bicultural self-efficacy as the "belief or confidence that one can live effectively, and in a satisfying manner, within two groups" (LaFromboise et al. 1993).

This could be applied to this study's case. As SPPAs negotiated managerial challenges, serving as communication channels between agency executives and beneficiaries, they became important interpretive forces, increasingly framing their work through a bicultural frame. LaFromboise (1993) quotes Gist and Mitchell's definition of the process by which bicultural self-efficacy can develop, which is quite similar to dynamics documented in the Seila environment: "self-efficacy develops through repeated task-related

experiences and changes over time as new information and experience are acquired (Gist & Mitchell 1992). In other words, “feeling confident that one can effectively navigate two cultures is an outcome of doing and having done so” (Bell & Harrison 1996, 52).³ Similar activities within the Seila environment may have been the secret to SPPAs’ cognitive successes.

9.3.3. Implications for Practice in International Participatory Development Programs

Previous policy studies of international development implementation processes have hinted at the challenges of transferring good governance (UNDP 1997a; World Bank 1997, 2001, 2004) and capable state initiatives (World Bank 1997) onto neo-patrimonial organizational environments. This is the case since empirical evidence supports the possibility that such reforms can actually come to operate in tandem to neo-patrimonial processes without radically altering the dominance of the neo-patrimonial order (Van de Walle 2001; Craig & Porter 2006).

Findings suggest that the idea of designing micro-level socio-cognitive strategies that incrementally mediate neo-patrimonial organizational environments is thus promising. These environments can, in the process, become multicultural and mid-level staff can act as bridges between the various cultures. Explicitly designing supportive socio-cognitive environments surrounding participatory policy programming in countries without historical experience of active citizen participation is particularly important.

Findings also point to the importance of hiring international staff that are both *capable* of emulating participatory principles in their work environments as well as express *motivation* to nurture the development of similar views in local staff. At the same time, placing local mid-level management staff in positions with significant autonomy and support can enhance their capacity to act as successful cognitive bridges between donors and local front-line workers and beneficiaries.

Findings also hint at the idea that including local staff in policy formulation activities in the early stages of program design might enhance cognitive dissonance in initial engagements with participatory programming, but prevent similar dissonance at later stages in the implementation process. Providing adequate support for staff engaged in such cognitive testing would be a critical component of the process.

Future studies which facilitate the measurement of sensemaking dynamics against policy outputs, and eventually even policy impacts, would enhance findings such as these for policy formulators in program environments across Cambodia and globally. Of course, measuring policy impact, not just program activities and outputs, remains a general challenge across program environments. Thus, in the short-run, in order to increase attention to process dynamics and promote them as a factor worthy of inclusion in future implementation modeling, efforts should be made to begin to integrate the measurement of such activities into traditional monitoring and evaluation strategies. This would provide a data base for future study.

Like Tandler’s case studies of local-level policy implementations in developing countries (1997), this study also highlights the importance of having local front line workers who demonstrate an unusual dedication to their jobs, hold a sense of mission, and embody increased flexibility and responsiveness in implementing policy mandates. SPPA buy-in of the participatory mandate appears to have led to much greater empowerment and ownership of the program’s mission. This study also supports Joshi’s (2003) interpretation that the internally driven commitment of front-line workers to the values underlying that which they are charged with implementing is also critical. Commitment cannot develop as long as the working experience produces cognitive dissonance, which points to the importance of creating cognitive alignment.

In service to these aims, the following types of questions might be asked before participatory interventions are instigated:

- What understandings of citizen participation do local stakeholders maintain?

- In what ways do local histories and understandings create cognitive dissonance for local stakeholders when confronted with international interpretations of participatory development?
- What promotes cognitive alignment between international and local understandings of development?
- What organizational processes spark local understanding? What narratives support cognitive alignment?
- How can donors realign international organizational dynamics in line with local organizational dynamics to facilitate more supportive organizational environments?
- How can participatory development rubric be merged with traditional orientations to enhance the best of both worlds while limiting negative aspects of both environments?

This study's findings are particularly significant as international development efforts increasingly focus on delivering democratic principles alongside more tangible infrastructure-oriented projects. As democratic development initiatives expand, development will be measured less by the delivery of tangible outputs and more so by the degree to which local stakeholders have understood, bought into, owned, and embodied democratic principles in their personal relationships and daily activities. As a result, programming initiatives will increasingly demand attention to the human dimension of development.

9.4. Data Limitations

The study of the human dimension of policy implementation processes has been limited in the past due to the inability to measure individual sensemaking experiences of such activities. With the emergence of the Social Constructionist paradigm, socio-cognitive dynamics have become an influential component of understandings of organizational dynamics. Studying group sensemaking dynamics assists in understanding individual sensemaking and action, enhancing our knowledge of the human dimension of policy implementation experiences.

However, this exploratory research also has design limitations. Key has been the inability to operationalize internal sensemaking of individual staff and the limitations associated with capturing inter-subjective sensemaking experiences. Nonetheless, this study has been worth pursuing because it has added new empirical evidence to the expanding knowledge of a poorly understood cognitive process in an understudied policy environment. Because of the limited literature on sensemaking in international policy environments, much of the data collection process was used in service to developing a theory of the sensemaking experience.

I chose an ethnographic approach to the study since it represented the best conduit for observing sensemaking in action, a social phenomena best considered in its natural context, as well as the organizational culture in which individual managers operate. Finch (1986) highlights the fact that ethnographic studies "examine process as well as outcome," and "provide explanations that are adequate at the level of meaning as well as the level of cause" (Finch 1986, 161). Rist (1984), as quoted in Hammersley (1992, 125) argues that ethnographic studies are able to take account of a diversity of perspectives and changes over time in such perspectives, as well as allow documentation of actual beliefs and behaviors existing behind official or public fronts. Ethnography also provides a multitude of sources of evidence (Hammersley 1992, 125) in a complex policy environment such as the Seila program, which helps reduce potential bias. Yet, the study suffered from some limitations in attaining its goals.

This study documented generalized feelings of distrust and cautiousness in the Cambodian population which were readily apparent in the interview setting as well, particularly for interviewees working outside of the Seila program (such as government or local NGO staff). SPPAs were not inclined to respond to interview questions requiring a critical evaluation of their superiors. For instance, SPPAs were reticent to

evaluate their boss in a critical manner, which I hypothesized to be due to a tendency to avoid publicly criticizing others. This makes sense when considering the face saving orientations documented in the course of the fieldwork. Alternatively, this may have been due to a sense of indebtedness to “big bosses” (e.g. patrons) at the top of SPPAs’ vertical work hierarchies.

As a result of such orientations and extensive involvement in program evaluations historically, SPPAs often questioned the study’s ‘true’ intentions, not trusting that there was not a ‘hidden agenda’ underlying the study. As a result, answers were often framed as if I were an evaluator. Thus, it is unclear the degree to which SPPAs were ‘selling’ the program to me, the degree to which their perceptions represented a true shift in deep-seated cultural issues, or whether SPPAs were indeed making sense of the participatory mandate through internationalization of its principles for themselves.

The degree to which individual SPPAs were actually making internal sense in contrast to just mimicking the sensemaking of others was not always clear. Perhaps they were simply verbalizing a collective ‘marketing message’ developed by superiors? However, the evidence presented at the end of Chapter 8 describing SPPAs’ deeper embodiments of the mandate do support the proposition that at least some SPPAs have internalized participatory principles for themselves. Further research with a broader sample of Cambodian staff would be required to confirm sensemaking dynamics. In either case, Gergen (1994; 2002) would promote the notion that language does in fact make culture, so even if SPPAs are ‘faking’ their understanding and beliefs related to the participatory mandate, a collective mimicking experience still holds significant possibilities for influencing the social construction of local staff’s understandings of participatory development.

An additional limitation for the study that was made evident in the initial days of data collection was an inability to access SPPAs’ retrospective sensemaking, which was initially a key objective of the study. Cambodian interviewees tended to have blocked out large swaths of past experience, particularly in the periods before the arrival of the donors. Although it is unclear whether this was due to Cambodians’ culturally-influenced temporal associations (e.g. Cambodians interviewed expressed a tendency to be very present-day focused in their discussions of their work life) or a reticence to access memories associated with traumatic periods (e.g. interviewees would explicitly refuse to answer questions related to more sensitive periods or state “I have no recollection of that period”), in general, SPPAs tended to be unable to access retrospective sensemaking experiences. Thus, in the early stages of data collection, it was unclear whether the analysis would be focused on reconstructing retrospective or present sensemaking.

In the end, the ethnographic data supported the study of managerial sensemaking as a phenomenon occurring over time, but not as rigidly as the pre- and post-engagement schema model originally dictated. As a result of such limitations, the constructs of *pre- and post-engagement schema* were left unproven but were significant tools to enter the study environment. These encounters with empirical reality suggested that linking present and past would be difficult unless I linked evidence about the micro-level dynamics of the Seila program’s organizational manifestations with that of the macro-level forces and ideas that had shaped the history and culture in the country, as well as to international manifestations of participatory development. It was clear that in order to understand the cognitive references about the multiple meanings of participation made by SPPAs in the early interviews, more significant attention would need to be paid to the historical, cultural, and organizational realities present in the Cambodian context.

Perhaps the greatest weakness of the study has been the lack of more frequent and targeted quotes to provide sufficient evidence in support of the identification of solid causal linkages between organizational processes and the development of SPPA participatory schemas. In the future, a revised interview protocol emanating from the pre- and post-engagement schemas identified in the course of this study would allow a greater exploration of this relationship as perceived by SPPAs. As well, considering SPPA schemas more

deeply by sub-groups and ordered by staff tenure would better demonstrate the frequency and range of such schema development, increasing the reliability of this study's initial findings.

Actions reported by interviewees are descriptions from the past and are thus a less credible source of data than observing people as they act. Expanding this study to additional program environments, both in Cambodia and in other cultural contexts, as well as increasing observations of individual and collective sensemaking in action, would further enhance the transferability of these findings to a broader international development setting. As well, extended observations of additional program environments would assist in developing more knowledge of how organizational principles, structures, and informal processes are shared with Cambodian staff.

This study is exploratory in nature and as such, its findings are quite limited. In order to conduct an initial study of sensemaking dynamics in international development environment, tradeoffs were made between deeply studying the sensemaking of a small sample of staff in order to make a preliminary theoretical contribution, rather than conduct a study with a larger sample. As such, there was no chance to document broader perspectives of beneficiaries and other Cambodians in the course of the study. In an ideal world, the sample would have included interviews with beneficiaries in order to better document participatory schema held by other stakeholders in contrast to SPPAs' conceptualizations. Extended observations of various organizational contexts, as well as field work conducted for unrelated studies, did allow probing of these groups' sensemaking though. In the future, a broader sample and extended comparison across sub-samples would enhance findings significantly.

9.5. Unanswered Questions and Future Research Avenues

My future research agenda aims to generalize findings to a broader grouping of international project environments, as well as provide new knowledge of socio-cognitive dynamics underlying policy implementations. A number of unanswered questions remain for future study, particularly related to the influence micro-programmatic and individual-level sensemaking efforts (particularly individual bicultural framing) have on collective understandings of participatory development. To extend the knowledge garnered in this study, future research would need to document how sub-groups within organizations share socio-cognitive perspectives. As well, efforts must be made to more explicitly link the relationship between individual bicultural framing and formation of participatory development schema.

Building a model to document bicultural characteristics in additional program environments could add new knowledge to the role of building bicultural skills in creating successful program environments. Muller identifies five factors which need to be taken into account in further research of biculturality in organizational settings: historical contexts, complex identities, domestic cultural values, management skills for the multicultural world, and cultural assimilation (Muller 1998, 24-25). In keeping with her call, future research might more deeply question:

- Was the key to program success the ability of Cambodian staff to create a bicultural lens which facilitated a nuanced assimilation, not rigid compartmentalization, of international understandings of participatory development?
- Did the individual SPPAs who embodied the participatory mandate the most assimilate the traditions, values, and norms of the dominant donor organizational culture/mandate more so than others?
- Were those Cambodian staff that were not able to embrace the participatory mandate more fully somehow more rigidly compartmentalizing their private and work lives?

Because I've studied only one case, it is not clear if socio-cognitive environments with similar dynamics are in operation in other development contexts. Thus, a comparative study which engaged an open-ended, in-depth survey which would allow a broader breadth of data collection could test the frequency of similar cognitive organizational orientations across additional organizational environments. At the same time, establishing better evidence of how sub-groups within organizations share socio-cognitive perspectives would add further knowledge to understandings of the influence of micro-level dynamics. Engaging in deeper observation of individual-level sensemaking would create new knowledge of how individuals make sense of macro-level forces.

A key contribution of this study is its' multi-level analysis, which has increased the profile of local program environments as worthy of targeted attention in their own right, separate from studies of macro-institutional processes emanating from headquarter level. More data is now needed to test elements of the findings stemming from this analysis, particularly: a) the role of individual decisionmaking and agency, and b) the influence of organizational structures and cultures to promote successful policy implementations at local levels. Thus, deeper observations of individual-level sensemaking are needed, as is documentation of the influence of micro-programmatic processes on individual sensemaking.

In the past and in simpler policy environments, the notion of "front-line" has been helpful to illuminate the importance of deeper considerations of the dynamics existing at the boundary between field workers and beneficiaries. It has been shown that attention to front-line workers' understandings and observations of the policy process result in the creation of program models more grounded in the realities of the stakeholders interacting at this important program divide. However, because of the nature and structure of such programming initiatives in international contexts, a broader range of local staff interact behind the scenes of the immediate front-line. Local managers provide training, monitoring, and support to newly capacitated front-line field staff that typically operate under strict operational hierarchies until program leadership is able to evaluate the extent to which capacity building initiatives have succeeded and thus, whether front-line workers are prepared to take on additional responsibilities. In such hierarchies, the mid-level manager's sensemaking can be a much more influential variable than that of the lowest level field workers, contrasting the assumptions emerging from traditional studies of front-line workers (Lipsky 1980; Hill & Hupe 2002).

