

Rural-urban Migration as a Response to Vulnerability in Rural Cambodia

by

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Addendum to title page:

ABSTRACT

A human security and vulnerability approach is used in this research to discuss rural-urban migration to squatter settlements in Phnom Penh, the capital city of Cambodia. There are three aspects to consider in this approach: first, the biophysical aspects that can contribute to vulnerability, such as natural resource scarcity, environmental degradation, and biological diversity; second, the socio-economic aspects, which can detail Cambodia's social relationships that were broken apart; and third, the dynamic quality of vulnerability and the factors contributing to vulnerability.

Cambodia is an extreme example of rural vulnerability, caused by its history of warfare, years of communist dictatorship by Pol Pot, and genocide. Rural Cambodia is characterized by lack of access to adequate land, natural resource scarcity, and insufficient employment to absorb the labour surplus. This study investigates how rural-urban migration may be a response to this vulnerability.

Forty-three interviews with rural-urban migrants were conducted in ten squatter settlements and two relocated communities in Phnom Penh. Open-ended, semi-structured interviews were used to investigate the participants' decisions to leave their homes in the countryside and start anew in Phnom Penh. Participants were asked about their previous lives in the countryside, to determine what aspects of vulnerability were occurring and how this helped shape their plans to find an alternative source of livelihood in the city.

The interactions between the causes of movement are complex and dynamic over time and space. The participants' decisions to move were based on outward factors, such as lack of opportunity in the countryside, debt and lack of resources, inadequate land size

and productivity, and networking in the migration destination. Movement may also be a response to underlying causes of vulnerability, oppression, and a limited capacity to adapt and alleviate the changes.

Addendum to abstract:

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

| | |
|-------------|--|
| CDRI | Cambodian Development Resource Institute |
| DFID | Department for International Development |
| MRC | Mekong River Commission |
| MPP | Municipality of Phnom Penh |
| NIS | National Institute of Statistics |
| SUPF | Squatter and Urban Poor Federation |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| UPDF | Urban Poor Development Fund |
| URC | Urban Resource Centre |
| USG | Urban Sector Group |

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Scope of the Study

The poor in Cambodia are very vulnerable, assuming vulnerability to be a function of factors such as being disabled, displaced, aged, very young, widowed, all conditions well fulfilled in Cambodia.
(Van Acker, 1999: 12)

While there are often economic reasons for people to move to the city, insecurity in the rural areas, with respect to environmental degradation, natural resource scarcity, and lack of access to productive land, also induces movement. Power differentials, vulnerability, and historical contexts, also all contribute to the potential for migration. The focus of this thesis, however, is on the interconnections between livelihood, environmental change, and migration.

This study analyzes the movement of Cambodians from the countryside to the capital city, Phnom Penh. The time frame for the research is limited to 1979 onwards, due to the forced movement of the population by Pol Pot and his Khmer Rouge factions from 1975-1979. During his reign, Pol Pot emptied the city of its inhabitants. His communist ideology drove the urbanites to work in the fields with their rural counterparts. Upon the invasion of Phnom Penh by the Vietnamese in 1979, and the resulting fall of Pol Pot, Cambodians began to return to Phnom Penh. This time provides a benchmark for my study. All migration documented by this study occurred after the fall of Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge.

The participants in this study are categorized as *permanent* migrants. That is, they now reside in Phnom Penh. *Seasonal* or *temporary* migration to Phnom Penh, however, contributes to the bulk of movement to the city. In most cases the migrants,

both permanent and seasonal, are unskilled labourers who find informal employment in construction, factories, and as motodup or cyclo¹ drivers. These migrants are poor. They may live with family already settled in the city, or they may find a place to live independently in a “cheap” part of town. The permanent migrants will most often find themselves living in the squatter/slum areas of town.

Movement from rural areas towards provincial capitals and the national capital, Phnom Penh, is increasing. Cambodia’s urban population increased from 10.3 percent of the total population in 1975 to 17.4 percent in 2001, and is estimated to increase to 26.1 percent by 2015 (UNDP, 2003). Yet, the majority of Cambodia’s population continues to reside in rural areas. Increased demands on agricultural lands and natural resources for both subsistence and commercial purposes are key problems. The resulting environmental impacts have the potential to disrupt the livelihoods of those dependent on local resources.

While such issues are not unique to Cambodia, the country has a unique history of conflict, a weak system of land tenure, and family land customs that complicate matters. Land plots are divided among family members and subsequent generations. However, recent government involvement and regulations have limited the ability for families to acquire new plots. Once divided, these fragmented plots may not prove economically viable, leading to migration and labour surplus. This suggests that migration is a coping mechanism for vulnerable populations faced with lack of access to adequate land, natural resource scarcity, and insufficient employment to absorb the labour surplus.

¹ Motodup and cyclo drivers are the most common form of taxi service. Motodup are scooters or mopeds. Cyclos are peddled rickshaws.

While urbanization is not yet a huge concern in Cambodia, the Municipality of Phnom Penh has not demonstrated an ability to deal with the current numbers of urban poor let alone the continued influx of additional people to Phnom Penh's recent squatter settlements. These settlements have little formal infrastructure or access to the city's water and sanitation services. They are characterized by lack of drainage, contributing to extremely unhealthy living conditions for the duration of the rainy season. Costs of living remain high for the poor as they are forced to purchase water and energy from private sources charging a premium for their services.

1.2 Purpose

The purpose of this research is to identify how rural-urban migration may be an adaptive mechanism to human insecurity. The change of lifestyle from rural to urban is dramatic. People originate in an area dependent on variable environmental factors, such as rainfall, to determine harvest levels, and thereby have an uncertain livelihood. Their destination is wrought with the uncertainty of obtaining steady employment and cash income. The question of why people move is a complex one, combining various interconnected factors and limitations. This thesis is an attempt to give some light to this question in the Cambodian context.

This research is important in two respects. First, it addresses issues of rural poverty, population pressure, land limitations, environmental change, and natural resource scarcity. Each of these factors contributes to the stress and vulnerability of communities to maintain a subsistence lifestyle off of the land. Second, this research addresses issues of the urban poor and low-skilled people. It is a complex decision-

making process for an individual or family to move from the countryside to the city. Those that do move have little idea of what living in the city will be like. If they have received any information at all from family or friends that have moved to the city previously, it is often glorified and obscured. Rural lifestyle is hard work with little reward. They live for the present with little ability to plan for the future or acquire assets. Faced with hardship, vulnerability, and lack of access to adequate land and resources, the tales of the bright city lights suggest a chance at a new livelihood.

1.3 Research Objectives:

There were four main objectives of this study, consistent with the purpose as outlined above. They were:

1. To document migration trends to squatter settlements in Phnom Penh.
2. To gain insight into the decision-making process of rural-urban migrants to Phnom Penh.
3. To investigate the differences between the quality of life in the city to that of the individual's rural village, from the migrant's perspective.
4. To assess how local communities have used migration as a response to vulnerability in rural Cambodia.

Qualitative research was used to examine the rural-urban migration of participants living in squatter settlements in Phnom Penh. In-depth data was collected through secondary literature, archival records, participant observation, and semi-structured interviews with individuals living in twelve of Phnom Penh's squatter communities. The research was carried out over the course of one field season (August – December, 2003).

The Mekong River Commission (MRC) and the Urban Sector Group (USG) were able to give me logistical support for my research activities.

1.4 Thesis Lay-out

The preceding sections have provided the scope and objectives of this thesis. The remainder of the thesis is will address the research questions, and is broken down as follows:

Chapter Two is used as a literature review to give background and theoretical context to this thesis. It describes the geographical background of Cambodia, including information on its natural resources and development. The recent historical background is used to place the present research in space and time, acknowledging that history largely determines and shapes the future. Chapter Two includes a description of recent literature and ideas of population movement and migration, migration trends in Cambodia, as well as human and environmental security.

Chapter Three further describes human security and vulnerability as a methodological framework to be used to discuss migration. The methods used for this thesis are described, including the significance and importance of qualitative research and the different explanations that qualitative data can provide through a case study perspective. The methods included triangulation of research by literature analysis and interviewing. The interview process and the questions used are described. Interviews were conducted in twelve communities, which are described in Chapter Four.

Chapter Four is used to describe the situation and the findings of this research. Forty-three participants were interviewed for this research, including 31 females and 12

males. This chapter provides a description of the study area, both of Phnom Penh as a whole and the individual squatter settlements visited for the field research. This chapter is also used to investigate patterns of migration of the participants. A comparison between rural and urban lifestyles is used to describe how the migrants have fared in using rural-urban migration as an alternative livelihood strategy. Lastly, the participants' motivations and perceptions of migration to Phnom Penh are described.

Chapter Five provides a discussion of the research findings in relation to the main theoretical concepts. Human security is broken down into its seven elements, each described with relevance to this research's context. The research is also placed within its relevance to general migration themes.

Chapter Six concludes this thesis by aiming to meet the objectives and purpose, namely migration as a response to vulnerability in rural Cambodia. The limitations and difficulties are described.

CHAPTER TWO

CAMBODIA BACKGROUND AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Geographical Context

2.1.1 Physical Geography

Cambodia borders Thailand, Lao P.D.R., and Vietnam in Southeast Asia. These four countries (along with China and Myanmar) have a common distinguishing factor: the Mekong River. The Mekong River, which extends 4200 km from the Chinese province of Qinghai in a generally southeast direction to the South China Sea, is the main artery of water and livelihood to 65 million people who live within its 800,000 square kilometre basin boundaries (Chenoweth *et al.*, 2001; Kite, 2001).

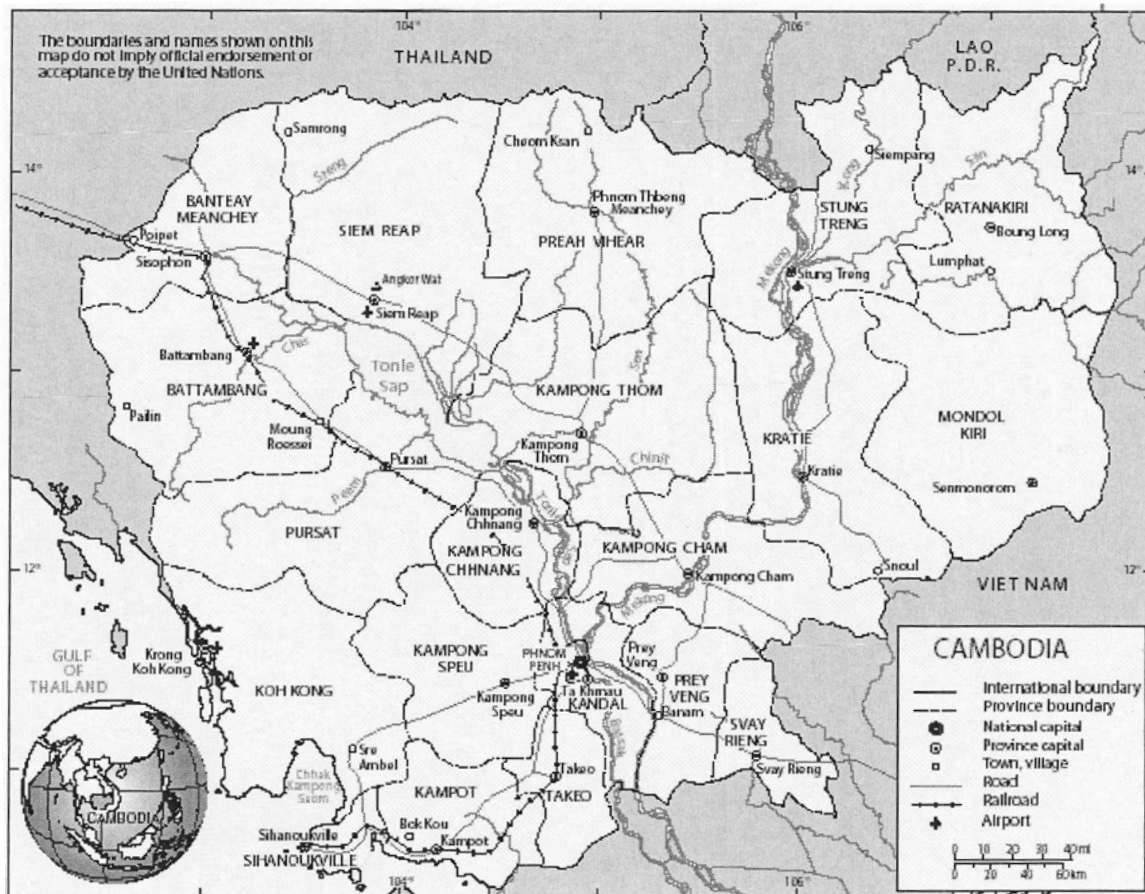


Figure 1.1 Map of Cambodia

(Source: UNDP, 2004: 5)

Cambodia's biophysical and environmental characteristics are dominated by the Mekong River and Tonle Sap. Eighty-six percent of Cambodia lies within the Mekong River Basin (Hirsch and Cheong, 1996). Table 1 indicates some of the features of the Mekong River Basin within the Cambodian context.

Table 1.1 Features of the Mekong River Basin within Cambodia

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Contribution to run-off | 18% of the entire Basin |
| Drainage area | 155,000 square kilometres; 20% of the entire Basin |
| Forest cover | 49-62% |
| Deforestation rate | 3% |
| Arable land | 29,100 square kilometres; 15% is under irrigation |
| Hydropower potential | 2,200 MW; 7% of the entire Basin |

Adapted from: Hirsch and Cheong, 1996 "Biophysical and Land Use Features of the Mekong River Basin"

There are two main topographical characteristics dominating Cambodia's landscape. The first characteristic is the low-lying central plains that comprise the bulk of the land area. These plains are mostly less than 10 meters in elevation. The second topographical land characteristic is the surrounding mountain ranges and high plateaus in the western part of the country. These are comprised of the Elephant and Cardamom ranges, which form a horseshoe shape opening to the east. The seaward side (west) of these elevated areas drains to the ocean, whereas all other areas of Cambodia drain into the Mekong and its tributaries.

The wet monsoon season floods rivers, tributaries, lakes and wetlands. In so doing, it brings water and sediments to the lowland areas, replenishing soil nutrients (McKenney and Tola, 2002). Tonle Sap Lake (see map on previous page) is the largest

freshwater lake in Southeast Asia, and it functions as a natural flood regulator to the Mekong River and Delta. In the peak monsoon season flooding in the Delta and a rise in the level of the Mekong River creates a reverse flow up Tonle Sap River to Tonle Sap Lake. This function takes up 20 percent of the Mekong River flow, and causes the lake to expand in area by approximately 300 percent from about 2,600 to 10,500 square kilometres (Hirsch and Cheong, 1996). Even with Tonle Sap Lake expanding as it does, the Mekong Delta still floods an area of 14,000 square kilometres.

The annual cycle of flooding coincides with, and allows for, the breeding and migration of fish populations, suggesting that maintenance of flow levels of the Mekong River are required for sustained, healthy fish populations². The official production figure for fisheries in the Mekong Delta and Tonle Sap is around 100,000 tonnes, 90 percent of which are from inland catch fisheries (Hirsch and Cheong, 1996).

It is estimated that the average consumption per Cambodian of fish, both fresh and processed, is 27-38 kg per year, but varies to as much as 70 kg in some areas (McKenney and Tola, 2002). The main catch season is at the beginning of the dry season as the floods recede and the fish begin to migrate. While catch estimates have increased in recent years, there is evidence that this is due to increased fishing efforts and better data collection, rather than improved or increasing fish stocks (McKenney and Tola, 2002).

² The Mekong River Commission has targeted flow maintenance as part of its Water Utilization Programme.

2.1.2 Socio-economy and Resources

Underdevelopment of Cambodia, which has historically hosted authoritarian regimes, has contributed to political instability, regional dissension, and now reckless and ecologically unsustainable development. While economic development may mitigate social and political conflict through growth and fair distribution of its benefits, the case of Southeast Asia, in general, has led to land being appropriated for agricultural expansion, industrialization, and rapid urbanization. This has resulted in more rural inhabitants becoming landless, food and water shortages increasing in prevalence, and increase of social tension (Acharya, *et al.*, 1995). Cambodia is experiencing landlessness and shortages from population increase and land appropriation for the expansion of agricultural export crops.

Cambodia is ranked 130 out of 175 countries by the Human Development Index, with only Lao PDR ranked below it in Southeast Asia (UNDP, 2003). This is due to a combination of factors (ecological, economic, social, and political), which also contribute to the vulnerability of the people in this region. Cambodia's population was estimated at 13.5 million in 2001 (UNDP, 2003). The population growth rate for Cambodia was estimated at 2.5 percent in the period from 1975 to 2001, but with an expected decrease to 2.2 percent from 2001 to 2015 (UNDP, 2003). The average life expectancy at birth in Cambodia is 57.4 years as of 2001 (UNDP, 2003), yet 42 percent of the population are under the age of 15 (DFID, 2000). There is severe malnourishment of children, where 45 percent of Cambodians under 5 are underweight, and 36 percent of households live below the National Poverty Line (UNDP, 2003). Rural families in Cambodia have an average income of less than 1/3 of their urban counterparts. Many rural households do not have

access to adequate sanitation: 82 percent do not have toilets (DFID, 2000) and 70 percent do not have continual access to an improved water source (UNDP, 2003). Access to electricity is very limited (1 percent in rural areas), and 96 percent of rural households use firewood as cooking fuel (DFID, 2000).

The Mekong River region has been dominated by subsistence living, where 90 percent of Cambodians live in rural areas (DFID, 2000; Syrabo and Kimseng, 2002). In a region of high resource potential, however, there is much room for development and economic exploitation. As the geopolitical tensions of Southeast Asia wane, as populations continue to grow, and as the popularity and accessibility to resources increase, the Mekong Basin will begin to “catch up” to other major world river systems in terms of economic and industrial development and natural resource exploitation.

Rice-based farming covers 90 percent of the cultivated area in Cambodia, to an estimated total of 2.32 million hectares, but working the land generally does not produce enough for families to survive (Hirsch and Cheong, 1996; McKenney and Tola, 2002). Rice production has risen by more than 60 percent in the last decade, from about 2.5 to 4.0 million tonnes (McKenney and Tola, 2002). Food security is the primary motivation for rice production, but it is still necessary for rural people to both fish and forage to supplement and diversify their rice diets (DFID, 2000; McKenney and Tola, 2002). Previous research estimated that 63 percent of the rural labour force is dependent on subsistence agriculture for their livelihood, and 77 percent also relies on other forms of agricultural employment (Heak, 2000; Ramamurthy et al., 2001). Access to basic resources is getting more difficult, especially taking into account the increasing

population that is compounding issues of food security and environmental degradation (Ramamurthy *et al.*, 2001).

There is also a strong dependence on forests and wildlands to provide for basic household goods, foodstuff, and grazing land. Uses of forests at the community level include provision of cooking fuel, construction materials, tools and household items, and various non-timber forest products, such as medicinal remedies (McKenney and Tola, 2002). While Cambodia is estimated to have the largest intact deciduous forest in Southeast Asia (the exact figures vary from anywhere from 30-60 percent), access to the forest resources is under growing pressure, and is plagued by the afflictions shared by many common property resources (Hirsch and Cheong, 1996; DFID, 2000).

Deforestation is increasing, and this has indicated the lack of effective, let alone any, forest management. Forests are subject to illegal logging and logging concessions to those with money and power. Poor people are being excluded from using the forest resources for food, materials, and income because the forests are diminishing in size and quality, and there are increasing limitations on permissible use of forests.

A general characteristic of the rural inhabitants of Cambodia is their vulnerability to shocks and upsets. Examples of these are farm failure, such as crops affected by severe drought and floods, health shocks and chronic illness, such as lack of clean water and poor sanitation, and rural crime and insecurity, such as lack of good governance or policing (DFID, 2000). Additionally, rural Cambodians are vulnerable to weak land tenure and the prospect of having their land appropriated for agricultural expansion of large-scale industrial crop plantations. Land tenure is not fixed, due to a lack of adequate documentation of when, and to whom, land titles were given. Cambodia's history of

extensive internal displacement and migration also contributed to the inability to keep track of family land tenures.

Landmines and unexploded ordinance set throughout the 1970s (in relation to the Vietnam War, the Cambodian Civil War, and the Khmer Rouge; see Chapter 2.2 for more details) present restrictions to some agricultural and forested land. One recent estimate states that about 300 square kilometres of productive land in Cambodia remains mined, leaving up to 1,000 people a year being injured by mines and unexploded ordinance (DFID, 2000). In 2003, 745 mine incidents were recorded in Cambodia (UNDP, 2004).

