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# Phnom Penh's Urban Poor: Livelihoods, housing and the failure of Cambodian development

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Thesis submitted for the degree of PhD

2016

Department of Development Studies

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## **Abstract**

Cambodia is a predominantly rural country with only 20 per cent of the population (3.2 million), living in urban areas. Of this 3.2 million however, over 50 per cent live in overcrowded, poorly constructed dwellings lacking basic infrastructure such as running water, electricity or sanitation. However due to the dominance of aid and assistance to rural areas and the expectation that those living in urban areas share in the wealth of the city, urban poverty is overlooked in Cambodia. This belief is reinforced as agricultural produce has been overtaken by the services and manufacturing industries in the Cambodian economy; industries concentrated in urban areas. This thesis addresses the deficit in urban poverty research by using a political economy perspective to investigate livelihoods and housing concerns of the urban poor, in the context of neoliberal development. Research undertaken for this thesis was guided by two research questions; first, *who are the urban poor and what resources do they rely upon?* And second, *does development policy address the needs of the urban poor?* Doctoral fieldwork was conducted in Phnom Penh 2011-2012. Key informant interviews with *tuktuk drivers* and stakeholders were conducted alongside life history interviews and a household survey in three urban poor settlements facing forced eviction and four resettlement sites. Assumptions concerning the informal economy underpinning urban poverty and urban poor livelihoods are deconstructed. Following mixed methods analysis; a more nuanced understanding of urban poor livelihoods is argued for and reinforced through two new terms, the *urban poor economy* and *horizontal regulation*. It is proposed that policy makers have failed to recognise the reality of urban poverty in which the relationship between where one lives and where one works is of the utmost importance. This failure exposes development plans as little more than rhetoric to attract foreign aid and investment. Combined with the exploitation of the urban poor by corrupt government officials more concerned with the accumulation of personal wealth, urban poverty alleviation efforts are undermined from their conception through to implementation.

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## Acronyms and Abbreviations

<b>ADB</b>	Asian Development Bank
<b>BABC</b>	Bridges Across Borders Cambodia
<b>BFC</b>	Better Factories Cambodia
<b>CDRI</b>	Cambodia Development Resource Institute
<b>CMDP</b>	Community Managed Development Project
<b>CNRP</b>	Cambodia National Rescue Party
<b>CPK</b>	Communist Party of Kampuchea
<b>CPP</b>	Cambodian People's Party
<b>CVCD</b>	Cambodian Volunteers for Community Development
<b>DIDR</b>	Development-Induced Displacement and Resettlement
<b>ECCC</b>	Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia
<b>EDC</b>	Electricité du Cambodge
<b>FUNCINPEC</b>	French acronym for National United Front for an Independent, Neutral, Peaceful and Cooperative Cambodia
<b>HRW</b>	Human Rights Watch
<b>ICLS</b>	International Conference of Labour Statisticians
<b>ILO</b>	International Labour Organisation
<b>ISCO</b>	International Standard Classification of Occupations
<b>JICA</b>	Japanese International Co-operation Agency
<b>KPRP</b>	Kampuchean People's Revolutionary Party
<b>KR</b>	Khmer Rouge
<b>LMAP</b>	Land Management and Administration Project
<b>MPP</b>	Municipality of Phnom Penh
<b>NFE</b>	Non-formal education
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organisation
<b>NPRD</b>	National Programme to Rehabilitate and Develop Cambodia
<b>NSDP</b>	National Strategic Development Plan
<b>NSPS</b>	National Social Protection Strategy
<b>OHCHR</b>	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
<b>PRK</b>	People's Republic of Kampuchea
<b>PIP</b>	Public Investment Programme
<b>PPDS</b>	Phnom Penh Development Strategy
<b>PPWSA</b>	Phnom Penh Water Supply Authority
<b>RGC</b>	Royal Government of Cambodia
<b>RRP</b>	Railway Rehabilitation Project
<b>SEDP</b>	Socio-Economic Development Plan
<b>STT</b>	Sahmakum Teang Tnaut
<b>UNAKRT</b>	United Nations Assistance to the Khmer Rouge Trials
<b>UNAMIC</b>	United Nations Advance Mission in Cambodia
<b>UNTAC</b>	United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia

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អរគុណច្រើនអ្នកទាំងអស់គ្នា

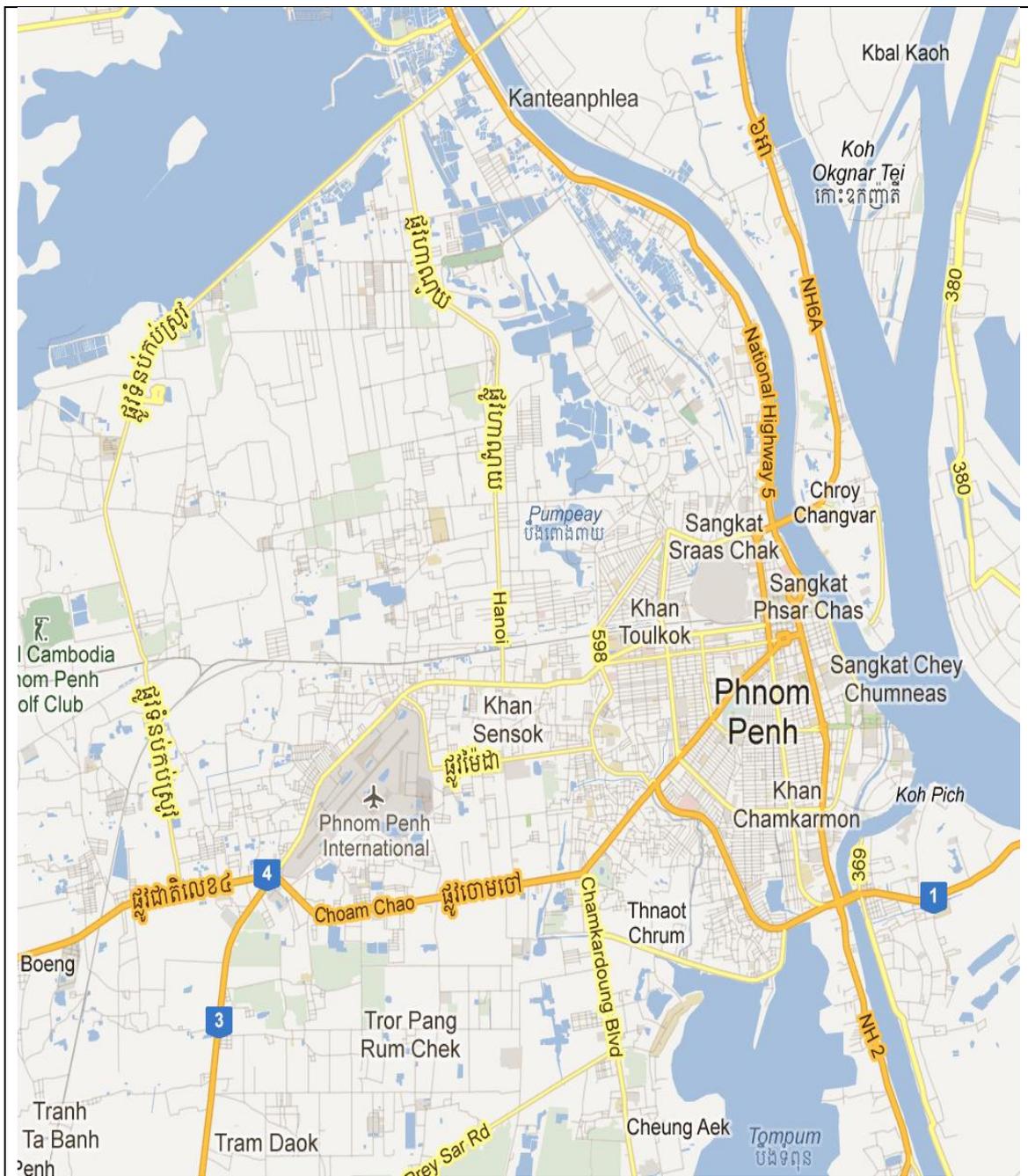
For my daughter, Niamh

ដំរីជល់គ្នា ងាប់ស្រមោច

When elephants fight, ants die



Map 1. Map of Cambodia (UN, 2005)



**Map 2.** Map of Phnom Penh (Google, 2014)

## Introduction

This thesis identifies the specific characteristics of urban poverty and addresses the failures of development efforts to alleviate poverty in Phnom Penh, Cambodia from a political economy perspective. The thesis is structured around two broad research questions. First, who are the urban poor and what resources and networks do they rely upon? Second, how does existing development policy address the needs of the urban poor? Two central chapters, each focusing on one of these research questions, present an analysis of seven case study sites of residents facing eviction and in resettlement sites. Within these chapters, two main themes of livelihoods and housing are identified and investigated. Broader contextual research including interviews with *tuktuk* (motorised rickshaw) and *motodop* (motorbike taxi) drivers and local NGOs will be included where appropriate to add further evidence and to help triangulate findings from the primary interviews. Assumptions held regarding urban poverty, development and poverty alleviation policy will be challenged through empirical analysis of these case study sites and interviews.

During the process of this research the author found it important to explain and at times justify her presence in urban poor areas of Phnom Penh, areas normally avoided by Cambodians and certainly not visited by foreigners. The author, a white British female, was often met with suspicion and asked to explain her presence and present official personal identification documents to those she encountered, particularly to local village chiefs and settlement representatives. This became an important process of validation as it either enabled or denied her access to people, settlements and information. The author explained that she was not there to influence people, monitor them for the government,

or provide financial or developmental assistance; rather that she was a student and was there to speak to people and to listen. Through this shift in the relationship-dynamic, the emphasis was placed not the questions asked, but the responses given by respondents, as people were free to talk about what was important to them, interesting or worrying. This also allowed people to ask questions of the author, to better understand her circumstances. Questions commonly began with interest into her marital status, age and income. Because of the importance of this process during fieldwork, the author has included this excerpt from her fieldwork diary, explaining how she found herself conducting research on urban poverty in Phnom Penh:

*I first came to Cambodia in 2010 for an internship with the United Nations Assistance to the Khmer Rouge Trials' (UNAKRT) Victims Support Section. I had recently completed my Masters in Human Rights and was keen to put into practice all that I had learned. However, my daily interaction with members of the public threw the historic atrocity at the centre of millions of dollars of international aid and support into stark relief with another, heightening atrocity: widespread poverty and deepening inequality in contemporary Cambodia. Millions of dollars are being spent to bring a handful of aged individuals to justice whilst millions of people struggle daily to make ends meet. Having to justify the expense of the Tribunal against building roads and houses, educating children, supporting farmers or providing healthcare to the sick was an impossible task. I decided to volunteer alongside my internship with a local non-government organisation (NGO), Cambodian Volunteers for Community Development (CVCD), which specialised in providing education to urban poor children. Through CVCD I was introduced to residents who had recently been resettled or were facing eviction as a result of the railway rehabilitation project, supported by AusAID and the Asian Development Bank (ADB). Their circumstances varied greatly. Some communities were living in very poor conditions whilst others had seen great improvements. CVCD focused their efforts largely on supporting these communities through building schools and implementing the Royal Government of Cambodia's non-formal*

*education programme.<sup>1</sup> It was through my experiences with UNAKRT and CVCD, as well as increasing global media coverage of controversial land conflict in the city that I began to formulate a research agenda. The disparity in circumstances of those being resettled made me question the circumstances of their resettlement, and how a city with such visible wealth, could be home to such poverty and inequality.*

The following thesis builds upon this initial introduction to Cambodia and the contemporary inequalities being lived out in Phnom Penh. This chapter begins with an overview of the research agenda and structure, before introducing the theories and theoretical approaches that were used to shape and inform this thesis.

---

<sup>1</sup> The different education programmes organized by the government, formal and non-formal, are explained in detail in section 4.1.ii

## 1.1 Overview

Since 1989, Cambodia has officially received more than \$10bn USD in aid<sup>2</sup> yet was listed 136th out of 187 countries in the Human Development Index in 2014<sup>3</sup> and is considered to be a fragile state by the OECD 2013 Fragile States report. Of the \$1bn USD aid budgeted for in 2015 by the Royal Government of Cambodia, \$174m USD had been allocated to agriculture and rural development, whereas \$19.4m USD had been allocated for urban development and management (Royal Government of Cambodia Development Cooperation Trends Report, 2014). With 80 per cent of the population officially residing in rural areas,<sup>4</sup> the bias in terms of aid and development for rural areas is easily justified. However, problems arise as it is assumed that those living in the cities and urban areas are wealthier. This is reinforced with a shift in the Cambodian economy from an agricultural base to a services and industry base: a shift from a 'rural' economy to an 'urban' one. Whereas agricultural produce traditionally dominated the Cambodian economy, services and industry have risen to overtake agriculture in recent years (see Figure 1). Agricultural produce is still a large portion of the economy accounting for 32.7 per cent, however services have over taken at 41.8 per cent and industry is not far behind at 25.5 per cent.<sup>5</sup> This is due to growth in the tourism industry, the increase in garment factories and extensive construction projects. These lucrative industries are concentrated in urban areas such as Phnom Penh, Siem Reap and Battambang.

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<sup>2</sup> World Bank Data available here:

<http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/DT.ODA.ALLD.CD?page=1>

<sup>3</sup> Human Development Index 2014 List:

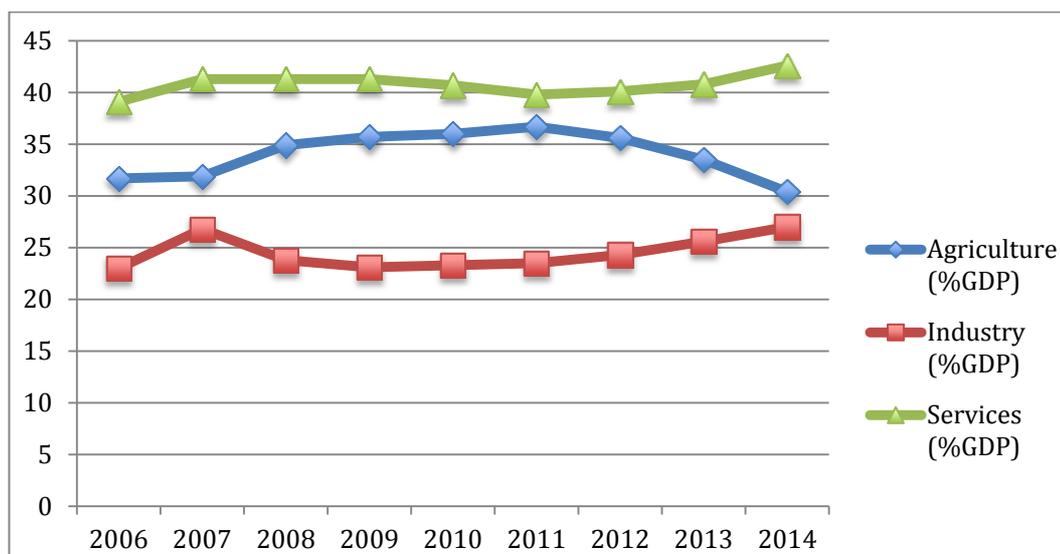
<http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/presscenter/events/2014/july/HDR2014.html>

<sup>4</sup> Urban population 20 per cent <http://kff.org/global-indicator/urban-population/>

<sup>5</sup> US Central Intelligence Agency data available here:

<http://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/cb.html>

**Fig. 1 Cambodian GDP percentage by Sector, 2006-2014**



However, not all urban residents share in the new wealth and opportunities offered with the growth of these industries, as 51 per cent of the Cambodian urban population in 2014 lived in ‘slums’<sup>6</sup> (see Figure 2).

