



A spatio-ethnographic methodology for strategic monitoring and evaluation

Two case studies from Papua New Guinea

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Program strategy

- Program strategy: the overall design intent or goal
- Programs are often multi-agency and complex
- Strategy is not always fully expressed
- Each activity becomes its own domain
- Such programs can lose strategic perspective



Spatially extensive programs

- Delivery of services and infrastructure over wide area
- May be in response to a crisis, or may be a sub-national integrated plan
- Theory of change has multiple steps
- Implementation has multiple threads
- Expected to have positive impact on beneficiaries over a wide area



Strategic monitoring and evaluation

- M&E purpose is coordinated, evenly distributed and effective impact
- An overview of all components
- Looking for component interactions
- Looking for patterns of impact: spatial and social
- Making implicit strategy explicit



Without strategic M&E

- Program's change theory not examined
- Focus on activity outputs
- Overall program outcomes become distorted
- Some regions gain greater benefit than others
- Undetected by program implementers or activity-level M&E



Spatio-ethnographic method

- Semi-rapid assessment
- It maps program inputs, environment and outcomes
- Two interacting, iterative strands:
 - i) Socio-economic spatial analysis
 - ii) Situating stakeholder views spatially, while learning from their interpretations of the spatial inquiry



Transport and agriculture in post-conflict Bougainville

- Many activity threads and agents
- Strategy not explicit, but was implied
- Identified as a market chain strategy
- How did activities fit to the mechanism?
- Assess level and distribution of impact

Spatio-ethnographic method used:

- Evaluation of spatial impact using found data
- Stakeholder's stories situated within spatial context / stakeholders teach insight to spatial issues

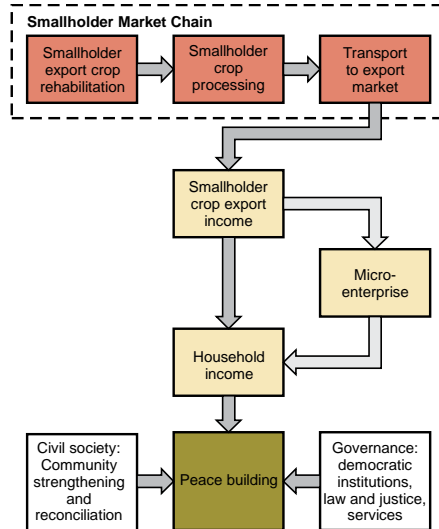


Complementary opposites

Spatial approach	Ethnographic approach
Systematic procedure	Flexible, spontaneous
Macro-level picture	Micro-level picture
Quantitative evidence	Qualitative evidence
Etic explanation (observer/technical)	Emic interpretation (views from within)
Visual reporting	Descriptive reporting



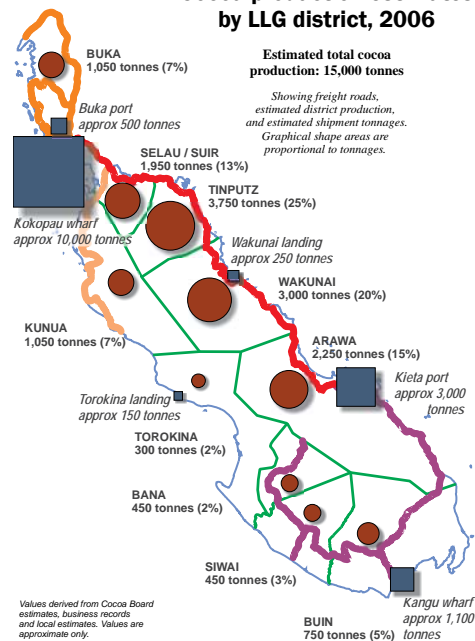
B'ville strategy identified



Rough data for socio-economic picture

- Revealed that wharves were not applied strategically

Cocoa production estimates by LLG district, 2006



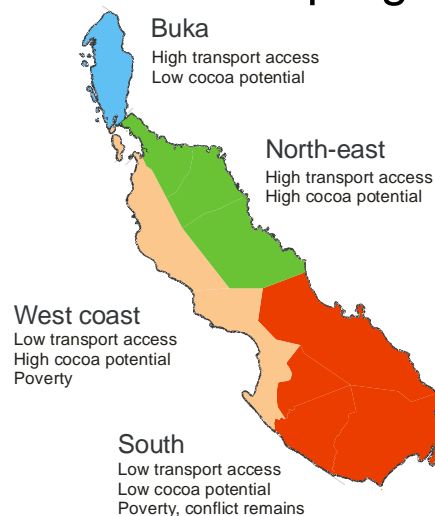


Landscape zones

- Heart of the S-E method is to define relevant socio-economic landscape zones
- Used for counterfactual (compare-and-contrast) analysis
- Counterfactual zoning good if baseline weak
- Zones can break out of official boundaries: they are political not socio-economic
- Begin with available data e.g. census data, crop tonnage data for landscape analysis
- Look for stakeholder interpretations of this data to inform zoning