This study also supports the notion that in international program environments, local staff positioned at the middle level of program operations, regardless of the frequency of their interactions with beneficiaries, form a broader *cognitive front-line* than has been conceptualized in previous policy literature. Local staff operating in such program environments become a discreet version of a 'front-line', engaged in a 'cognitive battle' with local stakeholders with whom they come in contact. Thus, the degree to which local staff embody the mandate determines the degree of transmission of such ideas to other local stakeholders.

However, such war imagery lies in direct contrast to the growing international rubrics of partnership and networking as well as possibly interferes with shifting attention towards conceptualizing policy implementation along more human dimensions. A better metaphor is required. The complex and continually transforming nature of interactions between program staff and beneficiaries requires the boundary between program staff and beneficiaries to be conceptualized as a wide belt of people and activities, an ever-morphing open system, with fuzzy and shifting fronts, not a thin constant line. Possibly, language engaging the notion of a 'fault-line' is a more apt descriptor than 'front-line' in the international development context.

Figure 9.2 (part a) represents the traditional distribution of attention to programming environments, where focus has been on understandings of mandates held at the international level, by policy leaders and theoreticians alike. It also represents the increased attention that has been directed towards considering how beneficiaries' conceptualizations of development can improve implementation. Figure 9.2 (part b) represents a paradigmatic shift in the study of international policy environments to devote much more attention to understanding the sensemaking of mid-level local staff and how it influences the delivery of international

policy mandate to workers and beneficiaries operating at the immediate front-line. Figure 9.2 (part c) characterizes my proposed broadening of past conceptualizations of 'policy front-lines' to that of 'policy bands,' terminology more aptly suited for the realities of international policy environments where local staff operating at all levels of operations represent a policy 'front' between global and local realities of development practices. In this way, attention to the human dimension is more appropriately and realistically spread across three critical dimensions of the policy implementation process.

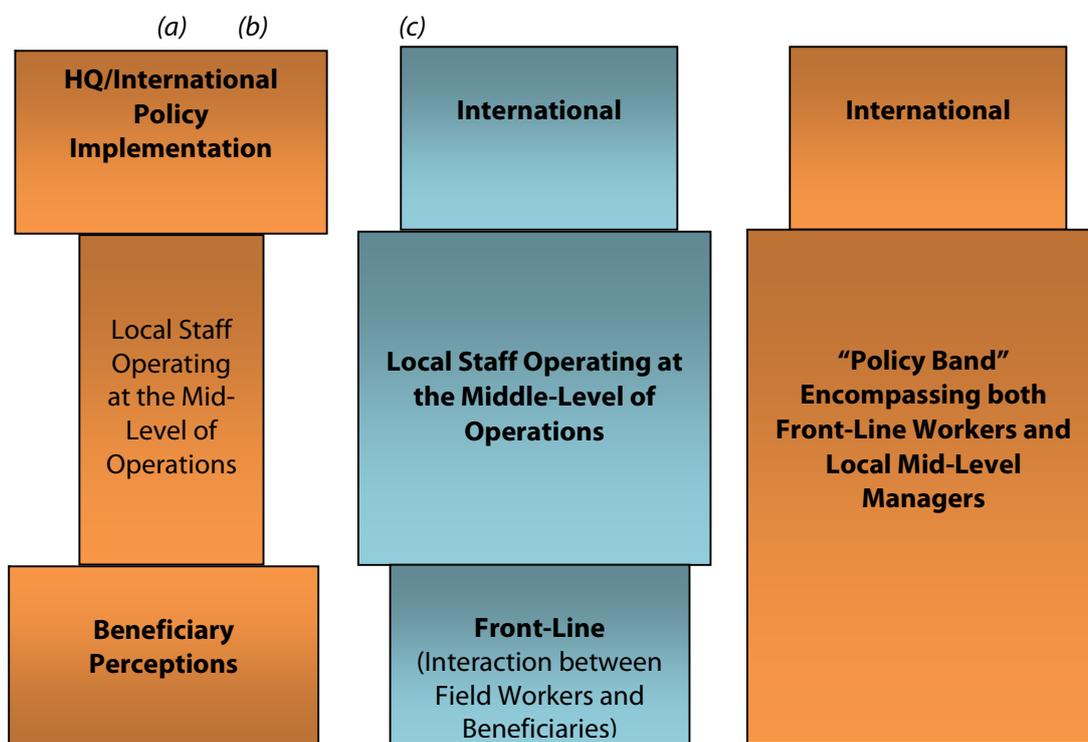


Figure 9.2: Expanded Conceptualizations of Middle-Level and Front-Lines of Policy Operations in International Development Contexts

Even with limitations, the construct of socio-cognitive environments has proven to be an effective tool for examining one program environment in the country of Cambodia. It has the potential to provide new insight into the human dimension of international policy implementation processes. Future research will refine the construct and further assess its power to consider the socio-cognitive dynamics surrounding a variety of work experiences beyond this specific context.

Finding tangible evidence for the proposition that staff embodiment of the principles undergirding democratic development initiatives are critical to how international programming produces participatory outcomes would significantly influence future program design and reorient staff trainings to such efforts. If initial findings hold, such program environments would thus benefit from the creation of opportunities for additional staff autonomy, as well as making mistakes. Placing staff in roles where representation of participatory principles is mandatory should lead to greater embodiment of the mandate.

This study has drawn from a tradition in which organizational worlds are envisioned as enacted environments of “socially constructed systems of shared meaning” (Burrell & Morgan 1979; Pfeffer 1981; Weick 1979, as quoted in Smircich & Stubbart 1985; Ospina et al. 2007; Foldy et al., forthcoming). It is therefore important that Cambodians themselves contribute new knowledge to the development of more grounded organizational models that best support their country’s development. To generalize findings to a broader grouping of international project environments will require similar application of Social Constructionist lenses as organizations in international development contexts will continue to offer multiple, converging realities which will result in continually new understandings about the world for their members (Weick 1979). The work has only begun.

¹ As well as the KDP program in Indonesia.

² Most policy studies to date have focused on: a) meta-level analyses which are able to explain systemic and contextual issues (e.g. political, economic and socio-cultural factors) in order to contribute structural-level solutions; b) Studies of policy processes which have focused on explaining how political processes influence various stakeholders attached to the policy process; c) Micro-level studies which have explored individual-level problems in order to identify micro-level technical solutions (Parsons 1995).

³ This process includes: “the acquisition of knowledge of the beliefs and values of more than one culture, the development of positive attitudes towards two cultures, the attainment of communication skills in two languages, the building of confidence that one can interact within two cultures, the learning of behaviors acceptable in two cultures and the creation of stable social networks in those cultures is critical” (Bell & Harrison 1996, 53).

Annex 1.1: Historical Milestones in Cambodia's Democratic Transition

Year	Dates	Description
<i>Pre-UNTAC</i>		
1953	November	Cambodia wins limited independence from France.
1954	July	Independence confirmed by Geneva Conference on Indochina.
1965		USA sends ground troops to Vietnam. Cambodia cuts diplomatic relations with USA.
1969		Nixon approves requests for airstrikes in Cambodia (secret bombing campaign).
1970	March 18	Prince Sihanouk deposed by Lon Nol, Sirik Matak and Chang Heng. Civil war between the Khmer Rouge (KR) and Phnom Penh Government escalates.
1975	March 23	Prince Sihanouk announces formation of the National United Front of Kampuchea (NUFK), including KR, to oppose Lon Nol regime.
	March	US intensifies bombing against Vietcong in Cambodia (B-52 "Menu" campaign).
	April 30	US and South Vietnamese troops invade Cambodia, attacking communist bases.
	October 9	Khmer Republic is declared.
	April 17	KR takes power in Phnom Penh, establishes a terror regime, evacuates cities and massively displaces population to the rural areas in forced collectivization settings. Democratic Kampuchea established.
	September 9	Sihanouk becomes head of state of Democratic Kampuchea.
1976	April 4	Sihanouk resigns as head of state and is put under house arrest.
1978	December 25	Vietnam invades Kampuchea. Pro-Vietnamese government installed in Phnom Penh.
1979	January	FUNSK takes Phnom Penh and establishes "People's Republic of Kampuchea". Pol Pot and the remaining KR withdraw to the

		border of Thailand, starting guerilla warfare with support from China (among others).
		Of note, the Khmer People's National Liberation Front (KPRLF) was a political front organized in 1979 in opposition to the Vietnamese occupation. It was composed of anti-Khmer Rouge politicians prominent in the former administrations of Prince Norodom Sihanouk and General Lon Nol, gaining most support from Cambodian refugees along the border. The armed wing was known as the Khmer People's National Liberation Armed Forces (KPNLAF).
	October	International humanitarian assistance to Cambodia starts. USA imposes economic sanctions on Vietnam (and therefore Cambodia).
	November	Opening of the first "reception center" at the Thai border. In December, 650,000 "refugees" in 13 camps.
1979-1981		Democratic Kampuchea occupies a seat at UN.
1980	December	End of international emergency relief operations in Cambodia. All UN agencies except WFP and UNICEF leave the country. Massive support restricted to reception centers at the Thai border, under UNBRO.
1981	March	Prince Sihanouk creates FUNCINPEC. The existing three resistance movements form a coalition which is supported by the ASEAN countries. They establish their bases in the refugee camps along the Thai border. A defense trench is built along the border on Cambodian territory.
	June 13	International Conference on Kampuchea, New York, fails to reach a settlement.
1982	June	KR, Son Sann and Prince Sihanouk form Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea which is seated in UN.
1985		Hun Sen becomes Prime Minister in Phnom Penh. Massive offensive of the Phnom Penh Government resulting in the elimination of most resistance strongholds within Cambodian territory. 160,000 people flee to the refugee camps along the Thai border.
1987	May 7	Prince Sihanouk steps down for a year as president of UN-recognized Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea in protest of KR attacks on his supporters.
1988	May 26	Vietnam announces it will withdraw 50,000 troops from Cambodia by end of 1988.

	July 25	Premier Hun Sen of Vietnamese-backed Cambodian regime offers a peace plan.
	July 28	Prince Sihanouk's representatives at Bogor talks introduce alternative peace plan. Talks end without agreement on final communiqué.
1989	January 6	Cambodian President Heng Samrin announces complete Vietnamese withdrawal before end of September 1989 if Cambodian peace settlement is reached by that time.
	March 21	Talks are suspended.
	April 5	Cambodian Premier Hun Sen announces Vietnam will withdraw all 70,000 troops by September 30.
	May 2	Premier Hun Sen and Prince Sihanouk begin two-day meeting in Jakarta.
	May 3	In Jakarta, Prince Sihanouk announces he is willing to return to Cambodia as head of state if Premier Hun Sen agrees to a multiparty system and a coalition government.
	July 6	US Secretary of State James Baker announces US-backing of the Hun-Sihanouk negotiations, effectively shifting US position regarding Hun's government as illegitimate.
	July 30	Cambodian peace conference begins in Paris with representatives of warring factions and 19 states attending.
	August 27	Prince Sihanouk resigns as head of guerilla faction, but remains president of resistance coalition.
	August 30	Paris peace talks end, failing to reach any agreements.
	September 21	Vietnam begins final withdrawal of troops.
	December 14	Prime Minister Hun Sen announces he will disband his government and allow UN supervision for the purpose of elections and in return asks that Cambodian UN seat be vacated.
1990	January 15	UN permanent members meet in Paris, agreeing to enhance UN role to end conflict.
	January 24	Prince Sihanouk resigns as head of Cambodian resistance coalition.
	February 27	Peace talks are held in Jakarta. Cambodian government refuses to disband or allow UN administration before elections.
	March 12	UN permanent members meet in Paris, agreeing that UN should be responsible for elections and government of Cambodia through UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC).

	April 10	Prince Sihanouk proposes nine-point peace plan.
	August 27	UN Security Council agrees on a comprehensive peace plan.
	August 29	KR accepts UN peace plan.
	September 10	Meeting in Jakarta, all four factions endorse UN peace plan and agree to form Supreme National Council (SNC).
	September 20	Resolution 688 endorses the framework set out at Paris conference for comprehensive political settlement of conflict.
	September 23	Prime Minister Hun Sen accepts Prince Sihanouk's power-sharing deal to establish SNC. As outcome of direct negotiations, Vietnam retreats their forces from Cambodia-several cease-fires are signed between Cambodian factions that are further broken.
	November 24	Meeting in Paris, UN Security Council agrees to final draft of peace settlement.
1991	February 7	Cambodian government postpones scheduled 1991 elections in hope of encouraging peace negotiations.
	April 9	United States offers to lift trade embargo against Vietnam in exchange for Vietnamese cooperation with UN-sponsored peace plan for Cambodia.
	April 23	Prince Sihanouk's forces accept temporary ceasefire.
	April 26	KR accepts UN-backed ceasefire.
	June 2	Cambodian Premier Hun Sen accepts Prince Sihanouk as SNC chairman.
	June 3	KR objects to Prince Sihanouk as SNC chairman.
	June 4	Three-day peace talks collapse.
	June 7	Sihanouk joins SNC.
	June 23	Factions agree to indefinite ceasefire beginning June 24.
	July 16-17	Cambodian peace talks in Beijing. Prince Sihanouk is unanimously elected president of SNC.
	August 29	Five-day Peace Talks end with only post-war electoral system left to be decided.
	September 30	Secretary-General recommends UN deploy advance mission in Cambodia.
UNTAC		

1991	October 16	Resolution 717 establishes a UN Advance Mission in Cambodia (UNAMIC) after signing agreements for political settlement.
	October 23	The final Paris Peace Agreement was signed on October 23, 1991 by all four Cambodian Parties, the five permanent members of the Security Council, the six nations of ASEAN, Vietnam, Laos, Japan, India, Australia, Canada, and Yugoslavia. The peace treaty installed Prince Sihanouk as provisional leader of Cambodia and called for transition to democracy with UN supervision. (Main parties involved in negotiations in 1991 included the external powers of China, Vietnam, Soviet Union, United States, Japan, and Western Europe; as well as the members of ASEAN, which included Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand) (Kamm 1998, 205).
	October 31	Resolution 718 expresses support for October 23 Peace Treaty and authorizes Secretary-General to designate special representative for Cambodia.
	November 9	UNAMIC establishes headquarters in Phnom Penh. A two party coalition government comprising the Sihanoukist and Hun Sen factions is set up.
	November 10	Prince Sihanouk returns after 13 years in exile.
	November 17	KR delegation returns.
	December 30	Cambodian factions hold talks in Phnom Penh and request immediate deployment of UN peacekeeping troops.
1992		The peace process is disrupted by continuous political and military disturbances. Return of refugees intensifies with support from UNHCR and camps are starting to be closed accordingly. Despite UN forces, KR increases their territorial control, comprising 2/3 of the 4 northwestern provinces where most returnees choose to resettle, provoking struggles. UNTAC established in Phnom Penh.
	January 19-21	Government forces repelled KR in Kompong Thom province.
	February 26	KR shoots down UN helicopters.
	February 28	Resolution 745 authorizes 22,000 peacekeeping forces of military and civilian personnel to establish UNTAC.
	March 11	UNTAC's first military contingent arrives.
	March 15	Yasushi Akashi, Secretary-General's special representative, arrives in Phnom Penh.
	March 29	Cambodian troops launch offensive against KR in north.