**Fig. 2 Cambodian urban population living in UN definition of slums 1990-2014**

Year	Cambodia total pop.	Cambodia urban pop.	Urban % total pop	% Urban pop in slums	Total slum pop
1990	9,690,107	1,220,953.50	12.60	71.72	1,702,389
2005	13,866,051	2,731,612.00	19.70	78.91	3,461,680
2014	15,408,270	3,235,737	21	51.1	1,650,225

This research aims to understand why development has failed in Cambodia; specifically it’s urban areas. Whereas the majority of aid and scholarship concentrate on rural Cambodia and rural poverty, this research will focus on the urban environment and the lesser understood or researched, urban poor (Fallavier, 2007). This thesis will attempt to bridge the gap between theory and policy and in doing so, contribute to academia but also be of use to urban poverty alleviation and development policy makers.

<sup>6</sup> The term ‘slum’ is used by the UN however the author explains why this is problematic through discussion of urban poor housing in Chapter Four.

The thesis begins with a Cambodian historical background chapter to highlight different pivotal moments in Cambodia's history where political and economic manipulations have influenced the trajectory of development. By identifying different events and themes including historical violence and neglect, the chapter sets the scene for understanding the nature of urban poor life and development-induced displacement. A more focused investigation into Phnom Penh's recent history follows to outline and highlight how the city has evolved over time and what broader challenges the city, and Cambodian civil society, face today.

From this historical context, the methodology and two main chapters of this thesis focus on two guiding research questions:

- 1. Who are the urban poor and what resources, networks and mechanisms do they rely upon?*
- 2. Does existing development policy respond appropriately to urban poor issues? If not, why not and how can this be addressed?*

With these two broad research questions in mind, the methodology undertaken for this research will be outlined in chapter three, emphasising the increased utility and versatility of a mixed methods approach to data collection. Fieldwork for this thesis took place in Phnom Penh from August 2011 to May 2012. This chapter will present the seven case study sites visited, including maps and photographs, to detail why each site was chosen and the varying circumstances between them. Ethical considerations, field assistants and problems faced during fieldwork will also be explained. Through a detailed methodology, the author hopes the reader will be able to contextualise not only the complexity of conducting fieldwork on urban poverty, but also the importance and relevance of a mixed methods approach that enabled the author to be adaptable and

respond to events that arose during fieldwork and the impact these had on this piece of work.

Chapter Four addresses the first of these research questions and begins by outlining demographic and general observations from household data. After these preliminary observations, the first part of this chapter looks in-depth at household income, expenditure and what kind of income generating roles people undertake. Lines of comparison will be drawn from both sets of case study sites, those facing eviction and those in resettlement sites, to illustrate how development-induced resettlement impacts upon every aspect of people's lives, negatively for the most part.

This section will present data on labour opportunities and economic coping practices of the urban poor, disaggregated to challenge and critically assess the informal economy approach to urban labour markets and poverty. Existing informal economy literature will be discussed and the lack of consideration a specific context addressed. The chapter demonstrates the importance of understanding the vulnerability and insecurity of urban poor labour opportunities, and challenges the assumption that increased informality of the workplace is required for development to take root. The term *urban poor economy* is proposed as a more accurate way in which to frame urban poor livelihood strategies and economic coping practices rather than the misleadingly dualistic term informal economy, highlighting the specific challenges of the urban context.

Further, the term *horizontal regulation* presented forward first in the introduction, is detailed and expanded to challenge the notion of the urban poor economy as lacking regulation. Fieldwork uncovered extensive self-created and maintained regulation amongst people with common goods to sell or income generating initiatives. The many

forms of regulation are not always ‘informal’. The definition of this term will be contextualised and developed further using academic literature, qualitative data and explanations offered by the people themselves.

Following the focus on livelihoods and household income, the second part to this chapter focuses on the housing conditions and land ownership status of households. As at the beginning of the chapter, the first section will be dedicated to outlining fieldwork findings relating to the housing situation of those who took part in the household survey. Information will include whether they rent or own their homes, how big their homes are, what structural materials they are made of and what utilities they do or do not have. Comparisons will be again drawn between sites facing eviction and those in resettlement sites, to gauge what the housing needs of the urban poor are.

The issue of insecurity emerges again as all sites included in this research are either facing eviction or are resettlement sites themselves. The violent nature of evictions has been well documented by the media and local NGOs. However it was not just those living in sites in central Phnom Penh marked for development that lived under threat of eviction, but those in government resettlement sites as well. This section will give space to the residents’ experiences of resettlement, both positive and negative.

The arguments for increased private property rights as key to poverty alleviation will be investigated and challenged. Instead an inclusive form of tenure security provision will be advocated for, whilst recognising that for the urban poor, work and proximity to work is their primary concern: in other words, the spatial dimension of the interaction between housing/accommodation and labour markets matters more than is often acknowledged. Chapter Four will conclude with a summary of issues facing urban poor

residents relating to livelihoods and living conditions, to be taken forward into Chapter Five.

Chapter Five will use the findings of Chapter Four to address the second research question, *Does existing development policy respond appropriately to urban poor issues? If not, why not and how can this be addressed?*. This chapter begins with a discussion of neoliberal development ('actually existing' as well as in theory) to set the context of the trajectory taken by Cambodian development. Particularly relevant here will be the historical context set in Chapter Two, and therefore historical references will be made accordingly.

Moving on from this theoretical discussion, relevant development policy documents, domestic laws and international rights will be investigated. This will begin with the Cambodian National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP) and the Phnom Penh Development Strategy (PPDS) in more general terms and how these relate to livelihood and housing issues of the urban poor. Following this, Cambodian labour law and the role of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) will be examined, drawing on the findings of the household survey and interviews. The different Cambodian land laws and the right to adequate housing will be addressed and the government's implementation of these laws and rights analysed using data from the household surveys.

The analysis of the findings from this research supports a conclusion that developmental efforts thus far have failed to alleviate poverty and have instead condemned the lives of urban poor residents to subsistence living. Development initiatives aimed at improving the lives of the urban poor failed at their conception to recognise and understand the

lives, jobs and coping mechanisms of the urban poor. The intrinsic relationship between where one works and where one lives is entirely overlooked. This has been facilitated through a failure to tailor development programmes to the urban environment in favour of applying rural development policy to urban space.

The research suggests that insecurity is a defining feature of urban poverty and that it can be used to characterise labour and land issues. If land and labour are to be effective tools of development, this insecurity must be tackled. However, the insecurity of the urban poor is not so much a consequence of their circumstances as a result of deliberate misapplication of policy. Rather than the poor benefitting from development assistance it is in fact the State, individuals and private corporations who benefit from the perpetual mobility of the poor. This perpetual mobility is a result of labour and land insecurity and is compounded by development projects, which serve both to marginalise the poor in terms of land and housing, and depend upon their continued presence as a cheap, casual workforce.

## **1.2 Analytical framework**

This thesis uses a political economy approach to unpack and analyse residents from seven urban case study sites who are either facing eviction or residing in resettlement sites, with the aim of investigating the shortcomings of development efforts aimed at tackling urban poverty. The case studies will be approached from two angles: livelihoods and the informal economy, and land and displacement. Recognising that individually these two perspectives cannot encompass the complexity of urban poverty, this research offers an integrated understanding of livelihoods and housing to address the shortcomings of existing literature and poverty alleviation policy. In doing so, this

research draws out and identifies a recurring theme of insecurity. More commonly seen as distinct, this research begins with the broader themes of livelihoods, housing and insecurity, critically engaging to demonstrate that trying to understand urban poverty is incomplete without an appreciation of all three of these elements.

There is seldom agreement on exact definitions within academia and the case for political economy is no different. Whereas early political economy was defined as ‘the investigation of wealth, production, exchange and distribution’ (Garret Fawcett, 1876) taking into account historical and social contexts, the ‘politics’ was dropped from definitions in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century in favour of emphasising the ‘economic’ (Mosco, 2009, p.21). For example, the 1948 Dictionary of Modern Economics defined political economy as ‘the theory and practice of economic affairs’ (Mosco, 2009, p.23). This heightened emphasis of the ‘economic’ over the ‘political’ is addressed at length in Dimitris Milonakis and Ben Fine’s 2009 publication, *From Political Economy to Economics: Method, the social and the historical in the evolution of economic theory*.

The authors take the reader on a journey through Smith, Ricardo, Mills and Marx, to the emergence and domination of contemporary neoclassical economics and economic imperialism.<sup>7</sup> Milonakis and Fine lament the amnesia of contemporary economists who readily forget the importance of the historical and social in the roots of economics, in favour of advancing only the economic mainstream (Milonakis & Fine, 2009, pp.3-5).

Whilst neoclassical mainstream economists forgo their historical and social roots, other scholars have not followed suit. The aforementioned work by Milonakis and Fine fervently tries to re-socialise economics through revisiting it’s historical and social

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<sup>7</sup> Milonakis and Fine outline the foundations, expansions and schisms within the history of political economy and the emergence of economics as a separate discipline in much more detail than is appropriate here.

science origins. Vincent Mosco in his book titled *The Political Economy of Communication*<sup>8</sup> offers a definition more akin to the political economy approach taken in this research:

*The study of the social relations, particularly the power relations, that mutually constitutes the production, distribution and consumption of resources*  
(Mosco, 2009, p. 24)

This more versatile theoretical political economy perspective, taking into account the social context of production, distribution and consumption of resources, has been used to understand *inter alia* migration, conflict, public policy, health, environmental change, gender and development. Important for this research, political economy acknowledges the relationship between political and economic policy and how each intrinsically affects the other and vice versa, in a particular context. Politics and economics may at the same time have competing and mutually beneficial interests. There is a relationship of power and the dynamics of power. A political economy approach can offer a macro level understanding of how domestic and international economic and political policies interact, as well as the micro level of how an individual operates within their available political space and within their economic opportunities. It is an investigation of this relationship, the power dynamic between politics and economics, taking into account a particular historical and societal context, that can reveal more than simply economics or politics can alone.

Towards understanding the societal and historical context of this research, literature from outside of political economy will be evaluated and incorporated where appropriate including geography, migration, urban planning and human rights scholarship. For

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<sup>8</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> edition published in 1996, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition revised and published in 2009 is referenced here however quote present in 1996 original edition.

example, the historical context of Cambodia cannot be understood without having an appreciation for the mass loss of life, displacement and migration that took place under the Khmer Rouge (KR). Conflict and migration literature are therefore important for understanding contemporary Cambodian society and development, as decades of conflict have left their mark in terms of societal upheaval, massive loss of life, lack of infrastructure and organisations and corrupt judicial and public administrative systems. Migration in particular post KR is significant as a displaced population attempted to resettle and forge new homes, however contemporary migration is also important as bustling urban centres draw in those hoping to find work. At present, urban areas are growing annually at 2.7 per cent, exceeding the population growth of 1.8 per cent (data.un.org).

Similarly, urban planning and development literature will be addressed to highlight and contextualise the different development initiatives taking place in the city. Large scale urban development plans, foreign investment, highly desirable real estate and the process of 'beautification' will be discussed through the urban development lens to complement data analysis. Alan Gilbert has written extensively on urban poverty from a geographical perspective, identifying four key elements of urban life: poverty, employment, gender roles and the urban environment (1994). These general elements he argues are not distinct but interact with each other. Gilbert provides a foundation for scholars interested in the urban environment, however this research offers a political economy perspective that exposes the role of politics and pursuit of economic development that may not be apparent from Gilbert's four key elements. This thesis addresses the complexity of urban poverty through a focus on how development affects the lives of the urban poor by offering an understanding based on the political economy of urban poor life, livelihoods and housing. However, Gilbert's urban specific work

provides a starting point for approaching poverty and development in Cambodia that is otherwise dominated by rural orientated research and policy.

It will also be prudent to incorporate human rights literature when discussing labour rights and land and housing rights. The discourse of human rights is growing in popularity in Cambodia, yet is provocative and at times controversial. This thesis examines how residents and different actors use the human rights discourse to access, engage or criticise the government and each other. Understanding how the obligations and duties associated with human rights are fulfilled (or not) through policy, and practice, as well as the culture surrounding this relationship is important.

Whilst this thesis draws from different bodies of literature, it is understood that these literatures do not necessarily neatly fall into place with one another. However, different academic perspectives are useful at highlighting shortcomings of other literatures, contextualising events, and unpacking decision-making processes. The political economy framework adopted for this thesis is supported by a mixed methods approach to fieldwork. This was chosen as a mixed methods methodology offers the most inclusive methodology for understanding the complexity of urban poverty. It is hoped that by approaching the issues of labour and land from qualitative as well as quantitative perspectives, that a picture as close to reality as possible can be portrayed.

### *1.2.i The political economy of livelihoods*

Deeply rooted in economics and law, the depth and breadth of labour literature can leave a non-economist or non-legal specialist feeling isolated. However, from a political economy perspective, the high, impenetrable walls of labour economics and labour law are broken down to reveal a more accessible understanding of labour relations, labour

markets and livelihoods. This is because political economy allows the researcher to go beyond the restraints of economics, the dichotomies of waged and unwaged, employed or unemployed, and account for other actions, relationships, opportunities and behaviours that are present and contribute to the livelihoods and everyday wellbeing of people. This is particularly the case when trying to understand the informal economy. Neoclassical economists and legal scholars conceptualise the informal economy as unregulated and external to the state. In doing so, and combined with the methodological difficulties of researching something that is unregulated, neoclassical economy and law limit the potential for further investigation of the informal economy.

Traditionally, neoclassical economic theory stresses a single, mutually beneficial labour market. And a neoclassical interpretation of labour treats it the same as any other commodity on the market, broccoli for example. However, not even the adaptations of neo-classical labour economics to account for 'segmented' labour markets can effectively account for the plurality of formal and informal economies, why labour markets of similar characteristics do not result in the same level of production and ultimately, why labour markets have not reached equilibrium and cleared (Cramer, Oya & Sender, 2008). The work of economist Robert M. Solow has tried to add variation and depth to neoclassical economy by characterising labour markets as social institutions and therefore influenced by society, culture and beliefs, which change over time (Solow, 1985, p. 328). J. E. King however argues that labour markets are unlike markets for other commodities as they far more complex. Labour is an abstract concept it is not an item to be exchanged. As such it is not fixed to a physical place and involves relationships between the employer and employee, which do not take place in the commodity market. Other distinguishing characteristics of the labour market are fixed wages, the presence of trade unions, large numbers of employees and fewer employers.

Unlike markets for other commodities, there is a lack of mobility and therefore labour markets are essentially imperfect (King, 1990).