The management of the Mekong River Basin is based on the political boundaries and administrative units determined through the colonial division of the region into countries and other political units. There is very little management focused on the natural characteristics of the region, such as on the basin, sub-basin, watershed, or climatic zone levels (Hirsch and Cheong, 1996). This has begun to create conflicts of interests, particularly when downstream riparian areas may be affected by upstream development, exploitation, or diversions (e.g. the Yali Falls Dam in Viet Nam on the Se San River, which flows through northeast Cambodia).

The Mekong River Commission continues to make progress with basin-wide research. Persisting since its creation in 1957, the original Mekong Committee (1957-1975) was the first of three phases in the intergovernmental organization's mandate and participation amongst the countries of the Mekong River Basin. The Interim Committee existed as a temporary body from 1975-1995. The Mekong River Commission, named thus in 1995 with the Agreement on the Cooperation for the Sustainable Development of the Mekong River Basin, has continued to represent the scientific research undertaken in

the Lower Mekong Basin. The Governments of the Kingdom of Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, the Kingdom of Thailand, and the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam signed this agreement. The Agreement recognizes these four countries as "being equally desirous of continuing to cooperate in a constructive and mutually beneficial manner for sustainable development, utilization, conservation and management of the Mekong River Basin water and related resources," (MRC Secretariat, 2002: 2). While Myanmar and China continue to abstain from formal cooperation with the MRC and the Agreement, the two countries of the Upper Mekong Basin do observe the proceedings and research carried out at the MRC.

While there appears to be ample progress made in Southeast Asia, and Cambodia in particular, in terms of increased agricultural and fisheries production, there are limitations to the quantity and quality of resources. Overexploitation of resources to meet the economic demands of development will likely undermine individual and community security³. Without the ability to meet basic necessities, such as food, clothing, and shelter, which would be provided by communities' surrounding environments and natural resources, people are insecure in that they do not enjoy a sense of well-being; communities and individuals will remain vulnerable to change and degradation of the environment. States that are unable to provide these necessities for their people will likely face declining productivity and increasing instability (Acharya, *et al.*, 1995). The challenges to rectifying issues of resource scarcity lie in the root causes of systemic oppression, and unequal distribution and access to resources, power, and opportunities.

³ Security in this sense refers to aspects of human security – the fulfillment of basic needs and a life without fear. This theoretical framework will be expanded further in section 2.6 of this chapter.

2.2 Historical Background

Cambodia has been shaped by its history – through its traditional mandala polity, its agrarian society, its period of colonial occupation by the French, years of direct and indirect conflict and turmoil, and years of reparation. Throughout these different eras, Cambodians have had varying degrees of autonomy and freedom to do as they please. This brief description of Cambodia's history gives context to the migration that has occurred since the fall of Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge in 1979.

2.2.1 *Pre-French Colonization (Pre-1863)*

Traditional Cambodian society was divided into three classes: peasants, officials, and royalty (Thion, 1993). As urban centers began to grow, a merchant class was formed. The merchants were mainly non-Khmer Cambodians, mostly of Chinese ethnicity. These social positions were generally fixed; on the rare occasion a peasant was promoted to the officials' class.

The possibility of accumulating wealth was, and continues to be, limited. There was essentially a system of 'dual property rights' or a 'usufruct'. In theory, land was not personal property; it belonged to the sovereign, who held absolute rights to it. In practice, however, the land belonged to the one tilling it (Van Acker, 1999). People could freely use the land, and they could move from one area to another and assume "ownership" through usage and occupancy. This system of 'acquisition by the plough' maintained a flexible system where people could take and use what was needed for subsistence without being overbearing on the rights of the community (Van Acker, 1999).

Non-cultivation for three consecutive years meant that any rights pertaining to that land were annulled.

Aspiring peasants could not improve their status and wealth by working hard. Production surplus was surely to be absorbed by petty officials and a corrupt administration. There were, therefore, no incentives for improving productivity and harvest yields. There was also no possibility for use of any acquired wealth for long-term beneficial purposes or investment (Thion, 1993).

The small population of Cambodia in the pre-colonial era combined with low, inefficient productivity placed little pressure on land or resources. The peasant populations were above starvation, marginally in some cases, but had no incentive to improve their position. To compensate for this inability to improve social status, Buddhism presented the possibility of advancement after re-birth (Thion, 1993). Thus faith gave incentive to lead a good life, and fate would punish or reward for an individual's efforts.

The Southeast Asian traditional polity during pre-colonial history has been known as the 'mandala'. The mandala can be described as "the circle of kingdoms within which a ruler had to build relationships, in order to ensure the security of his own realm" (Lund, 2003: 1). A characteristic of this geo-political structure was power radiating from a central deity. It was defined by "its centre rather than its boundaries". The term mandala was used in political discourse as an alternative to the conventional definition of boundaries and the delineation of the 'state', which was a political construct of post-colonial invention (Dellios, 2003: 1).

There was a common recognition of a hierarchical world order, in which the supreme overlord had authority over subordinate kingships. Yet this power was delicate, in that the ruler's merit as overlord could end, leading to the demise of his power and legitimacy (Winichakul, 1994). This gave a fluid sense of statehood, where both subjects and their rulers were able to move from the mandala sphere of power. Subjects tended to move towards, and maintain fidelity to, stronger and more charismatic leaders (Dellios, 2003). This fluidity made people more mobile; the culture was one of shifting allegiance and territory. This history of mobility within the mandala gives credence to current movement in Cambodia.

It was the patron-client relations that maintained this system. Mandala polities were based on the principle of "human loyalties rather than territorial acquisitions" (Dellios, 2003: 10). It was the control over the *people* that mattered, as they were the scarce resource rather than the land that was in abundance. The land was only useful if it was worked, and those that were available to work it were of essence.

The Angkor period was at its zenith in the 13th century. The temples built by the succeeding kings had their religious function, but also served as the centre of administration for the mandalic polity and as warehouses for grain (Dellios, 2003). The agricultural success of Angkor supported a million people through the management of the irrigated agricultural base (Dellios, 2003). This mandala lost its strength upon the expansion of foreign trade as the predominant economic power. The cultural and economic centre eventually moved to its present location at Phnom Penh, shifting the concentric circles of power away from the Angkor area.

2.2.2 *French Colonial Period (1863-1953)*

The mighty Khmer empire had fallen in the 15th century, and pressure from its neighbours, specifically Siam in the west and Annam to the east, continued through four more centuries (Tully, 2002). It was not until 1854 that the king of Cambodia sought out intervention and help from the French. A protectorate of Cambodia was formed in 1863, strengthened by a treaty in 1884, and finally in 1887 Cambodia joined the Union of Indochina (Tully, 2002).

The French tried to rule “traditional” society indirectly throughout this period. Colonization of Cambodia did prove beneficial in decreasing the occurrences of invasion by foreigners, namely by Siam and Vietnam, for the expansion of new regimes (Thion, 1993). The traditional land use system was changed through the initiation of the *Land Act* of 1884, which was subsequently resisted by the Cambodian farmers, forcing a delay in implementation until 1912 (Ramamurthy *et al.*, 2001). The new land use system applied private property ownership, turning land into a commodity. Agricultural lands were registered to an owner, with the ultimate goal of having a national cadastre, or official register, system. Contrary to the traditional land use system, all unoccupied lands were considered “free” and available for sale (Van Acker, 1999). Land was divided and assigned for various uses, such as individual possession or plantation farms, with hopes of inducing higher productivity. In the years 1928-1936 only 605,700 of 18.1 million hectares of Cambodian territory were licensed (Van Acker, 1999). This explains how the traditional code of land use persisted despite the formal registration system, since the majority of land remained un-surveyed.

Towns grew in response to increasing commerce and trade. The urban commercial groups developed from the tradition of being typically non-Khmer. Thus, the towns and Phnom Penh consisted of primarily Chinese and Vietnamese groups combined with select Khmer royalty and officials and French administrators.

Modern education was introduced by the French, neglecting traditional knowledge and focusing on what the French administration thought as relevant. Cambodians educated under this “modern” system were eligible for jobs as civil servants under the French administration, earning a salary from the French. The traditional practice of officials extracting wealth from the peasantry for their own consumption was perpetuated with these new salaries. “The exploitative character of colonialism thus merged easily with the exploitative character of traditional society, and intensified it” through the creation of an exploitative administrative class (Thion, 1993: 100).

2.2.3 Independent Period (1953-1975)

The Cambodians officially gained independence in 1953 after nearly a decade of preparation by the French. From 1945 – 1953 the Cambodians began taking over more of the administration of the country (Thion, 1993). Independence brought an increased fervour for “modern” education. The construction of schools was a popular State activity, more for the propaganda and image of development than for ultimate goals of education (Thion, 1993). This created a massive surplus of educated youth and student population. Throughout the 1960s there were no new sectors being developed to absorb the recent graduates (Thion, 1993). After having a little taste of education and urban lifestyle, these youth were not eager to return to dull rural life. Serge Thion (1993: 102)

describes the extent of the problem: “The educated youth, who by the end of the 1960s numbered in the hundreds of thousands, were an economic problem as an expensive but unemployable resource, and a political problem in that they became increasingly critical of the regime, partly no doubt just because they could find no place in it.”

The Western system of land use and property rights that the French had introduced continued after independence. The legal concept of private ownership seemed to weaken the traditional agricultural fabric and limited the land access for peasants (Greve, 1993; Van Acker, 1999). Indebtedness became a trend in this era, indicating the low productivity of the rice fields and lack of adequate agricultural infrastructure in use. Moneylenders charged high interest rates for those farmers needing to make ends meet. The farmers were often forced to repay their debts by selling their next season’s harvest at below market prices, thus leaving little for family consumption. Land fragmentation occurred, where parcels, after continual division, were no longer able to sustain the owners. A continual cycle of debt ensued, eventually leading to some farmers selling their land to pay off their debts to the money-lenders (Van Acker, 1999).

In the 1960s Prince Sihanouk launched a system of ‘Buddhist Socialism’ after 40 percent of the harvest had been smuggled over the border to Vietnam (Van Acker, 1999). The state began collecting all of the rice harvest at below market prices. Concurrent to this state socialism and monopoly, the Prince began to force the ‘Khmerization’ of ethnic minorities by assimilating them into orderly resettlements out of the highlands (Van Acker, 1999). This led to an eventual coup.

The last five years (1970 – 1975) of this “independent” period were tainted by the Cambodian civil war. On March 18, 1970 General Lon Nol ousted Prince Norodom

Sihanouk while the Prince was out of the country (Clodfelter, 1995). The Khmer Republic was created to replace the monarchy. The Cambodian communists, the Khmer Rouge, began recruiting pro-Sihanouk followers. Throughout this five-year period, the Khmer Rouge, with the help of their Vietnamese communist allies, began choking off the capital of Phnom Penh. Major routes into the capital were cut-off, as were many of the waterways that were the supply routes to the capital.

Concurrent to the coup of 1970 and the following years of civil war, the Americans continued to send missions into Cambodian territory to bomb Viet Cong troops. Most of this bombing was secret, concealed by the Nixon administration from the American Congress and the public (Clodfelter, 1995; Chandler, 1999). This continued through 1973, when relative peace had been achieved in both Vietnam and Laos, but the Americans increased the intensity of the bombing on communist battalions in Cambodia. The U.S. Congress had mandated a cut-off date – August 15, 1973 – for all bombing in Southeast Asia. By the time the cut-off date arrived, the Americans had flown 150,000 missions into Cambodia and had dropped a total of 539,129 tons of bombs (Clodfelter, 1995). These “explosives were dropped on a country that was not at war with the United States and that had no U.S. combat personnel within its borders” (Chandler, 1999: 96).

It was not until January 1, 1975, that the Khmer Rouge began their winning offensive. Phnom Penh had swollen to 2.7 million starving and war-decimated people, including 1.5 million refugees from the countryside (Clodfelter, 1995). On April 12, 1975, the Americans were evacuated with 159 Cambodians and 35 individuals of other nationalities. The five-year civil war ended on April 17, 1975. The capital city had

surrendered to the Khmer Rouge's "forest army" of teenage boys and girls (Clodfelter, 1995).

The losses of the civil war were incalculable. Clodfelter (1995) documents the following estimates: 50,000 government military killed and 200,000 wounded; adding the communist and civilian deaths by war increases the total in excess of 250,000; further adding those that died due to disease, starvation and other war-related causes increases the total to 600,000. Clodfelter further describes this civil war as "in fact, only a prelude to the real slaughter" (1995: 280) in comparison with the genocide of the Khmer Rouge to follow.

2.2.4 Democratic Kampuchea (1975-1979)

The Khmer Rouge claimed 1975 as Year Zero under the Khmer communist government led by Pol Pot (Ramamurthy *et al.*, 2001). Immediate evacuation of Phnom Penh was ordered, until only 50,000 people remained in the capital. The communists dreamt of creating a new, classless country. Everyone was proclaimed equal and all ownership of land was abandoned. Professions and classes were obliterated to remove all intellectuals (Clodfelter, 1995). Families were separated and the entire population was regrouped in the countryside. Pol Pot was drawn to Mao Zedong's ideology of class warfare and the importance of poor peasants – they were "uncorrupted by social differentiation", and ready receptacles for communist teaching (Chandler, 1999: 76).

The killing began with the Lon Nol government officials, and continued to include Buddhist priests, Chinese and Vietnamese, and 60,000 Muslim Cham (Clodfelter, 1995). An interrogation facility was set up at Tuol Sleng, a high-school turned

slaughterhouse. Some 14,000 individuals passed through this interrogation facility (Chandler, 1999). All but a handful were tortured and put to death, either within Tuol Sleng or at the killing fields (Clodfelter, 1995; Chandler, 1999). “Whether by bullet, by hunger, or by forced labor, at least 1.2 million and possibly as many as 2 million (almost one-third the population) died in the new Cambodia” (Clodfelter, 1995: 281).

Rice production was pushed to the forefront. Everyone was forced to work in the fields with a heavy workload under collectivized production system. The Khmer Rouge had hopes of raising the productivity from about 1 tonne/ha to 7 tonne/ha (Ramamurthy *et al.*, 2001). The new regime strove to re-establish the glory of the Angkor Empire. Instead the population was reduced to slave labour to build inadequate irrigation systems and dams, which did little to improve the yields. “An estimated 2 million of the 7 million people perished in the attempt to turn Democratic Kampuchea into an agricultural autarchic superpower” (Van Acker, 1999: 31).

Invasion of Cambodia by the Vietnamese brought the end to Pol Pot’s rule. Mass relocation, lack of family support, destroyed infrastructure, and decimated agricultural land had left Cambodia shattered – to virtually start again from ground zero. Phnom Penh had been evacuated and abandoned by the Khmer Rouge, leaving houses empty. Cambodians began wandering around the country, trying to find family and friends. The whole of the Cambodian population was vulnerable to shock and disaster.

The end of this era marks the beginning of the time frame for this research. The utility of using human security as a framework can be demonstrated here: while rural-urban migration occurs globally, the extreme case of Cambodia’s vulnerability and lack of human security after this period of destruction has different implications to migration

than the neo-classical migration theory would give credit to (see section 2.4 for further description of migration theory). A human security analysis of Cambodia's migration situation uses a different lens, looking at how the break down of social fabric contributes to a need for individuals and families to pursue different livelihood options in attempts at bettering their lives.

2.2.5 Centrally Planned Economy (1979-1989)

Invasion by the Vietnamese brought the fall of the Khmer Rouge regime. This was a unique occurrence as Cambodia now has the "distinction of being the only country where the Marxist regime was overthrown by another Marxist government with the help of a Marxist neighbour (Vietnam)" (Ear, 1995 in Van Acker, 1999: 31).

The invasion created massive upheaval and movement throughout the countryside as millions of displaced people and families looked for relatives. With severe famine looming, the new authorities ordered people to settle down, whether in their home village or not. The new government for the People's Republic of Kampuchea continued using collective property rights for housing and land. Solidarity units – Krom Samaki – were developed to meet their own immediate food requirements (Greve, 1993; Van Acker, 1999). All land was officially property of the State, but the solidarity units could use and inhabit the agricultural land while also sharing labour, draft animals, and any production equipment that may have survived the years of turmoil.

Each Krom Samaki consisted of 12 to 15 families in a collective work force on 15 to 25 hectares of land (Van Acker, 1999). There were three levels of collectivization, ranging from fully collectivized to collective work and ownership of agricultural

equipment (draft animals and tools) to a voluntary unit of collective labour. By 1987, 98,000 Krom Samaki had been developed (Van Acker, 1999). There were three general levels of the Krom Samaki units: 1) fully collectivized with all labour collectively performed and production divided according to work performed; 2) work was collectively organized and the means of production were collectively held, but land was divided into “private” family plots; and 3) draft animals and means of production were privately held, and only the land was used collectively (Greve, 1993). Those areas with the highest level of collectivization were typically in the poorest areas with the fewest physical assets, providing a measure of collective support to cope with a lack of draught animals, implements, or male labour, in some cases.

2.2.6 Post – 1989

After a decade of this system of collectivization, the People’s Republic of Kampuchea authorities realized the planned economic system was failing in Cambodia. This realization occurred at the same time as a reduction in funding from Eastern Bloc countries (Ramamurthy *et al.*, 2001). Collectivization was officially abandoned and the solidarity groups were urged to separate themselves (Greve, 1993). In the years from 1989-1991, the Krom Samaki were changed into Krom Prowas Dey – cooperative labour exchange groups (Van Acker, 1999). Collective means of production were fragmented and families were allocated land plots at approximately the same ratio as they had been farming under the solidarity groups.

The economic system was reformed to a free-market economy and reintroduced private property rights – ownership for residential land/buildings and possession rights

for agricultural land. The land still belonged to the State, but Cambodians again had the right to possess and use the land. Informal resettlement resulting from the mass confusion of the previous two decades was accepted. Land was redistributed among households based on the number of family members and land availability, also taking into account soil fertility and location. The size of land holdings varied depending on the population density of the area – ranging from 3 ha/family in low density areas to 0.5-1.0 ha/family in high density areas (Huy, P. 1999 cited in Ramamurthy *et al.*, 2001).

The Ministry of Agriculture founded the “Land Titles Department” in June 1989. All Cambodians were asked to register their land. This was to accompany surveying land and issuing titles to the ‘owners’. Nearly 4.2 million demands for land registration were submitted, 90 percent of which had not yet been processed by the end of 1995 (Van Acker, 1999). The system had been too cumbersome in light of the decimated administrative system.

In response to international pressure on the Vietnamese to withdraw from Cambodia, the increasing numbers of internally displaced persons, and continued unrest, the Paris Peace Accord was signed on October 23, 1991. Three items were signed: the Agreement on a Comprehensive Political Settlement of the Cambodia Conflict; the Agreement Concerning the Sovereignty, Independence, Territorial Integrity and Inviolability, Neutrality and National Unity of Cambodia; and the Declaration on the Rehabilitation and Reconstruction of Cambodia (Greve, 1993). Cambodia had become a country with a free market economy. It marked the liberation of Cambodian society from the earlier autocratic communist regime (Heak, 2000). After the signing, 350,000 Cambodians were resettled after a decade of exile (Van Acker, 1999). It is estimated that

a quarter of the population in the provinces Battambang and Banteay Meanchey (see map on page 1) are comprised of resettled refugees (Van Acker, 1999).

The Cambodian Land Law was developed in 1992. Article 1 nullifies all ownership rights held prior to 1975 (Van Acker, 1999; Ramamurthy *et al.*, 2001). The occupation and use of land and property since 1979 onward were, instead, recognized. All land belongs to the State and Cambodians just have rights to possess and use the land. This, however, contradicts Article 44 of the Constitution stating that Cambodians have the right to own land. A distinction was made between the rights to residential land and rights to agricultural land, where residential land could be owned, but agricultural land only possessed (Van Acker, 1999). This gave room for the government to renounce access to land that was not being used to full satisfaction.

Cambodia was declared a Constitutional Monarchy in 1993. Land continues to lie in the hands of the State with individual possession allowed. Land management is based on market-driven agricultural development. Land disputes have been on the rise due to population pressure, land fragmentation, and a lack of adequate and accurate land surveying.

Conflict between two major political parties in July 1997 led to fighting, destruction, and looting in Phnom Penh (Sopha *et al.*, 1999). This changed both the domestic economic activity in Cambodia and weakened the confidence in political stability. The response to the fighting was suspension and termination of foreign assistance to Cambodia by the international community. The riel began depreciating against the dollar (US), consumption and expenditures were affected, and the number of

tourist visitors plummeted. These major impacts occurred even before the Asian financial crisis in neighbouring countries began to affect Cambodia.

The Economic Crisis of 1997 started with financial turmoil in Thailand and was relayed to other countries in the region. The crisis occurred due to drastic outflows of private capital, which created currency depreciation and plunging equity prices (Sophal *et al.*, 1999). Cambodia's financial sector was not immediately affected by the crisis, mostly because the private capital inflows were in the form of foreign direct investment. Additionally, Cambodia's financial sector had not yet been fully developed so that bonds and securities had not been established.