	March 30	UNHCR's repatriation of refugees from Thailand begins.
	March 31	Army and KR open talks in Phnom Penh.
	April 1	UNTAC submits Electoral Law to SNC. SNC decides to sign two UN charters that form part of International Bill of Rights.
	April 20	KR and other Cambodian factions sign UN convention on human rights. KR invites UN to inspect limited areas in KR zones.
	May 1	First Progress Report of the Secretary-General on UNTAC to Security Council.
	May 9	UNTAC announces the Phase I of ceasefire will be followed by Phase II beginning June 13 to regroup the military forces of four factions.
	June 5	SNC adopts laws enshrining rights of freedom of association and of assembly.
	June 10	KR refuses to participate in demobilization of four factions outlined by Cambodian peace accord due by June 13.
	June 13	Phase II of ceasefire begins.
	June 22	Ministerial Conference on the Rehabilitation and Reconstruction of Cambodia meets in Tokyo, pledging US \$880m to assist reconstruction.
	July 2	KR places conditions on its compliance with the Paris peace accords at SNC meeting.
	July 15	UNTAC civil administration offices established in all 21 provinces.
	July 21	Resolution 766 deplors continuing ceasefire violations and urges all parties to cooperate with UNTAC. Security Council approves efforts of Secretary-General to continue implementing Paris Accords.
<i>Carere: Phase 1</i>		
1992	July 26	At Manila meeting, the EC, the United States, Japan, South Korea, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Brunei agree to back UN sanctions against KR.
	August 5	SNC adopts Electoral Law.
	August 12	Electoral Law promulgated.
	August 15	Registration of political parties begins.
	September 7	KR drops demand for UN verification of Vietnamese troop

		withdrawals.
	September 10	SNC agrees to accede to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; Convention on the Rights of the Child; and Convention and Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees.
	September 17	KR ends three-month boycott of Mixed Military Working Group chaired by UNTAC military commander.
	September 21	Second Progress Report on UNTAC to Security Council.
	October 5	Voter registration begins.
	October 13	Security Council accepts Secretary-General's recommendation to proceed with elections.
	November 6-8	Representatives of four Cambodian factions and ten states meet in Beijing for talks aimed at saving Cambodian peace efforts, but fail to reach agreements.
	November 9	Radio UNTAC begins broadcasting.
	November 30	Resolution 792 confirms elections for Constituent Assembly will not be held later than May 1993.
	December 8	KR boycotts SNC meeting.
	December 27	KR kills 13 Vietnamese civilians.
	December 28	KR refuses UN peace plan.
	December 31	KR shells UN troops.
1993	January 4	Prince Sihanouk announces cessation of cooperation with UN peacekeepers.
	January 6	UNTAC establishes procedures for prosecuting human rights violators.
	January 25	Third Progress Report on UNTAC to Security Council.
	January 27	20 political parties register for election.
	January 28	SNC agrees that elections for Constituent Assembly be held May 23-25, 1993.
	January 29	Government launches offensive against KR.
	January 31	Voting rolls close.
	February 2	Government halts offensive against KR.
	February 25	Informal meeting of international aid donors in Phnom Penh.

March 8	Resolution 810 confirms dates of Cambodian elections, May 25-27, 1993.
March 30	UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Sadako Ogata, closes last remaining Cambodian refugee camp.
April 4	KR officially announces it will not participate in the elections.
April 7	Official election campaign starts.
April 7-8	Secretary-General visits Cambodia, announcing UN troop withdrawal on August 22, 1993.
April 13	KR officials withdraw from Phnom Penh.
May 3	KR attacks Siem Reap.
May 20	Resolution 826 demands that all parties abide by Paris Agreement and cooperate with UNTAC.
May 23-27	Legislative elections held under UNTAC supervision. FUNCINPEC finishes ahead of ruling CPP.
May 29	Yasushi Akashi declares elections 'free and fair' and counting proceeds.
June 2	Resolution 835 expresses intention to support 'duly elected constituent assembly' and urges parties to respect election results.
June 3	Prince Sihanouk proclaims himself President, Prime Minister and Military Commander of transitional government of FUNCINPEC and CPP.
June 4	Transitional government coalition breaks down.
June 9	UN declares Cambodian vote fair.
June 12	CPP leader Prince Sihanouk announces secession of seven eastern provinces. FUNCINPEC leader Prince Norodom Ranariddh says he will retake provinces.
June 14	Prince Sihanouk is chosen head of state by new Constituent Assembly.
June 15	Security Council endorses election result.
June 16	FUNCINPEC and CPP agree to form interim government.
June 21	CPP accepts election results.
June 24	KR offers to act as advisors to interim government.
July 1	Provisional government accepted by Constituent Assembly.
July 2	Provisional Government sworn in.

	August 18	Three interim government factions launch attack on KR.
	September 8-9	First meeting of International Committee on the Reconstruction of Cambodia, Paris.
	September 15	Constituent Assembly votes to reinstate monarchy.
	September 21	New constitution passed by Constituent Assembly.
	September 24	Prince Sihanouk enthroned and signs constitution into law. Constituent Assembly becomes National Assembly. Provisional Government becomes new Cambodian Government. SNC formally hands back sovereignty to new government.
	September 26	UN ends peacekeeping mission - UNTAC ends.
	September 30	Withdrawal of CivPols completed.
	October 4	King Sihanouk offers KR advisory role in government.
	October 11	Fighting erupts between KR and government forces in north-west.
	November 4	Resolution 880 extends deployment of military police and medical elements of UNTAC to December 31, 1993.
	November 27	King Sihanouk threatens to take KR advisory role in government if they do not agree to ceasefire.
	December	National Assembly passes the National Program to Rehabilitate and Develop Cambodia.
	December 22	Government forces launch offensive against KR.
	December 29	King Sihanouk revokes offer of KR advisory role in government.
	December 31	Withdrawal of all UNTAC personnel completed.
<i>Carere: Phase 2</i>		
1994		375,000 refugees returned, living in precarious conditions due to lack of security, autonomous livelihood and freedom of movement.
	February-March	Continued KR military activity.
	March 10-11	Second meeting of International Committee on Reconstruction of Cambodia is held in Tokyo.
	March 19	Government forces capture Pailin, KR headquarters.
	April 19	KR recaptures their headquarters in Pailin.
	May-June	Inconclusive talks between the Government and the KR.
	June	KR office in Phnom Penh closed. Sihanouk proposes to take over power and form a government of national unity: proposal

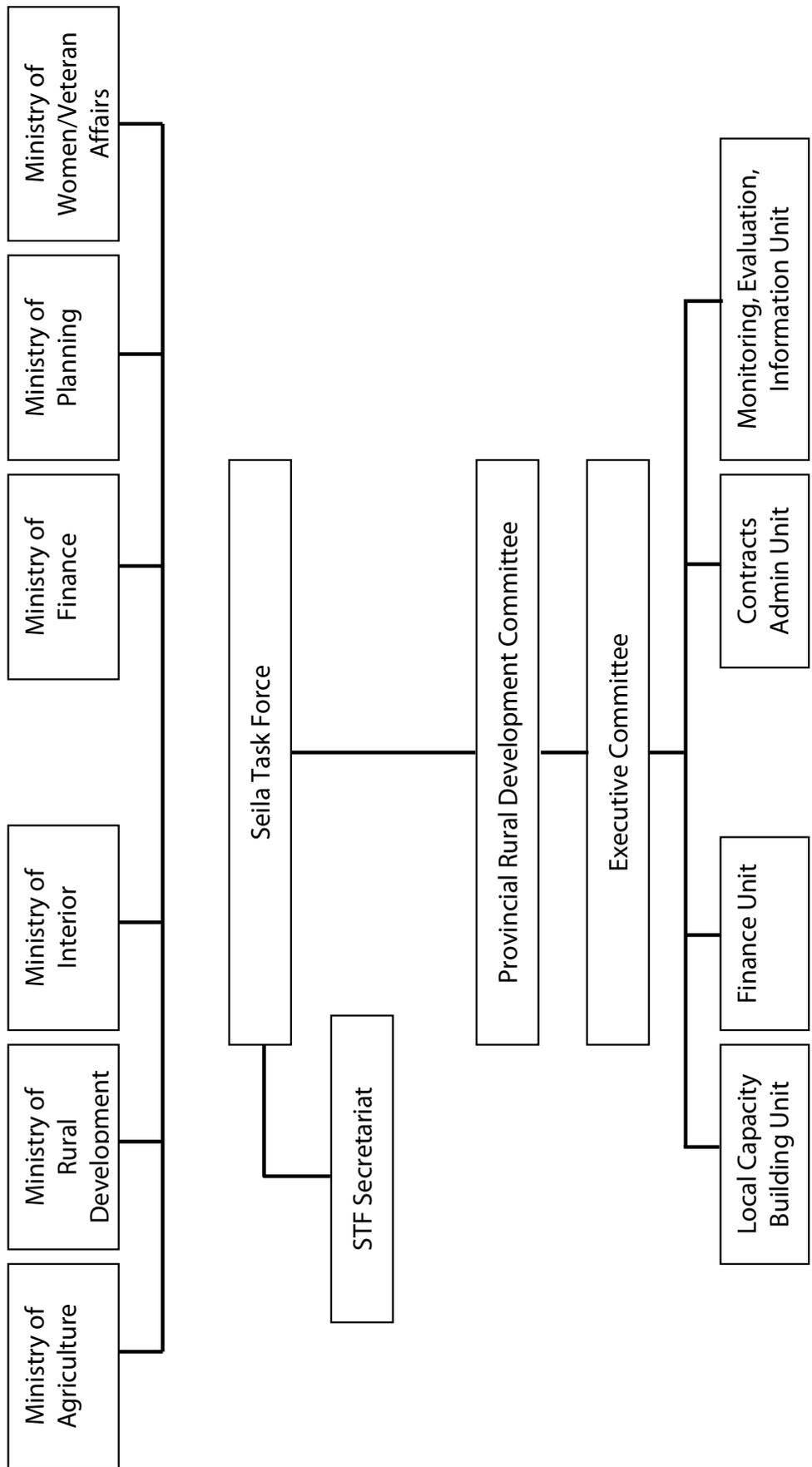
		rejected by Hun Sen and Ranariddh.
	July	Coup attempted by CPP hardliners. KR outlawed by the National Assembly. KR announces formation of a provisional government of national unity in Preah Vihear province.
1995	October	The national program took the name of Seila.
1996		Intensive military campaign of Governmental forces against KR strongholds in the northwestern provinces. Integration of KR leaders to government intensifies. Security in rural area improves significantly.
1997	March	CIHR starts good governance training program, mainly for government officials. Subjects include human rights, concepts of good governance, and principles of management.
	July	After rising political tension between coalition partners, Hun Sen evicts Prince Ranariddh and becomes the de facto ruler. More than 100 people die in clashes. The center of Phnom Penh is looted, 40,000 FUNCINPEC followers flee and cross the Thai border and resume armed resistance. Most KR units remain neutral.
<i>Seila: Phase 1</i>		
		Repatriation of refugees supported by UNHCR. Elections bring clear majority to CPP. Hun Sen becomes the sole Prime Minister. Prince Ranariddh is appointed Chairman of Parliament. Reconciliation with remaining KR units continues.
1998		Last KR hard-liner leader Ta Mok arrested. Integration of KR completed. Demobilization takes place progressively. Former KR territories integrated. Freedom of movement throughout Cambodia - end of conflict.
1999	March	CIHR begins women-only good governance training in order to begin redressing gender imbalances.
	June	The Royal Cambodian Government issues a circular for the establishment of Provincial, Commune and Local Rural Development Committees throughout the country based on the Seila model. The circular sets out provisions to ensure fair representation, including the 40% quota for women, and participatory methods. The new bodies, as first experiments in local democracy, will act as important preludes to the commune elections scheduled for the year 2000.
	June	The Royal Cambodian Government issues a circular for the establishment of Provincial, Commune and Local Rural Development Committees throughout the country based on the

		Seila model. The circular sets out provisions to ensure fair representation, including the 40% quota for women, and participatory methods. The new bodies, as first experiments in local democracy, will act as important preludes to the commune elections scheduled for the year 2000.
<i>Seila: Phase 2, PLG</i>		
2003	June 6	Signing of agreement to start KR tribunal. Agreement between UN and RGC for prosecution of crimes committed. Establishment of "Extraordinary Chambers."
	July 27	3 rd Democratic elections.