Fine (1998) and more recently Fields (2010) have built upon the theory of labour markets as social institutions, offering a theoretical model of a segmented labour market for analysing economies in developing countries (Fine, 1998; Fields, 2010), though they do this from radically different analytical perspectives, Fine's being rooted in Marxist political economy and Fields' in neo-classical economics. Segmentation of the labour market is defined as the instance whereby those who want jobs and are able to work are not able to find employment and that some jobs are 'better' than others. Fields acknowledges that the labour market does not unilaterally function the same way. However, whilst Fields' work demonstrates attempts by economists to theorise developing economies and labour markets, and makes progress in recognising that the labour market functions differently for different parts of society, his work is based upon an incorrect assumption. Fields supposes that regular wage jobs are more desirable than casual wage jobs and therefore 'everybody' wants a regular waged job. This is not the case. Working for oneself and choosing your own hours, being your own boss, making higher and lower earnings at different times of the year: these factors may not seem desirable to an economist modelling the labour market, but may in fact be highly desirable to many workers.<sup>9</sup>

A core assumption of mainstream economics is that labour, as a commodity, is no different from any other commodity and is therefore exposed to the same theory of

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<sup>9</sup> This research frequently came across individuals who had left regular waged employment for self-employment, despite the insecurities and wage fluctuations attached. This was particularly prevalent in the *tuktuk* drivers interviewed in Phnom Penh. See Chapter Four, section 4.2.ii.

supply and demand (Prasch, 2004). A political economy approach, as opposed to a neoclassical analysis, is able to explain market variation and plurality by identifying labour as distinct from other commodities. Human labour power is as complex, habitual, diverse and variable as the people who sell their labour. Prasch, in his work distinguishing labour from broccoli identifies four key qualities to labour (Figure 3).

<b>Fig. 3 Prasch's four qualities of labour (2004, p. 146)</b>
1) Labour cannot be separated from its providers
2) Labour cannot be stored
3). Labour embodies the quality of self-consciousness
4). Labour Is the one "factor of production" that most of us wish, in the end, to see well compensated

By acknowledging the special characteristics of labour, political economy emphasises the relationship between the capitalist who employs and mobilises the labour power provider. This relationship, although mutually beneficial in some respects, is essentially exploitative, as the capitalist is able to derive surplus value from the labourer (Cramer, 2008, pp. 124-125).

However both political economy and neoclassical economics focus primarily on the formal economy. The formal economy can be defined nationally and internationally as the regulation of resources, production, distribution and consumption of goods within a state or global market. Traditionally scholarship accounts for those outside of this formal economy as unemployed. This dichotomy leads to the assumption that those outside of the formal work force are unproductive and therefore do not contributing to the formal economy. However, this employed/unemployed dichotomy has been challenged by a number of scholars from different disciplines. For example Josef Gugler, a sociologist, in his work 'Overurbanization Reconsidered' (1997) investigates the economic implications of rapid urban growth and the consequences of this for developing countries. In doing so he outlines three kinds of unproductive labour, the

unemployed, underemployed and misemployed. For Gugler, unemployment is problematic, particularly in urban areas, as data relating to urban populations is vastly inaccurate. Equally problematic, he argues, is the definition of 'unemployed' used to collect this data. For example, can we consider those who work regular 35-hour contracts and those who work casual or zero hour contracts on an equal employment status? Regardless of the problems of this definition, Gugler characterises the unemployed as unproductive. Further, he supports the hypothesis put forward by his contemporary Gilbert, a geographer, that unemployment is a luxury of the relatively well off (1994). In other words, those who are truly poor cannot afford to be idle. It follows that those who are unemployed must have means of support, be it savings, reasonable mid-term prospects of employment or a family able to provide for them. However, both Gugler and Gilbert see those who enter employment as entering the formal sector. They view the informal sector as 'beneath' the formal sector and as largely negative.

Underemployment is offered by Gugler to account for the underutilisation of labour: labour that is temporarily idle. This may be due to the seasonal nature of a particular job, such as farming or those employed in tourism, for example. He also includes in his definition conditions whereby labourers are so plentiful that at any given time a percentage are not fully employed, or when solidary groups continue to employ them despite inadequate work quotas rather than release them. Finally, Gugler outlines misemployment: labour that could be considered full time but contributes little to society, e.g. begging or sex workers. Gugler associates 'free riders', those who benefit from the more powerful or economically successful, as misemployed also. He relates this back to Adam Smith's 'mercantilist state' in which the elite, political, religious, intellectual and cultural, are essentially parasitic to the productive classes. Extending

this analysis, he portrays three main activities that make up this form of unemployment; the ‘army of domestics’ who clean and make nice the environment for the elite, the prostitute who is subservient to the demands of the elite and risks exposure to disease and the scavenger who survives on the crumbs fallen from the table of the elite. However Gugler’s jump from Smith’s parasitic intellectual classes to cleaners, prostitutes and beggars is less than convincing in that he turns society upside down. In Smith’s work the elite, essential to society, are parasitic of the productive classes whereas Gugler argues the opposite, that the elite create non-essential employment due to desire, such as the desire for cleanliness, beautification or intimacy. However, this fails to acknowledge the middle classes at all, many of who employ domestic workers without formal contracts. The inclusion of begging with the provision of non-essential services also projects a negative depiction of those ‘misemployed’.

Despite breaking down unemployment into three distinct groups, Gugler (1997) and Gilbert (1994) work upon the assumption that all employment is formal and that anything outside of this is negative and ‘beneath’ that of the formal. Work outside of the formal economy, otherwise known as the informal economy, is the subject of this thesis. This thesis will challenge this conception of the informal economy as ‘beneath’ that of the formal by challenging the assumption that one falls out of the desirable formal economy into the depths of the undesirable informal economy, not by choice, but as a result of disastrous circumstances. This thesis will offer the argument, grounded in empirical evidence that the informal economy is not ‘beneath’ that of the formal or undesirable but is diverse, with its own particular formalities and is in fact highly desirable to some. More than this, informal activities often sustain and are inseparable from, rather than categorically different from or above or below, formal sector activities. That regulation, whilst not from the state or ‘top down’ in nature, exists

within groups with common interests. The context of the informal economy is also of vital importance, as a rural and urban informal economy face different challenges and obstacles.

First, however, we must acknowledge the origins of the term ‘informal economy’, contextualise this term and understand how its meaning has changed over time and continues to adapt. Martha Chen’s 2012 working paper for *Women in Informal Employment Globalizing and Organizing*, succinctly outlines the emergence of the term in the mid- late twentieth century. Chen begins with W. A. Lewis’ Nobel Prize winning 1954 essay, which outlined the assumption of a dualistic society whereby the capitalist (formal) sector would, through the process of modernisation, technology and development, absorb the subsistence (informal) sector (Lewis, 1954). Subsistence in this instance refers to small, traditional trades and casual work. This absorption would take the form of wage increases, leading to a turning point whereby workers are lifted out of subsistence and into the capitalist sector until the subsistence sector no longer existed. This came to be known as the Lewis Turning Point and was founded upon the following assumptions:

- 1. A developing economy has a surplus of unproductive labour in the agricultural sector*
- 2. Workers are attracted to the growing manufacturing sector where higher wages are paid*
- 3. Wages in the manufacturing sector are more or less fixed*
- 4. Entrepreneurs in the manufacturing sector make profit because they charge a price above the fixed wage rate*
- 5. Profits will be reinvested in the business in the form of fixed capital*
- 6. An advanced manufacturing sector suggests that an economy has moved from subsistence to an industrialised economy (Lewis, 1954)*

The Lewis Turning point was a reflection of the widely held belief post-WWII that the correct mix of state building, economic policies, expansion of mass production and assistance could transform the lives of subsistence workers. The declining global importance of agriculture in the 1960s led to increased numbers of surplus agricultural workers migrating to urban areas with the expectation that jobs in the city were more easily accessible, secure and higher paid (Breman, 2004, p. 232). The belief that the shrinking agricultural sector would be followed shortly by an expanding formal sector qualified the presence of an informal reservoir of labour waiting to transition into the formal sector. However, by the late 1960s, there was little sign of such a turning point as poverty and subsistence economies persisted in their existence across the globe (Chen, 2012). The resilience of subsistence economies and small-scale industries, or the failure of the capitalist economy to absorb them, led to a different mode of thinking and a new term, the ‘informal economy’.

The 1970s witnessed the introduction of the concept of the ‘informal economy’ by Keith Hart (1973) and the ILO Kenyan employment and inequality report (1972). In this report, Hart contrasted the ‘informal’ surplus workers in African cities who worked erratically and for low wages, with the ‘formal’ government regulated and more organised modes of employment. Whilst the ‘informal’ had previously been conceptualised as negative, Hart redirected discourse to suggest that informality may have positive, dynamic nuances and in some cases be crucial for transformation (Hart, [thememorybank.co.uk](http://thememorybank.co.uk)).

The term informal economy became popular through the wide distribution and readership of ILO reports, however its popularity has not led to precision in its use. Hart derived his conceptualisation of the informal economy from Weber’s theory of

rationalisation, relating the social organisation of the informal qualitatively with that of the formal. However the term has been used to describe size in terms of scale or numbers of employees, productivity, visibility and wages. What began as a term to describe work outside of the regulated corporate private and public sectors has been used instead as an acronym for deindustrialisation: criminal, black, underground economies etc. (Hart, [thememorybank.co.uk](http://thememorybank.co.uk)).

Whilst Hart's term did not originate as a term for measurement, many have tried to quantify the informal economy. Unofficial and unrecorded, the size of informal economies has been estimated as being anything from less than 10 per cent of a country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), mostly in developed countries, to over 75 per cent in developing countries (Schneider & Enste, 2000; Pil Choi & Thum, 2005; Charmes, 2012). Unpacking the activities of the informal economy is challenging due to the unregulated nature of the economy. Difficult to measure and so difficult to test, the methodological challenges of understanding the informal economy have no doubt contributed to the vague definitions utilised by both academics and practitioners.

Williams and Round (2007) identify the negative, marginalised interpretation of the informal economy and use Derrida's 'binary hierarchy' (1967) to understand the formal/informal dichotomy. Derrida's binary hierarchy essentially identified Western thought as a dualistic mode of thinking creating a binary structure that differentiates the positive attributes of the superordinate from the negative attributes of the subordinate. The outcome of this is an othering process, rather than one whereby similarities and commonalities are identified. As such the formal economy is the positive superordinate, and preferable over the subordinate, the informal economy, leading to the characterisation of the informal economy as negative, residual, discrete and wholly

separate from the formal economy (Derrida, 1967; Williams & Round, 2007). As a consequence the informal economy is considered to be a hindrance to development and economic progress (Castells & Portes, 1989; Gallin, 2001; Lyons & Snoxell, 2005; Williams and Round, 2007). However, Williams and Round limit their analysis of the informal economy to the unregistered paid, production and distribution of good and services. They include economic activity hidden from the state for benefit, tax or labour avoidance but exclude illegal trade such as drug trafficking. They also exclude unpaid exchanges and gift giving. Chapter Four of this thesis challenges the distinction between the formal and the informal sector empirically, highlighting nuances within the informal sector. One element of this is the importance of non-monetary exchanges.

Breman (2004; 1996) identifies three important misconceptions of the informal sector. He begins by identifying that the informal economy is not simply an issue for urban areas, but for rural also (Breman, 1996, p. 3). Describing in detail the flux that workers in both rural and urban environments become caught in as both sectors decline, Breman stresses that it is incorrect to assume that non-agrarian activities are limited to urban environments (Breman, 1996). 80 per cent of the Cambodian population lives in rural areas and therefore rural informal economic activity will undoubtedly influence urban informal economy and vice versa.

However, as Breman argues, the envisaged temporary 'waiting room' between the agricultural and the industrial sectors, in fact has become a permanent state of informal labour. Yet just as the 'waiting room' is not temporary nor are the workers a homogeneous group (Breman, 1996, pp. 6-7). For example, the informal sector may include casual construction workers, cleaners and maids, street sellers, motor-taxi and *tuktuk* drivers, seasonal workers and so forth. The regularity of work, job security,

income levels, hours and conditions vary and differ to such an extent that grouping them for analysis would be too general to be of any substantive use as the reality is far too complex to be considered in terms of this simple duality (Breman, 2004, p. 259). Third, connected to Breman's dismissal of employment duality is his critique of the assumption that self-employment is the principle mode of employment in the informal sector (1996, pp. 8-11). Workers that may appear to be self-employed may in fact be part of a broader organised workforce responsible to an employer who takes a portion of the income generated (Rizzo, 2002; 2011): for example, street sellers who rent their carts or do not produce the goods they sell. At specified intervals the seller will report back to the owner of the cart or producer to deposit a percentage of his or her earnings or a flat fee.

This section has thus far introduced the term informal economy, and explored and critiqued different interpretations of the term. Chapter Four returns to the theme of the informal economy picking up where this introduction ends, to discuss current definitions of informal economy for quantitative analysis and what informal economy means in the Cambodian context. In particular changes in definitions in ILO terminology will be outlined and the ILO's Cambodian 'Decent Work' campaign. However for this thesis the continued ambiguity of informal economy renders the term unfit for purpose. The term too easily implies a formal/informal division when in reality the distinctions are not so clear. Whilst the heterogeneous nature of the informal economy has come to be recognised, the issues remain with the expansion of the term and its continued acronymic use for hidden, criminal or underground economies. Further, this thesis argues the specific nature of livelihood generating practices in urban areas is distinct to that of rural areas and this must be reflected in our terminology. Therefore, this section offers an integrated alternative to the informal/formal dichotomy,

for a term appropriate for the context of this research: An ‘urban poor economy.’ This has been defined as follows:

*The livelihood generating and coping practices of individual residents and households in urban areas living close to a city-specific poverty line.*

The words *livelihood generating and coping practices* have been used to accommodate the variety of means of sustaining a household, to include both financial income but other practices essential to the maintenance of a household such as cleaning, cooking and caring for other young, old or persons with a disability. Therefore, the urban poor economy encapsulates much more than simply the self-employed and can shed the bind of the formal/informal divide instead focusing on livelihood accumulating procedures and customs, contracted or otherwise, undertaken by those living on and below the poverty line in urban areas. *Close to a city specific poverty line* has been selected so as to accommodate the increased living costs experienced in Phnom Penh. A city-specific poverty line is important, as national poverty statistics in a country such as Cambodia, which is 80 per cent rural, do not adequately portray the required income to provide for a family living in the capital and the inflated prices of goods. Living on \$2 USD may be an adequate poverty line in rural areas but as will be discussed in Chapter Four, due to the inflated cost of basic goods in Phnom Penh \$2 USD would simply not cover even the basic needs of an individual. This also accounts for wage variation that may be higher, or lower, in urban areas due to the aforementioned issue of surplus labour.

Individuals and households are used as points of reference for the urban poor economy in recognition of the influx of individual migrants who live and work alone in the city, as well as the complexity of households. The term family has deliberately avoided as groups living together are not necessarily related. However it is true to say the vast majority of Cambodians live with their immediate family or distant relatives, for groups

of couples or individuals to live together, or for adults with no children or grown up children to provide for orphaned children.

Chapter Four will further situate the term *urban poor economy* within the context of academic debate and evidence the term using data collected during fieldwork.

Therefore, hereafter when referring to this research, case studies and context, the term *urban poor economy* will be used. The term informal economy will be used when discussing relevant literature and policy. Furthermore, essential to an understanding of the *urban poor economy* is another term presented by this thesis, that of *horizontal regulation*.