The Cambodian Development Resource Institute (CRDI) working paper on the impact of the financial crisis on Cambodia affirms the difficulty of isolating the Asian crisis from other impacts occurring in the same time period, such as the political climate in July of 1997 in Cambodia and the environmental variation impacting harvest yields (Sophal *et al.*, 1999). The Asian crisis did augment the impact on social development and the social sector in Cambodia. Not only did government expenditure on the social sector drop, but declining incomes, loss of employment, and inflated prices on essential items all put increased pressure on the people's livelihoods.

2.3 Phnom Penh

2.3.1 *History of Phnom Penh*

Phnom Penh was built at the convergence of the Mekong, Tonle Sap, and Bassac Rivers at the end of the 14th Century. The Mekong River has historically been used as the main artery for transportation and commerce within the region. The junction of the three rivers was an ideal location to maintain trade vital to the growth of a city.

The city continued to expand on the riverbanks by building dikes and reclaiming wetlands. Phnom Penh was transformed from a small port, consisting of wooden houses, to the new royal city in 1865 (Fallavier, 2002). It continued to grow under French administration through 1890, with Phnom Penh being modeled after new land laws developed in Paris. The Civil Code of 1920 strengthened private ownership and strengthened the dichotomy between rural and urban spaces (Van Acker, 1999; Fallavier, 2002). It was at this point in time that the traditional principle of land ownership for rural Khmers, ownership on the basis of usage for productive purposes, was removed.

After Cambodia gained Independence from French colonial rule in 1953, Phnom Penh grew to twice its size in the seventeen years under its independent administration (Fallavier, 2002). Throughout the five years of civil war under Lon Nol's rule, the city doubled again to reach 1.5 million by 1975. This was contributed by refugees of the civil war, revolution, and rural poverty. This immense growth in Phnom Penh was abandoned under the Khmer Rouge regime. The cities were emptied of their inhabitants and the infrastructure was not maintained.

Throughout the Khmer Rouge regime, under the control of Pol Pot, inhabitants of Phnom Penh and other urban centres were evicted from their city homes and relocated to

rural locations around the country. The Khmer Rouge considered Phnom Penh to be a bad, immoral city. Ownership titles, cadastres, traditional systems of land ownership and inheritance were all destroyed (URC, 2002). At the end of 1979 when the Vietnamese overthrew Pol Pot's reign, people began filtering in from the countryside and taking up residence in the abandoned houses.

Under the government installed by the Vietnamese, all land was declared state property. This led to collective labour on rural and agricultural land in the countryside. In the cities, people were allowed to take up residence in buildings on a "first come first serve" basis. Greater influx from the countryside led to a shortage of housing by the end of the 1980s. People were then given permission to build shacks on vacant land. The total destruction of the country and the city's administrative capacity left the opportunity for unregulated development and settlement patterns (Memoire, 2003). Nearly all of the current "squatter" settlements around Phnom Penh were established from 1979 to 1983 (URC, 2002). The numbers of families "squatting" on vacant land increased with the signing of the 1991 Paris Peace Accord, as people returned from refugee camps and other countries. Aid organizations and private ownership forced land and rent costs to skyrocket, making it attractive for families to sell their housing rights at higher cost to move onto the "free" land. Migration exacerbated this burgeoning squatter society.

2.3.2 Present Day Phnom Penh

The 1998 Census conducted in Cambodia estimated the population of Phnom Penh at 1 million (NIS, 2000). In the UN-HABITAT report on slums in Phnom Penh, Pierre Fallavier (2002) estimates that as of 1998 94 percent of the city's population lives

in urban areas, while the remainder of the population live in the outskirts of the city. He also suggests that since many of the low-income inhabitants are not registered with the municipal authorities, there could be an additional 20 percent of “invisible” poor unaccounted for in the present estimates of Phnom Penh’s population. This is supported by other UN research, declaring that squatters are estimated at nearly 20 percent of the city’s population (Memoire, 2003) and at least 230,000 people (Champagne, 2004). These invisible inhabitants consist of renters, seasonal migrants, and those who are too poor to be acknowledged in communities or counted in surveys.

The Municipality of Phnom Penh (MPP) officially gained autonomy from State control in 1998. Despite this, their budget remains constrained and their independent ability to plan and finance its activities remains limited (Fallavier, 2002). The MPP is under the budgetary direction and control of the Ministry of Interior. Further to this, the MPP has little incentive or power to raise their own revenue through taxes or levies – all income generated is passed directly to the Ministry of Finance, with little becoming available for municipal use (Fallavier, 2002).

MPP has been seeking assistance for infrastructure developments, such as road improvements, drainage systems, electricity and water supply expansion, solid waste removal, sewerage, and on beautification schemes (Swan, 2001). This was intended to get the city’s economy going again, but it resulted in negative impact on the urban poor through clearance and demolition of low-income and squatter settlements. Even in July 2001 the Municipality devised a scheme to relocate 80 percent of the city’s total squatters to sites outside of the city, where services and infrastructure were far from sufficient (Memoire, 2003). This method of relocating downtown squatter communities is

changing, though, and in May 2003 Prime Minister Hun Sen announced that the government had stopped their system of evicting and relocating the poor to other settlements (Champagne, 2004).

As population increases, and movement to the city continues, efforts are geared toward job creation and urban planning to avoid more of a housing crisis in the future. The problem facing Phnom Penh, with its 550-odd informal settlements, is the ability to upgrade to formal and secure-tenured communities (Champagne, 2004). It is surmised, and has often been proven true, that the urban poor can upgrade the land themselves, as long as they are given solid land security (Champagne, 2004).

2.3.3 *The Urban Sector Group (USG)*

Urban poor non-governmental organizations have begun to emerge since 1994. The two primary associations are the Urban Sector Group (USG) and the Squatter and Urban Poor Federation (SUPF). These “support the urban poor to organize into communities to plan for their own improvement projects and to voice their concerns to the government,” (Fallavier, 2002: 7). Other organizations have sprouted to strengthen the “bottom-up” approach demonstrated by USG and SUPF. For example, the Urban Poor Development Fund (UPDF) promotes micro-financing for housing and income generation and the Urban Resource Centre provides assistance for small-scale planning.

USG and SUPF have provided support and representation in at least 130 squatter settlements (Fallavier, 2002). The more stable communities are now able to write proposals for local improvement plans, fundraise for these plans, and implement their own projects. Local advocacy groups provide training for community leaders on human rights and criminal law, in order to establish safer neighbourhoods. These efforts have been successful in demonstrating that the urban poor are interested and, more importantly, capable of working to improve their own living conditions. Barriers to success do persist through social and political inequalities and stigma related to squatters and the urban poor.

USG was the principal collaborating research partner in this study. USG has five key programme areas: Community Capacity Building, Community Organizing, Advocacy and Networking, Education and Social Support for Sex Workers, and the Women’s Economic and Legal Rights Programme. Each programme is under a manager, and in 2002 four of the five managers were women (Slocomb, 2002). Mr. Lim Phai was

the “Chair of the Management Team”, leading the management structure in a low-key, hands-off approach. My contact at USG was Ms. Ouk Sokha, who was the Advocacy and Networking Programme manager. Ms. Sokha facilitated the use of an interpreter who had past experience working with USG and with urban poor. USG provided networking support within the squatter communities and relocated settlements where the interviews were conducted.

2.3.4 Urban Poverty in Phnom Penh

Rural-urban migrants often find themselves living in poverty upon arriving in Phnom Penh. After making the decision to move, and following through on that decision, migrants with little capital or assets find themselves living in informal settlements and working in the informal sector in Phnom Penh.

John Ambler (1999) describes poverty as having three facets. The first facet is related to the economic status and access to assets. Poverty is predominantly viewed in terms of a lack of income, leading to the inability to secure a level of basic needs. Ambler (1999: 4) includes that “the critical underlying resources that produce income are the **assets** that the poor have access to and control over in pursuing their livelihood strategies.” These assets can be divided into various types, such as natural, social, human, physical, and financial assets – all of which contribute to the productive status and ability of an individual or family.

The second facet of poverty is the set of relations between the poor and the non-poor. This describes the inequalities occurring between different groups in a hierarchal social structure, in terms of competition and control over resources. The final facet is the

diversity of “poor people”. The poor are often viewed as a homogeneous group, without acknowledging the different levels of poverty and the unique characteristics at each location.

The MPP has created two categories of low-income inhabitants of Phnom Penh (Fallavier, 2002). It distinguishes *squatters* as those that **illegally** occupy public or private land. Conversely, *urban poor* have **recognized occupancy** status, giving a sense of security of tenure, but still with no ownership rights. The Khmer translation of the term “squatter” conjures an image of immorality, disorder, and criminality. Squatters are seen by the middle/upper class as an aesthetic nuisance and a threat to public order. This view is also held largely by the Municipality, basically as a reason to avoid giving legitimacy and public recognition to this group of people (Fallavier, 2002). Social exclusion and marginalization of the urban poor are thus maintained.

Fallavier (2002) notes the irony of the distinction of legal versus illegal occupancy, considering Cambodia has had no clear system of private ownership since this was abolished in 1974. Article 7 of the Cambodian 2001 Land Law indicates that much by stating: “Any ownership of immovable property prior to 1979 shall not be recognized” (URC, 2002: Appendix 4). Yet the 2001 Land Law does ‘assure’ Cambodian citizens, under Article 30, that people who have “enjoyed peaceful and uncontested possession” of land that *could* be appropriated is indeed “entitled to demand a definitive title to ownership” (URC, 2002: Appendix 4).

It is estimated that a quarter of Phnom Penh’s population live in low-income and squatter settlements (Fallavier, 2002; URC, 2002). Phnom Penh’s poor occupy land with little or no current value for development. These areas are mostly public lands along

roads, waterways, railway tracks, river banks, canals, and lakes. There are also clusters of low-income settlements on private land – in isolated alleys and in dilapidated, multiple-occupancy buildings. Although the inhabitants often purchase their small plot of land in the public space, they do not actually hold any tenure for that land. There is definite risk of eviction. Those that are evicted must resettle in alternate areas already established, or venture to occupy other vacant lots – either way the families are at risk of a cycle of evictions as the poor are continuously pushed to live on increasingly marginal land. Both the public and private settlements are geographically isolated, in terms of road access, water and power supply, sewerage, and drainage (Fallavier, 2002). Many of the make-shift squatter shelters are built below the level of flooding for much of the year.

Most low-income settlements are located close to the city centre and markets, in order to be close to employment opportunities. Those living in the poorest areas of Phnom Penh seek work requiring little skill and few qualifications. These jobs would include motodup⁴ drivers, for those that can afford to buy a scooter, cyclo drivers, for those that can only afford a rickshaw-style pedicab, and other occupations such as construction workers, scavengers, fruit and vegetable vendors, etc. The incomes would fluctuate depending on how “business” goes each day. This affects how much the family is able to consume each day, knowing that they may not earn enough in the following days. There is only the rare possibility for savings or investment.

Many households must rely on private vendors for both water and electricity. Since many of the low-income settlements are considered illegal, the inhabitants are unable to obtain official connections. Additionally, the poor often do not have the initial capital or room in their budget to connect to the public system (Fallavier, 2002). Water

⁴ See footnote on page two of the introduction.

availability is often affected by the distance to vending point, the transport of water, and lack of storage facilities. Individuals can either pay premium prices for water supplied by private vendors, or use surface water from rivers or small lakes. It is estimated that water bought from private vendors is at a rate of 15,000 riel/cubic meter, rather than the 350 riel/cubic meter from the public connection (MPP, 1999). Electricity is fairly accessible, for those that can afford it, as it is merely siphoned off from a household with a registered connection to the provider. Private electricity is sold at a rate double that for normal usage (URC, 2002). The poorest households then use rechargeable batteries and kerosene lamps for their light sources.

Some communities living in proximity to major garbage collection routes take advantage of those services for their solid waste disposal. The bulk of garbage is disposed of in open public spaces or it is simply burned. Sanitation presents a major issue for low-income settlements. Most slum areas lack any drainage systems. Access to indoor toilets is also limited, resulting in human waste being discharged into open spaces. The combined result contributes to lasting floods and stagnant water, presenting obvious health risks and disease prevalence to those living nearby.

Lack of sanitation and the severe living conditions of slum areas are worsened by the limited knowledge of basic preventative health practices. Nurses and physicians must be bribed in order for people to receive their “free” medical attention, demonstrating another aspect of social exclusion. The urban poor have a heavy reliance on local remedies and traditional medicine. Although traditional medicine is cheap and easily available, it is often inadequate for dealing with severe illnesses.

Education is yet another example of the barriers facing the urban poor. Like health care, education is formally a free service. However, students are required to pay an informal daily fee to the teacher. Khmer parents strongly believe in education creating more opportunity and increasing earnings. Therefore, when adequate money is available, a substantial part of daily family income can be spent sending children to school.

2.3.5 Relocated Settlements

The families that are relocated to the isolated resettlement communities face various challenges, such as long distances to employment opportunities, difficult access to schools and health services, and lack of access and availability of clean water and to other services and infrastructure. Since the distance to employment opportunities is so great, the ability to earn an income is low. Those that do commute must absorb the costs of transportation. Additionally, they lack the land or initial capital to grow food crops of their own. Food security and the ability to make a living, therefore their livelihood, are the main problems. While income generation is a prominent issue in all poor settlements, this is exacerbated in the relocated settlements that are far from the markets and downtown, commercial opportunities. It is estimated that there is an average reduction of income by 20 percent for those that are relocated outside of the downtown core (URC, 2002).

The main implication for the lower income levels in the relocated settlements, however, is the possibility of not being able to buy or produce enough food to sustain the family. The URC (2002) reports a reduction in expenditure on food. While this could be

due to the lower costs in the periphery of Phnom Penh, there is also the likelihood that families are eating less.

While the people have been relocated and face a decrease in income, therefore a decrease in food security, they perceive a benefit and confidence for the future because of their more secure land tenure (URC, 2002). This aspect of the importance of secure land tenure should be used for future endeavours for urban poverty reduction. The urban poor are capable of creating their own space, and if they are given tenure, they are more likely to invest in permanent structures.

2.4 Population Movement and Migration

The 1960s saw rapid population growth due to a decline in mortality rates and persisting high fertility rates in some areas. Since that time, industrialization and urbanization have largely determined the shaping of global population distribution. This stimulated human-induced change in the environment at a faster rate and at a larger scope than seen before (Hunter, 2001). Patterns of human movement and settlement vary between what are considered “developed” and “developing” countries. Migration has been accompanied by economic transformation and development to different location-dependent degrees around the world. Cambodia has not progressed very far along the economic development scale, despite the migration and low levels of urbanization that have been occurring there. This discussion of migration and human movement is focusing on migration in the developing country context.

The population-environment discourse is multidimensional and cyclical. As increasing populations affect the environment, so does the environment affect the

populations. Population density, distribution, and composition dictate the extent and manner of use of the surrounding environment. The environment encompasses qualities of resources and entities of air, water, and land, on which all species depend. Lori Hunter describes well the dependence of populations on the environment in the following passage, where:

Population size is inherently linked to the environment as a result of individual resource needs as well as individual contributions to pollution. As a result, population growth yields heightened demands on air, water, and land environments, because they provide necessary resources and act as sinks for environmental pollutants (2001: 7).

Every person requires food, either from agriculture or another form of sustenance production. So as population increases, and is consequently distributed in a certain fashion, pressure on local resources may increase. Some geographical areas are more endowed with natural resources, better soils, and climatic conditions than others. Just as resources vary by location, so does the ability to define and exploit resources. Non-uniform distribution and densities of populations on the Earth's surface and cultural and socio-economic patterns dictate resource use and consumption. Relative increases in population densities impact the surrounding resources, often overextending them, and forcing them beyond their natural ability to regenerate (Newman and Matzke, 1984; Dang *et al.*, 1997; Hunter, 2001). These issues of "population pressure" are not necessarily population-increase driven, but also encompass issues of land-use, land tenure, consumption and production processes.

Population distribution and density change in a 'natural' fashion, due to natural population increase and shifts in populations across locales. Migration is a second main determinant of local population change – it can increase or decrease the local population

size suddenly, rather than progressive change through “natural” growth (Newman and Matzke, 1984; Hunter, 2001). Migrants are identified in census data as living in a location other than a) their place of birth or b) their last locale of residence. While census information does give a brief idea of an individual’s most recent move, it misses the frequency and duration of any other moves. There are two broad categories of migratory movement, as defined by Newman and Matzke (1984). First, international migration indicates a movement across international political boundaries. Second, internal migration is movement within the boundaries of one country. This thesis concentrates on the latter form of migratory movement.

There are different degrees of internal migration, in terms of migrants’ destination location (rural-rural, rural-urban, etc.) or duration of movement (seasonal, temporary, permanent, etc.). The distinction of *length* of movement is relative to each experience and the individual’s perspective of residence. A further distinction of migratory movement is between “forced” or “free” movement. By forced migration, it is meant that the migrant has little option of whether to move or not. An example of this would be forced relocation such as the slave trade (Newman and Matzke, 1984), or the forced evacuation of Phnom Penh by Pol Pot. Free migratory movement, on the other hand, reveals freedom of choice in the matter – when individuals can choose to stay or leave their homes. The boundaries between free or forced migration can be vague, however, especially in terms of ecological necessity or natural disaster. Individuals’ or groups’ perceptions of their situations have a great deal of bearing on the decision to move.

Migration is motivated by both economic and non-economic factors, such as employment prospects and family at the destination location, as well as lack of

employment opportunities at the origin (Brettell and Hollifield, 2000; Hunter, 2001). Dang *et al.* (1997) suggest that, throughout the decision-making process, the *constraints* on migration are typically non-economic aspects while the *motives* tend to be associated with economic conditions.

The neo-classical perspective of movement maintains that population displacement is a natural response to interregional differences in social and economic opportunities. This is described typically as movement from labour-rich, capital-scarce areas to labour-scarce, capital-rich areas, moving towards an economic equilibrium of labour market demands (Simmons *et al.*, 1977; Kavanagh and Lonergan, 1992). The opposing structuralist perspective upholds that macro-structural forces lie at the base of the regional disparities to which people respond. Therefore, people do not have such freedom of choice as described in the neo-classical approach. The structuralist perspective illustrates how individuals are dictated through power structures, unequal distribution of wealth and opportunities, and other underlying forces (Brettell and Hollifield, 2000).

The interactions between the causes of movement are not always apparent, nor are they common amongst all cases. The socio-political and cultural dimensions of a situation over time and space all factor into the individual and unique case of migration. There is no direct relationship between movements from origin to destination, and no relationship can be dealt with in isolation (Simons *et al.*, 1977; Kavanagh and Lonergan, 1992). Simmons *et al.* (1977) suggest that population pressure on available cultivable land and natural resources are the most cited factor for migration from rural areas. This is supported by Rhoda (1983), who suggests that the major factors stimulating out-

migration are rural unemployment, underemployment, lack of land, and general rural poverty.

Migration and movement may be initiated by a number of “push” factors from the area of origin and “pull” factors towards a destination. Again, these factors do not work in isolation from each other. They are surrounded and situated in the context of each unique situation. The “push-pull” theory is frequently criticized because of its simplicity and reliance on direct causes of movement (Simons *et al.*, 1977; Newman and Katzke, 1984; Kavanagh and Lonergan, 1992; Hunter, 2001). This theory does, however, give a depiction of the different forces acting on a potential migrant, either to remain at his/her origin or to move elsewhere.

“Migration often reflects little more than a reaction to stress exerted by the physical, economic, social and cultural environment, and the rural poor who do migrate are commonly forced to leave their area of residence or face desperation and starvation” (Kavanagh and Lonergan, 1992: 10). Internal migration, that is, migration within an individual’s own nation, is one effect of stress and vulnerability on an individual or family. Differences between regions with respect to development and distribution of opportunities and capital are major grounds for migration.

Cultural and societal traditions and norms have a hand in the decision to migrate. The relationships of family or group members frame how likely or easily an individual or group may move (Rhoda, 1983; Chiswick, 2000). When members of a group leave, this sets a precedent for others to leave – it creates a safer realm for decision-making, knowing that others have moved, thereby creating links and contacts with a location outside of the comfort of their location of origin. Relatives at the destination provide

assistance for shelter, settling in, and livelihood suggestions or opportunities. Despite the opportunity for the potential migrant to gain information about the destination location, this information tends to be distorted to give a more dazzling representation of the situation (Simons *et al.*, 1977).