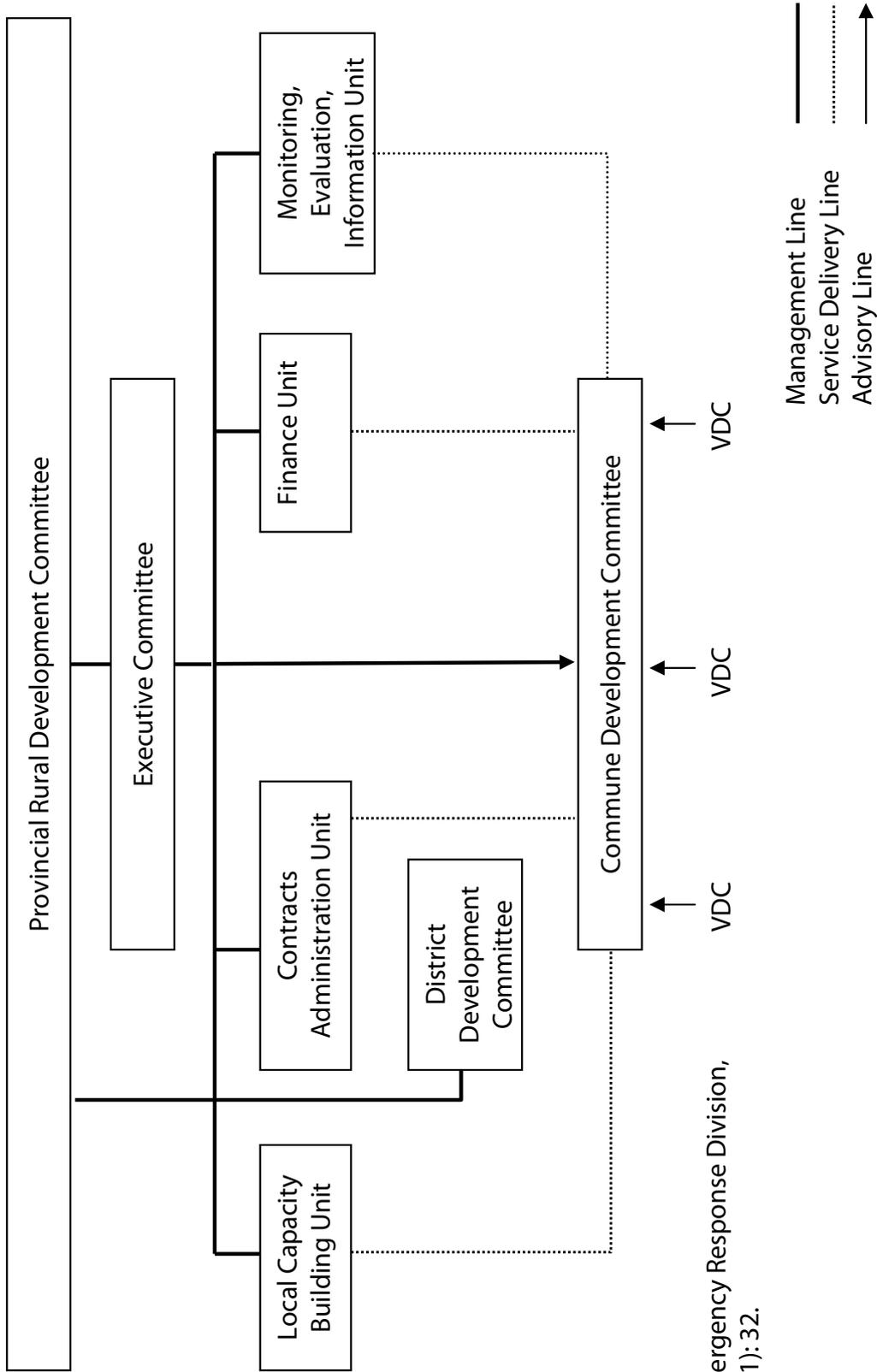
Compiled from:

Findlay (1995), Berdal & Lefier (1996), Mayall (1996), Neou (2000), UNDP/UNOPS/CARERE (April 2000), Emergency Response Division, UNDP March (2001), and Gottesman (2005).

Annex 1.2: Seila Program Management Structure (National to Provincial Level)

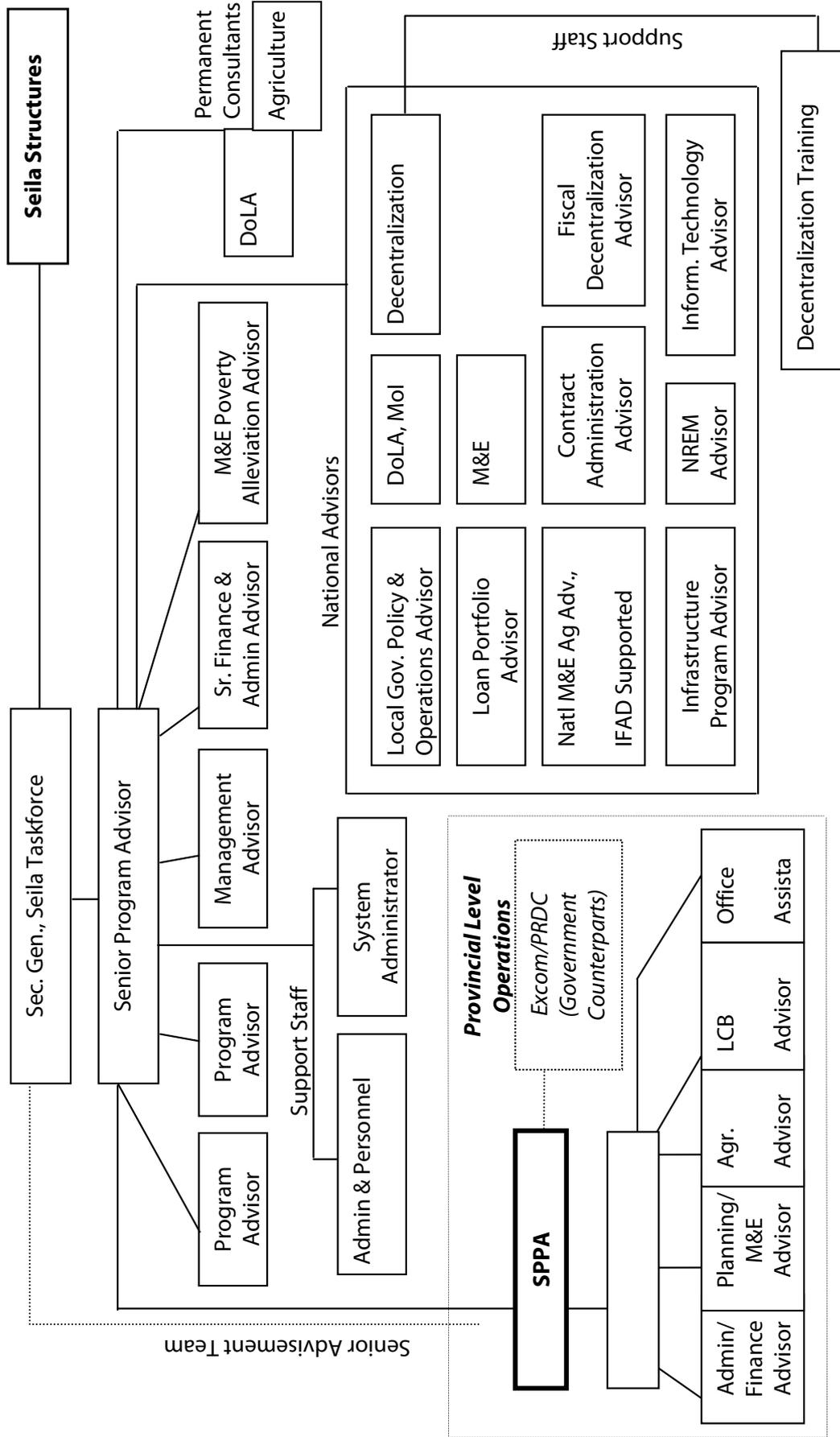


Annex 1.3: Seila Program Management Structure (Provincial to Local Level)



Source: Emergency Response Division, UNDP (2001): 32.

Annex 1.4: Partnership for Local Governance (PLG) Organizational Chart (Author's Representation)*



* Dotted Line: Relationship outside formal PLG project structure

Annex 3.1: Interview Sample Rationale: Carere Pilot Provinces, Seila Additions

Time Period	Phase	Province	Factors to Consider in Sample Decisions	Included in Sample
1993 - 1994	Carere Phase 1	Banteay Meanchey	Longest-term program operation	Yes
		Battambang	Richest province with greatest capacity; CPP political party control at local-level	Yes
1996	Carere Phase 2 (“Seila experiment” initiated in all five provinces)	Pursat	Poor, weak province, but considered to have “best cooperation with NGO community” by national advisors; FUNCINPEC-controlled at local level	Yes
		Siem Reap	FUNCINPEC-controlled at local level; Identified as “most capable and committed Carere team” by national advisors	Yes
		Ratanakiri	Located in the Northeast Highlands of Cambodia, consisting of Highland Khmer population within a very different institutional and political context (Travel too difficult during rainy season, so Mondolokiri substituted)	No
1998	Reconciliation activities started in 1998 and continued through 2000. (Provincial operations officially established in 2001.)	Pailin	“Outlier case” because politically controlled by former Khmer Rouge officials	Yes
		Otdar Meanchey (carved out of Banteay Meanchey and Siem Reap)	“Outlier case” because politically controlled by former Khmer Rouge officials	Yes
2001	Ongoing additions	Kampot Kampong	Included in Seila with support from GTZ (Not	No No

		Thom	included due to difference in program operations/ partnering arrangements)	
2001	Ongoing additions	Kampong Cham Takeo Prey Veng	Expansion to a total of 12 provinces in first year of Seila 2	Yes Yes Yes
2002	Ongoing additions	Kampong Chhnang Kampong Speu Svay Rieng Preah Vihear Kratie	Expansion to a total of 17 provinces in 2002 (Limit of planned expansion). (Several provinces not included due to newness of operations and short tenure of SPPAs)	Yes Yes No No Yes
2003	Ongoing additions	Phnom Penh Kandal Sihanoukville Kep Koh Kong Mondolokiri Stung Treng	7 provinces added in early 2003 to reach full national coverage (Several provinces not included due to newness of operations and short tenure of SPPAs)	Yes Yes Yes No No Yes No

Annex 3.2: Document Sample

Title	Phase	Organizations Involved, Document Purpose	Date
Public Administration and Civil Service Reforms	Pre-Carere	UNDP	Jul. 1993
Carere 1 1992-1995	Carere 1	UNDP/Carere	n.d.
Forging a Contract for Sustainable Human Development in Cambodia: The Carere Area Development Program in 1994	Carere 1	RGC, UNOPS	1994
Project of the Royal Government of Cambodia. Carere 2 - Cambodian Area Rehabilitation and Regeneration Project	Carere 2	UNOPS	Feb. 27, 1996
Project Agreement: Local Development Fund in Battambang and Banteay Meanchey Main Phase. 97.	Carere 2	UNCDF Internal Project Agreement.	1997
Carere/Seila Gender Strategy 1997-1999	Carere/Seila	UNDP/UNOPS/ Carere	Jun. 1997
Towards a Regulatory Framework for Decentralized Financing and Planning in Cambodia	Carere 2	UNOPS, UNDP	Jan. 1999
The Seila Programme, Report on Outputs 1 January 1996-31 March 1999	Seila	UNDP/UNOPS/Carere	May 1999
The Seila Programme of the Royal Government of Cambodia: Management Structure Roles and Responsibilities	Seila	RGC	Dec. 10, 1999
UNDP/Carere Annual Project Report 1 January 1999 to 31 December 1999	Carere 2	UNDP/UNOPS/Carere	Apr. 2000
DfID-Sida Appraisal of the Seila Programme 2001-2005, Final Report	Seila	Donor evaluation	May 2001
Carere2 Reconciliation Program Report 1996-2001	Carere 2	Program Report of Carere	Jun. 2001

Project of the Royal Government of Cambodia. Partnership for Local Governance (Project CMB/01/007)	Seila	Project Doc, RGC, PLG, UNDP	Jun. 8, 2001
Seila Program Document 2001-2005	Seila	RGC, PLG, Seila Task Force	Dec. 2001
Training Manual on Commune/Sangkat Development Planning Process	Seila	Royal Government of Cambodia, National Committee for Support of Communes/Sangkats	Aug. 5. 2002 (updated)
Decentralization Support Program (DSP) Fiscal Decentralization Component. Amendment to Projects: CMB/01/004 (UNDP) "Decentralization Support Project" (DSP) and CMB/97/C01 (UNCDF) "Local Development Fund", Covering the "Fiscal Decentralization Component" of the DSP	Seila	UNDP/UNCDF	Jan. 23, 2004
2004 Workplan and Budget	Seila	Partnership for Local Governance (A UN/Donor Support Project to Seila), RGC's Seila Program	Jan. 29, 2004
Seila Program Annual Work Plan and Budget 2004	Seila	The Royal Government of Cambodia's Seila Program, Seila Task Force	Jan. 2004
2003 Annual Program Report	Seila	Kingdom of Cambodia, Seila Program	Mar. 2004
Guideline for the District Integration Process (Unofficial translation)	Seila	Seila Program, RGC, NGO/CBO Partners	Sep. 2004
<i>External Evaluations Produced by Independent Consultants</i>			
Final Report - Independent Monitoring and Evaluation of Carere support to the Seila Local Planning Process, 1998	Carere/ Seila	Independent Consultant (Robin Biddulph)	Aug. 1998
The Seila Program and Decentralized Planning in Cambodia	Seila	Consultant produced report (Leonardo Romeo)	Mar. 12, 2000
Seila Support to Deconcentration	Seila	PLG, UNOPS,	May 18,

Framework (CMB/01/007)		Consultant to PLG (Hugh Emrys Evans)	2002
Learning by Doing: An Analysis of the Seila Experiences in Cambodia	Seila	Sida, Department for Natural Resources and the Environment (External Consultants: Jan Rudengren, Joakim Öjendal)	Aug. 2002
PAT Empowerment Study - Final Report	Seila/ PLG	(External Consultant: Robin Biddulph)	Nov. 15, 2003
Review and assessment of STFS and PLG support and the Seila/PLG execution systems	Seila, PLG	External Consultants: Rudengren, Jan; Andersen, Henny; John, Durant - SPM Consultants	Mar. 2005

Annex 3.3: Document Selection and Analysis Procedures⁴⁸

Type of Document	Selection Criteria
Primary Sources: Project-Specific Documentation⁴⁹	
<p>Policy Formulation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legislation • Seila Work Plan & Budgets, Program Reports, Program Documents • UNDP Policy Pieces <p>Policy Implementation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training Manuals, District Integration Workshop, Planning Process • Project Descriptions/Evaluations • Various project documents • Program-related websites <p>Policy Evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internally-Sponsored Project Evaluations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documents identified on the website as key project documents (Carere 1, Carere 2, PLG, Seila) • Documents identified by national staff as influential to their sensemaking (e.g. UNDP's World Summit for Social Development, Copenhagen, 1995; UNDP's good governance agenda, etc.) • Project-produced documents identified by interviewees as influential to their sensemaking (beyond project documents, like training manuals, work plans, planning manual, etc.) • Formal internal year-end and mid-term evaluations and annual project reports (Assumption 1: Such reflective materials represent the organization's projection of their project to themselves, donors, and RGC counterparts.)
Secondary Sources: Donor and RGC Documentation	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Royal Government of Cambodia Documents • UN Policy Documents – Cambodia • UN Policy Documents – International Context • Donor Policy Statements • Donor Evaluations • Conceptual Pieces Developed by External Consultants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legislation and government sub-decrees (Prakas) • External and donor reviews (e.g. PAG/PAT) • Documentation of Cambodian policy context related to participatory development • Government policy papers
Tertiary Sources: Cambodian Context	

⁴⁸ Document Summary Form and other analytic templates used in course of research available upon request.

