

Reflecting on the social context of development: Opportunities for learning and improving practice

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Context of this presentation

- **Kara**

- PhD: improving integrated conservation and development in Cambodia
 - Holistic, interdisciplinary and multimethodological (quantitative and qualitative analysis)
- I year working in Cambodia for a conservation NGO

- **Farib**

- Cambodian born
- Ongoing contact with Cambodia (personal and professionally) 30+ years
- PhD (ongoing): ethnic dimensions of business in Cambodia and influence of this



Cambodia

- Extremely poor and rural
- Rapid growth but extreme and growing inequity
- Recent violent history
 - Has resulted in extreme instability (socially and functionally)
- Traditional society
 - patronage networks dominant



Research Approach

- Primary component of Kara's PhD research utilised **grounded theory**



Close scrutiny,



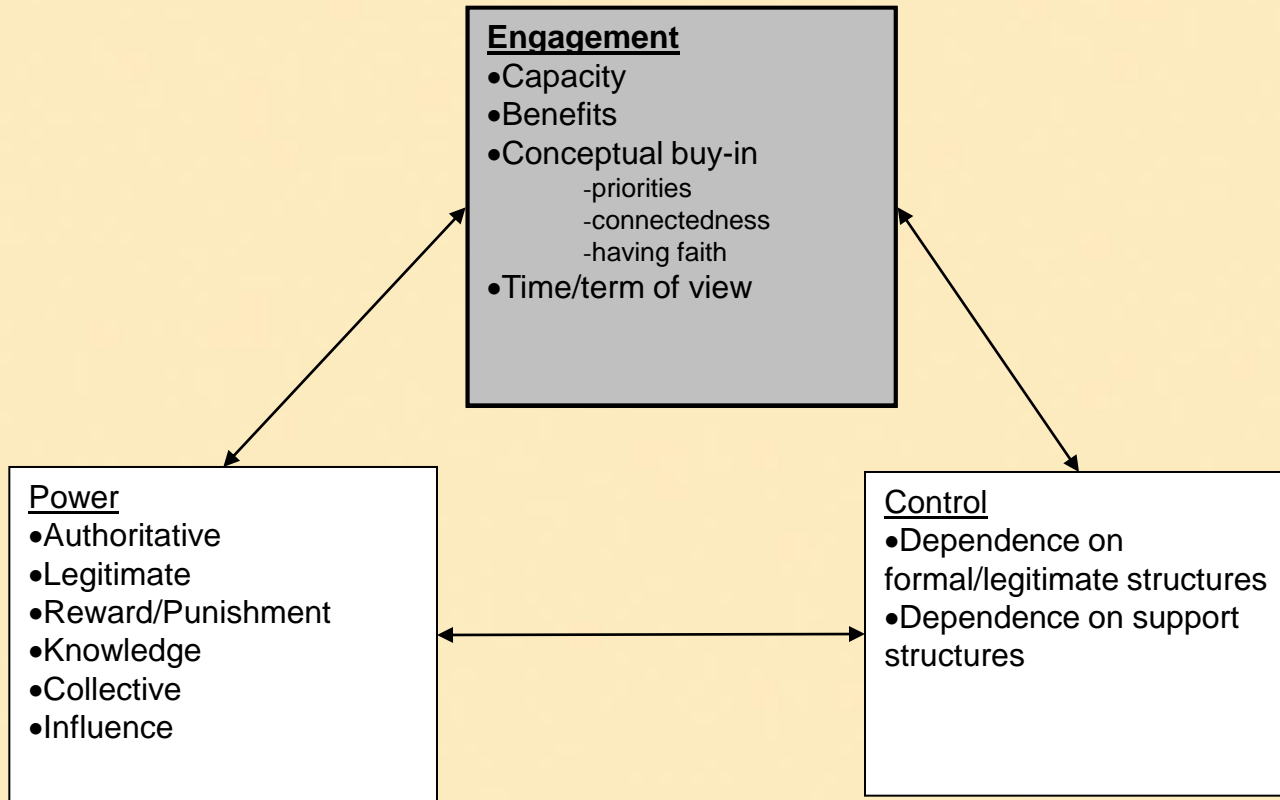
iterative analysis,



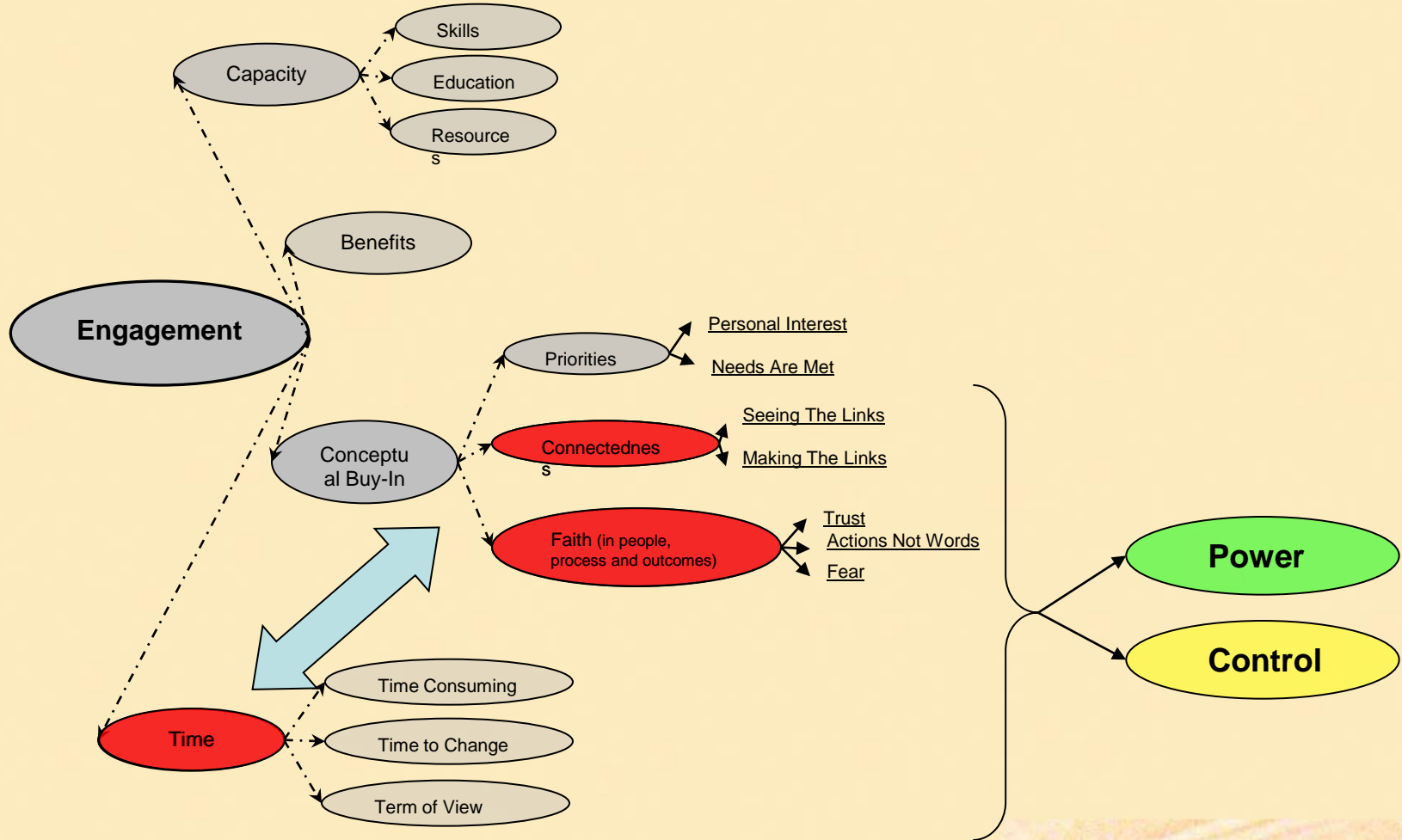
generates new insights

- Research based on semi-structured interviews with range of participants (Khmer and expat) from the sector: local and international NGO, Donors, government officials