The commonly formal nature of informal economies has been raised as a contradiction in terms. The author conceptualised this formality within the *urban poor economy* after evidence emerged from interviews and household respondents discussing their livelihood generating practices. In many cases respondents described working together to generate collective buying opportunities at lower costs, set agreed prices for goods, agreed geographic areas within which to work and established repercussions for those that broke the agreements. These peer-to-peer regulatory behaviours have been characterised as *horizontal regulation* by the author as regulations are created, reproduced and reinforced by individuals rather than a high authority or employer. *Horizontal regulation* is discussed in more detail in Chapter Four, illustrated and supported with qualitative analysis from interviews.

The discussion of informality in urban poverty is not limited to employment or the work place. Informality is a word commonly used when referring to the living conditions of the urban poor. The next section outlines academic debate and theory relating to urban

poor housing, displacement and resettlement. The intrinsic relationship between where one lives and works is often overlooked due to disengagement between academic disciplines. This thesis attempts to reengage this relationship emphasising the fundamental relationship between where we live and the livelihood generating opportunities available to us, and the importance of this in the context of forced displacement and resettlement in the name of development.

### *1.2.ii The political economy of development induced displacement and resettlement*

Political economy has been chosen again as a framework for understanding development-induced displacement and resettlement (DIDR), as it allows the researcher to approach DIDR from multiple angles, so as to understand the historical context and how this affects the tension between economic and political ambitions for development. A political economy approach facilitates the consideration of local, national and international political and economic agendas and how the interplay between them influences development institutions, organisations, policies and their implementation. On a local level political economy can be useful to expose the resources, networks and relationships both political and economic, but also social, to understand how people live from day to day or in the case of this research, how they cope through the process of DIDR. The cost of the pursuit of development, or the appearance of development, has been born by the poorest, in the context of a city undergoing unprecedented development. Development for many of the urban poor equates to coerced, violent evictions orchestrated by the government and powerful corporations.

DIDR traditionally falls under the scope of anthropologists and sociologists. However, this research uses a political economy lens to investigate the subject of land through a focus on DIDR. Involuntary population displacement has long existed, but it first

became a significant subject of academic research and analysis in the 1960s (Cernea, 1999). Emerging in both developing and developed countries, Herbert Gans' research into development in the Boston area (Gans, 1968) is considered to be a seminal piece, laying the foundation and tools required for further research. DIDR has traditionally been approached through an anthropological or sociological perspective and analysis (Cernea, 1999). Coldon and Scudder's work on the Gwembe in Tonga (Colson, 1971; Scydder, 1962, 1973) and Roy-Burman's work in India for example set the scene for anthropology's dominance of DIDR research throughout the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. DIDR research didn't transcend the academic sphere into the public policy sphere until the late 1970s, after which the World Bank created an operational policy for resettlement (Cernea, 1999; World Bank, OMS, 2.33 1980). This coincided with the rise of major infrastructure projects across the globe including dam construction in China and India. The World Commission on Dams 2000 report estimated that in China alone 10.2million people were displaced 1950-1990. In India, for the same period, an estimated 16-38million people were displaced. A global overall total of displacement is estimated between 40 and 80 million people (WCD, 2000: 104).

On a much smaller scale, when compared to China and India, yet proportionally vast, an estimated 10 per cent of the total population of Phnom Penh were evicted from their homes 1990 – 2009 (LICADHO, 2009). The urban population is a minority in Cambodia, just 20% of the total population in 2005, however it is reported that a further 150,000 Cambodians were at risk of forced eviction in 2009 (Amnesty International, 2009). However, since this report, hundreds of people have been evicted in the city (STT, 2014).

It was during the mid 1990s that the first forced evictions took place in Phnom Penh. However, the turn of the millennium and the now infamous Tonle Bassac fire serve as a watershed for the wave of violent abhorrent evictions. The Tonle Bassac fire left 2,500 families homeless and was widely believed to be an act of arson despite police reports of an accidental fire (Phnom Penh Post, 2008). Since the Tonle Bassac fire in 2001 a number of other evictions have caught the attention of the media: The Borei Keila community eviction by the government in conjunction with the company Phan Imex in 2003. This site has been particularly controversial due to the on-site social land concession included in the contracts signed by Phan Imex. However, at the time of writing the Borei Keila community continues to make the headlines as Phan Imex have built only eight of the ten contracted residential buildings, refused to build the remaining two buildings and have since sold the remaining land. In 2007 the residents of Dey Krahom hit the headlines as video footage of armed military police and construction workers demolishing homes and assaulting residents emerged resulting in an estimated 1,400 displaced persons. Amnesty International recorded the use of water cannons, rubber bullets and electrified batons used by privately hired security forces to force the people out of their homes (Amnesty International, 2012). In 2008 Phnom Penh witnessed the largest urban displacement since the KR with the forced eviction of over 10,000 families in the Boeung Kak Lake area. This development has been by a large margin both in terms of media coverage and numbers displaced, the most controversial forced eviction to have taken place. These cases are discussed in more detail in the history chapter following.

In his 1999 edited volume, 'The Economics of Involuntary Resettlement: Questions and Challenges', Cernea exposes the lack of economic theory and methodology in DIDR, which he regards as essential. Cernea recognises that in practice DIDR does not

improve the livelihoods of resettlers but diminishes them and pushes them further towards and into poverty (Cernea, 1999, p.6). Therefore, having not tailored economic theory to conceptualise DIDR, economists' theories and practices have fallen short and thus failed in improving the lives of the resettlers (Cernea, 1999). Cernea laments the lack of interaction between economics and sociology, which as a sociologist, he attributes to the absence of a tailored economic conceptualisation of DIDR and appropriate methodology. His work identified seven key areas that lacked investigation:

1. *The undervaluation of individual losses.*
2. *The decapitalisation and impoverishment of resettlers.*
3. *The absence or design of safety nets for the resettled.*
4. *The lack of research into patterns of displacements and recovery costs.*
5. *Further information regarding different financing options for resettlement projects is required.*
6. *Inequalities within the resettlement projects requires further research.*
7. *Productivity of resettlers is diminished and not capitalised upon.*

(Cernea, 1999, p. 25)

Since Cernea's 1999 work and the renewed efforts of the World Bank to raise DIDR on the international agenda, calls for increased economic research in theory and in practice have been made (Cernea, 1999; Pearce, 1999). This has materialised in the form of resettlement compensation and remuneration research (Caspary, 2007). Monetary compensation analysis, although important, does not alone address an individual's valuation of their assets and goods, or the many different unfavourable outcomes of resettlement. For example, the focus on resettlers can lead one to neglect the host community's willingness and ability to accommodate the new settlers (Pearce, 1999). The way in which Cernea bridges the divide between theory and practice, sociologists and economics, is through his identification of the 'risks' of DIDR: landlessness; joblessness; homelessness; marginalization; food insecurity; increased morbidity and

mortality; loss of access to common property; social disarticulation (Cernea, 1999, pp. 17-18). He argues that either sociologists or economists alone cannot answer these risks. That, if resettlement, of which the primary aim should be to improve the lives of those being resettled, understanding the risks facing evictees is essential if the process is to meet its objectives of improving their lives.<sup>10</sup>

This research, however, goes beyond analysing the sociological or economic dimension of DIDR. Through a political economy approach, this research will unravel the complex relationships between the urban poor facing resettlement and their lives in the city with the processes of development. In this instance, development concerns the eviction and resettlement of the urban poor. Political economy is a particularly relevant approach, as it can encompass the economic driving forces behind development and simultaneously be used to analyse impact of resettlement on a household level. These economic components are inherently related to the role of politics at an international level that drives development, and therefore influence the interactions of those being evicted and local and municipal authorities. The history and ever-present threat of violence against those who do not comply plays an important part in understanding how the urban poor experience development. It also raises the point that development aimed at assisting the urban poor does not prioritise them and fails to understand their lived circumstances. This is evidenced through the establishment of resettlement sites, which are later abandoned as they lack livelihood generating opportunities and are virtually uninhabitable.

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<sup>10</sup> Amanda Hammar has recently responded to this gap in the literature in her book (2014) 'Displacement Economies in Africa: Paradoxes of Crisis and Creativity'. Hammar's work and is addressed in Chapter Five, section 5.4

DIDR scholarship has in the past theoretically approached urban development, forced eviction and resettlement via a human rights discourse (Hammar, 2013; Leckie & Huggins, 2011) or development policy and management discourse (Dwivedi, 2002; Perera, 2011; Rajagopol, 2000). The human rights discourse emphasises the fulfilment of the human right to adequate housing as outlined in The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Cambodian government's own constitution. This avenue has been advanced by human rights organisations in Cambodia such as Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions, Amnesty International and LICADHO to monitor, organise and mobilise communities against forced evictions (Amnesty, 2008; COHRE, 2009; LICADHO 2009). These organisations advocate for the government to its obligations to provide adequate housing for its population and in legitimate circumstances of eviction, deliver adequate compensation. These obligations are reinforced by Cambodia's ratification of the International Covenant on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights, The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, The Convention on all forms of Discrimination against Women and The Convention on the Rights of a Child.<sup>11</sup>

Further, UN guiding principles on internal displacement (1998) state explicitly the right of individuals to be protected from arbitrary displacement from their home (Principle 6). These principles challenge large-scale development projects that are seen to be unjustifiably incompatible with public interest. Rajagopol (2000) has built upon these international treaties, declarations and principles to identify five legal mechanisms that could be used to challenge the legality of evictions should they be denied:

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<sup>11</sup> See the following for a detailed analysis of the legal obligation for the provision of adequate housing rights under Cambodian domestic and international law: Leckie, 1992; Williams, 2008; Mgbako et al., 2010.

- 1. The right to development and self-determination: Autonomy, culture and land*
- 2. The right to participation at every stage of the development process*
- 3. The right to life, relating to livelihoods and the environment*
- 4. The rights of vulnerable groups, particular indigenous groups and women*
- 5. The right to remedy through appeal and timely resolution.*

This approach may be more pragmatic than simply demanding a right to an adequate home from the government, as it outlines the different stages and processes that should include the consultation and contribution of the home owner. However despite this theoretical breakdown, these processes have yet to be translated into policy (STT, 2012; LICADHO, 2008).

Human rights are internationally recognised and advocated for globally. They involve a relationship of rights, duties and obligations between the state and its population. Yet human rights lack an effective enforcement mechanism (Collingsworth, 2002; Hafner-Burton, 2008; Harris-Short, 2003). Human rights may be violated when a state may be unable to meet the duties placed upon them through the ratification of human rights treaties due to a lack of resources or conflict. Alternatively, a state may violate the human rights of its citizens in targeted deliberate attacks. Whereas the former may be met with foreign assistance, the latter calls for punishment. Punishment for violation of human rights principles requires political will, however there are innumerable cases of human rights violations taking place across the globe that are not addressed, ranging from the criminalisation of homosexuality to the detainment of prisoners of conscience, the abuse of children to the forced displacement of populations.<sup>12</sup> Action to counter human rights abuses require political will from the international community. However,

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<sup>12</sup> These violations of human rights were a sample taken from Amnesty International's 'Issues' section of their website, [www.amnesty.org.uk](http://www.amnesty.org.uk) accessed 23 September 2014.

profitable economic and trade interests, access to resources and political alliances often trump the call to action (Collingwood, 2002; Harris-Short, 2003).

The violent inclinations of the Cambodian government are well documented and do not portray a government concerned with human rights abuses.<sup>13</sup> This failure of human rights discourse to either halt existing evictions or prevent future evictions is further compacted by the failure of the government to award adequate compensation to evictees in any systematic or comprehensive manner. In fact, active international human rights NGOs and have served to exacerbate the strained relationship between state and society,<sup>14</sup> resulted in incitement charges and imprisonment for activists (Phnom Penh Post, 2014).

An alternative to a human rights narrative of housing rights is the developmental policy discourse through which one can conceptualise resettlement as an inherent part of the development process that requires controlled planning, monitoring, execution and evaluation (Dwivedi 2002). Therefore, displacement can be viewed as not in itself undermining development but as a necessary part of the development process (Penz et al., 2011). Interviews with various NGO workers revealed a chasm in their approaches to evictions. The human rights NGOs largely confronted and challenged the RGC for their failures to meet adhere to the Cambodian constitution and international human rights principles. However a separate small group of local NGOs worked with the government to implement their resettlement policy in the hope of applying the policy fairly and effectively. By shifting their strategies and working with the authorities rather

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<sup>13</sup> Violence used by the state will be discussed throughout the thesis however the history chapter will summarise the different ways in which violence is used by the against the Cambodian people in the name of development.

<sup>14</sup> Civil society and social movements are discussed in section 2.2

than against them, the smaller group of NGOs believed they would develop credibility and relationships with the authorities and be able to help people at the same time. A consequence of this approach however, has been that NGOs working alongside the government have been heavily criticised and labelled assailants, perpetuating the exploitation of the poor by effectively becoming vehicles for human rights abuses. These NGOs have been ostracised and excluded from land and housing conferences, consortiums and forums.

The RGC views Human Rights NGOs' constant criticism and persistent challenging of their policy as negative, undermining and disloyal. The local urban NGO Sahmakum Teang Tnaut (STT), which published reports evidencing the exploitation of the urban poor through development-induced evictions,<sup>15</sup> was met with hostility by the government and suspended from operations for one year in 2011. STT's offices were raided, their bank accounts closed and individual staff were bombarded with harassment and emails insulting them and questioning their loyalty to Cambodia and their identity as Khmer.<sup>16</sup> Many staff left and their offices were shut down. However as a result of international support and the lack of legal basis for their suspension, STT was able to continue its work assisting the urban poor in 2012.

A recent book edited by Amanda Hammar (2014) identifies and addresses paradoxes of displacement, making important new contributions to DIDR scholarship. Hammar et. al identify and investigate displacement paradoxes such as the opening and closing of opportunities; movement and displacement running parallel to confinement and

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<sup>15</sup> STT report that prompted their suspension criticized the development of the railways. Available here: [http://teangtnaut.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/20110703\\_DMS-analysis\\_FINAL.pdf](http://teangtnaut.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/20110703_DMS-analysis_FINAL.pdf)

<sup>16</sup> The details given here are from personal account as the author worked for STT during this time.

restriction; extreme wealth and extreme poverty (Hammar, 2014, p. 2). Hammar's own chapter focuses on displacement economies, building on Cernea's critiques (1999)<sup>17</sup> highlighting the failure of different academic literatures to work together and strengthening the linkages between disciplines. For example, despite well-developed literatures on migration and refugees, there have been few progressions in creating a relevant or robust theoretical framework to encompass the complexity of displacement (Hammar, 2014).

Hammar identifies the persistent destructive characterisation of DIDR, which leads to the perpetual victimisation of those facing displacement. This negative characterisation prohibits the creation of a space in which to discuss the generative and productive outcomes and processes of displacement (Hammar, 2014). Whilst these products and outcomes may themselves be negative, this re-figuration of DIDR allows for the study of displacement to move away from persistent 'backwards facing' research focusing on how things were and how they have been destroyed, to facilitate a forward facing theory building upon the positive notion of what DIDR can produce, rather than simply obsess with that it destroys.<sup>18</sup>

A recent body of literature focusing on land rights, land titles and security of tenure as a key mechanism of development and poverty alleviation has emerged (de Soto, 2000; Leckie, 1992; Durand-Lasserve & Royston, 2002; Banerjee, 2002; Saule Jr; 2002; Shatkin, 2007). In response to rising urban poverty, the work of de Soto has resonated loudly, as he offers what appears to be a quick simple fix to alleviating urban poverty. De Soto argues that developing countries are not starved of investment or jobs, but

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<sup>17</sup> See Introduction for discussion of Cernea's critiques of DIDR.