⁴⁹ Publicly available program records documenting the program's origin, history, operations, impact, etc.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultant Studies • Dissertations, Academic Studies • Donor Analyses • International Policy Overviews • Studies of Communes • Anthropological Studies of Cambodian Culture • Empirical Studies of Rural Villages • Descriptions of Rural Development Programs • NGO/Civil Society Pieces • Newspaper/Media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analytic Pieces Related to Participatory Policy in Cambodia • Contextual descriptions of culture, beneficiaries, communes, community life, community-based public activities • Discussions of Party Politics, Democracy, and Elections • Discussions of Decentralization • Descriptions of Local Governance Practices
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<p>Document Analysis Protocol (adapted from Caulley 1983):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish guiding questions to direct the analysis: • What evidence of the formal participatory development mandate does this document provide? • Does it diverge from or converge with other descriptions? In what ways? • Can differences be tracked according to date of document creation? • Does the mandate description differ according to intended audience? • Track identifying information for the documents, including authorship, position, and tenure within the organization at the time of dissemination. • Include any known information about the original objectives that promoted the production of the document, (e.g. intended audience).
<p>Questions Asked of Documents:</p>
<p>Formal Mandate</p> <p>What is UNDP’s stated participatory policy? Other donors associated with the program? Where is the word “participation” used in the document? Are there sub-headings or boxes that highlight participation or participatory practices?</p>
<p>Definition</p> <p>What defines a project document for this study?</p>
<p>Audience</p> <p>Who is the audience for documentation? (e.g. Documents are primarily written to the donors to document progress, influence donor perception/maintain program support, and to document donor/program</p>

expectations for the RGC.)
<p>Authors</p> <p>Who are the authors?</p>
<p>Mandate Evolution</p> <p>Are there different phases of participatory policy emerging? What do such iterations say as a whole directive?</p>
<p>Substance</p> <p>What is important to document for my analysis? Are actual definitions, objectives, and actions identified? Analysis of the substance – is it clear? precise?</p>
<p>Process</p> <p>Are there connections between vertical layers of organizational management? Is it clear what each actor at each level is supposed to be doing? Content of trainings?</p>

Annex 3.4: Relevant National Legislation⁵⁰

Title/Legislation Number	Date
Law on Demonstration	Dec. 27, 1991
Declaration No. 031 on the Roles, Responsibilities and Organizational Structure of the Provincial and Municipal Administrations (Mol)	Feb. 15, 1994
Law on Administration of Communes(Khum-Sangkat)	Oct. 1994
The Law on The Administration and Management of Commune/Sangkat	Mar. 19, 2001
Inter-Ministerial Prakas ⁵¹ on Commune/Sangkat Development Planning (National Committee to Support the Communes/Sangkats)	Jan. 15, 2002
Sub-decree on the "Communes/Sangkats Fund" (National Committee to Support the Communes/Sangkats)	Feb. 7, 2002
Sub-decree on Decentralization of Powers, Roles and Duties to Commune/Sangkat Councils	Mar. 25, 2002
Inter-Ministerial Prakas on Amendment of Article 29 of the Inter-Ministerial Prakas on Communes/Sangkats Development Planning. No. 2400	Aug. 26, 2002
Prakas on Establishment of Structure, Roles, and Responsibilities of the Provincial/Municipal Rural Development Committee of the Seila Program. 292 STF. Unofficial translation (STFS)	Nov. 8, 2002
Prakas No. 152/MEF Establishment of CS Fund Working Group (Senior Minister of Economy and Finance)	Jun. 3, 2004
Sub-Decree No. 11 ANKR/BK on National Budget Contribution to the Commune - Sangkat Fund	Feb. 3, 2005

⁵⁰ National legislation associated with Seila and PLG structures, mandate, and implementation activities, theoretically sampled by association to substance or process.

⁵¹ Prakas are legal proclamations, regulations or decrees adopted by a Minister.

Annex 3.5: Sample of Observations and Informal Discussions

#	Event
A	SPPA Quarterly Meeting
B	National Pilot Training
C	2 Commune Councils
D	National Pilot Training for Inter-Commune Planning process
E	Informal briefing by Excom to understand management roles of Excom, Provincial Units, and Treasury in relation to Seila Program
F	Commune Council with Natural Resource and Environmental Management Project
G	Commune Council completing Step 2 of Planning Process
H	Informal dinner with Senior Portfolio Manager, UNOPS, Bangkok
I	Commune Council Engaged in Step 7 of Planning Process
J	Slum Planning Meeting
K	Communications Pilot Training for Highlands People
L	Informal Discussion with Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, PLG
M	District Integration Workshop
N	SPPA Quarterly Management Meeting

Annex 4.1: Evolution of Terms Related to Citizen Participation in the Khmer Language⁵²

Phonetic Spellings	Khmer	English Translation
<i>'To Enter In Togetherness': Pre-Independence Conceptions Of Participation (Pre-1953)</i>		
Chol	ចូល	To enter, such as into a room, house, or a meeting
Ruom	រួម	Togetherness, uniting, joining, or sharing
Chol-Ruom	ចូលរួម	Participation
<i>'Community Solidarity, Togetherness': The Sihanouk Period (1953-1970)</i>		
Sa-Ha-Ka-Knea	សហការគ្នា	Cooperation, collaboration
Sa-Maki-Pheap	សាមគ្គីភាព	Sense of solidarity
<i>'Forced Togetherness, Sharing, Putting Together': The Khmer Rouge Period (1975-1979)</i>		
Ang-Ka	អង្គការ	The Khmer Rouge leadership ⁵³
Chol-Ruom-Chea-Muoy-Ang-Ka	ចូលរួមជាមួយអង្គការ	To participate with the Khmer Rouge leadership
Ruom	រួម	Togetherness, but understood as <i>by force</i> in this period
Dakk-Ruom	បារក់រួម	In the Khmer context, meant "put together" (through <i>forced sharing with others</i>). An expression of such togetherness would be to "have a meal together in a common canteen."
Bay-Ruom	បាយរួម	<i>Bay</i> is rice and this means to share food, such as having rice or a meal together in the same village canteen, where equally or

⁵² All definitions of Cambodian terms have been developed through dialogues with numerous Cambodians, checked against Jetra and Leang's *Modern Khmer English Dictionary* (2003) and two editions of Headley's *Cambodian-English Dictionary* (1977, 1997). Final translations were confirmed by two Cambodian translators.

⁵³ It is useful to compare this term to its pre-Khmer Rouge meaning, which was used to refer to a variety of organizational forms, and its post-Khmer Rouge meaning, which often refers to any organizations associated with development, including donors, NGOs, and the Seila program.

		commonly food could be divided among equal rations. ⁵⁴
Krum-Khopk-Ma	ក្រុមកុមារ	Children's group
Kang-Chalat	កងចល័ត	Mobile group
Kang-Phalet	កងផលិត	Produced group
'New Solidarity And Forced Contributions': The Vietnamese Occupation (1979-1989)		
Chol-Ruom ⁵⁵	ចូលរួម	Contribution of in-kind, forced labor, or fighting forces, or cash contributions to civilians, soldiers, or government officials on the front-line. (against the Khmer Rouge)
Kar-Pram ("K5")	ក ព្រំ	A military campaign by the Vietnamese-controlled government in Cambodia, against the Khmer Rouge
Krum-Samaki	ក្រុមសាមគ្គី	Village-based solidarity group often used for agrarian purposes
Sa-Maki-Pheap	សាមគ្គីភាព	Sense of solidarity
Sa-Ha-Ka-Knea-Pheap	សហការភ្នំ	Cooperation; collaboration
Evolving Participation: The Emergence of the Development Agenda (1991-Present Day)		
Boas-Chhnot	បោះឆ្នោត	Elections
Chol-Ruom-Buos-Chhnort	ចូលរួមបោះឆ្នោត	Participate in elections
Bra-Kas	ប្រកាស	Official Proclamation/Decree
Chol-Ruom		In the early days of Carere, this term was used to refer to community participation in emergency relief projects
Chol-Ruom-Ak-Phi-Wat	ចូលរួមអភិវឌ្ឍ	To participate in development

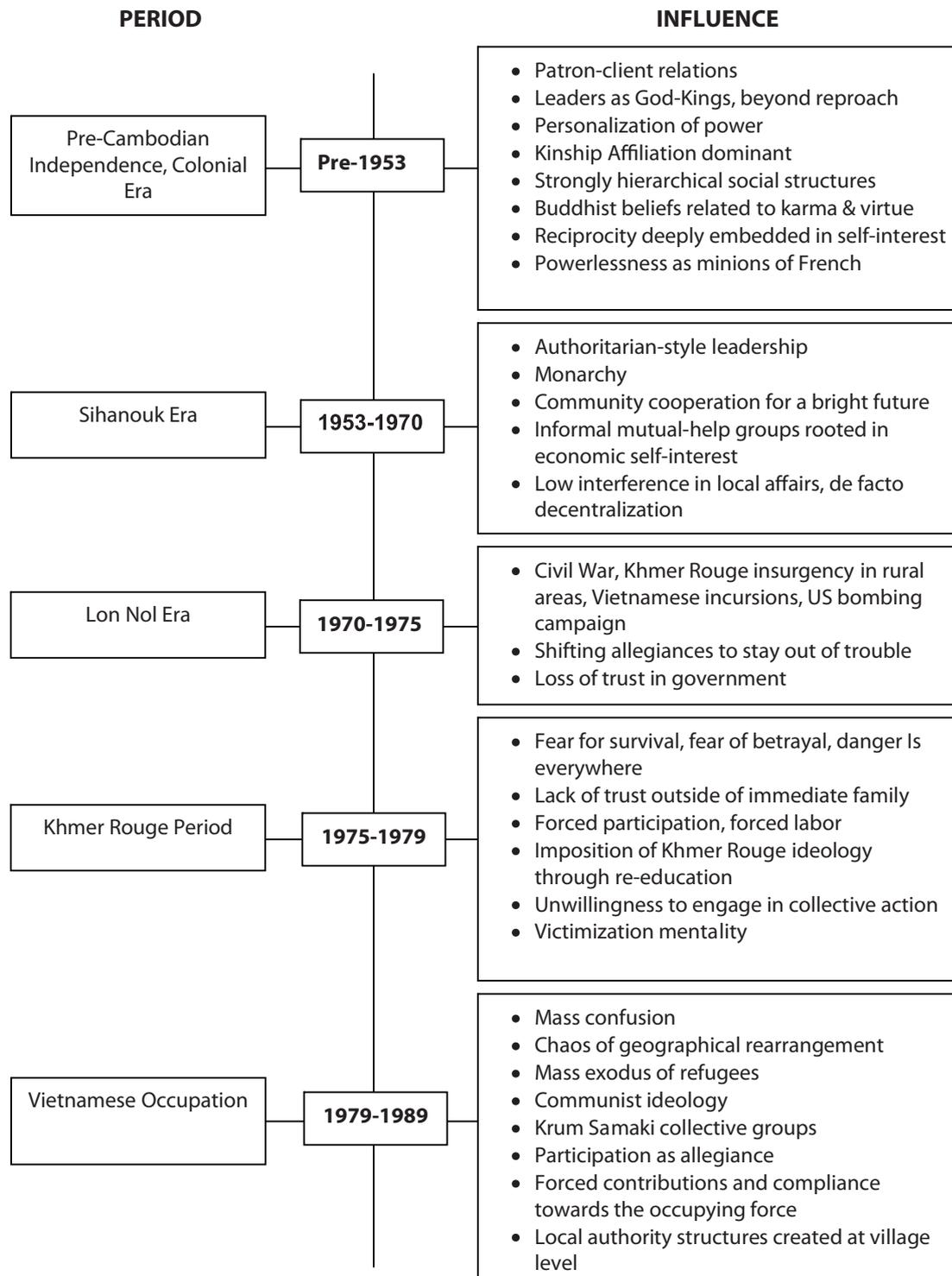
⁵⁴ To give a sense of the non-voluntary aspect of this experience, it is worth noting that cooking utensils were confiscated from every household and placed in the common village's canteen to ensure shared cooking and eating.