“Throughout the world there is an increasing migration of subsistence farmers to cities because of environmental degradation in rural areas” (Timberlake and Tinker, 1985, cited in Kavanagh and Lonergan, 1992: 18). This occurs when there is a disparity between what can be produced from the land, with the means at hand, and the subsistence requirement of those depending on the land. The deteriorating resource base, both on agricultural land and with common resources, combined with an ever-increasing population contribute to rural-urban migration (Rhoda, 1983; Newman and Matzke, 1984; Hunter, 2001).

Kavanagh and Lonergan (1992) describe how populations faced with environmental change and degradation will use several response mechanisms, such as using shifting cultivation, changing areas of production, and seasonal migration. In the context of Cambodia, the state began directing the systems of production of agricultural land after 1975, first through communal use and later “private” use. After that point in time, it was not possible for subsistence farmers to use shifting cultivation and rotational crop patterns as a means to cope with their degrading resources. Migration then became an option in order to fulfill livelihood needs. “The urban sector, through human rural-to-urban circulation, becomes but one more resource niche in the economic base of the rural household... that can extend local resources and help to protect the household against risk” (Skeldon, 1997: 4).

A threshold minimum income is required for individuals to migrate (Simmons *et al.*, 1977; Skeldon, 1997; Chiswick, 2000). This idea describes how it is those households that already have the available/required initial capital that are able to make a move in the first place. These individuals will be the ones most able to survive in the new location, but they would have also made the greatest positive effect on their community of origin, in terms of motivation for creating success there. The poorest are not likely to move due to the costs of transportation and relocation associated with moving to a new place. These translocation costs are largely dependent on distance to destination and whether the migrant has family at the destination that would house them initially. Other costs of moving to a new place include the social and psychological costs of moving away from a familiar place to an unknown location, away from friends and family.

Migration acts as a mechanism for diffusion and regional economic growth. Remittances of money and knowledge back to the rural origin are often used to increase the welfare and status of those at the origin who did not migrate. Remittances may also serve to increase further migration out of the village by contributing to “threshold” income levels of others hoping to migrate (Simmons *et al.*, 1977).

The “bright lights” of the city is a desirable factor for potential migrants (Brettell, 2000). The city is the place to be. There are tales told of numerous job opportunities. The things to do and see are also innumerable. The life one leads in the city is far more desirable than the dull, repetitious life of a rural, subsistence farmer (Dang *et al.*, 1997). “Migrants respond [sic] to the promise of job opportunities and, given the higher urban unemployment rates, it would seem that many were deceived by their instincts”

(Simmons *et al.*, 1977:56). Despite the inability for many migrants to find sufficient or regular income, they consider themselves to be more progressive than their rural counterparts since they now live in the city.

Rural-urban migrants are often faced with lack of adequate shelter, lack of employment opportunities, and a lack of a sense of belonging. “Generally, cities tend to attract migrants in numbers far above their capacity to employ, house, feed, service, and educate” (Kavanagh and Lonergan, 1992: 33). Many city municipalities are unable to face the burden of providing adequate housing and infrastructure for the urban poor. Migrants often find themselves living in marginal areas of the city. They are forced to live in unacceptable conditions that are prone to flooding, and that lack sanitation facilities or clean water. The increasing number of migrants to the city results in expanding slum and squatter settlements as well as more dense living conditions.

The bulk of rural-urban migrants have little or no skills, relative to those that were born or have been living in the city. They rely on low-skill, low-paying jobs that many others are also vying for. Unemployment may persist in urban areas because of the influx of migrants contributing to an increased labour surplus. A labour surplus will create a decline in wages. Yet to further reiterate the benefit to moving, “no matter how low on the economic ladder they are at the place of destination, rural-urban migrants have still enhanced their wage and income levels by moving” (Simmons *et al.*, 1977: 62). Those with family or acquaintances already living in the destination location are automatically at a better standing, having a social network already in place.

At present in Cambodia, local population growth is a hindrance to achieving adequate subsistence living. Fragmentation of farms, inequalities of access to land, and

over-exploitation of agricultural and common-property lands all exaggerate issues of population pressure and excess supply of rural labour. Thus, rural-urban migration is becoming increasingly more common as individuals and families see alternative opportunities in urban areas.

2.5 Migration in Cambodia

2.5.1 Trends and Implications

The upheaval that has contributed to mass population movements in Cambodia is described well by Kavanagh and Lonergan:

During the 1970s, the nation suffered upheaval, hardship, and horror; civil war, a subsequent revolution, and Vietnamese invasion have caused mortality from massacres, war, executions and famine, resulting in large population movements...Cities grew rapidly from the internal refugee flows, and the capital – Phnom Penh – experienced an influx of more than 2 million refugees (1992: 20).

Two decades of civil war and unrest affected all sectors of Cambodian livelihood. A large portion of the Cambodian population was victim to the war and conflict that had plagued the region and their country for decades. Farmland was abandoned due to lack of adequate irrigation, declining productivity, the presence of landmines, and the fear of rebels and persisting insecurity in many of the rural areas. Agricultural output was devastated. Large families living on limited land, combined with a predominantly monoculture production of rice with variable natural conditions, left farmers struggling to get by. Debt increased amongst rural Cambodians due to the combined vulnerabilities of poor harvests, illness, hostilities, natural disaster, and/or failed businesses. Seriously indebted families find themselves losing disposable assets such as land and livestock (Oxfam GB, 2000; Acharya, 2003). Landlessness and poverty in the countryside have

induced greater rural-urban migration for those looking for better opportunity, or any opportunity.

In addition to the landless poor or the aspiring rural inhabitants that make the move to the city, many of the urban poor are comprised of amputees, widows, and other disadvantaged people unable to make a living by themselves in the countryside. Another portion of the demographic is comprised of refugees returning from other countries, and those otherwise displaced from their homes elsewhere in the country (Huguet, *et al.*, 2000).

Rural Cambodians are drawn to Phnom Penh to seek a modern life and material well-being. The city has money, and therefore power. They leave their villages and move to the centre of Phnom Penh, most often to find themselves living just as hard a life in different circumstances. Phnom Penh's low-income settlements were created, and continue to be dominated, by rural migrants fleeing the countryside. Growing concern surrounds the city's lack of adequate infrastructure to absorb the movement of people into Phnom Penh (Huguet, *et al.*, 2000). There is no official policy on migration within Cambodia, but the government discourages rural-urban migration to Phnom Penh by making it inhospitable for the low-income demographic (Acharya, 2003).

According to the 1998 National Census, 31 percent of Cambodians at the time of enumeration were migrants (NIS, 2000). This encapsulates all people who had a previous residence outside of the place of enumeration. It is further estimated that only 17.3 percent of all migrants moved from a rural area to an urban one (NIS, 2000). Yet because of the predominant rural population, this rural-urban migrant population accounts for the majority 58.9 percent of the urban population (NIS, 2000).

Kampong Cham, Prey Veng, Kandal, Svay Rieng, Battambang, and Takeo have high rates of out-migration. The largest net-losers of people are regions closest to Phnom Penh and those situated on the Mekong plains, both of which are densely populated regions (Oxfam GB, 2000; Acharya, 2003). These areas are particularly affected by inter-generational succession of land, or lack thereof. While all urban areas (i.e. provincial capitals) attract migrants, Phnom Penh has the highest rate of in-migration. Phnom Penh is estimated to be growing by 6.5 percent annually (NIS, 2000).

Figures 2.1 and 2.2 (next page) indicate general demographic information gathered in the most recent census completed in Cambodia in 1998. Figure 2.1 indicates that population density is greatest in the southern provinces, on the banks of the Mekong River and into the Mekong Delta, and in a north-west to south-east axis of the country, surrounding Tonle Sap Lake. These are the prime rice-growing areas of the country – in the fertile soils deposited by the Mekong River. Figure 2.2 indicates percentage migration **out** of each province. In most provinces there is a positive correlation between high population density and the propensity to migrate out, with the highest percentage of out-migration occurring from Prey Veng province.

Population Density in Cambodia

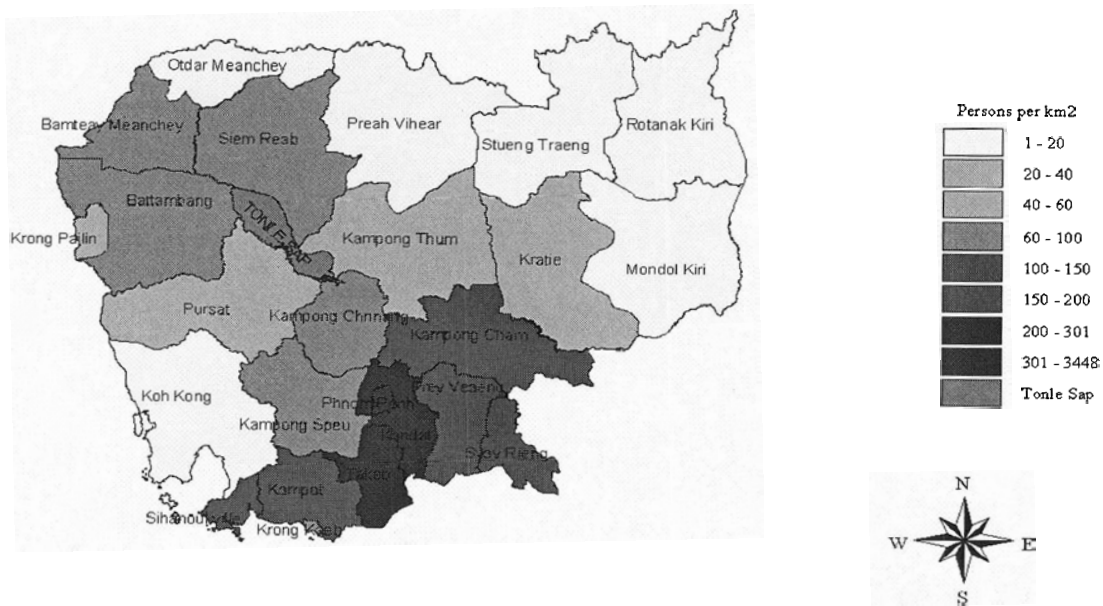


Figure 2.1 Population Density by Province in Cambodia, 1998 (NIS, 1999)

Negative Migration in Cambodia

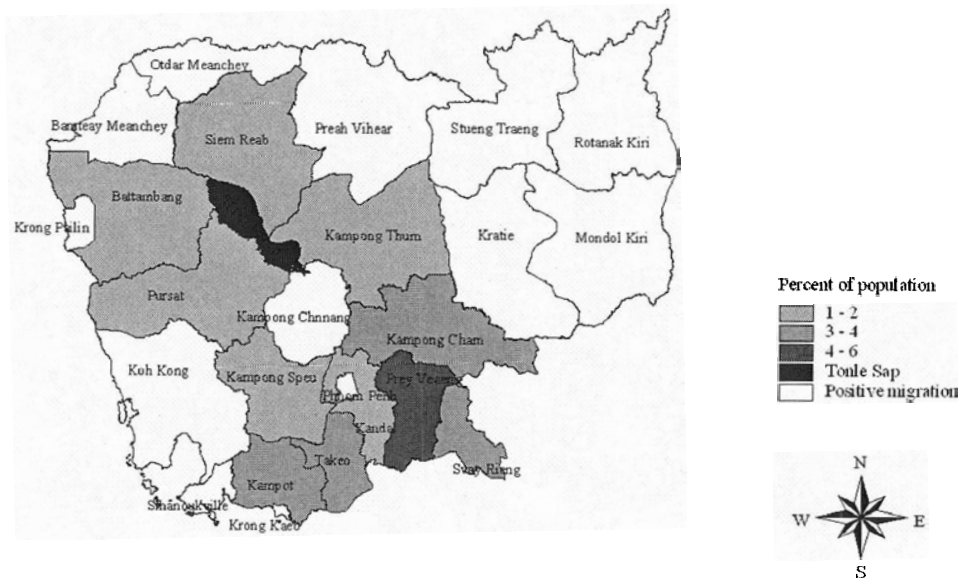


Figure 2.2 Out-Migration by Province in Cambodia, 1998 (NIS, 1999)

One of the largest draws for rural-urban migrants to Phnom Penh since 1997 has been the growth of the garment industry. According to Oxfam Great Britain's report on Migration in Cambodia (2000), rural migrants account for 91 percent of the garment industries workforce. The garment industry uses migrants, and particularly young women, as they are perceived to be easily controlled and dominated (Oxfam GB, 2000). All employment depends on cheap labour.

Migration may seem to be unorganized, in terms of motivation, and unstructured, in terms of economic activities. Recruiters and networking make the move to the city more plausible. In order to get "in" to the informal sector of work, connections are vital. Migrants may lack the initial capital to move and set up in the city, while also trying to locate work. Recruiters often provide loans for the move, albeit at a high cost.

2.5.2 *Landlessness as a Motivation to Migrate*

Landlessness can be defined as "having no agricultural land and not having the means to purchase it," (Biddulph, 2000: 8). Landlessness is estimated at 12 to 15 percent of the rural households (Ramamurthy *et al.*, 2001). The landless are totally reliant on wage work and other sources of livelihood.

Cambodia's total land area is 181,035 square kilometres. Of this area, an estimated 21 percent is potentially cultivable land – half of which is already in use for the production of annual crops (Ramamurthy *et al.*, 2001). Rice occupies approximately 90 percent of the total cropland and provides 15 percent of the total GDP, indicating the importance of rice land as an economic asset for those households supported by agriculture (Van Acker, 1999). While Cambodia does boast rice surplus at a national

level, production varies so much throughout the country that there is invariably rice shortages in different locales each year. Cultivated area has increased since 1980 due to reclaiming unused land, clearing landmines, and improved security in the rural areas. Cambodia has an average of 64 inhabitants per square kilometre, with the most densely populated areas in the central plains in a belt stretching from the north-west to the south-east of the country (Ramamurthy *et al.*, 2001). Each family has, on average, only 1.0 hectare of cultivated land for subsistence production (Ramamurthy *et al.*, 2001). Yet 54 percent of rural families are found to have less than one hectare of land (Van Acker, 1999).

Agriculture is still based on the single rain-fed rice crop. Irrigation is not available to most farmers, due to infrastructure costs. The average yield is about 2 to 3 tonnes per hectare (Oxfam GB, 2000), hardly sufficient for basic subsistence. Other crops and vegetables are grown as *chamkar*, multicropping on secondary land or along riverbanks, to supplement household consumption.

Two main structural elements characterize poverty in Cambodia: first, the widespread reliance on subsistence agriculture; second, the lack of non-agricultural employment opportunities (Van Acker, 1999). Cambodia has a rural population of 84 percent, and concurrently 77 percent of the labour force works in the agricultural sector (including fisheries and forestry), and 63 percent of the labour force uses agriculture for their subsistence livelihood (Heak, 2000; Ramamurthy *et al.*, 2001). With a young population, estimated at 55 percent below the age of 20, the labour force is growing beyond the economy's ability to produce adequate employment.

The growing population, without significant growth of off-farm or wage job opportunities, will create a greater dependence on agricultural land, both for direct subsistence and employment. The supply of land in Cambodia is insufficient to provide for the demands for agricultural land of the rural inhabitants – almost 70 percent of rural households are not able to produce enough rice to provide half of their caloric requirements (Van Acker, 1999). In many cases subsistence level rice harvests do not last the entire year, leaving families short of sustenance for the months leading up to the new harvest each year (Tickner, 1996).

The traditional system of land allocation is for parents to divide their land between their children, both sons and daughters, as the children marry. This is becoming increasingly impossible, as the plot subdivisions are becoming unfeasibly small. It is in this fashion – as couples marry they are subsequently unable to acquire new plots from the local authorities or sufficient land from their parents – that landlessness is increasing (Biddulph, 2000). Other major causes of landlessness and loss of access to land are: distress sales in order to pay for medical help for a family member; those settling in a new village after land distribution without the means to purchase land; land expropriation through the misuse of administrative or military power; and misappropriation of land through the dysfunction of the system (Kato, 1999; Heak, 2000).

Wage work for rice cultivation is limited to only a few months of the year, providing an unsustainable livelihood. Access to common property resources is an increasingly important option for poor peasants. The traditional agricultural subsistence system depends on the diversification of livelihood, to include collection of forest and aquatic resources and other economic activities if any are available. This allows a

surplus in one sector to cover a deficit in another – acting as a buffer against crisis. The landless are more dependent on these alternative resources. The products received from these resources and the resultant benefits are declining because of over-exploitation, over-use, and limited access through conversion to private use. Thus there is an increase in the demand for cash incomes from trade and employment (Biddulph, 2000; Memoire, 2003). Yet, these other options are not as readily available as required to offset the reduction in common property resources. Much of the “common property” land in Cambodia is becoming privatized. Land that was not allocated during the redistribution of land in 1989 is now being granted as concession forests, fishing lots, and plantations (Ramamurthy *et al.*, 2001).

In a recent study completed for the Oxfam GB Cambodia Land Study Project (Biddulph, 2000), 13 percent of their study group were found to be landless – that being one in eight families did not have agricultural land or the means to purchase any. While there are discrepancies between different survey findings, it is generally found that some 12 to 15 percent of the rural population is landless (Ramamurthy *et al.*, 2001). The study could not determine what made one family more prone to losing their land over another in the same circumstances, but a range of factors was detailed as causing landlessness. One cause of landlessness was the prevalence of illness, resulting in a distress sale of land. Another key cause was due to the return of border refugees. While refugees had been promised land to facilitate the move from the border camps into Cambodian society, the sheer numbers of refugees were underestimated. Those that did receive land found that it was often marginal in quality and insufficient in size (Biddulph, 2000). The rest

who were not able to secure land were left competing for any available employment in the area.

Provinces in the northwest of Cambodia have a higher incidence of land expropriation by local government officials and/or military officials (Kato, 1999). Those provinces also typically have more landless residents, as compared with the southeastern provinces (Biddulph, 2000). One theory of the sustainability of landless residents in the northwest lies with the relative abundance of alternative resources and income opportunities in the northwest. This allows the landless to continue to reside in their village, reaping the benefits of the alternative sources of food and income. In the southeastern provinces, the population density and the resultant competition for alternative resources is much greater. The landless are then forced to move out of their village in hopes of finding a more successful locale (Biddulph, 2000).

2.6 Human Security

A human security and vulnerability approach is used in this research to understand participants' reasons for rural-urban migration. The concept of vulnerability is one way of integrating biophysical aspects with socio-economic aspects of migration. Both aspects are dynamic and change over time. They contribute to the richness of migratory behaviour.

2.6.1 Background of Human Security

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 1994) describes in the publication of the "Human Development Report – 1994" that the concept of human

security supports future generations through its people-centred development approach. A distinction has been developed to branch security discourse away from its original Cold War, military context. It now encompasses 'real' issues of security to the daily lives of ordinary people, such as fulfilling daily basic food and energy requirements (Dyer, 2001; McDonald, 2002). Combined with the UNDP's definitions of 'sustainable human development', the concept of human security addresses questions of whether present life styles are acceptable, or do they perpetuate inequities and exclusive environments (UNDP, 1994).

Human security is a conceptual framework, and is one that depends on the context of different societies and cultures (Thomas, 2001). At this point, rich nations have the means, and the luxury, to promote conservation and environmentalism. The poor, however, do not have the luxury of worrying about issues such as global warming; instead they must concern themselves with meeting their daily needs and struggling for survival (UNDP, 1994). "Human insecurity results directly from existing structures of power that determine who enjoys the entitlement to security and who does not" (Thomas, 2001: 160). To strive for human security is to attempt to diminish the inequities.

By recognizing that every human being is entitled to life without fear and life without want, human security aims to increase human dignity and autonomy through emancipation from oppressive structures (Lonergan, 1999; Thomas, 2001; Alkire, 2002). Human development addresses poverty and the limitations it poses on choice and the opportunity for a better life (UNDP, 1994; Thomas, 2001). Human security, then, serves to improve people's personal capabilities to access options freely (Lonergan, 1999).

2.6.2 *Focus on Vulnerabilities*

A focus on inequalities (for example, but not limited to, gender disparities and income distribution) in education, health, and institutional arrangements provides insight and strategies to prevent threats or mitigate harmful effects of insecurities (UNDP, 1994; Alkire, 2002; Li, 2002). This framework creates opportunity to target observable potential threats and begin positive action against them. Human security recognizes that the fulfillment of basic human needs could be jeopardized as the natural asset base is eroded. Contributing factors to human insecurity and vulnerability are population growth, environmental degradation, loss of access to natural resources, unequal access and distribution of resources, and movement onto increasingly marginal land (Homer-Dixon, 1994; UNDP, 1994; Lonergan, 1999; Matthew and Gaulin, 2002). “The most vulnerable human populations are those that are currently marginal, in terms of location or resources” (Woodward *et al.*, 1998: 36). Unsustainable resource development could further threaten the people’s livelihoods through the increase of their vulnerability.