<sup>18</sup> Hammar's work and this re-configuration of DIDR will be discussed further in Chapters Four and Five.

suffer a shortage of property rights. All that is required for the poor to access their wealth are property titles (de Soto, 2000, pp. 300-301). Titling, de Soto claims, will instantly create massive equity with little or no cost to government. Thus the poor, in turn, would become micro entrepreneurs able to use their property as collateral to release wealth and transform their lives. Formal property titles, argues de Soto, are more than just a system for recording and mapping assets, but are instrumental in the human psyche for generating surplus value. Because of this, property titles must be universally accessible to everyone and this will have a binding social contract effect, as individuals cooperate to raise a society's productivity (de Soto, 2000, p. 199-200). In fact de Soto argues that not only will private property rights tackle poverty, they will prevent revolution and rebellion (Gilbert, 2002). De Soto's answer to urban poverty has been popular amongst policy makers and providers of international aid, being adopted most enthusiastically by USAID (Gilbert, 2002). His model has provided a starting point for case study analysis by various authors whose emphasis on the simplicity of land titling ultimately blames the government for being unprepared to make even the smallest of efforts towards the simple transforming procedure of land titling (Durand-Lasserve & Royston, 2002; Banerjee, 2002; Saule Jr; 2002; Shatkin, 2007).

De Soto's theory, however, is problematic for a number of reasons. First, it assumes an accountable and transparent government that recognises and respects the property rights of its citizens. This however is often absent in a developing country. Second, evidence shows that establishing land rights for slum dwellers has increased rents and property costs in slums. This is due to the inclusion of the poor into a state's tax formal base, by inviting costly state regulation of previously informal businesses and by opening up land to the real estate market which results in even former basic, unsanitary slum dwellings being put out of a slum resident's reach (Gilbert & Varley, 1991; Gilbert &

Ward, 1985; Davis, 2006) Third, evidence shows that property rights and capitalism have served to divide communities rather than unite them by initiating economic competition that undermines community solidarity by individualising the struggle, and provoking conflict over uncertain property boundaries. Fourth, de Soto has not accounted for the circumstance in which land that has been titled is undesirable and fails to sell on the market (Gilbert, 2002). Finally, the attempt at titling land and property in the Cambodian context has created new avenues for corruption and opportunities to accumulate immense personal wealth, whilst leading to the abuse and exploitation of thousands of poor Cambodians by government officials.

Responsibility for the process of land titling in Cambodia fell to the World Bank's Land Management and Administration Project (LMAP), established in 2002. LMAP was mandated to enforce the 2001 land law over a period of 8 years with the objective of preventing and resolving land disputes, issuing land titles, managing natural resources and strengthening legal and management frameworks (Bugalski & Pred, 2010). The World Bank, GTZ, the government of Finland and Canadian International Development Agency initially funded LMAP, the World Bank footing the majority of the bill, pledging \$28.83million. LMAP was successful in developing legal frameworks and building the capacity of the RGC to tackle land registration, as well as relative successes in titling undisputed rural areas of Cambodia. However in its enhanced review, the World Bank acknowledged major failures of the project, particular in urban and indigenous areas (LMAP Enhanced Review, 2009). LMAP admitted contributing to tenure insecurity of the urban poor as a result of the design of LMAP components, implementation, delay and rapid evolutions in the land market (LMAP Enhanced Review, 2009, p.2). Further flaws are identified in the report: LMAP's exclusion of

disputed areas, which were supposed to be resolved as part of the core objectives and the lack of transparency in procedures and implementation of State land classification.

The process of land titling in Cambodia has therefore not been the swift cure to poverty predicted by de Soto. This is due to poor planning, design and implementation of LMAP as well as broader issues of corruption. Chapter Four will outline a more relevant typology of tenure that reflects the varied living conditions, informality and insecurity of the urban poor. This typology for example will include pavement dwellers, social housing, unauthorised occupations of land and so on (Khemro & Payne, 2004). The nuanced typology ultimately adds detail to the complexity of housing issues that is essential if the right of adequate housing and poverty alleviation efforts are to be realised.

### **1.3 Conclusion**

This introduction has thus far outlined the structure of this thesis, which has been constructed around the two central research questions. Firstly, *Who are the urban poor and what resources, networks and mechanisms do they rely upon?* Second, *does existing development policy respond appropriately to urban poor issues? If not, why not and how can this be addressed?* The response to these questions uses a political economy theoretical framework that combines two, interrelated perspectives that reverberate throughout the thesis: livelihoods and housing. These perspectives emerged through the process of fieldwork, the household survey, interviews with *tuktuk* drivers and other stakeholders, as essential for answering the research questions and understanding urban poverty and development.

Enabled through a mixed methodology and the political economy framework, this thesis offers two new terms to better recognise and characterise the livelihood generating practices of the urban poor, the *urban poor economy* and *horizontal regulation*. This nuanced understanding of the everyday lives of the urban poor contributes to our understanding of why residents migrated to the city and live in the circumstances they find themselves in. The relationship between urban livelihoods and urban housing are inseparable when trying to understand urban poverty as the very reason people are living in the city in often dire, unsanitary, overcrowded conditions is because of the livelihood generating opportunities, perceived or not, that the city offers. Therefore, to understand the housing needs of the urban poor, one must understand how they generate and maintain their livelihoods.

It is from a combination of political economy and the re-configured DIDR perspective of development policy and management that this thesis precedes, allowing space for what is created and produced by resettlement rather than focusing solely on the destructive outcomes. Data presented in Chapter Four will show that resettlement has been (and continues to be) a vehemently negative, violent experience for the majority of those affected. Yet, whilst development necessarily includes destruction before new spaces are built, it is not an inherently negative or violent process. This thesis argues that development has failed in Phnom Penh, however this is not inevitable and does not have to continue. With careful planning and working with the residents facing eviction to understand their tenure status through an expanded typology and, fundamentally, their livelihood generating practices and needs, development can produce beneficial outcomes for residents, the city and investors.

## **2. Historical Background**

### **2.1 Cambodia: a brief history, 1950s - present**

Historical context is essential for understanding contemporary Cambodia whether in relation to family structures, cultural traditions, economic and political tensions and particularly land conflict and the majority young population due to the infamous genocide committed under the KR. However whereas the KR had intended to return to ‘Year Zero’, they could not erase Cambodian history. Colonialism and regional rivalries that were established long before the KR still resonate today. This section will begin in the 1950s to highlight some of the important events and long-standing tensions that have resonated through the recent decades. The United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) will be discussed in more detail as peacebuilding initiatives that went on in the late 1908s – early 1990s set the political and economic trajectory for contemporary governance and development. The following section will focus on Phnom Penh and the residents of the city in recent history to contextualise how urban poverty emerged and why development historically fails to address the needs of the urban poor.

Cambodia gained independence from France in 1953 however; this did not herald peace for the Khmer kingdom as internal political divisions deepened. By the 1960s Cambodians were suffering from the spill over of conflict taking place neighbouring Vietnam. Cambodia was officially politically neutral but acknowledged on all sides as being used as a safe haven by the Vietnamese who hid, recuperated and mounted fresh attacks from the rainforest and mountainous terrain along the Cambodia-Vietnam border. The borderlands were subsequently bombarded by US forces’ secret carpet-bombing campaigns, Operation Menu, throughout the 1960s and early 1970s.

Cambodians were paying the price for a neighbouring conflict in secret, as Nixon and Kissinger went to great lengths to cover up Operation Menu; only in 2002 were details of the extent of the campaign released, under the Clinton administration (Hanhimaki, 2004).

A coup d'état in 1970 by Prime Minister Lon Nol, former Army Chief of Staff, whilst King Father Sihanouk was in Beijing, failed to pacify the country and only served to exacerbate allegations of corruption and nepotism as he consolidated personal power (Osborne, 2008, pp. 135-138). Civil war ensued and the KR seized the capital and power on 17<sup>th</sup> April 1975. The KR were able to use the fear of US bombing campaigns to successfully evacuate Phnom Penh and urban areas forcing city dwellers, including hospital patients, the young, old and vulnerable into the countryside. The entire population of Phnom Penh, over 2 million people, were evacuated in just three days. The city became a ghost town, abandoned entirely but for a couple of secret prisons and torture centres, the most notorious of them all site S-21 or Tuol Sleng, taking up residency in a former high school. Over 17,000 men women and children are believed to have been tortured at Tuol Sleng sentenced to death and killed in near by Choeung Ek (a mass grave site commonly referred to as 'The Killing Fields') under the guidance of it's leader Kang Guek Eav, alias Comrade Duch.<sup>19</sup> The following three years, eight months and 20 days saw Cambodian society turned upside down and inside out. Secretive and xenophobic, the KR regime worked tirelessly to destroy Khmer contemporary culture banning individual freedoms, religion and traditional Khmer arts as well foreign impure influences such as money and medicines. From their rise to

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<sup>19</sup> Kang Guek Eav, alias Comrade Duch was sentenced at the ECCC to life imprisonment after an initial appeal on a 19-year sentence. The Court's hybrid structure, cases, documents, events, timelines and publications can be accessed here: <http://www.eccc.gov.kh/en>

power, Year Zero, the KR aimed to reconstruct an extreme communist agrarian society. Those who had held positions within the government or public sector positions were executed. Anyone who had received an education or worked in a profession deemed unsuitable could be executed. Mechanics, architects, singers, actors, actresses and filmmakers were executed. Executions of particular ethnic groups such as Vietnamese or Cham Muslim Khmer were ordered. People simply accused of being KGB, Vietnamese or CIA spies were executed. Even an uncorroborated accusation of sympathy towards the Vietnamese or other enemy of the State could result in death. Executions became so frequent that they ceased to have substantiated meaning, as everyone and anyone could become a suspect. The population was further decimated through intensive labour camps and widespread malnutrition, disease and famine. Rice provisions as small as 150gm per person per day were recorded (Kiernan, 2014, p.193). A death sentence waited for anyone who broke the rules for example, by secretly sharing, storing or foraging for food. The KR controlled every aspect of a person's life from their family structure, who they married and where they lived to what they wore, their hair cuts and even what they ate and when.<sup>20</sup>

The KR regime finally collapsed on the 7<sup>th</sup> January 1979 following a Vietnamese invasion in 1978. The Vietnamese installed Hun Sen, a former KR Cadre and Head of the Kampuchean People's Revolutionary Party (KPRP) as Prime Minister, who governed the newly named People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK) from 1979-1989. Widely considered to have initially been a puppet of the Vietnamese, Hun Sen has consolidated an extraordinary level of power in Cambodia, having held the position of

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<sup>20</sup> This information comes from the author first hand reading, translating and editing victim testimonies, witness statements and Civil Party applications for the ECCC for Case 002 and 003 in 2010 during an internship with the Victims Support Section of the ECCC.

Prime Minister virtually continuously since 1979. Yet despite the new regime, the KR continued to occupy its seat at the United Nations and gained the support of the international community until 1981. Widyono (2007) argues that this was down to the international community fearing the regional power and ambitions of the Vietnamese, who from their perspective had violated the sovereignty of the KR government through their 1979 invasion (Widyono, 2007). The power struggle between the USA, Chinese, Soviets and Vietnamese was a more pressing concern internationally than what the Cambodian government was or was not doing to its own people (Widyono, 2007, p. 28).

The removal of the KR government did not bring peace to the PRK, instead civil war broke out between KR remnants, non-communist groups opposed to the Vietnamese presence, and the PRK regime. Civil conflict continued throughout the 1980s, fuelled by regional power struggles between Vietnam and China, and the international interests of the USA and the Soviet Union (Hughes, 2003). The 'K5' plan implemented by the PRK, instructed by the Vietnamese, focused on integrating Cambodia into the Indochinese Socialist Block. Labelled as a 'new genocide', Cambodians were once again forced into manual labour camps along the Cambodia-Thai border and literally worked to death. Cambodians were also used by the Vietnamese to clear land mines by being marched into suspected areas containing mines and in the event of detonation, being killed and mutilated by the devices they stumbled upon. If they tried to escape, they were shot (OHCHR, 2010; Martin, 1986).

In 1982 an alternative coalition government formed in exile between FUNCINPEC, the KR and the Khmer People's National Liberation Front called the Coalition of Government of Democratic Kampuchea. United in opposition to the Vietnamese backed

KPRP, the Coalition of Government of Democratic Kampuchea took over the KR's seat at the UN after 1981. The Vietnamese largely withdrew from Cambodia in 1989 upon which the KPRP regime changed its name to the Cambodian People's Party (CPP), and PRK took the less ideologically burdened name of the State of Cambodia (Heder, 2003).

After over a decade of civil war and failed peace negotiations, a set of peace agreements was finally brokered in Paris on the 23<sup>rd</sup> October 1991. Immediately after the Peace Accords, The United Nations Advance Mission In Cambodia (UNAMIC) was established the same month. UNAMIC was responsible for the maintenance of the ceasefire and establish mine awareness and later mine clearance programmes. In March 1992 UNTAC subsumed UNAMIC. UNTAC was established and mandated in February 1992 by UN Security Council resolution 745, to oversee implementation of the Paris Peace Accords. The most ambitious peacebuilding mission to date, UNTAC effectively took over the administration of the state and pushed the boundaries of traditional peacekeeping models.

UNTAC conducted operations between February 1992 and September 1993 in clear pursuit of a liberal peace model (Paris, 2004). UNTAC was mandated to:

- 1. Organise free and fair general elections*
- 2. Organise military arrangements*
- 3. Organise the repatriation and resettlement of Cambodian refugees and displaced persons*
- 4. Organise the rehabilitation of essential Cambodian infrastructure and civil administration*

To achieve this mandate 15,991 military troops, 893 military observers, 1,149 international civilian staff and 465 UN volunteers poured into Cambodia from across the world including Australia, Bangladesh, Belgium, China, France, Germany, the

Netherlands, Russia, Thailand, the UK and the USA to join with 3,359 civilian police (UN website for UNTAC mission). Considering the fact that entire country had been experiencing conflict for decades and the broad, ambitious UNTAC mandate, the small numbers deployed by UNTAC comes as a surprise and has been characterised as ‘not enough actors for the play’ by Widyono (2007, p. 137).

Evidenced through the continued military threat of the KR throughout the mission, UNTAC failed to disarm the various factions caught up in civil war. The KR’s strength was in the discipline of its military capabilities and it was unwilling to demobilise. In retaliation and perhaps out of distrust and insecurity, other political parties also refused to demilitarise. Unable to convince political parties otherwise, UNTAC acknowledged its failure to disarm, cut its losses and shifted its efforts towards the elections. In doing so, they exacerbated tensions between the armed political parties and as a result, the KR withdrew from the elections and returned to militant tactics, as threatened, for political gains. This failure to disarm contributed to the persistent military threat of the KR Cambodia, estimated as having a combat strength of between 5,000-10,000 in 1995 (Brown, & Zasloff, 1998, p. 257).

Whereas UNTAC’s attempts at disarmament were ineffective, they enjoyed relative success with repatriation of internally displaced people and estimates of 350,000 refugees returning to Cambodia from camps along the Thai border (Peou, 2000, p. 239). However, this relative success will come into question in the discussion of the World Bank’s management of land titling through LMAP in the following section and in Chapter Five section 5.2.iv.