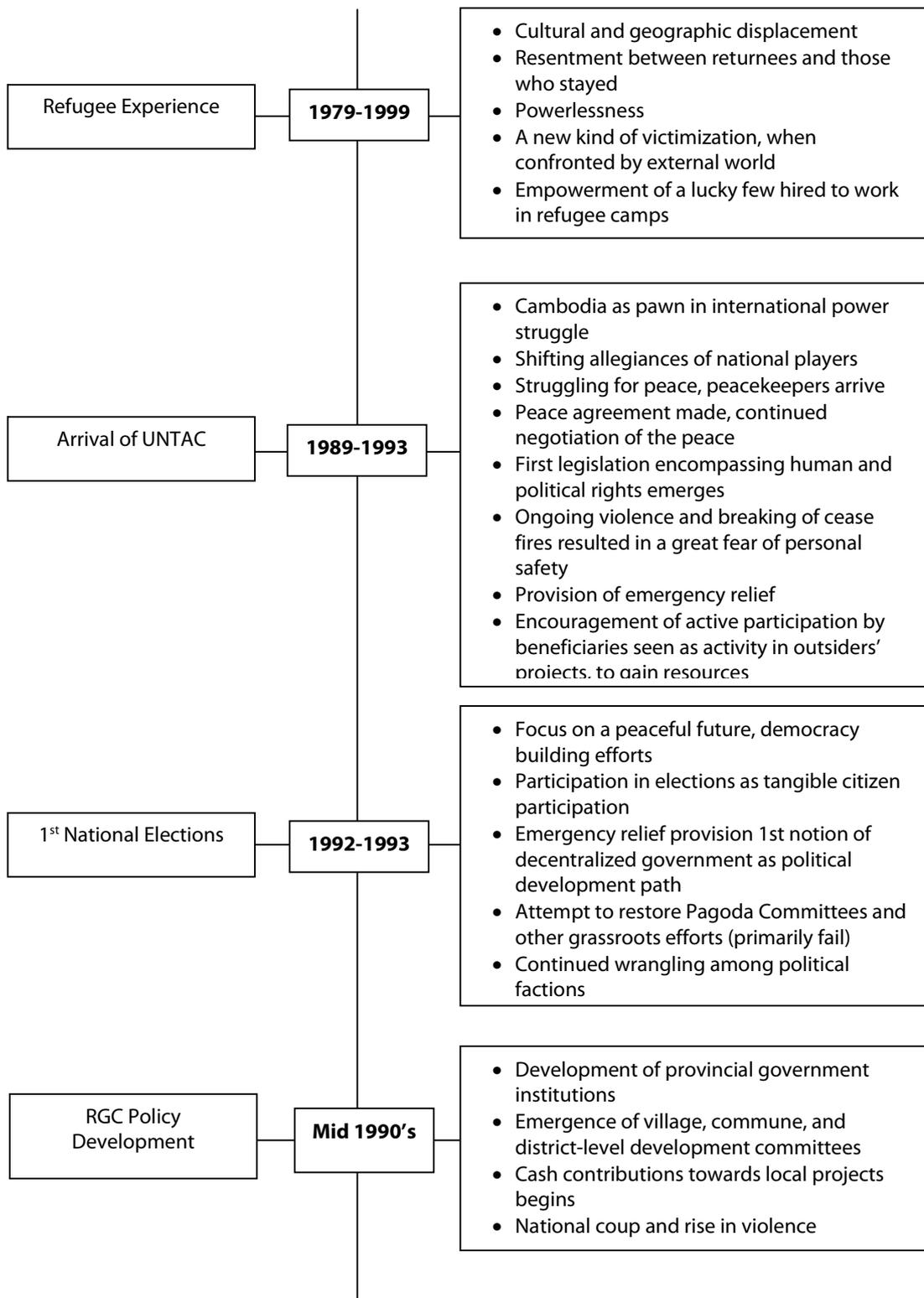
⁵⁵ *Ka* added to a word makes it a noun. In the chapter, the term *Ka-Chol-Ruom* is used, referring to participation as a noun.

Praa-Chom	ប្រជុំ	Meeting
Chol-Ruom-Praa-Choum	ចូលរួមប្រជុំ	Within the development context, used frequently at the village level to refer to participation in a meeting
Kak-Nak-Kamaka-Ak-Phi-Wat- Phum	គណៈកម្មការអភិវឌ្ឍន៍ភូមិ	Village Development Committee (VDC) (term used at village level)
Tuon-Chol-Ruom	ទុនចូលរួម	The word <i>Tuon</i> means wealth/capital/ money. Within the development context, <i>Tuon-Chol-Ruom</i> means (local) cash contribution
Chol-Ruom-Yoo-Baal ⁵⁶	ចូលរួមយោបល់	Participation of an opinion
Chol-Ruom Maa-Toeak	ចូលរួមមតិ	Sharing (or participation) of an idea
Chol-Ruom-Patu-Kam	ចូលរួមបាត់កម្ម	Participate in demonstration ⁵⁶
Ka-Chol-Ruom-Robos-Pra-Chea-Chun	ការចូលរួមរបស់ប្រជាជន	Joining(or participation) of people ⁵⁷
Pheap-M'chas-Ka	ភាពម្ចាស់ការ	Ownership
Thama-Pol	ថាមពល	Energy
Chol-Ruom-Mate	ចូលរួមមតិ	Person Who Participates

⁵⁶ Social usage of *Chol* includes *Chol-Bon* or *Chol-Louy* which translates as 'contribution of funds to a ceremony' (*Bon* is a religious ceremony, *Louy* is money). *Chol-Paa-Chaay* also refers to contributions towards religious activities (*Paa-Chaay* also refers to funds or money). *Chol-Ruom Bon-Kaam-Naart* or *Chol-Ruom Chooup-Leang* refers to participation in a celebratory party such as a birthday, anniversary, or house warming party.

Annex 4.2: Overview of Historical Periods and Key Influences on Cambodian Participatory Socio-Cognitive Environment





Annex 6.1: Participation in Development Theory and Practice: A Selective History

Era	Approach	Institutional and Intellectual Influences	Development Theory: Approach to Immanent Processes and Imminent Interventions	Approach to Citizenship	Locus/Level of Engagement
1940s-1950s	Community development (colonial)	United Kingdom Colonial Office 1944 Report on Mass Education in Africa	<p><i>Immanent</i> (Re)produce stable rural communities to counteract processes of urbanization and sociopolitical change, including radical nationalist and leftist movements</p> <p><i>Imminent</i> Development requires participation and self-reliance; cost-sharing. <i>Animation rurale</i> includes adult literacy and extension education, institution-building, leadership training, development projects</p>	Participation as an obligation of citizenship; citizenship formed in homogeneous communities	Community
1960s-1970s	Community development (post-colonial)	Post-colonial governments (social welfare or specialized departments)	<p><i>Immanent</i> As above; also development of state hegemony, moral economy of state penetration</p> <p><i>Imminent</i> As above; also health, education</p>		
1960s	Political participation	North American political science	<p><i>Immanent</i> Political development dimension of modernization theory. Participation as securing stability legitimacy for new states and strengthening the political system</p> <p><i>Imminent</i> Voter education; support for political parties</p>	Participation (e.g. voting, campaigning political party membership) as a right and an	Political system and constituent parts; citizens

1960s-1970s	Emancipatory participation (EP) Liberation theology (LT)	Radical 'southern' researchers/educationalists. Freire, Fals Borda, Rahman 2 nd Vatican Council, Latin American Catholic priests. Gutierrez, Sobrino	<i>Immanent</i> Analyze and confront 'structures of oppression' within existing forms of economic development, state information, political rule and social differentiation <i>Imminent</i> EP: Participatory action research, conscientization, popular education, support for popular organizations LT: Form base Christian communities, training for transformation, popular education	Participation as a right of citizenship; participatory citizenship as a means of challenging subordination and marginalization	Economic and civic spheres; communities; citizens
1970s-1990s	'Alternative development'	Dag Hammarskjold Conference 1974. Development Dialogue, IFAD Dossier. Nerfin, Friedmann	<i>Immanent</i> Critique of 'mainstream' development as exclusionary, impoverishing and homogenizing; proposal of alternatives based around territorialism, cultural pluralism and sustainability <i>Imminent</i> Popular education; strengthen social movements and self-help groups	Participation as a right of citizenship; citizenship as a key objective of alternative development, to be realized in multi-level political communities	Initially focused on communities and civic society, latterly the state through 'inclusive governance'
1980s-present	Populist/ Participation in development	Development professionals, NGOs (e.g. MYRADA, IIED)	<i>Immanent</i> Little direct engagement; implicit critique of modernization	Focus on participation in projects rather than	Development professionals and agencies; local participants

		World Bank Participation Learning Group, UN Agencies. Chambers	<i>Imminent</i> Failure of top-down projects and planning; participation required to empower people, capture indigenous people's knowledge, ensure sustainability and efficiency of interventions. Participatory: rural/urban appraisal, learning and action, monitoring and evaluation; NGDO projects	in broader political communities	
Mid-1990s-present	Social capital	World Bank Social Capital and Civil Society Working Group. Putnam, Bourdieu, Narayan	<i>Immanent</i> Social capital promoted as a basis for economic growth <i>Imminent</i> Local institution building, support participation in networks and associations	Participation as a right and obligation of citizenship	Civic associations
Late 1990s-present	Participatory governance and citizenship participation	Participatory Research and Action (Delhi), Institute for Development Studies, Brighton (Participation Group)	<i>Immanent</i> Development requires liberal of social democracy, with a responsive state and strong civil society. Some focus on social justice <i>Imminent</i> Convergence of 'social' and 'political' participation, scaling-up of participatory methods, state-civic partnerships, decentralizations, participatory budgeting, citizens' hearings, participatory poverty assessments, PRSP consultations	Participation as primarily a right of citizenship	Citizens, civil society, state agencies and institutions

Source: Hickey & Mohan 2004, 6-8.

Annex 6.2: Theoretical Lenses of Participatory Development

Categories of Participation ⁵⁷	Label	Description
Least Participatory Activities	Manipulative Participation	<p>Participation as a pretense, with people’s representatives identified by others. The participants are unelected and have no power.</p> <p>Participation as a free exercise: This meaning neither conforms to the meaning of the word, nor the way in which it is translated in practice. More often than not, “people are asked or dragged into partaking in operations of no interest to them, in the very name of participation” (Rahnema 1992, 116).</p> <p>Manipulated or tele-guided forms of participation: “Participants don’t feel they are being forced into doing something, but are actually led to take actions which are inspired or directed by centres outside their control” (Rahnema 1992, 116).</p>
	Passive Participation	<p>People participate by being told what is going to happen or has already happened. It is a unilateral announcement by an administration or project management without listening to people’s responses. The information being shared belongs only to external professionals.</p>
Beneficiary Participation⁵⁸	Participation in Information Giving	<p>People participate by answering questions posed by extractive researchers using questionnaire surveys or similar approaches. People do not have the opportunity to influence proceedings, as the findings of the research are neither shared nor checked for accuracy.</p>
	Local Organizational Development	<p>Pagaran defines provisions of external assistance in strengthening or creating local organizations (2001) as a component of participatory development.</p>
Participation as a Component of Community Development	Participation by	<p>People participate by being consulted, and external people</p>

⁵⁷ This scaling moves from more conservative definitions of Participatory Development to more radical and emerging definitions of PD. All uncited material is from Long’s summary of the field (2001).

⁵⁸ Participation defined as project input by beneficiaries. Bamberger describes Community Participation as beneficiary involvement in the planning and implementation of externally initiated projects (Bamberger 1988, viii).

	Consultation	listen to their views. These external professionals define both problems and solutions, and may modify these in light of people's responses. Such a consultative process does not concede any share in decision making, and professionals are under no obligation to take on board people's views.
	Participation for Material Incentives	People participate by providing resources, for example labor, in return for food, cash, or other material incentives. Much on-farm research falls in this category, as farmers provide the fields but are not involved in the experimentation or the process of learning. It is very common to see this called participation, yet people have no stake in prolonging activities when the incentives end.
Participation as a Means to a Separate End	Instrumental /Functional Participation ⁵⁹	People participate by forming groups to meet predetermined objectives related to the project, which can involve the development or promotion of externally initiated social organization. Such involvement does not tend to be at early stages of project cycles or planning, but rather after major decisions have been made. These institutions tend to be dependent on external initiators and facilitators, but may become self dependent.
	Democratic Participation	Participation as development linkage to democracy formation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation results in electoral involvement, sense of representation, responsiveness, community empowerment, etc. • Terminology: citizen participation. • Participation as part of decentralization. • Participation as creating accountability. • Participation as part of government reform.
Participation as an End in Itself,	Interactive Participation	People participate in joint analysis, which leads to action plans and the formation of new local institutions or the

⁵⁹ Instrumental participation is defined by Long as "participation as a means to an end to meet short-term policy needs, but with focus on achieving secondary, longer-range impacts." In short, the logic entailed is that participation in practice leads to better projects and thus, sustainable improvements in social/economic conditions (Long 2001, 18). Later, empowerment of the poor should lead to them taking a more active role in decisionmaking, increase their capacity, which leads to progress in achieving an environment in which democratic development can flourish (Focus on addressing short-term "policy" needs but also focused on secondary impacts).

		strengthening of existing ones. It tends to involve interdisciplinary methodologies that seek multiple perspectives and make use of systematic and structured learning processes. These groups take control over local decisions, and so people have a stake in maintaining structures or practices.
	Transformational	Participation as an end in itself. Participation strengthens people's ability to determine how to improve social/economic condition. Participation is the true essence of development.
	Convergence of Instrumental and Transformational	<p>This category covers participatory activities which include parallel efforts to meet particular program outcomes, but also keep an eye to sustainable development, including a particular focus on long-term empowerment.</p> <p>Upscaling activities fall here, since they engage participatory activities beyond the local community or project level (Gaventa & Blauert 2000, 228).</p> <p>Mainstreaming activities also fall under the convergence paradigm, referring to efforts to bring participatory development activities into the nucleus of development approaches (Gaventa & Blauert 2000, 231). Efforts to bring marginalized voices into the development process, such as 'gender mainstreaming' also fall under this label.</p>
	Indigenous Local Participation	Bamberger and Pacharan define this as "the spontaneous activities of local organizations" (Bamberger 1988, viii; Pagaran 2001, viii), proposing that only <i>indigenous local participation</i> expresses organic, proactive, and community-owned activities. She contrasts this participation to local organizational development which often entails "external assistance in strengthening or creating local organizations." This might create or structure participatory or democracy-oriented processes, but does not define the role of beneficiaries nor require proactivity.
	Self-Mobilization	People participate by taking initiatives independent of external institutions to change systems. They develop contacts with external institutions for resources and technical advice they need, but retain control over how

		resources are used. Such self-initiated mobilization and collective action may or may not challenge existing inequitable distributions of wealth and power.
Emergent Views	Participation as a Human Right	Participation as right of citizenship and part/parcel of democratization. Participation as fundamental part of people's right (right of citizenship) to choose how they are governed and how they, with government, will carry out the work of development (Tertiary impact: sustainable social/economic outcomes). Promotion of citizenship as normative goal (Hickey & Mohan 2004, 9).
	Participation as Essence of Human Experience	Participation as an experiential/felt process inherent to the human condition (Reason 1998, Reason, n.d.)