The vulnerability of a system, or community, is determined by two components: first, the sensitivity of the system, or the resistance that the system holds against change; and second, the ability of the system to adapt, therefore its resilience (Woodward *et al.*, 1998). So under multiple exposures, vulnerability describes how well the system will deal with this change and pressure. Those systems or communities with limited ability to cope with exposure to change are considered to be the most vulnerable (O’Brien and Leichenko, 2000). Woodward *et al.* (1998: 31) clarify that “vulnerability is undesirable, and is a relative concept.” Vulnerability is contextual and dynamic, and it is dependent on regional, sectoral, or social variations (Kasperson and Kasperson, 2001).

The variations of vulnerability are divided into its biophysical and social components. Biophysical vulnerability applies to environmental threats and the biophysical dimensions of a change or disturbance, such as the magnitude, duration, and frequency of the threat. Social vulnerability refers to social, political, and institutional capacity to deal with threats (Cocklin and Keen, 2000; O'Brien and Leichenko, 2000). The combined interactions of these create the individual context, leading to understanding of the nature of the vulnerabilities and how local people relate to, and manage, their environments. "Pre-existing vulnerability to natural hazards and long-term climate change means that those most at risk of, and least able to cope with, slow- or rapid- onset disasters and environmental change, are the poorest, including poor women" (Nelson *et al.*, 2002: 58).

2.6.3 Human Security and the Environment

Environmental degradation and resource scarcity have adverse, and often circular, effects on human populations. An example of the circular aspects of environmental degradation is presented by Lonergan (1998), where environmental degradation is a causal factor for migration in search of better conditions. However, this movement often results in increased population pressure on increasingly marginal land, thereby causing more environmental degradation. These issues of environmental insecurities are based on systemic issues of poverty, inequities, and inadequate policy development and implementation. Is it the environment that 'threatens' people, or is it people that threaten the environment (Dyer, 2001)?

Environmental security is described by Arthur Westing (1994) as a combined factor to achieving human security, for the sustainable utilization of resources, sustainable disposal of waste, and adequate protection of biodiversity. Without these aspects, human populations may become increasingly vulnerable to food and resource shortages, unsanitary living conditions, and environmental degradation. These aspects may lead individuals or communities to explore different livelihood options.

There is no simple causal link between poverty and environmental degradation. Each situation is complex and location-specific (Ambler, 1999). It is often the wealthier landowners who play a prominent role in clearing natural vegetation or overusing agrochemicals. It is those of higher income brackets that consume greater levels of energy, while producing more waste per capita than the poor.

Environmental degradation (through population growth, economic development and pollution (Matthew, 2002a) and resource scarcity create a combined pressure on communities. Together these can disrupt social functioning (Lopez, 1999). Insufficient supply, too much demand, and unequal distribution of resources are aspects that Matthew (2002a) describes as putting communities into situations of deprivation. O'Brien and Leichenko (2000) have used the idea of "double exposure" in reference to climate change and economic globalization. Double exposure can be attributed to any combination of changes or impacts, and it describes the simultaneous and combined consequences of the different processes. In particular, the authors lay an emphasis on how the processes "may exacerbate or offset each other," as some groups or regions may become "winners" because of the processes, while others become "losers" (O'Brien and Leichenko, 2000:

222). This is an important aspect of the complex interactions of change and its impacts on communities.

Society and cultural differences affect how people generally perceive any environmental problems within a region, thereby contextualizing the problems the people face (Lonergan, 1999; Nijkamp, 1999). Accordingly, whether environmental change continues gradually or abruptly depends in part on human choice and perception of use (Litfin, 1999). This indicates that each problem is unique, so although conclusions can be drawn from case incidents to become relevant elsewhere, they will differ because of the different perceptions of each dilemma. Environmental security, therefore, will not take the same form everywhere, nor can it ever guarantee a norm will be established for its reference (Dyer, 2001).

In order to better understand the situation of environmental degradation, exploitation of resources, and/or likelihood of turmoil, there should be a thorough look at the history of the region and the circumstances. These historical aspects are often overlooked, when in fact policies and practices of colonialism, for instance, may have created the destructive patterns common today (Matthew, 2002b).

Environmental degradation and natural resource scarcity act as combined impacts on vulnerability. They create insecurities to those using the resources or who live in close connection with the environment. Using the goal of environmental security, to allow equal and adequate access to resources, will address only one aspect of people's vulnerabilities. In order to combat the impacts of vulnerabilities and insecurities, any other underlying aspects must also be examined. Swathed in a complex series of multiple stresses, vulnerability is a difficult barrier to overcome. Poverty, exclusion, and

marginalization, among other social, economic, environmental, and political factors, all contribute to vulnerability and insecurity. Ongoing monitoring and adaptation to address these factors will help indicate what actions need to be taken to decrease the vulnerability of communities (Barnett and Dovers, 2001).

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

3.1 Methodology

As outlined in Chapter Two, a human security and vulnerability approach is used to describe rural-urban migration patterns in Cambodia. This approach has three aspects to consider: first, the biophysical aspects that can contribute to vulnerability, such as natural resource scarcity, environmental degradation, and biological diversity; second, the socio-economic aspects, which also can detail Cambodians' social relationships that were broken apart; and third, the dynamic quality of vulnerability and the factors contributing to vulnerability.

Human security can be broken down into seven elements (UNDP, 1994):

- i. *Economic security* assures a basic income for all people, from productive and remunerative work or government-financed safety nets.
- ii. *Food security* is the sustained supply and access to basic food resources.
- iii. *Health security* assures access to health care and health services.
- iv. *Environmental security* is the access to a healthy environment, with low threat of degradation through natural or man-made forces.
- v. *Personal security* assures a lack of physical violence and threat.
- vi. *Community security* occurs in the absence of oppressive regimes and traditionally discriminating practices.
- vii. *Political security* is the assurance of respect for human rights, and the absence of military dictatorship and state oppression.

Each of these elements can be used to describe a community's level of human security and whether it may be prone to vulnerability. These elements, in relation to the relevance of human security and vulnerability in Cambodia, will be discussed further in Chapter 5.

This research uses the complex notion of vulnerability, and combines it with a case study of rural-urban migration to Phnom Penh in order to understand, through the voices of the participants, their reasons for migrating.

3.2 Methods

Qualitative research gives a broad understanding and appreciation of the social context surrounding a research topic. It requires face-to-face interactions and involvement with the research participants. The focus of a study is placed within its unique characteristics. Without these unique characteristics, the same events would have completely different meaning. The incommensurables are studied, putting meaning and worth to subjective aspects of research.

Events can be explained using different techniques. For my research I used a combination of the structural and interpretive explanations. Structural explanations are an accumulation of ideas that form parts of the whole central idea. Network theory, as one example of structural explanation, describes how certain patterns of interaction or overlapping aspects of social relations will result in a certain behaviour or relationship. The "explanation shows how a specific event is just one of a larger pattern, is one building block in a bigger structure, or is... one link within a much larger system of linkages" (Neuman, 1997: 54).

Further to the structural explanation, an interpretive explanation describes an event and its meaning within a specific social context. “Like all scientific endeavour, the aim of such a geography is to understand and explain the nature of (social) reality” (Eyles, 1988: 1). Each person’s subjective world view fashions how he or she will act in certain situations. The researcher then attempts to discern other peoples’ reasoning and perspective, to put meaning into their lives through their own constructions (Eyles, 1988; Neuman, 1997). Interpretive explanations are related to hermeneutics, a methodology based in the humanities to discover the meaning embedded within a certain viewpoint. The goal is to develop an understanding of how the different parts relate to the whole.

The interpretations that are developed from this type of methodology must be validated against other resources, such as secondary literature. This type of research is a cumulative research endeavour, encompassing past research while contributing small “snapshots” to future research (Eyles, 1988).

There are structural patterns and occurrences that motivate human migration. However, individual movement involves certain interactions between cultural and historical factors, economic motivations, and personal choice, to name a few motivating factors. These aspects of qualitative and interpretive research are concerned with everyday life and what is meaningful to individuals.

By using a case study, my research places localized attributes amongst the larger whole. A case study explores a set of circumstances through detailed data collection (Creswell, 1998). It is bounded within a certain time and place. The case study requires using various techniques of data collection to give context to the case.

Triangulation of research data with other sources of information helps to increase the integrity of qualitative research, as it will confirm consistency with other accepted sources of information and literature (Glesne and Peshkin, 1992; Neuman, 1997). I have used two main data gathering techniques: literature analysis and interviews. The interviews were used to gather information specific to this case study, while the literature analysis was able to substantiate the information gained in the interviews and place it into its broader context.

3.2.1 *Literature Analysis*

Literature and documents provide context to qualitative research. Text material corroborates with interview and observation material to provide validity and support (Glesne and Peshkin, 1992). Historical and demographic information can be used to enhance what is heard and seen, in order to expand the research into a full-bodied explanation. The literature analysis for this research was predominantly used to support migration trends to Phnom Penh, including the historical aspects that shaped these trends. Other literature was used to support demographic and situational description of the squatter communities and relocated settlements around Phnom Penh.

Most of the literature used to back up this research has been in the form of reports written by other independent researchers and, most often, for organizations situated and working in Cambodia. The related issues of the literature range from migration, land tenure, landlessness, poverty, population demographics, and urban poor, amongst others. Organizations include Oxfam Great Britain, Oxfam America, UNDP, UN-HABITAT, UNHCR, Mekong River Commission, and UN World Food Programme.

3.2.2 Interviews

Interviews give the researcher an opportunity to delve into peoples' lives by listening to their stories. Seidman describes the root of interviewing as "an interest in understanding the experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience" (1998: 3). As an interviewer, one must acknowledge the fact that other individuals' stories have particular meaning. One must also acknowledge the fact that it is not possible to understand another individual perfectly, short of *being* that person.

Interviews do not exist in a black box with no outside forces. Researcher-participant interactions, individual experiences, and daily moods will all influence the interview. What the interview does allow is for behaviour and reaction to be put in context, thereby providing some understanding of individuals' actions (Seidman, 1998). This understanding is developed through the researcher's work with the interview material – through interpretation, description, and analysis.

Semi-structured interviews – the approach used in this research – works well in two fashions. First, it provides a structure to the interview, which is particularly helpful to the novice researcher in order to keep on track. Second, it allows for adaptation within the interview as more/different lines of questioning may emerge.

It is only through interviews that one can explore individuals' explanations, future behaviour, opinions, perception, and attitudes. Interviews provide "the opportunity to learn about what you cannot see and to explore alternative explanations of what you do see," (Glesne and Peshkin, 1992: 65). Interviews were integral to this research by providing the personal perspectives of the rural-urban migrants. The migrants were able to personally attest to the situation of vulnerability in the countryside and other factors

that may have provided a motivation to move to another locale. A comparison is made between the standard of living in Phnom Penh and that in rural Cambodia, to illustrate the effectiveness of the individuals' movement as a method to find a worthy alternative to rural livelihood. In order for me to gain an understanding of the lifestyle of rural Cambodians, the rural-urban migrants were asked to recall as much as they could about their lives before moving and also the lives of family members who have remained in the countryside. I sought information regarding ownership of physical assets, primary income sources, and the types of food and natural resources that were used.

3.3 Interview Process

My interpreter, Kimlay, facilitated the search for interview participants. There was no formal method of eliciting the help of the participants; Kimlay and I entered into a community (known and suggested by USG) and approached individuals by introducing ourselves and the project. The only stipulation was that the individual was originally from a rural location outside of Phnom Penh. We did not approach each house in the community, and our selection was largely dependent on who was at their place of residence. The interviews were conducted in an informal atmosphere, in a location chosen by the participant. The location varied from being in the participant's home, on their front stoop, or perhaps in the family-run grocery stand on the street front.

I conducted forty-three interviews. The number of interviews was determined by time constraints and the availability of Kimlay, but also sickness on both Kimlay's and my part – he with the mumps and I with a strain of salmonella.

Kimlay has an increasing portfolio of experience with conducting interviews as well as with translating written documents. He had been volunteering with the Urban Sector Group (USG) for quite some time, gaining the necessary experience for future job opportunities. At the time of my departure, he had signed contracts for interview/interpreter work with the IUCN based in Phnom Penh. He had also earned a position working at a Ministry in Phnom Penh. Meanwhile, he is working toward his Masters of Business Administration at the Royal University of Phnom Penh.

He was a vital component of my field research, as he had sufficient interviewing experience to provide me with useful tips and reassurances of my interviewing technique and style. At twenty-four years old he had an impressive resume and skill level; he was obviously from an advantaged family and was given opportunity to excel at an early age.

I took detailed notes throughout each interview, which also included observations and descriptions of the surroundings. At the end of each day, I re-wrote and summarized my interview notes into a more functional and understandable format. The information was later formed into a spreadsheet format for easy reference of each participant's answers.

3.3.1 Interview Questions

Several series of questions were created, in search of the most succinct sequence of questions to most appropriately answer my objectives (see Appendix One). With the suggestions and help of Hans Guttman (MRC), Claus Pederson (MRC), Chhaya Heng (MRC), and Gareth Clubb (DFID, World Fisheries Program) my interview scheme was prepared. The series of questions was condensed to an appropriate length but still to

retain an adequate depth of questioning. Part of the interview consisted of specific questions, for easy reference and quick responses. The latter half of the interview consisted of semi-structured, open-ended questions. The open-ended questions were determined to help shape the interview and keep the flow of discussion on track, but the interview was not limited to these questions alone, or at all, depending on each individual interview.

The interview design was separated into three parts:

1) Information on the Participant

This portion of the interview was designed to give a brief demographic background of the participant – age, sex, marital status, as well as the location of their home/rural village outside of Phnom Penh.

2) Life in Phnom Penh

This portion of the interview was designed to give an appreciation of the individual's life and status in Phnom Penh. The questions focus on their move to the city, in terms of when, if they knew anyone living in Phnom Penh before they moved, type and extent of energy use and other amenities, daily expenditures and earnings, job type, and their ability to send remittances back to their village.

3) Life in the Village

The majority of the interview is within the boundaries of 'life in the village'. The initial questions follow the same design of the previous section, in terms of the type and extent of energy use and other amenities as well as the daily expenditures. The questions then branch into the semi-structured, open-ended style. This latter portion of the interview was divided into three broad areas about village life: information about

resources, changes in the environment and natural resources, and comparison to life in Phnom Penh.

3.3.2 Interview Locations

The interviews were conducted in communities in Phnom Penh (see Chapter 4.1 for further description of the interview locations). This information was collected to provide details of rural-urban migration by those migrants currently residing in Phnom Penh. The information from these interviews was used as an analysis of human movement in response to vulnerability in rural Cambodia. The interview participants were a population of rural-urban migrants, able to provide information about the vulnerability that they personally experienced in the countryside.

This population of rural-urban migrants living in squatter communities and relocated settlements in Phnom Penh offered convenient access to the information that I was seeking. For the logistics of my field research, and my limited time in the field, this was an appropriate selection.

3.4 Data Analysis

This research used interviews to indicate the relationship between rural vulnerability and rural-urban migration. Acknowledging the complexity of migration, the interview information was collected to discover migrants' perceptions of their choice to migrate. The interview questions aimed at indicating the various aspects limiting individuals or families to make an adequate livelihood in the countryside. By identifying

these limitations and vulnerabilities, it could be suggested that they acted as a portion of the motivating factors leading to the move away from rural Cambodia.

The data collected in the interviews were used to find main themes of rural vulnerability that may have contributed to the decision to migrate; these themes will be described further in the Chapter 4. The data were compiled from the interviews and literature analysis. The interviews were recorded and edited into a cohesive descriptive format for further use. The data were then further compiled into a spreadsheet for more comprehensive examination of themes and details.

The interview data were used to form common themes that were used to shape the research further. The themes were identified and used to be coherent with the research objectives and conceptual framework to discover aspects of vulnerability in the countryside, what the decision-making process was for migrants, and how rural vulnerability may have been a motivation for rural-urban migration. These data have been used to describe how successful migration to Phnom Penh has been to better the participants' situations, and ultimately to see how it worked as a reaction to vulnerability in rural areas.

3.5 Subjectivity and Limitations

3.5.1 Subjectivity and Bias

Qualitative research contextualizes the processes under examination. Interpretation of the interviews by the researcher emphasizes the relationship between them and the research topic. Interpretations of the interviews by the interpreter further emphasize the subjectivity of this type of research. Biases and personal nuances are

introduced on both accounts, and must be acknowledged. It is important to place oneself as a researcher in relation to those being studied, particularly with respect to cross-cultural differences.

Concurrent with this subjectivity bias by the researcher and interpreter, there are also data errors that skew the research data. A major example from this research is the participants' self-reporting income. It is difficult to estimate an average daily income, when, for many people living in squatter communities, income is often inconsistent and sporadic. Details of wage and income, as well as expenditure, are usually underestimated. Income is very important to the poor, therefore their underestimation is not due to inaccurate counting. The expenditures, on the other hand, are often underestimated because the individuals may not necessarily account for costs that spread over several days. To address these issues, Ms. Ouk Sokha of USG suggested that I specifically ask for the income earned "yesterday". This gave the interview participant a finite and recent time on which to base the response. In terms of the expenditures-side, she suggested asking about specific items incurring cost and breaking them down over a time period.

3.5.2 Limitations to Interview Methods

Human migration occurs within a myriad of variables over time and space. Human security and vulnerability also vary over time and space, and are defined through different situations and perspectives. Both are situation and context dependent. It would be presumptuous to assume that this study has clearly defined and described how and why processes of human migration have occurred in Cambodia. Relying on a case-study

perspective, however, I have aimed to cover broad thematic relationships between migration and vulnerability in rural Cambodia. This has been limited by the inability to predict all possible underlying processes and the linkages between those processes.

Qualitative data took precedence over quantitative data for this study. Statistical significance was overlooked in lieu of developing a situational description. As a result, while the small sample taken of Cambodia's rural-urban migrants may not represent the greater whole of migrants, the individual interviews were able to give personal context to forty-three individuals who have, thus far, had no opportunity to voice their personal struggles.

Cambodian culture is very much status and hierarchy driven. The land title and tenure systems are very new, but land transactions continue to be structured by the historical and social aspects of power. These mechanisms of power in Cambodian culture are more complex than I could decipher through this research. It was a practical and ethical matter to avoid the sensitivity of the political issues and people's vulnerability to abuse of power. I felt that it would have been provocative to question my participants on matters of hierarchical domination, as an outsider and with the political climate being so fragile in Cambodia. It was important to preserve my relationship with my interview participants and to avoid prejudicing my research data. I felt that it was beyond the scope of my research and beyond my abilities in the given time frame, to pursue discussions of the politics of power-holders in Cambodia, with respect to domination of local populations and the expropriation of land in rural areas.

3.5.3 *Limitations to Interview Sample*

The nature of my interview sample was not all-encompassing, whereby all participants were rural-urban migrants living in squatter settlements in Phnom Penh. Two main groups were not captured in my sample because of this, and they were: a) the successful rural-urban migrants who were able to advance to the middle class society of Phnom Penh; and b) the rural-urban migrants who had returned to their villages. My research resulted in a partial picture of rural-urban migration in Cambodia, yet it was beyond the means of my research to pursue these additional groups. The limited amount of previous research on rural-urban migration in Cambodia does not indicate how large these other groups may be.

My interview participants were comprised of individuals that a) would not be able to pay the relocation costs back to their villages, and lacked the dignity to admit failure to their families, and b) felt that they were doing better in Phnom Penh than what they would have done in the village. My participants were those rural-urban migrants who were either unsuccessful in finding a better livelihood, or who felt they were successful in bettering their situation, but by a fine margin. This implicates my research in that only one perspective, of those rural-urban migrants living in squatter settlements in Phnom Penh, is accounted for.

The two other groups may have quite different stories to tell, with regards to their motivations for moving, how vulnerability contributed to their decision to move, and whether or not they have been successful. Those migrants who returned to their village could have been successful enough in Phnom Penh to pay for their relocation costs *back* to the village, while also retaining their dignity. This might indicate the absence of

human security and vulnerability factors in their decision-making process to move to Phnom Penh, if they were willing to move back into that same situation. Those migrants who have advanced into middle-class might contribute to remittances being sent back to the village, whereby other individuals may have the opportunity to make the move to Phnom Penh using their middle-class relatives in the adjustment to the big city.

CHAPTER FOUR

CASE RESULTS

4.1 Interview Locations

There are varying amounts of information available on my study site locations. This is due to the transient nature of the squatter settlements, and also to the lack of statistics and data on the settlement inhabitants. Some settlements and communities have had quite a bit of interaction with NGOs involved with the urban poor, and have therefore been given exposure for use by other sources. Much of the information is informal coverage on the state of squatter settlements.