The Paris Agreements provided for the establishment of a free market economy and mandated UNTAC to help promote its emergence by overseeing economic reforms and the provision of relief and reconstruction aid. However, UNTAC has been heavily criticized as deliberately avoiding economic policy in favour of political stability (Paris, 2004; Hughes, 2003; Williams 2008). Less has been written about UNTAC's economic impact although it has received criticism for the sudden influx of relatively highly-paid UN personnel exploiting their positions. Hughes and Un characterise the period immediately following as a period of short-term projects and short-sighted wealth extraction (Hughes & Un, 2011, p. 6). However UNTAC's long-term economic legacy is the reliance on international assistance and aid (Smoke & Taliercio Jr, 2007) which influenced the trajectory of economic policies pursued throughout the 1990s and 2000s (Hughes & Un, 2011). Economic activity conducted outside of state regulation continues to be commonplace, ranging from bribing local authority officials and forging fake documents, to land grabbing and forced evictions making way for big businesses. It is this unregulated economic activity amongst the urban poor that makes up part of the focus of this thesis.

Historically, the Cambodian system of patronage predates French colonisation of Southeast Asia in the mid-nineteenth century to the various dynastic lines of the expanded and contracted medieval Khmer kingdom (Williams, 2008; Hughes, 2003). However nepotism and corruption are commonly found in Cambodian civil service (Springer, 2010; Williams, 2008; Smoke & Taliercio Jr, 2007). Despite being part of its mandate, UNTAC did not address civil service reform (Doyle, 2008) The system of civil administration in Cambodia, established by the Vietnamese in 1979, did not change and has not been reformed since. Dominated by the CPP, civil servants are appointed not on merit but used to place relatives or reward members of the CPP. The

Cambodian civil administration is therefore tasked with supporting the CPP and CPP officials, acting as a facilitator of patronage rather than concerned with public service (Smoke & Taliercio Jr, 2007, p. 67). Governance is further compromised through the lack of clarity and allocation of responsibility within the RGC. Whereas local provincial and municipal authorities are part of the Ministry of Interior, the connection between decision-making, implementation and accountability on a local level to central government remains unclear (p. 65 World Bank, 'Private Solutions for Infrastructure in Cambodia: A country framework report, 2002).

Elections are a key milestone in credible peacebuilding efforts, as it is an established assumption that peace derives from free and fair elections (Lappin, 2009; Paris, 2004). Notwithstanding the name change of the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea to the National Government of Cambodia in 1991, the coalition was not recognised as legitimate and was forced to separate for the 1993 elections. The 1993 elections drew an unexpected 90 per cent of eligible registered voters regardless of with the KR's withdrawal from the electoral process and continued acts of aggression (Peou, 2002: p. 510). Furthermore, despite the elections being acknowledged internationally as having been conducted in a free and fair manner, the result of these elections was not fully implemented.

The new political framework of Cambodia, named the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) was as a constitutional monarchy with the Monarch maintaining state power and a prime minister holding executive power. The National Constitution was enacted in 1993 creating a parliamentary, representative democracy. Two chambers of Parliament hold legislative power: the National Assembly and the Senate.

However this framework was not fully realised. The RGC arrangement that evolved comprised of two Prime Ministers: a First Prime Minister, Prince Ranariddh, head of FUNCINPEC, and Hun Sen of the CPP as Second Prime Minister. FUNCINPEC, the party with the clear electoral majority, had been forced into coalition with the CPP. The coalition was facilitated by UNTAC in response to Hun Sen and the CPP's assertion that the KR posed a continued security threat and that only the CPP had the military power and technology to counter them. FUNCINPEC may have been legitimate but they were militarily weak, whereas the CPP lost the election but were powerful (Heder, 2003).

The coalition never functioned effectively as the two parties grappled for power and attempted assassinations were carried out on both sides. Internal CPP splits led to an attempted coup by CPP dissidents in 1994, and disputes within FUNCINPEC resulted in the expulsion of Sam Rainsy from the Party, the leading advocate for a liberal democratic state. Subsequent competition for power and economic interests between CPP and FUNCINPEC politicians and military men resulted in a coup in 1997 against FUNCINPEC led by Hun Sen and a CPP faction personally loyal to him. While the coup was mainly aimed at exterminating FUNCINPEC's military leadership, it also involved an expropriation of FUNCINPEC business assets, further skewing the market to benefit those entrepreneurs who had previously backed or now threw in their political lot with Hun Sen. However, once the elections had taken place, the international community had satisfied its conscience and donor objectives, and moved swiftly on.

Paris's observations of the Cambodian peacebuilding mission come into line with the argument of this research as he highlights Freedom House's downgrading of Cambodia

from 'free' to 'not free', accrediting the relative stability of Cambodia in the late 1990s to *illiberal manoeuvrings* to the extent that, 'it is unclear to what degree Cambodia's relative stability can be attributed to the internationally sponsored democratization process, or instead to Hun Sen's efforts to suppress political opposition in the country' (Paris, 2004, pp.88-89). UNTAC neither addressed the underlying causes of conflict nor resolved the conditions that led to or exacerbated the conflict. These points would substantiate the argument that this research presents, namely that UNTAC failed to pacify the country and address the historical and contextual factors that fuelled the conflict and the negligent indifference of the international community towards Cambodia. To be established peace necessitates more than elections; democratisation is only part of the process. Genuine political contestation within the rule of law, respect for political and civil liberties, constitutional limitations on the exercise of governmental power and the maximisation of individual freedoms are as essential. However steadfast political will and the full commitment of the international community are both indispensable elements for successful peacebuilding that were absent in the 1990s. The repercussions of the political manoeuvring that took place, contrary to democratic principles, are still being played out today.

UNTAC failed in its mandate and did little more than prescribe democracy to Cambodia. That the swift departure of the UN after elections set the course for the inevitable failure of democracy, as UNTAC's military commander later publically acknowledged (Sanderson, 2001, Sanderson and Maley 1998). However further to the point, democracy was never overthrown, as it was never successfully established as the event of one election taking place does not constitute a democracy (Hughes, 2003). Cambodia throughout the 1990s remained one of the poorest countries in the world with a per capita GDP of \$350 USD and an annual growth rate of less than 3 per cent. Three

quarters of the population were subsistence farmers and less than 35 per cent of Cambodians over 15 years of age were literate. The government relied heavily upon aid, which accounted for 60-70 per cent of public expenditure in the 1990s (Smoke & Taliercio, 2007).

With the benefit of hindsight and drawing from the successes and failures of other UN peace missions (Paris, 2004; Doyle & Sambanis, 2006), the limited time frame of UNTAC and the small personnel available limited the ability of the mission to achieve its vague mandate. That in just 18 months UNTAC was expected to entrench democratic principles, establish and encourage the fair application of law, demobilise troops after decades of civil conflict, and resettle an entire displaced population, is unimaginably naive. Thus, at a pivotal moment in Cambodia's history, the commitment of the international community to the recovery and development of Cambodia failed. The UN failed to create a realistic mandate for UNTAC, failed to recognise that a post-conflict country does not become democratic over night, and failed to commit time and resources to peacebuilding efforts, monitor the implementation and establish electoral results.

It is clear from the failure of UNTAC to create a government based on the result of the democratic elections held in 1993 that UNTAC was more concerned with political stability than legitimacy. Obedience is not held due to a positive choice in Cambodia, but enforced through state aggression and violent oppression of Cambodian civil society. Hughes and Springer identify this as a time where the corruption, nepotism and patronage were reinvigorated (Hughes, 2003; Springer, 2010). In the years since UNTAC, the CPP have virtually restored Cambodia to an authoritarian one-party state through violent systematic suppression of the opposition (Springer, 2010).

Figure 4 outlines the coup d'état, assassinations, attacks of protesters and other episodes that have taken place against government that have led to arrests and imprisonment. The Cambodian people do not positively obey the authority of the government, but have little means of resistance and opposition as a result of the government's continued use of violence, intimidation techniques and assassination, Hun Sen and the CPP remain in power today. Hun Sen's continued presence in power over three-decades leads us to question Cambodia's political transition as well as the quality of Cambodian democracy. Political manipulation and oppression have been felt in Cambodia as the CPP have worked to neutralise their opponents in the run up to the following 1998 and 2003 elections; elections which have been described as representing 'little more than a tool to provide legitimacy for a government that has, in various ideological manifestations, enjoyed unbroken rule over Cambodians for nearly three decades' (Williams, 2008: p.23). Whilst Cambodia has not returned to war, the country has by no means been transformed into a peaceful state, with a virtually complete reconsolidation of de facto one-party rule and large-scale perversion of market freedom by powerful political interest associated with the ruling party (Heder, 2003). The indifference of the international community to Hun Sen's prolonged violent oppression of civil society and political opponents suggest that economic interests trump those of democracy and good governance (Springer, 2010).

<b>Fig. 4. Instances of state coordinated violence (OHCHR, 2010; HRW, 2012)</b>	
1. S-91 and Chhoeu Khmao, 1992-94	2. Son Sann grenade attack, 1995
3. Killing of Thun Bun Ly, May 1996	4. Grenade Attack on Opposition Party Rally, March 30, 1997
5. The July 1997 Coup and Post-Coup Killings, 1997-1998	6. Execution of Soy Sophea, February 1998
7. Acid Attack on Tat Marina, 16, December 1999	8. Killing of Om Radsady, February 2003
9. Killings of Labour Union Leaders Chea Vichea and Ros Sovannareth, 2004, and Hy Vuthy, 2007	10. Killing of Khmer Krom Monk Eang Sok Thoeun, February 2007
11. Killing of Journalist Khim Sambo, July 2008	12. Killing of Environmental Activist, Chut Wutty, April 2012

## **2.2 A history of Phnom Penh: development and beautification**

Cambodia's unique history of colonisation, proxy war and civil conflict, an extreme communist regime and failed development initiatives left a country in ruins. Detailed at length in the section above from the 1950s to present, an understanding of the circumstances of war, mass displacement, torn apart families, missing generations, the absence of any form of property rights, the absence of justice and the absence of rule of law are essential for understanding contemporary Cambodian society. However Cambodia's capital Phnom Penh has had a particularly vibrant history. A place home to the confluence of four rivers, home to royalty and the poor, the centre of politics and commerce, film, music and the arts; Phnom Penh has been both densely populated and entirely abandoned, a stage of political oppression, liberation, protest and genocide. This section will look at how Phnom Penh has changed, from its desirable location and growth, to its abandonment under the KR and the subsequent redevelopment. The MPP, local authorities and civil society movements will be engaged with through this examination of the development of Phnom Penh.

The capital of Cambodia has moved with the centuries. Formerly situated in Siem Reap province (see Map 1) home of the famous Angkor Wat complex, the capital relocated south to the area of Phnom Penh in the mid 15th century. The site of Phnom Penh is a natural centre of trade and business for the country as it sits on the banks of four rivers: the Tonle Bassac, Tonle Sap, the Upper Mekong and the Lower Mekong. These rivers are the arteries of the country not only facilitating trade but also seasonally flooding the low lands and the Tonle Sap Lake, enriching paddy fields and crops with fresh water and nutrients. However the capital did not stay in Phnom Penh for long. With the rise and fall of different regional powers, the centre of Khmer influence and culture changed location from Phnom Penh north to Longvek on close to the Tonle Sap and later south

to Oudong, amongst other sites, before finally settling permanently in Phnom Penh in the 1860s.

In the 20<sup>th</sup> Century Phnom Penh was known as the ‘Pearl of Asia’ due to its riverside location and French style promenade, period architecture and public parks. This epithet holds colonial connotations, as at this time Cambodia was part of French Indochina. France invested heavily in Phnom Penh, planning the city’s expansion and expected industrialization (Fallavier, 2007, p. 70). A bustling metropolis, not even the Great Depression affected the growth of Phnom Penh (Osborne, 2008, p.79). French funded urbanisation in Southeast Asia, including the development of Phnom Penh, came to a stand still during the World War II. Global political turmoil and internal divisions led to little growth, construction or maintenance of the city throughout the 1930-1940s (Osbourne, 2008). However with independence came Cambodia’s ‘Golden Age’ and the iconic architecture of Vann Molyvann, a talented young architect, educated in France, who designed some of the most iconic buildings in Phnom Penh including the State Palace, National Theatre, Olympic Stadium and the Independence Monument amongst others.<sup>21</sup>

Nevertheless the ‘Golden Age’ did not last and whilst Cambodia had remained neutral in the neighbouring conflict in Vietnam, the spill over of violence and bombing campaigns served to heighten political dissatisfaction with the King and the right wing government of the time. A coup led by Lon Nol and his subsequent authoritarian reign incensed and invigorated rebel groups. The KR emerged as a disciplined military force

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<sup>21</sup> Vann Molyvann fled to Switzerland during the KR and now lives in Siem Reap. His work combined modern architectural shapes and structures with Khmer culture, working in harmony with the environment and seasonal change. Demolition and decay threaten many of Molyvann’s buildings however an initiative has begun to lobby for the preservation of his work: <http://www.vannmolyvannproject.org/>

and on the 17<sup>th</sup> April 1975, over threw Lon Nol and marched victorious into Phnom Penh.

In just four days the capital was evacuated almost entirely under the guise of an imminent American bombing campaign. The KR fed upon legitimate fear of an American bombing raid, exploiting fear to fabricate an emergency situation whereby even the hospitals were emptied. The bedridden were forced to walk, be carried, or were left to die by the roadside. Urban Cambodians were largely considered to be undesirable to the new regime, part of the group the KR referred to as *New People*. Educated, fashionable and worldly, they embodied everything that the KR considered to be evil and impure. Whereas the *Old People*, the farmers, fishermen and labourers, who were for the most part uneducated and living in rural areas, were glorified.

This simplistic binary distinction led to the slaughter of thousands of *New People* and the loss of technical skills, art, history and culture that efforts are still trying to restore today. The KR annihilated urban life by forcing the entire Cambodian population into labour camps in the countryside. It wasn't until the KR fell in 1979 that people dared return to the cities. Images and footage of houses, apartment buildings, shops and schools looted and abandoned reveal haunting similarities with the famous 'lost' kingdom of Angkor Wat in Siem Reap province preserved in the jungle for hundreds of years.<sup>22</sup>

It is from this abandoned capital that a unique form of urbanisation and labour markets emerged in the early 1980s as Cambodians flowed back into the cities. It was reported that an estimated 90 per cent of some 750,000 Cambodian refugees from border camps

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<sup>22</sup> See DC-CAM's archive: <http://www.dccam.org/>

had wanted to return to their provincial homes, however due to the proliferation of undetonated land mines and uncultivable farmland, the majority were directed to urban centres (Fallavier, 2007, p. 71). Around Phnom Penh, holding centres were established by the Vietnamese to filter the large numbers of people trying to gain access to the capital. These centres were designed to identify people who were employable, had desirable skills and the potential to become part of the new public administration. This was no easy task as only 15 per cent of *New People* were estimated to have survived (Osborne, 2008, p. 182). Those selected underwent ‘re-education’ before being allowed into the city.