Source: Adapted and Extended from Blackburn & Holland 1998,157; Pretty et al. 1995.

Annex 7.1: RGC Laws Defining Citizen Participation

Title	Passed	Content
Law on the Administration and Management of Commune/Sangkat	Mar. 19, 2001	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated version of the 1994 Law on Administration.
Inter-Ministerial Prakas on Commune/Sangkat Development Planning	Jan. 15, 2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 3, Articles 12-20 outline each step of the planning process. • Article 29 highlights that “one male and one female representative from the VDC shall be added to the planning and budgeting committee as defined in Article 9” (p. 11).
Sub-Decree on the Commune/Sangkat Fund	Feb. 7, 2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “To receive the transfers, the Councils shall demonstrate that they have: followed a process of participatory planning, budgeting and implementation...” (p. 9).
Sub-Decree on Decentralization of Powers, Roles and Duties to Commune/Sangkat Councils	Mar. 25, 2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article 1: designates Commune/Sangkat (C/S) as a legal entity and that each C/S shall have a C/S Council (p.20). • “A Commune/Sangkat shall be accountable to all residents of its Commune/Sangkat” (p. 21). • It also includes timing of Commune/Sangkat meetings, titles, clerk positions, internal rules and regulations. • Article 7 identifies the rights residents have “during working hours”: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To conduct their affairs with the Commune/Sangkat Council; ○ To be informed about the proposals and work of the Commune/Sangkat Council; ○ To see and read documents that are owned by the Commune/Sangkat; and ○ To make suggestions or complaints (p. 22). • Article 8: “The Commune/Sangkat is the owner of all correspondence and documents...” (p. 22). • Article 10: Set up a public notice board. • Article 11: Commune’s directive to “promote and facilitate the development of C/S by invoking assistance and mobilizing capacities and resources of: own C/S; the RGC and ministries; international,

		<p>national and local organizations; private sector and generous people” (p. 23).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article 12: “A C/S Council shall actively promote and coordinate the process of democracy in C/S by setting up mechanisms for consultation with residents, civil societies and communities of the C/S. The deliberations of the C/S Council shall be open and transparent” (p. 23). • Article 15: mandates that C/S “shall cooperate with one another by assisting and supporting each other” (p. 22). • Article 19: “appoint a woman councilor to be in charge of women’s and children’s affairs or appoint a woman as an assistant in charge of women’s and children’s affairs” (p.24). • Article 20 lays out the responsibilities of the C/S chief. Articles 22-24 highlight the role of village chiefs, including “report matters relating to village for inclusion in implementation in C/S Council annual report; be responsible for the implementation of duties assigned to him/her by C/S Council; regularly consult with residents of his/her village; seek out matters of common interests with adjoining villages; participate in C/S Council upon request by C/S Council” (p.26). • Article 30: “Every C/S resident can attend every C/S Council meeting but cannot vote. C/S residents can ask C/S chief or councilors questions at the meeting of C/S Council...” (p. 26). • Article 31: “Every C/S resident can put a written suggestion or complaint to the council. The latter is compulsory to respond to the complaint or suggestion” (p. 26). • Article 33: “C/S Council shall ensure to regularly inform the residents of the C/S of all matters within its competences (<i>sic.</i>) and the decisions made at the meetings of the C/S Council” (p. 27). • Article 62 (p. 31) details the roles and functions of the C/S. Article 67 points out that the main function of the C/S is to “promote and facilitate the development of the C/S by selecting appropriate and effective methods to carry out and deliver services...” (p. 32).
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Inter-Ministerial Prakas on Amendment of Article 29 of the Inter-Ministerial Prakas on C/S Development Planning	Aug. 26, 2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• "...C/S Development Planning shall consist of one representative from Village Authority and one representative from Village Development Committee. The two representatives shall consist of a man and a woman." (Amended Article 29, p. 2)
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Annex 7.2: Program Milestones Relevant to Participatory Development Mandate⁶⁰

Date ⁶¹	Description
<i>UNTAC (Oct. 1991- Apr. 1993)</i>	
Jan. 1991	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MoU signed between UNDP and UNHCR.
Sep. 1991	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following signature of Peace Agreement, UNDP hands over UNBRO administration to UNHCR; Humanitarian Assistance and Rehabilitation project (HARO-CMB 91/002) approved by UNDP and the SNC.
Oct. 1991	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paris Peace Accords, creation of the Supreme National Council. • UNDP Resident Coordinator visits OPS in New York to appraise available intervention models; PRODERE approach selected as project model, based on application in Central America; OPS fields a fact-finding and appraisal mission in Cambodia and sets basis for UNDP/UNHCR partnership for Carere.
Nov. 1991	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNHCR and WFP jointly appeal for support for returnees' re-integration.
Late 1991	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNDP and UNHCR develop Carere project.
<i>Carere 1, Phase 1 (Early 1992 to late 1993)</i>	
Jan. 1992	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signature of the UNDP/UNHCR Memorandum of Understanding that entrusts implementation of UNHC projects to UNDP; Establishment of the Joint UNHCR/UNDP Support Unit (JTU), modeled on CIREFCA.
Feb. 1992	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • March 1992: First draft of what was to become Carere produced. • This proposal followed by a multi-sectoral, inter-agency mission, led by UNDP. • Comprehensive approval of HCR/WFP appeal. Joint UNDP and UNHCR field mission prioritized a list of quick impact projects for a total value of US \$63 million.
Mar. 1992	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNDP leads inter-agency inter-sector mission develop a comprehensive area-based program proposal providing guidelines to link reintegration, rehabilitation and further development in the selected target provinces, under the name of Cambodia Resettlement

⁶⁰ The following phases are the researchers' representation of key shifts in program focus and process that directly relate to SPPA sensemaking in life of program. They have been compiled from a summary of project documents listed in *Annex 3.3* and the Emergency Response Division, UNDP 2001.

⁶¹ Dates in *Peacebuilding from the Ground Up* overlap at times, so milestones have been grouped by the program phase with which they are associated, regardless of date. So for instance, Carere 2 preparations were happening in 1995, but are placed under Carere 2 for continuity.

	and Reintegration Programme (Carere).
Jun. 1992	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNDP Action Committee approves a US \$30,000,000 umbrella rehabilitation package comprising Carere and 3 ILO-executed projects: rural infrastructure, local economic development agencies and vocational training; appointment of the first Carere Programme Coordinator.
Jul. 1992	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1st Provincial Support Unit (PSU) of Carere 1 established in Banteay Meanchey. Within the year, Battambang, Pursat, and Siem Reap added. • Start of implementation of UNHCR funded QIPs in support of returnees that have selected Battambang and Pursat as their place of resettlement.
Sep.-Dec. 1992	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PSO teams fully dedicated to deliver UNHCR funded quick impact projects targeting exclusively groups of returnees under direct executing modality.
Jan. 1993	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advanced authorization for the <i>Cambodian Resettlement and Reintegration Programme</i> approved (US \$7.3 million).⁶²
Carere 1, Phase 2 (1993-Early 1995)	
Feb.-Mar. 1993	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNDP Gender in Development visits Carere PSOs in Pursat, Battambang and Banteay Meanchey and strongly recommends proper gender strategy to be designed and implemented.
Apr. 1993	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNTAC Repatriation Operation successfully completed (Project of the Royal Government of Cambodia 1996, Annex 4).
May 1993	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Democratic elections held and transitional government formed (first democratically elected and internationally recognized government in Cambodia in over 20 years). • Last meeting of the Joint Technical Management Unit (former UNHCR/UNDP JSU).
Jun. 1993	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First change of Programme Coordinator.
Sep. 1993	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promulgation of the constitution and the establishment of the RGC. • First Carere external evaluation that played a major role in reorienting Carere from QIP-based to ADS approach; change of Area manager in Banteay Meanchey and appliance of a research-based approach initiatives; first capacity building activities directed to Governmental Institution take place in the agricultural sector.

⁶² "At least until mid-1993, given the exceptional nature and way by which Carere was established and initially implemented, no programme nor project documents, in the traditional sense of the word, were prepared" (UNDP/Carere n.d., 2).

Oct. 1993	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparation of a development oriented Carere work plan for Carere 1994 initiatives in the 3 PSUs.
End 3 rd Quarter 1993	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was determined that Carere's efforts could not be sustained without the development of local institutions and civil society. Carere didn't have enough resources to support capacity already developed. Communities unable or unwilling to maintain projects (UNDP/Carere, n.d., 40).
Dec. 1993	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following recommendations of the evaluation mission and through Carere's technical and financial support, agricultural extension services resumes on a basic scale in Banteay Meanchey and Battambang.
Jan. 1994	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International Conference on the Reconstruction of Cambodia (ICORC) held in Tokyo pledging 630 million; Government of Cambodia establishes the NPRDC (National Programme to Rehabilitate and Develop Cambodia) and an inter-institutional Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development (CARD) under the chairmanship of the Second Prime Minister. • Carere project document signed.
1994	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RGC consolidated and new ministries received mandates and established provincial presence (Project of the Royal Government of Cambodia 1996, Annex 4). • Security situation deteriorated, shortage of funds as a result. Direct implementation had to stop and reduce capacity. The emphasis shifted to planning and assisting the government and the people of the province in project identification, design and implementation (Project of the Royal Government of Cambodia 1996). • Shift "focus away from direct support and implementation of emergency-type projects towards building up the capacity of government departments (and limited numbers of local communities) to manage and implement development plans and projects" (Project of the Royal Government of Cambodia 1996, 3). • Scott Leiper, Programme Manager, joins project.
Feb. 1994	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deterioration of security situation frustrates full implementation of development activities foreseen in Carere 1994 work plan. As a result, direct execution reduces and planning and capacity building support to line-ministries' provincial departments increases.
Feb. 15, 1994	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Declaration No. 031 on the Roles, Responsibilities and Organizational Structure of the Provincial and Municipal Administrations (MoI).
Mar. 1994	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNDP 1991-1993 review mission labels Carere as the "center piece" of UNDP's activity in Cambodia.

Mid-1994	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Battambang workshops (“organized to understand the needs of the community during which time Carere staff along with local officials and communities analyzed the situation and needs; staff members participated in several rounds of discussions with the international organizations and UN agencies; and a consultative workshop with representatives of NGOs and other agencies were organized [1994] to solicit input regarding the future needs and expectations” (UNDP/Carere, n.d., 21).
Jul. 1994	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • July 1994: LDC established at village, commune, and district levels. • Opening of Province Support Office in Siem Reap. • Establishment of the first pilot Provincial Department for Rural Development (PDRD) and Provincial Rural Development Committee (PRDC) in Sisophon, Province of Banteay Meanchey. Carere proposes the concept and supports the elaboration of the Rural Development Structure, composed of a province-wide network of local development committees established at village (VDC, members are elected), commune (CDC) and district (DDC) levels. First time departments had input into planning preparation. “Efforts were made to create similar planning and coordination structures at district, commune and village levels with the representatives selected by the rural population” (UNDP/Carere, n.d., 7).
Sep. 1994	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Second change of Programme Coordinator. Appointment of the first Deputy Programme Coordinator. First PRDC meeting in presence of the Minister for Rural Development takes place in Sisophon.
Oct. 1994	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Law on Administration of Communes (Khum-Sangkat). • UNDP Executive Board approves the first country program for Cambodia for the period October 1994-December 1996, as a transition towards the forthcoming programming cycle (1997-1999).
Nov.-Dec. 1994	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All line-ministries participate in the formulation of Carere 1995 Work Plan in the framework of the newly established PRDC, in Banteay Meanchey, Battambang and Pursat.
Dec. 1994	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “With the decision by the Council of Ministers, in Dec 1994, to officially establish PRDCs in all provinces, the circle was complete from national to village level. District Development Committees were formed composed of government department representatives at district level” (UNDP/Carere, n.d., 42). • Carere assists in drafting corresponding Royal Decree.
<i>Carere 1, Phase 3 (Early 1995-1996)</i>	
By 1995	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By 1995, a rural development structure had emerged, “allowing for the widest possible participation and dialogue” (UNDP/Carere, n.d.,