Grounded Theory Analysis



Engagement



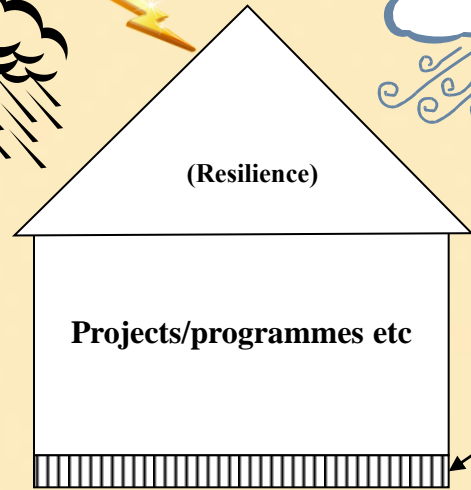
So what?

- ‘Connectedness’
 - Critical importance of *relationships* (between individuals *and* organisations)
- Fundamental importance of trust (‘faith’)
 - Forms foundation without which sustainable ‘anything’ (development, engagement etc) cannot occur
- Time
 - Building ‘faith’ and ‘connectedness’ *takes time*
- The human dimension is central
 - SOCIAL CAPITAL
- Understanding context of the place you’re in
 - In Cambodia -> issues around trust related to patron-client networks/social context





External Forces



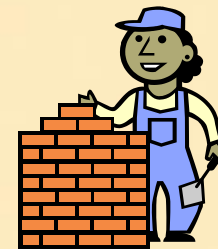
Foundation of social capital
(trust, relationships etc)



Straw/Bamboo



Wood



Brick/Concrete



Closing remarks

- Must appreciate fundamental importance of ‘social capital’
 - It underpins any aid/development activities
- Awareness and appreciation of the context within which you are working
 - e.g., in Cambodia link between trust and P-C networks
- Time is a critical issue (need long/longer time frames)
 - linkage to building trust and constructing relationships.

Thank you

Questions and discussion please!