I conducted interviews in twelve communities. 'Communities' refer to different neighbourhoods within Phnom Penh, which often have their own community representatives to the city. The community members identified themselves as living in specific locations and within a specific demographic. Ten of the communities used for my interviews were located within the city limits, and the remaining two were relocated settlements a distance away from the urban area. Aphiwat, the railway communities, have been divided into communities comprised of ten to twenty houses. Four of my interview sites were of these railway communities (i.e. situated along the train tracks in Phnom Penh).

4.1.1 *Borei Keila*

Borei Keila is located within the heart of Phnom Penh, consisting of 1,776 households (UPDF, 2003). It includes four-story apartment blocks that were built in the 1960s with an unstructured collection of shacks at its base. This area was settled in 1979

(UPDF, 2003). There is a small pond located behind the shacks, which serves as a waste collector. While the municipality will take (minor) responsibility for the apartment buildings, it will take no responsibility for the rest of the community's infrastructure (Slocomb, 2002). Access is along muddy tracks that pass through stagnant puddles of water and garbage.

This community is under USG's watch. There was a great risk of eviction and relocation as development proposals for the area had been increasing (Slocomb, 2002). While there has been some improvement in terms of community development and advocacy, there remain many issues of inadequate drainage, roads, garbage collection and public hygiene.

The Municipality of Phnom Penh has agreed (July 12, 2003) to on-site upgrading projects for urban poor communities (UPDF, 2003). There are plans to rebuild the area with small row houses. The government has agreed to give 4.6 hectares for this development.

4.1.2 *Aphiwat (Railway Communities)*

This series of communities is located along the Phnom Penh – Battambang railway line – literally within metres of the tracks. Small houses have been built along one side of the tracks. They are generally of good repair, and the area is kept quite clean. Behind the first row of houses are houses of lower quality, built on stilts above water and waste.

Many of the people living in these communities own their houses, while others rent. There is risk of relocation, though, as the land does not belong to the house owners.

The community members do seem to have vested interest in maintaining and improving their part of the city⁵.

I interviewed in railway communities 59 to 62, all of which are under USG jurisdiction. I was able to interview the community leader who was trained by USG in advocacy. He was a key lobbyist in establishing the new road running along the length of the railway. His next project was to set up an appropriate drainage system. He relied on income earned by his wife and spent the bulk of his time facilitating and managing the community.

4.1.3 Sambok Chab

Sambok Chab is located along the western bank of the Bassac River. It was established in the 1980s. Until 1975 the land was a public garden, and after the fall of the Khmer Rouge it was bought and sold informally (URC, 2002). Its inhabitants generally earn between 5,000 and 7,000 riel per day per family, through combined employment as labour in construction, as cyclo drivers, and as police (Sophal, 2003).

On November 26, 2001 a fire swept through the Bassac communities. Those affected by the fires were relocated to two new settlements outside of the city: Anlong Kngan and Anlong Korng. Those who were relocated had a difficult time at the new site because of lack of infrastructure and social services. The municipality paid for transportation out to the community as well as the 7m x 15m plots of land (Sophal, 2003). Other donations were made by NGOs and aid groups for the resettlement, in the form of

⁵ In the External Evaluation written by Margaret Slocomb for the Urban Sector Group, it was noted that the community wanted to “fix up the rutted track beside the railway line which is the only form of access to their homes,” (2002: 10). At the time of my research, approximately fourteen months later, a road had been cut into the slope beside the railway tracks and a wall had been built to ensure stability. This provided greater access and improved the safety of access to the communities along the tracks.

food and resources. Initially there was conflict between the newly resettled and those who had already lived in the original village located at the sites. There were land disputes because the government had not yet paid the village for the land that they were giving away. Some people pawned the title to their newly acquired land to move back to Sambok Chab (Sophal, 2003). Sambok Chab is the most popular place to move back to because of its proximity to the city centre and the opportunity that brings.

4.1.4 Moha Montrey

The inhabitants of this small squatter settlement moved to Phnom Penh after the signing of the 1991 Paris Peace Accord from near the Thai border, where they had been employed to cut down trees (Moha Montrey Community, 2003). The sangkat (district) chief had agreed that they could settle there, and even arranged for identity cards to be made in 1984. Twenty-seven families live in the community, with a total of 161 people. It is located near the Olympic Market and Stadium.

The community is threatened by eviction, as the Ministry of Transportation wants to upgrade roads in order to increase housing value in the area. One house was purchased outright, with aims at purchasing eight more. Yet after the first was bought, authorities issued eviction letters offering no compensation for moving (Moha Montrey Community, 2003).

4.1.5 Village 22

This community is located near Boeng Kak Lake in the northern limits of the city. Boeng Kak is known as a backpacker area, with small guesthouses on the lakefront.

Village 22 is nestled down an alley way beside the mosque, on land designated “open space” (SUPF, 2003). The small road through the community is bordered on one side by the mosque’s wall. Some of the houses lie adjacent to the lake, which serves as a site to dump solid and human waste.

Village 22 has been under the supervision of the Solidarity for the Urban Poor Federation (SUPF). It has been proposed to develop the lake into a recreational area to promote tourism.

4.1.6 Samaki Settlements

The Samaki settlements are located approximately 12 kilometres from the edge of the city, and 19 kilometres from the original site before relocation (URC, 2002). They were developed after a fire swept through Boding, a large low-income settlement near the Bassac River and the “grey building” on Sothearos Boulevard, in May 2001 (Slocomb, 2002). The people affected by the fire were resettled on the undeveloped land by municipal order, without having the opportunity to see the site beforehand. They were granted small plots of land and were given donated building materials.

Toilet construction was started as people began arriving at the site. The infrastructure continues to be inadequate for the number of residents (URC, 2002). The municipality drilled wells, which provide water for bathing and laundry. Drinking water must be bought from private sellers.

The land is very low-lying, and as a result, many of the houses are built below the rainy season flood levels. In addition to the structural implications of houses flooding, the flood waters were contaminated with the waste that accumulates throughout the dry

season. Many of the roads become impassable in the wet season, clean water continues to be an issue, and health is a constant reminder of the conditions that the people live in.

There are several garment factories in the area, which do provide employment for half of the women residing in Samaki (Slocomb, 2002). For the remainder of the population and for men in particular, there is no other industry in close proximity to the Samaki communities. The main income earners must either commute to the city or find accommodation in the city to decrease the cost of daily transportation. It costs 2,500 to 3,000 riel in the dry season, 4,000r in the rainy season, and 5,000r at night time to hire a motodup for a one-way trip to Phnom Penh (URC, 2002).

It is estimated that these squalid conditions cause 70 percent of the resettled people to move back to the city centre during the rainy season (URC, 2002). As the water recedes, people do move back to Samaki, but only 75 percent of the original residents continue to live there (URC, 2002). Some families find the isolation from the market too great, so they return to living in low-income squatter settlements in the city.

4.1.7 Anlong Kngan

Anlong Kngan is located about 15 kilometres from the city's edge, and 19 kilometres from the original sites before relocation. It began as an agricultural experiment station by the Ministry of Agriculture. The land for this settlement was "donated" by the Prime Minister at the opening ceremony of the Samaki 1, 2, and 3 settlements (URC, 2002). The land was given to the Municipality of Phnom Penh for the relocation of inner city squatter communities. Non-governmental organizations working with the urban poor recommended a delay to any relocation until services could be

provided to the site. At the time of donation there were inadequate employment and social services available at the site, and its isolation and distance from Phnom Penh limited the success of the new settlement.

Five months after the Prime Minister had donated the land, a fire swept through squatter communities on the banks of the Bassac River. This sped up the relocation date despite pressure from NGOs and international agencies to delay until services and assistance could be given. The Urban Resource Centre (2002) documented that 3,500 families were moved to this site; most of the families were forcefully relocated within ten days of the fire. It is estimated that ninety hectare were used to divide into plots for the resettled families (URC, 2002).

The services and infrastructure in place at the time of relocation were inadequate: UNCHS funded temporary toilets to be made in the short notice of relocation, providing two toilets for ten families; private wells were drilled to sell water to the relocated families at premium prices; the housing remained precarious and at risk of ruin during rainy season flooding (URC, 2002). Many of the villagers had persisting health problems, such as diarrhea, skin irritations, and respiratory infections.

There were not enough available income-generating activities, since the community was so far removed from the city centre and the related infrastructure (e.g. garment and other factories). Community members living at Anlong Kngan and Anlong Kong (the sister relocation settlement to Anlong Kngan) were unable to make a living where they were. Similar to the Samaki settlements, main income earners often stayed overnight in Phnom Penh to decrease the costs of daily transportation and commuting. Some businesses had developed in Anlong Kngan, such as grocery stands, lottery sales,

and telephone stands (URC, 2002). Many either sold their land to other people, such as rich outsiders (1 plot sells for \$800 to \$1000), or pawned the title to the land (Sophal, 2003). When they were unable to pay off the debt to the pawnbroker, they often just ended up selling the land to the broker in order to move back to the city – inevitably back to Sambok Chab from where most families had originated.

4.2 Demographics of the Interview Participants

Forty-three interviews were conducted, thirty-one (72 percent) of the interview participants were female and the remaining twelve (28 percent) were male. While the participant selection was random in terms of houses that we approached, it was determined by whether or not someone was present at the house. The skewed ratio of female to male participants may have been indicative of a higher proportion of women remaining at home, to look after children and keep house. None of the women were without employment, yet it may still be maintained that the men were more fully employed or took jobs a greater distance from the home. Almost half (49 percent) of the participants' households were female-headed households, meaning that they managed the household accounts and spending. There may be two reasons that this high incidence of female-headed households. First, the women may have a more intimate knowledge of the families' daily requirements while the men may be working out of the house. Second, female-headed households are more common as many men were killed in warfare leaving widows to manage the family and farm.

The ages of the participants ranged from twenty-one to fifty-eight years, with the average being thirty-nine years old. Eight participants – all female – had no education.

Eighteen participants had high school education (grades 8-12), thirteen participants had elementary education (grade 4-7), and four participants had primary education (K-3).

Average household size was five people, and this may have included only the nuclear family or members of the extended family, most often parents or in-laws of the participants. Family at the migration destination was a large factor in migration behaviour, making the transition to the new location a little easier. Of this study's migrants, twenty-nine participants (67 percent) house other family members (e.g. aunts, uncles, cousins, siblings) living in Phnom Penh, implying the existence of a social network. Twenty-seven participants (63 percent) had a place to stay upon arrival in the city – mostly with family members, and on occasion accommodation was pre-arranged with an employer.

4.3 Rural-urban Migration to Phnom Penh by Province

As described in Chapter 2.5.1 and shown in figures 2.1 and 2.2, there is a correlation between high population density and the propensity to migrate out of that province. The results correspond to the 1998 Census⁶ with the highest percentage of migrants being from Prey Veng province, in this case at 27 percent of the interview respondents. Kampong Cham follows, with 23 percent of the interview respondents originating there, Svey Rieng follows at 12 percent, Takeo and Kandal at 9 percent, Kampong Thom at 7 percent, Kampot at 5 percent, and Koh Kong, Kampong Speu, Kampong Som, and Banteay Chey all fall in at 2 percent of the interview respondents.

These eleven provinces all lie in close proximity to Phnom Penh, providing ease of access to the capital. Excluding Banteay Chey, Kampong Som, Koh Kong, and

⁶ See Chapter 2.5.1.

Kampot, the remaining seven provinces are within Cambodia's "bread-basket". The prime rice-growing region of the country is located along the banks of the Mekong and Tonle Sap rivers, attracting the bulk of the population to these fertile plains.

4.4 Migration of Historical Significance

Three major movements to Phnom Penh were documented through my interviews; each movement is loosely correlated with three events in Cambodia's recent history (see Figure 4.1 next page). The first movement occurred at the fall of the Pol Pot regime in 1979. The city had been abandoned during the forced exodus of urban residents to the countryside in 1975. Once the Khmer Rouge regime fell to the Vietnamese in 1979, people found themselves dispersed all over the country, with no land of their own. Many made their way to the city, taking residence in the abandoned houses. This created a wave of conflict when the "rightful" owners returned to find their own pre-war houses already occupied.

The second movement occurred at the end of the Vietnamese occupation of Cambodia, at the end of the 1980s. Throughout the decade of occupation, there continued to be a system of collective land use. At the end of this era, families and individuals still had no land of their own – it was all state controlled. The government of Cambodia began to reallocate land of certain parcel sizes, determined roughly by the number in the household. However, if an individual/family was not in the village at that time, they missed out on this allocation. Throughout this time some people had begun to look elsewhere for paid labour, and therefore missed out on the land opportunity. In

addition to those who missed out on the land reallocation, the repatriation of refugees onto marginal land in 1991 created the second wave of migrants to Phnom Penh.

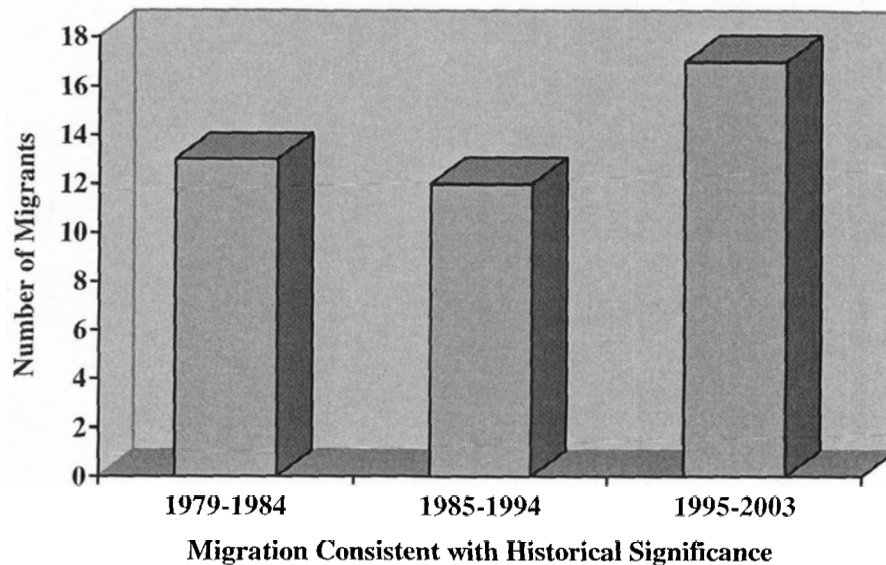


Figure 4.1 Three major movements of rural-urban migration to Phnom Penh, according to years groupings of historical significance.

The third major movement of migrants to Phnom Penh has been in recent years, since 1997. The system of land fragmentation foreclosed these migrants from having a sustainable livelihood.

4.5 Comparing Rural versus Urban Lifestyles

This section provides context to the people that were interviewed, mostly in terms of standard of living. The standard of living in Phnom Penh is compared to that in rural Cambodia, to illustrate the individuals' movements as an alternative to rural livelihood. For me to gain an understanding of the lifestyle of rural Cambodians, the rural-urban migrants were asked to recall as much as they could about their lives before moving and also the lives of family members who have remained in the countryside. These details

can indicate the well-being of the participants and their families. The indicators describing rural lifestyle provides an understanding of vulnerability, indicated by the lack of physical assets, buffer to shock or illness, or access to common property resources. While a greater accumulation of assets will occur by living in Phnom Penh, with greater access to monetary income of an urban centre, other indicators of urban lifestyle can depict vulnerability, such as the uncertainty of stable employment and having to purchase all basic goods at high prices.

4.5.1 Urban Lifestyle

Despite the weak land tenure for the poor in Phnom Penh, thirty-two participants declared “ownership” of their houses in the squatter areas⁷. There were eleven renters paying anywhere from between 20,000 riel (C \$5) per month to 120,000 riel (C \$30) per month, the average being 50,000 riel (C \$12.50) per month. The rent pays for the shelter only, and all other costs are supplementary.

The participants’ daily costs and income give an approximation of their ability to meet their needs, but it is hard to a) accurately account for all expenses incurred in an average day, and b) formulate an average daily income, while taking into account unstable, often erratic employment in the informal sector. The participants’ costs were basically limited to living expenses: water, cooking and light sources, food, and rent where applicable. The average daily living costs spent by the participants equaled 12,823 riel (C \$3.21), while the average daily income is 12,276 riel⁸ (C \$3.07). A deficit of

⁷ This may have been a point needing clarification of house versus property ownership. They may consider a dwelling made by their own hands and resources as ownership, while realizing their insecure status on the land itself.

⁸ The average daily income accounted for 42 of the participants.

income to expenses does not necessarily indicate a daily increase in debt, although this may occur in some instances. As suggested above, inaccuracy in the calculations of daily income and expenses may serve to describe this outcome. What it does indicate, however, is the *potential* for debt. The interview participants are, on average, barely making ends meet.

Table 4.1 Physical Asset Possession by Urban Households

| Physical Asset | Percentage of Urban Households (%) |
|----------------|------------------------------------|
| Radio | 56 |
| Television | 56 |
| Mobile phone | 26 |
| Moto | 47 |
| Bicycle | 42 |
| Fan | 26 |
| Sewing machine | 7 |

To get a further sense of the participants' standard of living, physical assets can indicate their economic status. Table 4.1 describes the percentage of urban households from this study that have the listed physical assets. These numbers indicate that the participants have a certain amount of disposable monetary income, which they have used to purchase these physical assets. It indicates that these households should be successfully fulfilling their basic needs, and that they have the ability to save and invest in their household and lifestyle. In addition to those assets listed in Table 4.1, other assets commonly included were lock boxes, coffee urns, rice cookers, iceboxes, VCD players, and other electronics. Ten of the households (23 percent) had none of the listed assets. Those that owned televisions also had at least one other asset, but on average those that had televisions had four other physical assets as listed above. Although I can only surmise about their standard of living, these numbers indicate that 56 percent of my

total participant group households had five physical assets that would have required accumulated wealth in order to acquire.

Table 4.2 Drinking Water Sources of Participant Households

| Drinking Water Source | Number of Urban Households (%) |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------|
| Public water | 17 (40) |
| Private vendors | 14 (33) |
| Communal pump | 11 (23) |

Other indicators of standard of living are the drinking water source and what the households use for cooking and light energy. As mentioned previously, the urban poor often pay a premium for water and electricity services. Many of the poor do not have enough initial capital to connect with public sources, and are thereby forced to pay private vendors. Table 4.2 describes the three main sources of drinking water for the participants' households. This study indicated that 17 participants were able to connect to public water, indicating a high level of capital to be able to pay for the expensive initial fee. Communal pumps were primarily used in the relocated settlements outside of town. This was usually combined with rainwater collection to avoid using potentially contaminated water. The remainder used other sources such as rain water and bottled jugs of water.

Table 4.3 Cooking Fuel Types by Urban Households

| Cooking Fuel(s) | Number of Urban Households (%) |
|-------------------|--------------------------------|
| Charcoal | 13 (30) |
| Wood | 12 (28) |
| Gas | 6 (14) |
| Gas & charcoal | 6 (14) |
| Gas & wood | 2 (5) |
| Gas & rice cooker | 1 (2) |
| Charcoal & wood | 3 (7) |

Table 4.3 shows that charcoal and wood were the primary sources of cooking fuel, indicating that these participants are still cost-conscious enough to use the cheaper fuel options. Since the initial cost of buying a gas stove is quite high, it inhibited the use for cooking, used exclusively by 6 participants. The gas itself, however, was described as being much more efficient, but lacking the comfort and tradition of using either wood or charcoal. Various combinations of primary sources were used to suit individual needs. The use of wood is popular in the relocated settlements, where there is still the ability to collect firewood for personal use.

4.5.2 Rural Lifestyle

Five of the study participants do not have family in the countryside anymore – some having also moved to the city, or having married and moved elsewhere. The data collected describes the family members of the interview participants that are still living in the rural village. Inconsistencies and lack of data are due to the inability to recall information about living in rural Cambodia. Many of the participants had not thought about their old village life in some time.

Compared to other data collected, this study indicated a lower incidence of reliance⁹ on both subsistence agriculture and other agricultural-related employment, with 23 participants (53 percent) and 28 participants (65 percent) respectively. Other main sources of income were basket weaving, selling groceries, running businesses, driving motos, selling cakes/fruit/porridge/rice and other specialty items, enlistment as a soldier, teaching, and recharging batteries. Families of two of the participants survived

⁹ See Chapter 2.1. for estimates on the rural labour force dependent on both subsistence agriculture and other forms of agricultural employment.

predominantly on the remittances that relatives in the city were able to send back to the village. This may indicate a lack of access or availability of land, that lead people into a diversity of non-agriculturally related livelihoods in rural areas.