	8).
Jan. 1995	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Royal Decree Number 136 establishes formally the Provincial Rural Development Committees; first VDC formed in Banteay Meanchey.
Feb. 1995	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluation of Swedish support to emergency aid to Cambodia; 111 VDCs have been formed by the end of the month.
1 st Semester of 1995	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "The RGC at national and provincial levels initiated the process of laying the foundation for long-term, self-reliant rural development in Cambodia. Simultaneously, a gradual shift occurred with Carere moving away from emergency, quick impact assistance to support long-term, sustainable human development initiatives" (UNDP/Carere, n.d., 42).
Early 1995	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Carere decided to revise its approach to emphasize human resources and the development of institutions. It included a focus on the overall development within which organizations operate and interact."... (UNDP/Carere, n.d., 42) "Carere assisted the provincial authorities in the creation of capacity..." (ibid., 40).
Mar. 1995	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial identification mission by UNCDF: proposes a swift from Community Development approach to Governance approach through the establishment of an LDF.
May 1995	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ratanakiri (NE province) included (UNDP/Carere, n.d., 2). Internal workshop on prospects for second phase of Carere (Mekong River workshop).
Late 1995	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Carere initiated efforts to strengthen the administration section within the provincial departments of agriculture to facilitate the organization, administration and management of a large multi-sectoral development program. Accounting, administration and planning staff were selected to form a group that would focus on program administration" (UNDP/Carere, n.d., 18).
1995	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provincial departments continued to be major implementing partners. "Projects were approved only after they had been discussed and approved by the PRDC or the working committee" (Project of the Royal Government of Cambodia 1996, 4). National consultative meetings held with "key ministries with which UNDP expects to maintain consistent dialogue on policy issues emanating from the Carere 2 experiment" (Project of the Royal Government of Cambodia 1996, 4).
Jun.-Jul. 1995	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prospective Evaluation Mission by UNDP/UNOPS and UNCDF make design recommendations with a "particular emphasis on integrating the principles adopted by the RGC in its National Programme to Rehabilitate and Develop Cambodia (NPRDC) and those of the World Summit for Social Development which constitute the core of UNDP's

	development agenda for the coming years." (Project of the Royal Government of Cambodia 1996, 4).
Jul. 1995	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change of PSO Managers in three out of four provinces.
Aug.-Oct. 1995	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on the recommendations on the prospective evaluation, UNDP develops program document for Carere 2, the acronym remains unchanged but the Cambodia Resettlement and Reintegration Programme becomes the Cambodia Rehabilitation and Regeneration Programme.
Nov.-Dec. 1995	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formulation by UNCDF and AIT of Carere 2 Local Development Fund.
Dec. 1995	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNDP HQ approves Carere 2 for four years (1996-1999); implementation of micro-projects prioritized by elected VDCs.
End of 1995	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Carere established in-house capabilities to sustain [local planning] efforts and to support the development of initiatives of provincial departments and local community groups" (UNDP/Carere, n.d., 6). • Carere 1 project formally comes to a close.
<i>Carere 2 (1996-1999)</i>	
Early 1996	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RGC embarks on formal program reform.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Law of Commune Administrative management.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commune Election Law.
Jan.-Mar. 1996	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary recruitment of Carere 2 staff.
Feb. 1996	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RGC signs Carere 2 project document; RGC releases its Socio-Economic Development Plan 1996-2000.
Feb.-Mar. 1996	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following February 95 evaluation mission, SIDA Sweden carries out appraisal mission which results in funding support to Seila/Carere 2.
Apr. 1996	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thirty-five new national professional staff (and eleven new international staff) join Carere 2.
May 1996	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pilot phase of UNCDF funded LDF commences in Banteay Meanchey and Battambang.
Jun. 1996	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RGC formally establishes the Seila Task Force (STF) to be chaired by Ministry of Finance, vice-chaired by Ministry of Interior, under CDC secretariat with Ministries of Rural Development, Planning, Women's Affairs and Agriculture.
Jul. 1996	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eleven new international staff join Carere 2; design of the Carere 2 M & E system starts; first Carere 2 planning and orientation workshop;

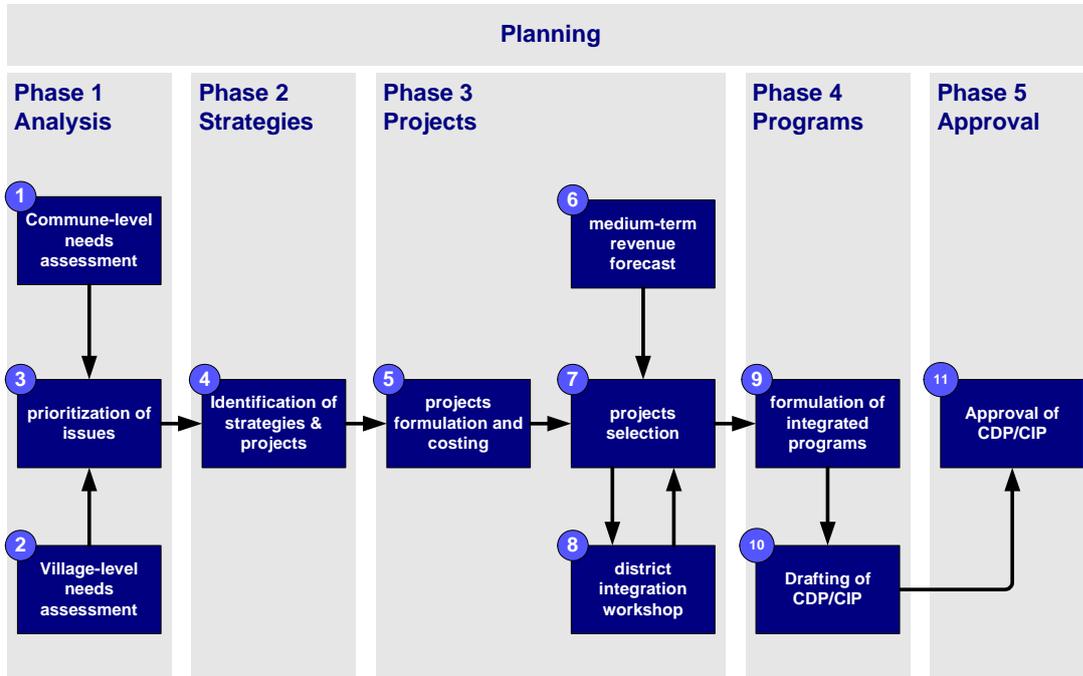
	Seila is conceptually framed within the RGC five year Socio-Economic Development Plan 1996-2000.
Aug. 1996	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNCDF formulates LDF main phase project document. Change of Deputy Programme Coordinator.
Sep. 1996	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Seila planning workshop held in Sisophon; Local Planning Process facilitation training workshop.
Oct. 1996	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seila Education Planning workshops in the five provinces; Seila Agricultural Planning workshops in the four northwestern provinces; Seila Health Planning workshops in the five provinces.
Dec. 1996	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of the main phase of the UNCDF-funded Local Development Fund initiatives; RGC's five year Socio-Economic Development Plan 1996-2000 is approved by the National Assembly. Following agreement between the RGC and Khmer Rouge leadership of Pailin and Malai, on 16 August 1996, Carere allowed access with PDRD delegations for the newly reintegrated regions of Battambang and Banteay Meanchey to begin reconciliation program.
1997	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Period when Scott says the program really began to coalesce as a vision and a team.
1997	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local elections were expected to be held at commune and district levels, with goal that elections of Commune Councilors would result in shift from appointed Local Administration Units (LAUs) with little authority or capacity, to democratically-elected, fund-controlling bodies empowered to engage community in the planning process. Factional fighting did not allow these elections to occur until 2002.
<i>Seila, Phase 1 (1996-2000) (Transition from Carere 2 to Seila)⁶³</i>	
1998	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNCDF support to Carere ends in 1998.
Jul. 1998	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General elections.
Mid-1999	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carere extended for six months, to June 30, 2001 to assist the final stage of Seila program formulation, support expansion to new provinces and manage the transition to new execution arrangements from July 2001 (Leiper & Robertson 2001, 4).
1999	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National training scheduled to train new managers and deputy managers (Interview 16).
2000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CDC Congress of all CDCs in five provinces convened to update communes on Seila policy and program issues as well as to reinforce horizontal solidarity and dialogue (Leiper & Robertson 2001, 5).
2000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commune Legislation: "Mol completed the draft of the Commune

⁶³ PLG and Seila were concurrent operations.

	Administration and Commune Election Laws and both laws were reviewed and endorsed by the Council of Ministers for submission to the National Assembly. A clear decision was made by the Royal Government to adopt decentralisation and deconcentration as the policy through which the Commune Administration Law would be implemented and the Organic Law, defining the role of the Province and District, designed" (Leiper & Robertson 2001, 9).
Mid-2000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government prepared a working paper for discussion at the Consultative Group meeting held during May 2000 in Paris which outlined the rationale, scope and resource requirements for this expansion (Project of RGC, PLG 2001, 8). • In tandem with this, UNDP/SIDA fielded a mission at the request of the STF to provide advice on the overall policy and program framework for decentralization, to provide a context for further definition of the Seila program in particular (Project of RGC, PLG 2001, 8). • PPM name formally changes to SPPA with introduction of new program. • Seila granted full authority and project approved.
Dec. 2000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seila Programme Document 2001-2005 signed. • Seila implemented in 220 communes in six provinces, reaching 1.6 million people, representing 15% of the total number of communes and total population (Project of RGC, PLG 2001, 8).
Jul. 2000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Western PPMs turn their positions over to Cambodian SPPAs. • "Cleaning House" phase (Interview 2).
Aug. 2000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of Local Planning Process Guidelines with the specific goal of preparing a set of Guidelines for the LPP (Leiper & Robertson 2001, 9).
June 2000- November 2000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SPPAs re-apply for their positions. • STF carried out a formulation process to design next five-year phase of the program. An inter-ministerial working group was established to lead the exercise, which involved the formulation of a Logical Framework for the new program (Leiper & Robertson 2001, 10).
<i>Seila/PLG, Phase 2 (2001-2007)</i>	
Mar. 19, 2001	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Law on the Administration and Management of Commune/Sangkat passed.
Jun. 8, 2001	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PLG Project Document signed.
Jul. 2001	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PPMs renamed SPPAs. • All Cambodian SPPAs have to reapply for their jobs.

Jul. 30, 2001	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • End of Carere 2.
Jan. 15, 2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inter-Ministerial Prakas on Commune/Sangkat Development Planning (National Committee to Support the Communes/Sangkats).
Feb. 3, 2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1ST Commune Council Elections.
Feb. 7, 2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sub-decree on the "Communes/Sangkats Fund" (National Committee to Support the Communes/Sangkats).
Feb. 2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of interim CDC, transfer of equipment and handover to CCs following elections.
Mar. 25, 2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sub-decree on Decentralization of Powers, Roles and Duties to Commune/Sangkat Councils.
Jul. 27, 2003	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National elections.
Aug. 26, 2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inter-Ministerial Prakas on Amendment of Article 29 of the Inter-Ministerial Prakas on Communes/Sangkats Development Planning. No. 2400.
Nov. 8, 2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prakas on Establishment of Structure, Roles, and Responsibilities of the Provincial/Municipal Rural Development Committee of the Seila Programme. 292 Seila Task Force.
Late 2003	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New provinces were added and SPPAs had to re-apply for their positions (Interviews 2 and 4).
Jun. 3, 2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prakas No. 152/MEF Establishment of CS Fund Working Group (Senior Minister of Economy and Finance).
Feb. 3, 2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sub-Decree No. 11 ANKR/BK on National Budget Contribution to the Commune - Sangkat Fund.
Late 2006-mid-2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seila integrated into Ministry of Interior, program structure reorganized and renamed Project in Support of Democratic Development through Decentralisation and Deconcentration and National Committee to Manage Decentralisation and Deconcentration Reforms.

Annex 7.3: The Commune Development Planning (CDP) Process⁶⁴



In February 2002, the government issued a planning regulation to guide the communes in preparing their development plan in a participatory manner. The Planning Process is articulated in five phases as illustrated in the above diagram. Schematically:

<p>Phase 1: Data and Needs Analysis: identification of service needs and development problems that affect individual villages and communes as a whole and eventually with the prioritization of critical issues that the Council wants to address during its mandate.</p>
<p>Step 1: Data analysis and Commune/Sangkat level needs assessment Step 2: Participatory needs assessment Step 3: Prioritization of development issues</p>
<p>Phase 2: Strategy Identification: generation of a vision for commune development, transforming the selected critical problems/issues into goals and objectives and identifying the strategies and projects to address them.</p>
<p>Step 4: Identification of strategies and projects</p>
<p>Phase 3: Project Formulation: preliminary formulation and costing of the identified</p>

⁶⁴ Material compiled [sic.] from Ty (2005) and Seng & Dongelmans (2005).

<p>projects, their ranking and final selection, in light of the opportunities for financing that are offered to the Council by existing state, donor and NGO programs. As well, Council's revenue, be it from their own sources or CSF, or other intergovernmental transfers, is considered.</p>
<p>Step 5: Formulation of projects Step 6: Medium-term revenue forecast Step 7: Selection of projects Step 8: District Integration Workshop (DIW)</p>
<p>Phase 4: Program Formulation: integration of the selected projects and other routine activities of the local administration into sector or cross-sector programs of action that translate the local government's vision for development of its jurisdiction into concrete activities. It results in the actual production of a draft Commune Development Plan (CDP) and a Commune Investment Programme (CIP).</p>
<p>Step 9: Formulation of integrated programs Step 10: Drafting of Commune Development and Investment Plan</p>
<p>Phase 5: Approval Process: obtaining and integrating into the draft CDP/CIP comments and suggestions from both the local people and the provincial administration. It results in the approval by the Council of the CDP/CIP.</p>
<p>Step 11: Approval of Commune Development Plan & Investment Plan</p>

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An institute to serve facilitators of development

OFFICE ADDRESS :

28, Street 80 (corner 75) Sangkat Sras Chak,
Khan Daun Penh, Phnom Penh, Cambodia

POSTAL ADDRESS :

PO Box 2307 Phnom Penh, Cambodia

TELEPHONE :

(855-23) 722 115/116

FAX :

(855-23) 722 117

WEBSITE :

www.vbnk.org