By definition, everyone returning to Phnom Penh initially squatted (UN-HABITAT, 2007, *Enhancing Urban Safety and Security: Global Report on Human Settlements*, p. 122). Immediately desirable property was claimed or ‘grabbed’ by those in positions of power. The rest of the population were left to lay claim to former residences or take up homes in empty buildings, old cinemas, abandoned shops, restaurants, rooftops and roadsides. Informal dwellings<sup>23</sup> mushroomed around areas of work in Phnom Penh, namely the riverside, railway station, close to markets and the city centre. Trade crept back into the city. Local markets were reopened and slowly businesses grew up from beneath the rubble. Hughes describes a ‘pool’ of migrants drawn to the city searching for unskilled labour opportunities such as petty trade, manufacturing, construction, prostitution (2003, p. 177).

In 1981 the official estimate of Phnom Penh’s population was 300,000 however NGOs reported numbers of over 400,000 (Osborne, 2008 p.186). By 1992 this number had

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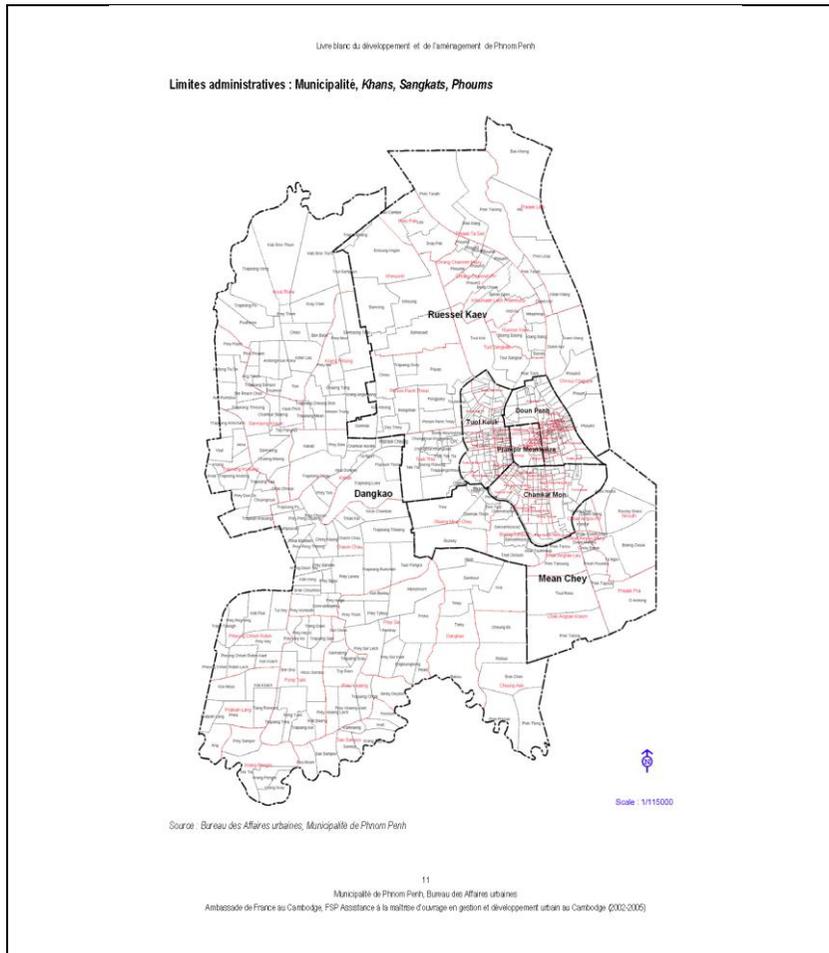
<sup>23</sup> The use of the word ‘slum’ is contested in this thesis here and in more detail in section 4.3

risen to 700,000 with over 200,000 seasonal workers, living in a city that had been built to home half a million (Fallavier, 2008, p. 72). In 1985 the MPP recognised the informal living circumstances of long-term residents of Phnom Penh by issuing *Family Books*. These books served as legal records of family members in residence and recognised occupancy, however they were not land or property titles. Rather *Family Books* are used to confirm an identity, enable access to public utilities or by family members to claim compensation in the event of an eviction (Fallavier, 2008, p. 72). By 1998 Phnom Penh was estimated to have a permanent residential population of one million indicated by the census, however this did not include seasonal workers and those without *Family Books* which has been estimated to be another 22 per cent (Fallavier, 2007, p. 73).

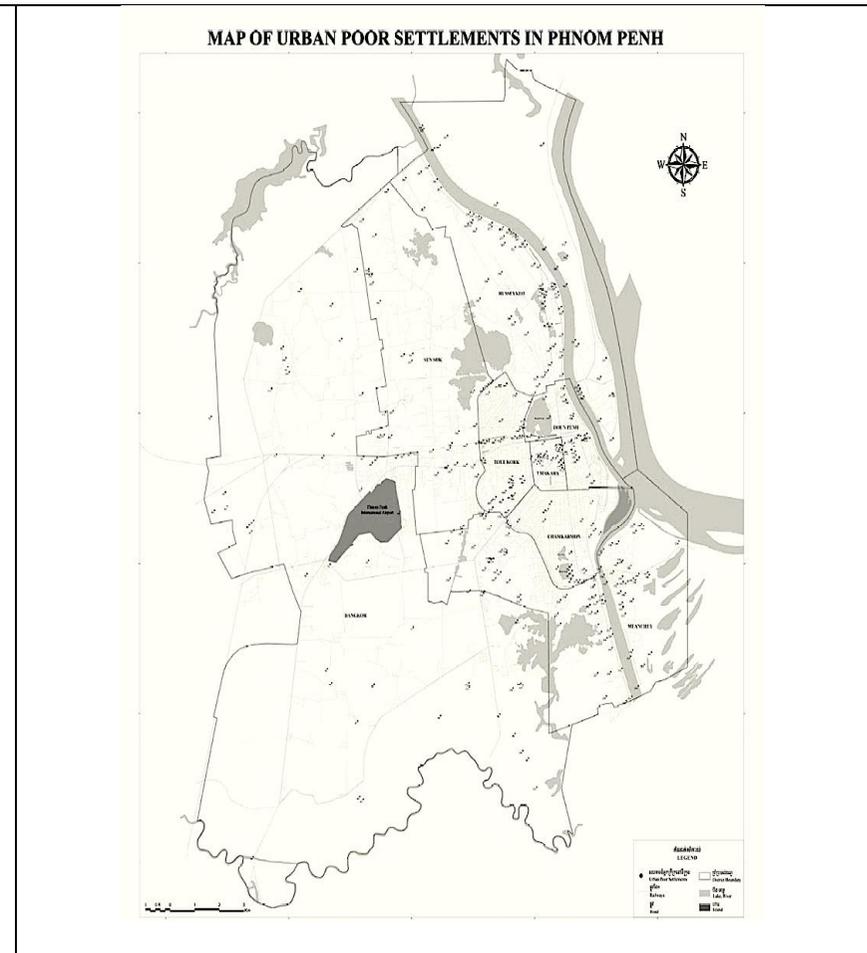
The 1992 Land Law enabled residents who had occupied land for five years or more to ownership however mismanagement, corruption and nepotism were in reality more influential factors. In the mid 1990s there was virtually no dialogue between the MPP and the urban poor, who distrusted the authorities. The failure to implement the 1992 Land Law and the lack of awareness of the law amongst residents of Phnom Penh enabled brutal evictions and the raising of entire villages in the 1990s. Whether down to deliberate mismanagement, a lack of personnel or political will to implement the law, land disputes were the largest category of complaint received by UNTAC 1992-1993 and by NGOs today (Hughes, 2003, p. 48).

In 2001 a new Land Law was enacted and to ensure its fair implementation, World Bank established LMAP at a cost of \$28.8m USD. In 2005 the city had only seven *khans*: four central *khans*, Doun Penh, Tuol Kork, 7 Makara and Chamkarmon; and three outer *khans*, Russei Keo, Dangkao and Meanchey (Map 3). In 2008 this number

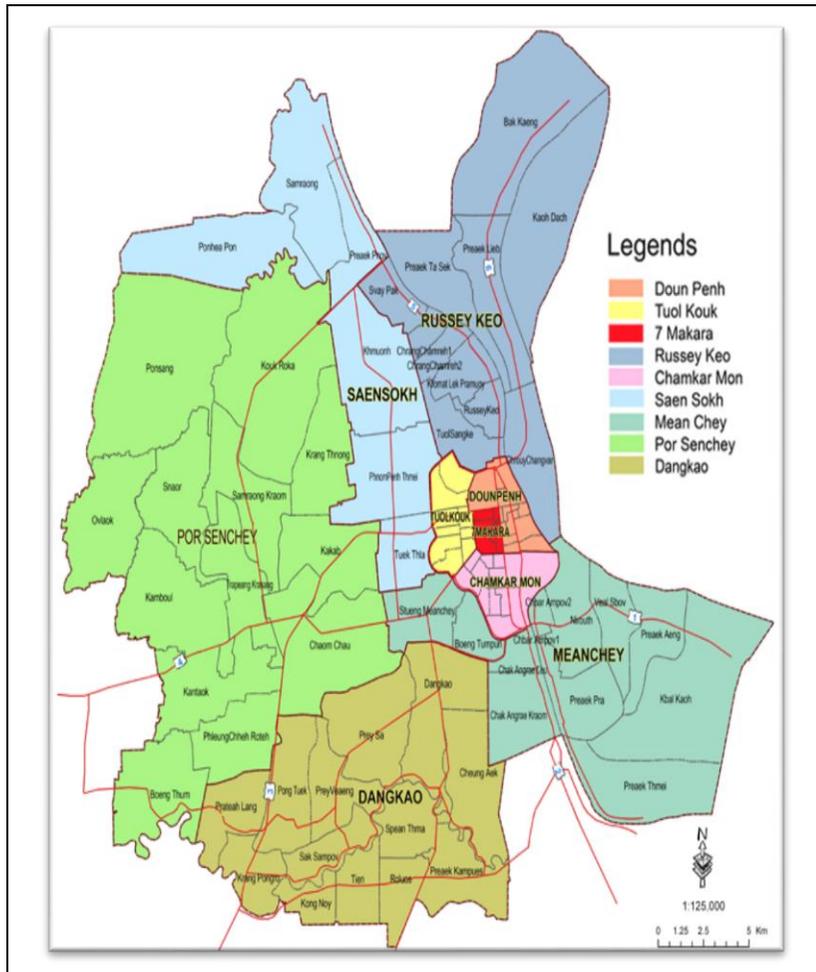
had risen to eight as *khan* Russei Keo was divided to create *khan* Sensok (Map 4). In 2011 a ninth *khan* was created when Dangkao was split into Por Senchey and Dangkao (Map 5). By 2015 Phnom Penh had expanded further into surrounding Provinces and amassed three new *khans*, Chrouy Changvar, Preaek Pnov and Chbar Ampov, taking the number up to 12 (see Map 6).



**Map 3.** 2005, Phnom Penh: 7 *Khans*  
Image: White paper for the development and management of Phnom Penh



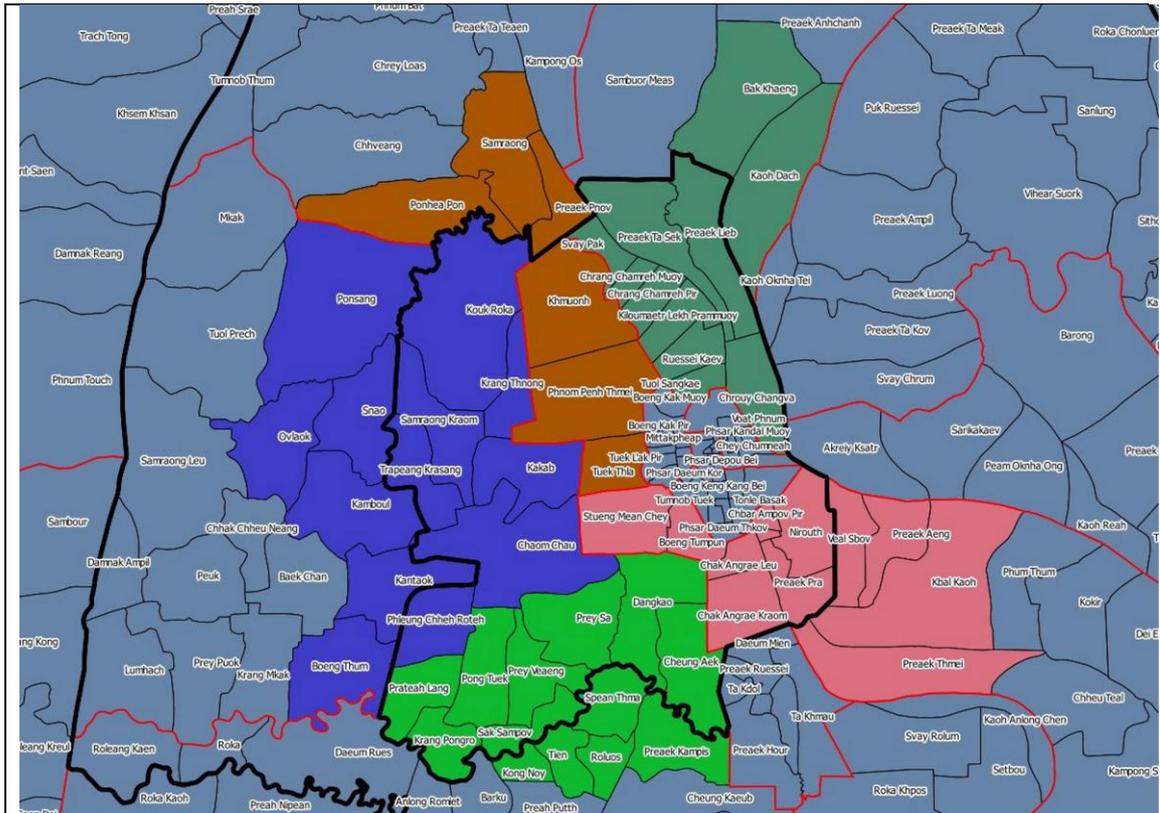
**Map 4.** 2009 Phnom Penh: 8 *Khans*  
Image: STT, The 8 *Khan* Survey



**Map 5.** 2011: Phnom Penh, 9 *Khans*  
 Image: MPP website: [www.phnompenh.gov.kh/district.php](http://www.phnompenh.gov.kh/district.php)