Alternative and supplementary livelihoods ranged quite widely. They included: making mats, selling fruit, livestock, Khmer noodles, eggs, and other goods, collecting forest resources and fishing for sale and supplementation, receiving remittances from family elsewhere, working for others by helping with transplanting rice and harvesting rice and other crops, renting out land, and selling what the household did not use for subsistence.

Table 4.4 Land Status of Rural Households

| Land Status | Number of Rural Households |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Allocated land in 1989 | 9 |
| No agricultural land | 7 |
| Acquired land from parents | 6 |
| Ancestral land | 5 |

Rural households gain respectability on land ownership. Table 4.4 describes the land status of twenty-seven of the participants' families still living in the countryside. Nine of the families in the villages were living and working land that they had received through the 1989 allocation. Seven families had no rural agricultural land – they did not receive allocated land. They were making a living by working for others or trying their hand at a small business. Six of the participants' families had land and had reinstated passing the land down from parents to children, but the land was passed onto the siblings of the study participants as they moved to seek a different livelihood in Phnom Penh. There were five participants' families that still worked their ancestral land, with the parents still working the undivided land.

The lack of family land to divide was why Veng chose to move to the city. His parents and other siblings remained in the village, while he and a brother moved to Phnom Penh. Veng still considers moving back to the village, but he does not have the money to buy his own land. If he moved back right now, he would return to being a burden to his parents. He explains his situation and his decision to move to Phnom Penh:

Our plot has no room for expansion because all of the land borders on the next family's land. It is divided into blocks, and the blocks are full. Traditionally the family would divide the land between children, but that would not provide enough land to support a family on. Therefore, my brother and I chose to find other ways to gain income so that the family land could stay in one piece and be more productive.

Five of the families sold their land to pay for debt, illness, or to have capital to be able to start a new life in the city. The remaining participant accounts of the status of land in their village include the following: there was no room for expansion or division of the land, forcing grown children off the land in search of their own form of livelihood; youth were not interested in an agricultural livelihood so land was being used by the increasingly older generations (without the support network of family members working the land once the elderly are unable to work the fields); families have moved to the urban provincial towns; the family consisted of all teachers, so had no agricultural land; families moved to Phnom Penh in 1979 to take advantage of the free buildings there.

Table 4.5 Physical Asset Possession by Rural Households

| Physical Asset | Number of Urban Households |
|----------------|----------------------------|
| Radio | 15 |
| Television | 15 |
| Mobile phone | 3 |
| Moto | 6 |
| Bicycle | 14 |

In terms of rural physical assets, 13 of the interview participants had not returned to their village in many years and could not remember many details of what their family owned there. In addition to the physical assets listed in Table 4.4, other physical assets that the rural households claim are livestock, including water buffaloes, cattle, pigs, and chickens, and one even claimed to have a tractor. Despite the unequal number of responses regarding rural assets, asset accumulation appears to be less for rural households. The type and scope of assets are also different – there is a lower reliance on electrical/mechanical assets and more assets that contribute to agricultural and farm wealth.

Rural households predominantly used wood stoves for cooking, and they collected the wood themselves in common property forests and their own land. There were a few instances of charcoal use, but it was lower in the rural areas because it must be bought rather than collected like firewood. There was one instance of the use of cattle dung for cooking energy. Kerosene lamps are used as a light source. Some families use batteries to power bulbs, and a few families who live in proximity to a town or have a generator in their village are able to use electricity.

When asked about the vulnerability and outcomes of the wet season flooding, few found the annual floods to be disastrous. The interviewees declared that the flooding was a necessary occurrence in order to replenish the soil with nutrients. The general attitude was to just deal with it when the floods came, knowing that it would happen every year. There were cases when recently sown seeds would be ruined because of a late season flood, and this would create issues of increased debt to borrow more seed to re-sow the fields.

During the wet season and the floods, the families try to get by using a variety of means. There is more fishing activity and more gathering of vegetables and fruits from riverbanks and communal areas. Animals and livestock are sold to give a little more income. There is a greater reliance on any remittances from family working elsewhere. If a household becomes particularly strapped for cash or a harvest is ruined, many will buy or borrow rice to supplement their food needs until the next harvest. Another option is to borrow money to buy goods at the market. Both options lead them into debt, as they must repay rice at double the amount and money at high interest rates. Some family members will try to find additional work in the village or nearby, often working at plantations harvesting beans or rubber. Many also migrate to towns or to Phnom Penh as temporary workers for the wet season.

The subsistence lifestyle does not provide much opportunity to save or accumulate assets. This style of living does not include opportunity to plan for the future. Most rural households are living day-to-day in a hand-to-mouth fashion, not thinking about the future. Farmers endeavour to work hard to have a good harvest that will last out the year. They try to diversify their incomes in the off-season when their previous harvest has not carried over. Households send family members to the city, both permanently and temporarily, to try to earn money and send remittances back. Many send their daughters to work in garment factories. In one family, the mother moved to the city to earn money to send back to her children who were still living with other family in the village. They try, in any fashion, to make enough to get by. On four occasions the interviewees endorsed education and hard work as the way to get by and to become an entrepreneur. Two women, upon realizing the growing scarcity of firewood, took their

own initiative to plant their own trees as fenceposts to later use as firewood. One village maintained a village buffer area, so that if a family's harvest were ruined they would have some additional land to live off.

Migration is a major method of bridging the gap between each year's harvests. About three quarters of the interview participants confirmed that there is a lot of migration to Phnom Penh or other urban areas, and about half of those migrations may be temporary while the rest move permanently. Some participants claimed that their village did not have much migration because the villagers mostly do not like the city, therefore would never want to go there. Some villages had a fruit and vegetable wholesaler to buy produce and re-sell in the city. Other villages had unique industries to employ people, such as producing palm sugar.

Interview participants have described the benefits of remittances for the improvement of the villages. Remittances, combined with hard work and good harvests, have improved the living conditions in certain villages. Many of the participants have noticed larger houses being built and people are wearing nicer clothes. Other improvements were in the form of new pump wells, new schools, and new pagodas. Some villages were suffering from several consecutive bad harvests, creating ghost-town situation where much of the village's population had moved away. One interview participant voiced his wonder at how people in the village make enough food to live on. Some participants indicated that vegetables were not growing as well, and there have not been good harvests lately.

4.5.3 Summary of Participants' Views of Rural Life

The research respondents often referred to their village with nostalgia, or had looks of fond remembrance on their faces. They were able to give rich description of the lifestyle, from the crops and vegetables that were grown to the respectability of owning land. The underlying theme to their descriptions, however, was one of continual labour and hard-work. Another theme was the deep connection and reliance that the rural livelihood has with the environment, such as relying on the rain coming at the appropriate times of year in order to replenish soil nutrients and ensure healthy harvests.

Along with this nostalgia of their village comes the potential for skewed perspectives and respondent bias. The description is modified by the passing years since they last lived in their rural village, and their remembrance of only the good things – or the bad. Some of the interview participants had tried to put that life behind them, making it hard to accurately remember the situation of their families there.

4.6 Participant Perceptions of Migration to Phnom Penh

A decision to move is created by a complex myriad of information, tactics, aspirations, and motivations. People's perceptions of the place of destination versus the place of origin are one factor. Many of the participant migrants in my study did not understand what Phnom Penh would be like when they arrived. Some young migrants were excited at the possibility of a new adventure, while others were under the impression that it would be the same as living in the village. It was mostly rumoured that it was easy to find work or to run a business in Phnom Penh, especially if you moved to the city already with a skilled trade. This latter aspect remained true – participants with

sewing or mechanical skills were able to find solid employment or to found businesses of their own. For those that did not have the skills, some were able to find work, but it was often unsteady employment with low wages. Some migrants had visited or resided in Phnom Penh before moving there permanently, either as a soldier, for the men, or to sell goods from the nearby countryside, for the women. This gave them an idea of what to expect when they moved.

4.7 Participants' Decisions to Move

On a few of the occasions it was a family-made decision to move to the city, either as a whole family or to send a family member there. Eight of the migrants had moved because of a joint decision between the husband and wife. The joint decisions were made in light of lack of land, debt, and no other opportunities available in the countryside. This was the case with Sarim and her husband, who made a joint decision to move to Phnom Penh. She recounted that “at the time, the harvest had not been very good and the rice had been ruined by flooding. We had lost our capital to grow more, so decided to try living in Phnom Penh.”

Some women (10 participants) made the decision themselves to move to the city. These women moved before they were married, seeking new opportunity in the city. Two women moved with, or to be with, their sisters, and others moved at the suggestion and help of other family members already in the city. It was the husband's decision to move for 17 of the migrations. He was the one to find a job opportunity in the city, and the wife just followed along.

The most commonly stated reasons for migrating to Phnom Penh were to find a job and to start a business. Other reasons can be categorized by the motivations outlined in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6 Reasons for Participants Migrating to Phnom Penh

| Motivation | Reason |
|---------------------|---|
| Rural Vulnerability | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No land in the village for farming • Great debt • Insecurity and danger in the village • Too many children and/or siblings to sustain on the limited land in the village • Lost capital • Lost their land in the village |
| Urban Opportunity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Available work in a skill or trade • Free housing after Pol Pot • Seeking medical help • Wanted a better future for their children • Something new and exciting |
| Other | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soldiers restationed there • Follow their husbands |

4.8 Participants Comparing Their Current Lives to Life in the Village

4.8.1 *Successful Rural-urban Migrants*

Out of forty of the participants, 23 participants thought that their current life is better than what they could have had in the village. They began earning profit with more opportunity for advancement. Some admitted that they would no longer know what to do if they were subsistence farmers, but they did remember the hard physical work in the rural areas. Some were nostalgic and homesick for the quiet village life, but maintained that even though they may be the poorest in Phnom Penh, they are still doing better than those at home in the countryside.

4.8.2 *Unsuccessful Rural-urban Migrants*

Ten participants admitted that their life in the city was worse than in the village. These were the poorest, who were really just trying to get by. One participant had suffered through two evictions by the city, with no remuneration or assistance. There are more children and they have to support other family members as well. Sometimes family members must go to bed with little or no food. These people said that they were too ashamed of their poverty to even consider moving back to their family in the countryside.

4.8.3 *Ambivalent Rural-urban Migrants*

The final 7 participants found their lives to be the same. They still worked for other people, as they would have if they had remained in the countryside. While they do earn more, they certainly do pay more as well. Some are ashamed to be in debt again, but there is nothing to go back to the village for.

4.9 Summary of Findings

One participant, Chrip, describe her main difficulty with the difference between her life in Phnom Penh and her life in the village: “In the village if you lacked something you could always borrow or find it yourself. In the city, you don’t know each other, and you can’t get in touch with each other, therefore you can’t borrow anything.”

Chrip’s description embodies the difference in lifestyle between the two locales. The principle of a subsistence livelihood is to be self-sufficient and to be able to make ends meet from the land available. Participants are nostalgic for that freedom from

money. Yet, they are even still enthralled at the numerous job opportunities, the ability to make monetary income, and the ability to actually purchase physical assets.

Twenty-three of the participants found themselves to be more successful and better off in Phnom Penh than in their respective villages. Yet, many of these individuals were nostalgic for the quietude of the countryside, the fact that you did not have to pay for everything, and they held onto the idea that maybe, if they ever earned enough money, they would buy some property to move back to.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

5.1 Relevance of Human Security and Vulnerability in Cambodia

The highest contributors to human insecurity in rural Cambodia, according to the interview participants, are the inability to secure a livelihood and the very few options available to the rural poor. Cambodia's subsistence farmers have no assets to act as a buffer to disaster, illness, and change (market, economy, productivity, employment rates, etc.). Yet, they require extra support in addition to their subsistence agricultural livelihood. There is a growing population of rural farmers that have limited ability to access land and a lack of means to acquire greater land area. There is an issue of high density of people relative to the amount of agricultural production available from the land. Furthermore, farmers are faced with a degrading environment and declining productivity of the land. These farmers do not have access to improved production systems or higher value crops to improve their agricultural production. Some areas continue to present unsafe living conditions and political insecurity. There is very little accessible medical help, and mostly at high cost.

As discussed in Chapter 2.6, human security promotes a sense of safety for people at home, at work, and in their community. Vulnerability is the difficulty or inability to cope with stresses. The level of vulnerability of an individual or community depends on net assets, both personal (education, training, capacity development, etc.) and physical (housing, land, etc.) (Edralin, 2001a). The interview participants indicated rural vulnerability to include inadequate access to land for the rural poor, few off-farm jobs to

absorb the surplus labour, lower yields in some areas, and little opportunity to accumulate assets.

Cambodia's rural people are vulnerable due to many environmental and geopolitical factors. The annual flooding of the rivers during monsoon season presents potential for 'natural disasters' and the destruction of human infrastructure and crops. Interview participants did not indicate this as being a large factor, as it was part of the annual cycle of rejuvenation of the land. They did indicate that seed were sometimes ruined by late floods after planting, but they dealt with this by borrowing seed to replant, leading to a cycle of borrowing and repayment. Cambodia has great potential for resource development, but lacks the infrastructure and knowledge to intensively increase production. People lack access to land, access to technologies, and secure tenure. These conditions, along with a lack of social spending, have contributed to poverty and further vulnerability in the rural areas.

Human security and vulnerability affect both the rural and the urban poor. In the following section, I will describe how this research relates to the seven elements of human security (as described in Chapter 3.1).

5.1.1 Economic Security

As described previously in this thesis (see Chapter 2.5.2.), approximately 84 percent of Cambodia's population resides in rural areas, with 63 percent depending on subsistence agriculture for their livelihood (Heak, 2000; Ramamurthy *et al.*, 2001). Subsistence level rice harvests tend not to last the entire year, leaving families seeking additional income for these carry-over periods. These activities include other rural

agricultural (e.g. transplanting), non-agricultural employment (e.g. construction), or work in urban areas. Available rural employment is becoming insufficient to provide jobs for the large rural labour force, leading to an increased movement to urban areas both temporarily and more permanently (Tickner, 1996). The limited potential for agricultural production, income generation, and asset accumulation contribute to the economic insecurity in rural Cambodia.

The interview participants living in squatter communities in Phnom Penh have a higher overall level of physical asset accumulation than their rural counterparts (see Chapters 4.4.1 and 4.4.2). This indicates higher access to a supplementary monetary income, allowing for opportunity to invest in physical assets. The urban poor have greater access to training, education, and modern services (albeit at a high cost) to improve their situations. Considering the situation in terms of asset accumulation and access to assets, the urban poor can be considered to be “less poor”, or have greater economic security, than their rural counterparts in that they have access to monetary income and the ability to actually save.

5.1.2 Food Security

In rural Cambodia, food security is related to both rice production levels and the ability to find alternative off-farm foods, such as non-timber forest products, fish and other aquatic animals, and other items traditionally found through common property resources and open-access land. Forest concessions, limited access, and degradation of the resources often limit the ability to use these sources to supplement the diet.

Food security in urban areas is directly linked with economic security, as families are not able to rely as heavily on “free” land resources to extract food –virtually all must be purchased. While there certainly is enough food to buy, job opportunities and income determine basic food consumption.

Interview participants identified various factors that are leading to the increased vulnerability in rural Cambodia. Participants indicated that they are too dependent on the immediate environment, common property, and forest areas for their livelihoods. In many cases families have limited land, or even no land, on which to secure an adequate level of subsistence through agriculture. Decreasing yields and successive bad harvest seasons lead to food insecurity. The buffers to these low yields are the common property areas and resources. Yet, these areas are decreasing through land concessions, deforestation, and plantations. Some people have begun to harvest common property resources for sale at the market, exploiting the resources at unsustainable rates and ruining the opportunity for others to use the resource.

The last resort in dealing with food insecurity, poor harvests, and lack of buffer is to borrow money and/or rice, thereby falling into greater debt. While this is a response to an immediate issue, the individuals’ general human security declines as they delve further into insufficiency and deprivation. This will compromise their ability to meet their basic needs as they endeavour to keep on top of interest payments. As one participant suggested, while facing vulnerability, “you must flee the danger and uncertainty”.

5.1.3 Health security

At most, half of the Cambodian population has access to basic health care. While health care is supposed to be free for the poor, any service requires bribes to the nurse or physician. Many families are reduced to selling physical assets, such as livestock and eventually land, in order to pay for medical services. This might be an outright sale for treatment, or sale of assets may be incurred by increased debt through borrowing money from a moneylender. There is little social security for the poor, and they often have little buffer to cope with illness or emergency. There is often little knowledge or education for preventative health care.

Maintaining a high dependence on agriculture and land-based products does not provide much buffer to disaster or emergency. Interview participants have indicated their anxiety of potential illness, where they would have to sell their land and their few assets in order to pay for medical attention.

5.1.4 Environmental Security

In Cambodia, there are inadequate environmental regulations and limited institutional capacity that pose problems in all sectors related to natural resource development and management. Over-cultivation and/or inappropriate farming techniques contribute to the deterioration of soil quality and productive potential of agricultural land (Tickner, 1996). Deforestation alters the Earth's albedo, which can contribute to changes in a region's microclimate. Logging also increases the potential for flooding and/or drought. It alters run-off and evaporation patterns, increases erosion and siltation, and changes river flow and the riparian conditions for plant and animal life. It also leads to

the reduction of plant and animal species and the ability for wild food acquisition (Tickner, 1996).

Environmental security affects both the rural and the urban poor. Subsistence farmers in rural areas have a close relationship with, and are heavily dependent on, the land and natural resources for their livelihood. They may live on marginalized land with few assets or opportunities to improve their status. They often survive in a hand-to-mouth style, with no ability to plan for the future. Few of the interview participants found the annual flooding to be disastrous, and they recognized the necessity of the floods to replenish soil nutrients. The risk of late-season floods ruining seed is one frequently cited aspect of flooding that contributes to increased debt. In the wet season, families try a variety of means for subsistence. Subsistence farmers begin to look elsewhere, such as common property areas, to meet their basic needs. Increasing natural resource scarcity also limits the livelihoods of rural inhabitants. Those without land are even more dependent on common property resources. Again, these resources are being depleted and access is being restricted for general use.

The situation in rural Cambodia differs greatly from the urban poor living in squatter areas. These urban poor have little direct interaction with the environment and natural resources, but they are often efficient recyclers and re-users, while also consuming less energy and producing less waste. The urban poor interact with their environment in terms of sanitation, water quality, and health risks. Flooding may indeed risk the urban poor more than their rural counterparts, wherein they must evacuate their houses during times of high flood levels. It is at this time that sanitation issues become of greater concern, as the floods inundate areas used as waste receptacles.

5.1.5 Personal Security

While the situation in Cambodia is becoming increasingly safer, there are still instances of threat to personal safety and security. Until recently the Khmer Rouge maintained control over various pockets of the Cambodian countryside. These rebels operated as bandits along trade and travel routes. There continues to be a scattering of landmines throughout the countryside, usurping cultivable land and injuring or killing many victims each year. In urban areas, there continues to be assault and theft impinging on personal safety. Rural inhabitants also worried about the threat of theft of livestock and assets, which would decrease their personal buffer to illness and failed crops. Personal security can also encompass knowing ones' rights and knowing how to make sure that they are maintained. Education is essential for personal security.

5.1.6 Community Security

Again, the situation in Cambodia is continually progressing. While ethnic minorities continue to be discriminated against and those in power often marginalize the poor, the effects of UN initiatives to improve the democratic governance have shown evidence of removing the extreme hierarchical power structures. The decades of conflict in the region have left Cambodians tainted with feelings of vulnerability.

The urban poor are subject to continuous denigration by the hierarchical social structure of Phnom Penh. They are considered as nuisances and a threat to the social fabric of the city. They are not included in planning considerations that directly affect them. They must pay for services provided by the controlling middle and upper classes.

Low education and little skill training limit the potential for rural Cambodians to find decent non-agriculturally related jobs. There are very few such jobs available. Even those who aspire to run a business and diversify their assets and opportunity in rural areas fail because of the poor overall rural economy.

5.1.7 Political Security

Abuse, exploitation, corruption, nepotism, bribery, and intimidation continue to be used by those in power in Cambodia. There is an absence of a military dictatorship, yet this traditional use of power concentration ignores the rights of the poor. This leaves a tenuous situation for both the rural and urban poor, wherein they are at the whims of those in power to direct or change their lives and livelihoods. While the Cambodian government has implemented the use of forest concessions, it is not critical in evaluating how many they give and for what amount of extraction. They do not have strict enforcement against illegal extraction, either. The powerful people have no problems with prohibiting land use, particularly if it is in their own economic interest.

The rural poor are oppressed in terms of having little control over their livelihoods. They are concerned with meeting their basic needs. They have little time, energy, or resources to spend vying for increased privileges. Concurrently, the urban poor are marginalized, both socially and physically, to the edges of society. It should be noted that the urban poor and NGOs are working towards their inclusion and their recognition as a necessary socio-economic community, providing many of the necessary services to the higher classes.