Zone comparison reveals effects of uneven program





Spatial counterfactual

- No baseline
- Stakeholder views and quantitative data combined to create and differentiate districts by program benefit

	Low cocoa potential	High cocoa potential
Low transport access	South K144	West Coast K309
High transport access	Buka K109	Northeast K1003



Ethnographic detail strongly contextualised

- Two women given micro-enterprise support
- Evaluation reveals their outcomes largely determined by larger linkage issues between program elements
- The budget for linkages was there but the program strategy to see them was not.

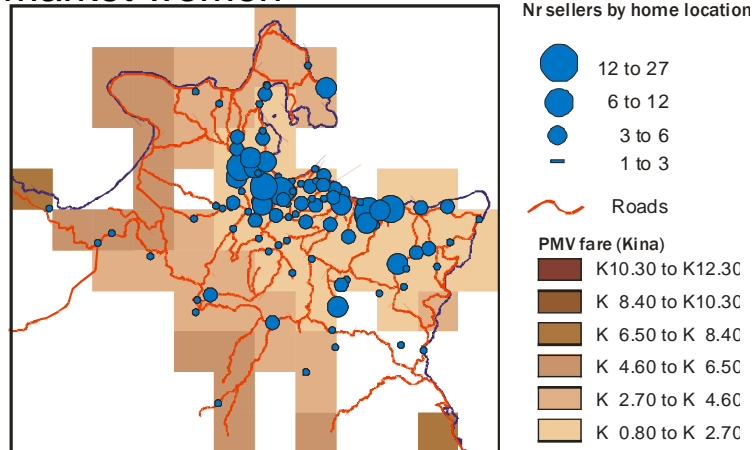


West coast: transport forgotten, so no cocoa money, so nobody can buy her bread. Effect of no strategy.



East coast: both roads and cocoa trees rehabilitated, people have money, her business thrives.

East New Britain: Impact of roads for market women



- Policy question: Will extending the road network connect more women to market? Probably not, the fares become too high. The thinking to juxtapose these two datasets was inspired by women's own comments. The mapping amplifies their story.

Semi-structured interviews

- Key rapid ethnographic technique
- Stakeholder views not used as objective truth, but as insight to agreements and conflicts between viewpoints
- Talk to wide variety of stakeholders
- Recursive process – shuttle ideas back and forth between stakeholders
- 'Hot topics' quickly become apparent
- Everyone has their own story – natural conversation, not clipboard questions
- A learning approach – change the questions as your insight deepens
- Low key - no circus, no raised expectations



S-E method timeframe

- Lower time and cost overheads in comparison to traditional large-scale social survey techniques
- Slower and more expensive than rapid assessment techniques based on literature review and stakeholder interviews
- Higher resolution socio-economic mapping is more time consuming
- Iterative process ideally needs at least three fieldwork-analysis cycles



Partner agencies

- Maps are popular: data access easily given and key stakeholders like the result
- Data collected and mapping done is very likely to have other uses
- especially if dovetailed to official interests and systems
- Mapping is a relatively straightforward skills transfer
- Involving national counterparts builds their technical capacity



S-E further benefits

- Mapping is an immediate, visual way of communicating large amounts of data, to help decision makers
- works especially well if possibly the text of the report will not be fully read.
- Ethnography seeks out, recursively tests and represents a range of viewpoints from across the stakeholder spectrum
- is a powerful way of injecting new understandings and bypassing 'explanation capture' by a dominant stakeholder group.



Conclusion: S-E method is:

- Strongly evidence-based
- Suited to M&E where program impact has spatial distribution
- Very good where baseline is weak
- Mapping gives big picture, while ethnography informs the mapping
- May be the only way broken links and distribution gaps are realised
- A useful tool at strategic level