5.1.8 *Summary of Human Security in Cambodia*

There is a wide range of contributing factors to the vulnerability and human insecurity of Cambodia, particularly of the rural inhabitants. The situation of the poor is compromised by internal displacement, poverty, lack of services, and a lack of employment opportunities. Education and health are two essential components supporting human security. Yet, government expenditure in the social sector, as previously mentioned, has been declining.

Population growth is putting pressure on resources for local use and for export. Population growth also increases competition for resources: between villages, between the state and the locals, between illegal users and the locals. Added pressure on the agricultural sector is imposed by consecutive years of drought and flood, such as occurred in 1998 and 1999 (Edralin, 2001b). Food scarcity, land distribution, and resource conservation are critical concerns for the subsistence livelihoods of the bulk of rural inhabitants intricately dependent on the environment and resources. These pressures lead to Cambodia's rural inhabitants making livelihood decisions. If competition over resources and land becomes too great, individuals and families are more likely to seek alternative livelihood strategies, such as migration to cities.

5.2 *Relevance to General Migration Themes*

Economics and the quest for money to meet specific basic needs are a primary motivation of rural-urban migration in Cambodia. As I found in my interviews, the rural lifestyle is not providing enough return for work – it is not providing enough subsistence earnings through agricultural production, nor is it providing enough off-farm

opportunities to earn money to make up for the paucity of subsistence earnings.

Therefore, many rural inhabitants are looking to another medium of lifestyle and livelihood.

The neo-classical paradigm¹⁰ suggests that migration occurs in response to interregional differences in social and economic opportunities, instigating movement from labour-rich, capital-scarce areas to labour-scarce, capital-rich areas. In Cambodia, a labour surplus is maintained in Phnom Penh. Yet, people continue to migrate into the city, despite the surplus – despite the uncertainty of employment. This suggests the presence of other motivations for migration. By taking a vulnerability perspective, these other motivations can be explored using both biophysical and socio-economic factors.

Certain geographical areas within Cambodia's borders are more endowed with resources than others. In the predominant rice-growing area of Cambodia, in the low-lying plains of the Mekong River and Tonle Sap Lake, an increase of population densities has begun impacting the land and overextending the resources. "Population pressure" in these areas is not only due to natural population increase, but also pressure inflicted by the land use systems in place, current land tenure, labour surplus, consumption and production patterns, and general rural poverty and dependence on the land and natural resources. These factors all stimulate out-migration to urban centres.

The vague boundary between forced- and free- migration is conveyed in the Cambodian context. Ecological and biophysical factors encourage and motivate rural Cambodians to move. In some cases individuals are left with little option but to move in the face of natural disaster, flooding, drought, continued agricultural stress, and deprivation. Combined with environmental motivations are the social and cultural

¹⁰ See section 2.4. for more details on the neo-classical paradigm.

dictates of who is able to control land and natural resources, and who is able to benefit from resource exploitation. The structuralist perspective of migration indicates the lack of choice of rural Cambodians in light of power structures, and unequal distribution of wealth and opportunities.

The enticing “bright lights” and excitement of the city is real for rural youth. The city is made even more alluring when there are relatives already at the destination. Family members and friends that have migrated to the city previously set a precedent for others to follow. This network base can provide shelter and expertise to life in the city as well as making the move psychologically easier.

Rural-urban migrants with little to no job skill training and little capital find themselves living in squatter areas and working low-paying jobs. There is little social support or infrastructure for these urban poor. They have little opportunity to increase their social standing because of persisting unemployment and underemployment of low-skill jobs, which can be intensified by the continuous influx of migrants increasing the labour surplus.

Despite Phnom Penh’s basic inability to deal with the burden of the urban poor, the city does provide some improved opportunity for new migrants. This minute improvement and social progression relative to migrants’ rural counterparts carries a great deal of weight.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Meeting the Objectives

In section 1.3 four research objectives were laid out in order to answer the question of *how rural-urban migration may be an adaptive mechanism to human insecurity*. Each objective will be addressed and discussed here.

6.1.1 *What are the migration trends to squatter settlements in Phnom Penh?*

Research participants originated from eleven provinces (listed in descending order of frequency): Prey Veng, Kampong Cham, Svey Rieng, Takeo, Kandal, Kampong Thom, Kampot, Koh Kong, Kampong Speu, Kampong Som, and Banteay Chey. With the exception of Koh Kong, migrants moved from areas of relatively high population density¹¹ in the south-east, prime rice-growing region of Cambodia. Koh Kong province is situated to the west of Phnom Penh in a more mountainous area of Cambodia. Unlike Kampong Som province that gets its high population from tourism and the seaport at Sihanoukville, Koh Kong has little economic or agricultural opportunity to support a high population.

This research has documented three migration waves consistent with historical occurrences. As outlined in Chapter 4 (section 4.1.3), these three historical trends are: the fall of Pol Pot in 1979, the end of the Vietnamese occupation in 1989, and in recent years since the late 1990s. The first two historical epochs indicate periods of intense change in Cambodia. The fall of Pol Pot marked the end of intense dictatorship and genocide, leaving a population floundering for familial support and livelihood. The end of the

¹¹ See Section 2.5.1 Figure 2 for population density by province.

Vietnamese occupation brought major restructuring to land tenure and production patterns. The third period has been a result of land fragmentation and lack of opportunity in rural Cambodia.

6.1.2 *What was the decision-making process of rural-urban migrants?*

Many of the participants were unaware of what the city was like before they moved; their only knowledge of Phnom Penh was based on stories and tales that had returned to the village (see sections 4.1.5 and 4.1.6). People were drawn by the lure of employment, but not clearly understanding the other implications of city life. Veng describes the lure of employment: “Money is the only reason – what else is there other than money?”

There was diversity in the responses of who made the decision to migrate to Phnom Penh. Those families that made a joint decision to migrate to the city based their decisions on lack of opportunity in the countryside; they had tried their hands at a rural livelihood, but had run into debt and lack of resources. The women that had made their own decision to move to the city moved before marriage, when they had no personal ties in the village. This indicates that they could foresee the dearth of opportunity available to them if they chose to remain in the countryside. In most instances it was the man in the family who made the decision to move to Phnom Penh. Twelve of these instances were described first-hand by male participants; the remaining five cases were women indicating that it was their husband’s decision to move the family because of his own job opportunity in the city.

Family in Phnom Penh, the migration destination, was an important factor in making the transition to the city. Job offers and pre-arranged accommodation by the employer were other lures in the decision to move to the capital. The transition from the countryside was made much easier by having secured these two important aspects to successful life in the city.

6.1.3 What were the differences between rural and urban qualities of life?

The participants gave a variety of descriptions of their lives in the city versus their lives in the village (see section 4.1.7 for a comparison between the participants' lives now, in the city, and before, in the village). The people's perspectives can be used to describe their feelings of success in migrating to the city. Those that have felt that they have benefited from their move are more likely to speak of the benefits of living in the city and the pitfalls of rural life, or they may speak nostalgically of their past life in the countryside but with a surety of wanting to stay in the city. One participant laughed when she was asked how the city compared with the village life; she answered that "it depended on who you asked – people always think that their locale is easier."

There were two perspectives on each locale. These responses are indicative of the successfulness of adapting to city life, thereby the success of rural-urban migration. These four categories summarize the different perspectives of the interview participants; they are a combination of different interviewees' voices:

Life in the village: perspective A

Life in the village is very difficult. If you do not have land, you have no chance of getting by. You must work for others, but you receive very little money. It is hard to earn money in any fashion. The countryside is insecure, with theft occurring, leading to loss of assets. The rural lifestyle is also boring – you have a routine, and you repeat that routine day in and day out.

Life in the village: perspective B

People are happier in the village. It is safe and quiet. You can get by having no money because there will always be rice to eat, and you do not have to pay for everything. You can grow things to support the family, and you can gather and collect additional things you need. You can always borrow from your neighbours if there is something that you lack.

Life in Phnom Penh: perspective A

Phnom Penh is crowded, dirty and stinky. There are more problems and dangers. The people are ruthless and they will take advantage of you. It is hard work with little money, yet you often have to pay rent and buy everything. It is just a waiting game to become secure while you worry about money. It is still difficult to have a business. Even though you can earn lots, it is still living hand-to-mouth.

Life in Phnom Penh: perspective B

It is a better, safer, and more secure place to live. People are richer and happier, and it is easy to enjoy the comforts of the city life. There are more jobs and opportunities, and is far easier to run a business. If you have skills it is very easy to find work. There is no physical energy required to earn money, and there is a diversity of jobs that you would not find in the village. Children's futures are much better in the city.

The comparison of rural versus urban poor generally seems to be one of apples and oranges. Each group is faced with different issues of marginalization, oppression, and limitations to meeting basic needs. It is a problematic relationship, in light of many rural inhabitants' desires to reach the city. The city remains glorified by excitement and opportunity. Yet, many do not appreciate the negative aspects of the city before they make the move. For many, however, their move to Phnom Penh presented a new and successful way of life (see Chapter 4.7).

6.1.4 Migration as a response to vulnerability in rural Cambodia

Vulnerability in rural Cambodia can be summarized by the powerlessness of individuals to improve their own lives. Environmental change, in a broad sense, impacts the land and the livelihoods of the people depending directly on the land's natural resources. Higher population densities in some rural areas are increasing the strain on land already under cultivation. Rural households are faced with the choice of fragmenting their already small amount of land to give to their off-spring, or to force newly married couples off on their own because of the inability to increase their land holding size. This

is an economically constructed version of land pressure. Land is still available for use, but it is beyond the means of most subsistence farmers. Sengoung, who moved from Kandal province in 1996, attested to this inability to access the land by saying that once the land was allocated in 1989:

If you have extra money, then there is additional land that could be bought, but there is no room to just expand onto. Children are allocated land by their parents, but the land portions are very small, and if they were divided they would be too small to support the family.

Rural life is led by a hand-to-mouth existence. Those living in the countryside are vulnerable to crisis and change because of the limited capacity to adapt and alleviate the changes. Participants indicated various ways to respond to rural vulnerability. The most frequently indicated response is permanent migration to an urban area. In doing so, individuals or households may sell their land, rent out their land, or leave it for other family members to benefit from larger land area. The migrants would also help out by sending remittances if possible.

Migration, therefore, is identified to be a response to vulnerability and lack of opportunity in the countryside, followed by the suggestion that rural inhabitants must work harder to succeed at farming if they decide to remain in their communities. This also includes working for others to top up their income levels. Gathering and fishing at higher levels are used to increase food security, while also generating additional income from sales at the market. Participants suggested that in order to get by, rural inhabitants must diversify their income and food sources in order to invest in other things to create a buffer to crisis.

6.2 Applicability of the Human Security and Vulnerability Framework

It is pertinent to address how applicable the human security and vulnerability framework was, when applied to rural-urban migration in Cambodia. The neo-classical model of migration implies that people move from areas that are labour-rich, capital scarce to areas that are labour-scarce, capital rich. Movement to Phnom Penh occurs where people are moving TOWARDS a labour-rich area, indicating that there are other driving forces prompting rural-urban migration. The economic incentives of these rural-urban migrants were unclear in light of movement to Phnom Penh contrary to the economic-based neo-classical model.

Cambodia is an extreme example of vulnerability, where it has been subject to decades of warfare, years of communist dictatorship by Pol Pot, massive genocide of two million people, the evacuation of the cities, and the relocation of the whole population about the countryside. So it was appropriate to use this framework to discuss these issues of vulnerability in Cambodia, contributing to the motivation to migrate. This framework has the advantage of integrating a wide variety of different factors to describe migration.

While the neo-classical model is simplistic in measuring economic differences in the location of origin to that of destination, the human security and vulnerability framework attempts to measure the complex notion of varying levels of vulnerability. In practice, elements of vulnerability can be closely ascribed to the characteristics of poverty. This is a basic analysis of vulnerability, but is one that is relatively easy to assess. Yet, this framework is lacking in the ability to adequately describe the process of movement from areas of higher vulnerability to areas of lower vulnerability, or from differing contexts of vulnerability. It is inherently difficult to measure vulnerability, and

for the purposes of my research, it was difficult to compare the vulnerability of my research participants from their locations of origin to their destination locations and across a period of time.

The human security and vulnerability framework does not include the dissemination of information about life in the city. Many of the interview participants conceded that they had an idealized view of city life prior to moving. Mythologized success stories would have made their way to the villages by return migrants or other successful migrants that had the opportunity to visit their village again. This use of information as a deciding factor for migration lies outside of the human security and vulnerability framework.

The ancient mandala polity of Southeast Asia, which describes how people were organized by political structures rather than by spatial boundaries, supports an idea that people move towards the central king as the centre of power and therefore security. This suggests an historic trend in Khmer culture to gravitate towards the leadership and power centre of Cambodia, now located in Phnom Penh. This aspect of historical influence and culture lies beyond the analysis of the human security and vulnerability framework. In addition to this, other aspects of personal aspiration and ambition would also lie outside the realm of the framework.

6.3 Possible Extensions of this Research

Due to the multidimensional nature of migration, there were a number of aspects of rural-urban migration that were left unexplored throughout the course of this research. The most apparent avenue for further research is to investigate why those people in the rural areas have stayed there – what their decision process was, why they ultimately have chosen to stay in the countryside, and how they have fared after making the decision to stay. A comparison could be made between the two outcomes, thereby revealing other aspects involved in the decision-making process involved with human migration in Cambodia. By interviewing those living in the countryside, a more comprehensive description of the differences in the qualities of life can also be achieved.

Another potential avenue for future research involves documenting the trends of seasonal migration. The participants of this research were permanent migrants to Phnom Penh. Seasonal migration, according to the 1998 Census, represents a higher proportion of human movement around Cambodia. These trends are difficult to document definitively, because of the scope of movement, the very transient nature of seasonal migration, and their existence within the informal sector in the urban areas.

In addition to the future migration-related research potentials, there are also opportunities to research the underlying forces working that are prompting migratory behaviour. For example, these processes include underemployment in rural areas, diminishing access to common property resources, and the inability for individuals or families to secure larger land holdings to be able to maintain a subsistence level of production. These are supported by oppression and lack of good governance for the bulk of Cambodians.

Finally, urban planning, research, and development need to be explored. The reality is that rural-urban migration to Phnom Penh is occurring, and the migrants are moving to squatter and informal settlement areas of the city. The Municipality of Phnom Penh will need to recognize that their “problem” of these squatter settlements is not going to disappear, therefore they will need to embrace the issue and find ways to mitigate the presence of the urban poor. This includes housing, services, and infrastructure development, as well as the creation of more low-skill employment opportunities. This will require a great amount of support, for the physical developments of necessary services and also for the development for an appropriate political and social atmosphere to include the urban poor in the modern Phnom Penh.

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APPENDIX ONE

INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

This survey is designed to better understand the motives of individuals who have moved to Phnom Penh from rural communities. It will provide a comparison of the quality of life in the city to that of the individual's rural village, from the migrant's perspective.

PART 1. INFORMATION ON THE PARTICIPANT

1. Date of Interview: _____
2. Location of interview: _____
3. Name of Participant: _____
4. Name of Home Village: _____
5. District or Commune: _____ 6. Province: _____
7. Sex: _____ 8. Age: _____
9. Education level: _____
10. Marital Status: _____ 11. Children? **Yes / No**

PART 2. LIFE IN PHNOM PENH

12. a. When did you move to Phnom Penh? _____
b. Do you have other family in Phnom Penh? _____
13. How many people live in your household? _____
14. Who is the head of the household? _____
(Please circle appropriate answer)
15. Did you know where you would live before arriving in Phnom Penh? **Yes / No**
a. **If yes**, are you still living in the same location? _____
b. **If no**, how did you find somewhere to live? _____
16. Do you pay rent? **Yes / No**
17. **If yes**, how much does your rent cost? _____
a. What does the rent include? _____
18. How much do you spend on: Food? _____
Clothes? _____
19. Is there anything else that you need to spend money on? _____

| 20. Do you have a... (Please indicate appropriate answer) | |
|---|--|
| Radio | |
| Television | |
| Refrigerator | |
| Telephone | |
| Motor cycle | |
| Bicycle | |
| Sewing Machine | |
| Other: _____ | |

21. What types of energy do you use (cost): to cook? _____
for light? _____
other? _____

| 22. Water and Sanitation (Please indicate appropriate answer) | | |
|---|------------------|--|
| Source of drinking water: | River/lake water | |
| | Well water | |
| | Piped water | |
| | Bottled water | |
| | Rain water | |
| | Others (specify) | |

23. What do you do with any garbage or other waste?

Information About Your Job

24. How much did your family earn yesterday? Is this profit? How much do you pay in taxes or fees in a day?

25. How does your family earn money?

26. How long did it take for you to find your current work? _____

27. How many days do you work per week? _____

28. How long have you been working at this job? _____

29. How many hours do you work on a normal shift? _____

30. Have you had other jobs while living in Phnom Penh? List and describe reasons for changing jobs.

31. Do you send money back to your family in your village?

(Please circle appropriate answer)

Yes / No

a. **If yes**, how much do you try to send? _____

How often? _____

b. **If no**, why not? _____

c. (if applicable) Does anyone send money back to your family in village? How much?

Illness

32. Where do you go to get medical help?

(Please indicate which ones were applicable)

| | | | |
|------------------------------|--|--------------------|--|
| None | | NGO clinic | |
| Clinic within community | | Private clinic | |
| Clinic in other community | | Traditional healer | |
| Government district hospital | | Others: _____ | |

PART 3: LIFE IN THE VILLAGE

33. How many people live in your household in the village? _____

34. Who is the head of the household? _____

35. Does your family pay rent on their house? Yes / No

a. **If yes**, how much does their rent cost? _____

What does rent include? _____

36. How much do they spend on: Food? _____

Clothes? _____

Other:? _____

| 37. Do they have a... (Please indicate appropriate answer) | |
|--|--|
| Radio | |
| Television | |
| Telephone | |
| Motor cycle | |
| Bicycle | |
| Sewing Machine | |

38. What types of energy do they use (cost): to cook? _____
 for light? _____
 other? _____

| 39. Water and Sanitation (Please indicate appropriate answer) | | |
|---|------------------|--|
| Source of drinking water: | River/lake water | |
| | Well water | |
| | Piped water | |
| | Bottled water | |
| | Rain water | |
| | Others (specify) | |

40. What does your family do with any garbage or other waste?

Illness

41. Where does your family go to get medical help?
 (Please indicate which ones were applicable)

| | | | |
|------------------------------|--|--------------------|--|
| None | | NGO clinic | |
| Clinic within village | | Private clinic | |
| Clinic in other village | | Traditional healer | |
| Government district hospital | | Others: _____ | |

Education

42. Is there a school located in your village? **YES/NO** (please circle correct answer)

a. If no, where is the closest school? _____

43. a. What grades did the school teach? _____

b. After that, where do they go to school? _____

Information about Resources

44. What are the main sources of income for your family in their village? (agriculture, government, cash crop, trading, herding livestock, making crafts....) What other activities does your family do for income?

45. List the main foods that your family uses (vegetable garden, chickens...). Where do you collect these items? Do you collect other items from the forest or other areas? What do you collect?

46. Has the amount of land your family has used for agriculture

REDUCED/STAYED THE SAME/ INCREASED in the past years? (please circle appropriate answer)

Is there room to expand the plots of land being used if necessary? Why or why not?

47. How is land allocated to children?
 48. Where do people collect firewood and other building materials? Who has access to this land?

Changes in the Environment and Natural Resources

49. Does your village experience flooding? _____
 50. Describe how your family deals with floods. How does your family collect enough food if crops are ruined by flooding or too little rain? What else does your family do to make money or get enough money at this time? (ie. Some go to city, find other jobs...)
 51. How does your family plan for enough food in the future? Have they started using different resources than before? How did they learn to use these new resources?
 52. Do many people from your village move to Phnom Penh or other areas to find work?
 53. Describe any other changes in your village that you have noticed.

Comparison of Life in Phnom Penh

54. Describe why you decided to move to the city. Whose decision was it?
 55. Describe what you thought of Phnom Penh before you moved here. What did you think it would be like?
 56. Describe how living in Phnom Penh compares with living in your village.
 - Living conditions, Opportunity for employment and income
 57. Describe how you feel about your village now that you have moved away.
 58. Do you feel your life is better or worse now?
 59. Do you think that you will move back to your village? **Yes/ No/ Maybe**
 - a. **If yes**, describe the reasons why you would move back to your village.
 - b. **If no**, describe the reasons why you would not move back to your village. Do you think you will stay in Phnom Penh, or move to different city?
 - c. **If maybe**, describe the reasons why you are not sure.
 60. Are there changes that you would like to see in your village that would make it better to move back to? Describe.