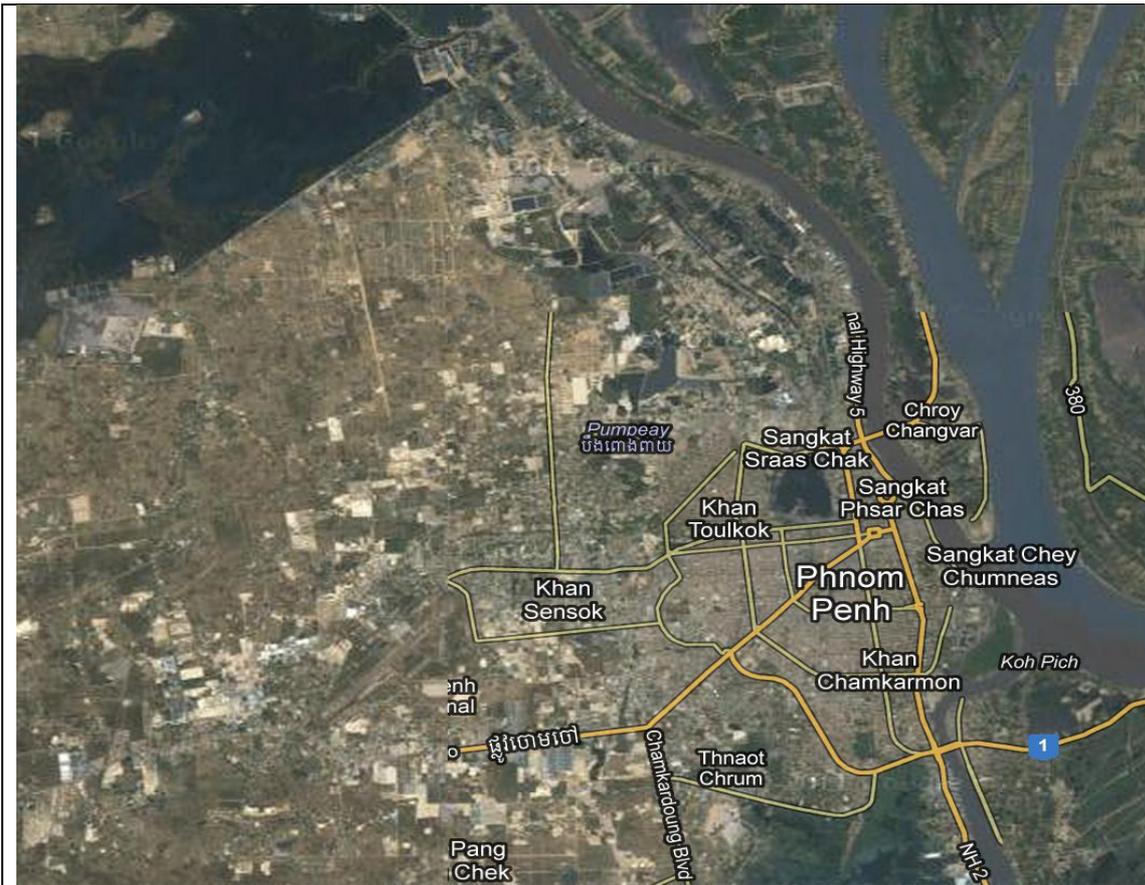
**Map 6.** 2015: Phnom Penh, 12 *Khans*  
 Image: <http://www.primetrustproperty.com/>



**Map 7.** The expansion of Phnom Penh, 2011. (M. Pellerin, LICADHO, 2012)

Map 7 shows the expansion that took place in 2011. The inner black line indicates the 2008, eight *khan* city boundary, whereas the coloured areas beyond this line indicate the expansion that took place in 2011. The area total area of Phnom Penh increased from 380.760km<sup>2</sup> to 693.552km<sup>2</sup> (M. Pellerin, LICADHO, 2012). However, whilst the city boundaries have changed, satellite images of the city in Map 8, show that urban settlements remain most densely concentrated in the central four *khans* while much of the outer *khans* remain rural farmland. Therefore, contemporary Phnom Penh is both a dense urban landscape and rural farmland. This is important for understanding the relocation process as residents are promised they will be relocated within Phnom Penh, believing this to mean metropolitan Phnom Penh. However, as a result of *khan* boundary changes and the expansion of Phnom Penh, this is no longer the case. The outer boundaries of the outer eight *khans* are over 30km away from central Phnom Penh. These areas are little more than disused rice paddies with few

roads and virtually no water or electricity connections. Household respondents expressed their dismay at being misled during the relocation process. Many were told they would be relocated close to the city and be able to keep their jobs but following relocation, found themselves living in exposed, empty fields down dirt tracks, miles away from even a main road never mind the city centre.



**Map 8.** Satellite image of Phnom Penh (Google, 2014).

Violent, coerced evictions continue today, not only in Phnom Penh but also across the country. Forced evictions and resettlement remain a major human rights atrocity committed under the current CPP government (Amnesty International, 2009: p. 2; LICADHO, 2009: p. 27; COHRE, 2009: p. 7). The reports from 2009 offer the most comprehensive picture of the violence and devastation brought about by the evictions taking place across Cambodia. However a 2011 report from Amnesty brings a more human face to evictions, usually characterised by images of houses and bulldozers,

‘Eviction and Resistance in Cambodia: Five women tell their stories’. This report puts the struggle of five women at the forefront of land conflict in Cambodia. Tep Vanny, who offers her story from the Boeung Kak Lake development was arrested and sentenced to two and a half years imprisonment following the publication of the report and her persistent protests against the government.<sup>24</sup>

It was the Boeung Kak Lake development that forced LMAP and the violent evictions into the spotlight. Boeung Kak Lake is likely the most famous and controversial forced eviction that has taken place in Phnom Penh. The lake was formerly over 90-hectares and natural floodplain in the north of Phnom Penh. The Boeung Kak area was home to hotels, small businesses and homes; a bustling tourist spot in Phnom Penh. Residents used the lake itself for fishing and growing vegetables. However the RGC changed the status of the lake from public to private and leased the area for 99 years to Shukaku Ltd. a company owned by Senator Lao Meng Khin, a close associate of Hun Sen and supporter of the CPP.

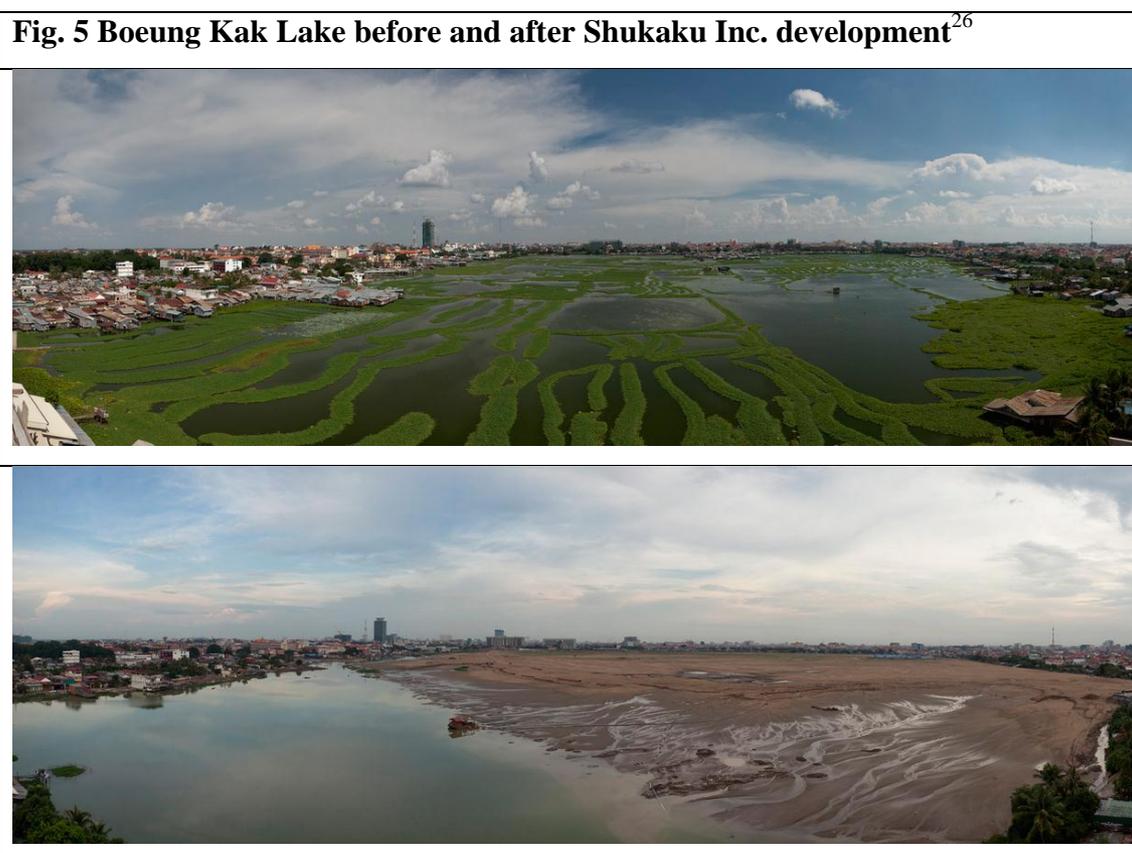
Despite the lake being an essential floodplain and home to thousands of residents, businesses and wildlife, Shukaku Ltd began pumping the lake full of sand and silt to fill the lake and set the foundations for a satellite city in 2008.<sup>25</sup> The land registration process in the area was flawed from the beginning as land adjudication was not conducted according to the law. Many of the homes and businesses that had legitimate claims to their land, were denied land titles (Bugalski & Pred, 2010).

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<sup>24</sup> See wordpress blog ‘Free the 15’ for up to date information regarding the detention and imprisonment of BK lake activists <http://freethe15.wordpress.com>

<sup>25</sup> See the Inclusive Development website for full details of the BK resident’s struggle: <http://www.inclusivedevelopment.net/bkl/>

Shortly after the erroneous land titling process, Boeung Kak Lake was designated by the government to be a ‘development zone’, thus preventing further land titles from being issued. Private security and the police used threats and intimidation to scare away residents (*A Tale of Two Cities*, STT, 2012; Amnesty, 2009). Figure 5 shows the how the lake looked three years after Shukaku began filling in the lake, and afterwards. The lake now is entirely dried up, a giant sand dune in the heart of the city, erased from maps and awaiting further development.



Those who were brave enough to stay were offered meagre compensation, which was rejected. Following the rejection, vicious forced evictions took place often taking place at night (Amnesty International, 2009). Video footage of bulldozers destroying houses while residents were still inside circulated via the Internet documenting the

<sup>26</sup> Photos taken by Nicolas Axelrod, 2008:  
<http://blog.thecauseofprogress.com/2011/08/03/before-and-after-3-years-apart/>

atrocious acts (LICADHO, 'The Impact of "Development" and Forced Evictions in Cambodia' video, YouTube, uploaded 24<sup>th</sup> October 2011).

Events came to a head when the World Bank, having indirectly funded the development project through LMAP, took the landmark move of freezing all loans to Cambodia based upon the media coverage of human rights abuses (Guardian, 2011; Bretton Wood Project, 2011; Carmichael, 2008). Further investigation revealed that the World Bank was found to have breached its own operational policy by failing to design and supervise LMAP appropriately. This has resulted in the exclusion and denial of titling rights to thousands of residents, arrests, protests and violent forced evictions (Mgbako et al., 2010: p. 52; The Guardian, 2011). The loss of Boeung Kak Lake was not only an environmental disaster, but also a scene of grave violations of the rights of residents to tenure security and adequate compensation, overseen by the international media (The Guardian, 2011; The BBC, 2011; The New York Times, 2012; Voice of America, 2013) The World Bank was forced to admit that it had funded a corrupt and illegal process of land grabbing.

Following the withholding of World Bank loans, Hun Sen became personally involved in the Boeung Kak Lake dispute and agreed to 12.4 hectares of land to be allocated as compensation to residents after a stand off. However the 12.4 hectares disappeared from development plans soon after the promise was made and 15 female residents protesting peacefully were forcibly detained, sentenced and imprisoned. After an international campaign the women's sentences were reduced and they were freed however they did not receive a pardon (Amnesty, 2012). More recently,

Shukaku Ltd has been praised by the government for their poverty alleviation work in the area.<sup>27</sup>

Boeung Kak Lake not only demonstrates the inadequacies of Cambodian development, but Cambodian civil society's struggle against the arbitrary nature of judicial processes and the virtual absence of accountability (Transparency International, 2014). Hun Sen separates himself from the authorities and positions himself as the merciful father who, despite having created the circumstances of exploitation behind closed doors, emerges publically on the side of the victims gifting them promises of compensation, of which he has no intention of fulfilling. Boeung Kak Lake however is not an exception, rather it typifies the disconnect between elite relationships, developmental objectives and the lives of ordinary Phnom Penh residents.<sup>28</sup>

Fallavier has related the absence of a functioning and accountable local authority in his 2007 PhD thesis, to the prevalence of short-term, emergency interventions by international assistance programmes and the readiness of recipients to receive them. The unique political and economic circumstances of Cambodia in the late 1980s and early 1990s resulted in civil society organisations and NGOs filling in the space traditionally occupied by a functioning government such as the provision of social

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<sup>27</sup> Phnom Penh Post article, 'Minister Praises Boeung Kak fill-in' published 27<sup>th</sup> February 2013. (Kim Yuthana and Shane Worrell). Available:

<http://www.phnompenhpost.com/national/minister-praises-boeung-kak-fill>

<sup>28</sup> Hughes 2003 IIAS newsletter offers an earlier example whereby large residential slum areas were cleared to improve and beautify the city, only for the area to be portioned off by the CPP and sold privately to investors (2003, p. 49). The on-going dispute over the Borei Keila development is a further example of contractors with ties to the CPP, promising compensation and upon winning the contract, retracting the compensation agreement. For more information on Borei Keila see section 1.2.ii.

services, education, construction and infrastructure. This detachment between a government's public administration and the population is discussed in section 5.1 of this thesis as a version of the rentier state model. A rentier state is one that functions without accountability to the electorate as it is financially supported by means other than a tax base, most commonly through profits extracted from a country's natural resource wealth. In the instance of Cambodia however the government does invest in a functioning public administration or social services as NGOs readily assume this mantle. International donors and private investors rather than taxes sustain the RGC and therefore the government acts in the best interests of its business partners rather than the electorate.

However it is important that we do not make the mistake of white washing Cambodian governance with a portrait of Hun Sen. His longevity has certainly served to establish a network of loyal allegiances whom he rewards, from the senate down to village level (Fallavier, 2008, p. 69) however the MPP, provincial and local authorities do act with a degree of autonomy.

Below central government are 24 provincial and municipal administrations, which form part of the Ministry of the Interior. Phnom Penh is governed by the MPP and administratively divided into *khans* (districts), which contain a number of *sangkats* (communes), which are made up of *poums* (villages). These administrative zones are often blurry and function at varying levels of effectiveness, particularly at the *poum* level. One *poum* chief may be particularly politically active whereas another may

simply hold the title and perform few duties at all.<sup>29</sup> However an active *poum* chief may not be indicative of an active *sangkat* or *khan* chief. This variation becomes important when for example, facing forced eviction. An active, well-connected *poum* chief may be able to prevent the development or secure good compensation for their residents, whereas an inactive chief may do nothing at all, or even profit themselves at the expense of their residents.<sup>30</sup> The most common complaint that emerged during fieldwork by household respondents was that raising concerns with the local authorities, protesting an eviction or challenging the authorities was not just ineffective but futile. If you were lucky and had a *poum* chief that raised your concerns with the *sangkat* chief in the first instance, there was little hope of the complaint reaching beyond *sangkat* or *khan* level to anyone of influence. To influence anything, multiple respondents said, one must lobby Hun Sen himself: he holds the all power.

Cambodian civil society has been long characterised as weak and lacking in capacity as kinship ties are prioritised and any action undertaken otherwise is occasional and short-term (Hughes & Conway, 2003). The Uppsala Research Report in Cultural Anthropology (no. 15), *Where Every Household is an Island: Social Organisation and Power Structures in Rural Cambodia*, legitimised and reinforced this long-standing assumption academically when it was published in 1996. Despite being based primarily on literary resources and a short three to four weeks fieldwork, Jan Ovesen, Ing-Britt Trankell and Joakim Öjendal's Uppsala Research Report remains a

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<sup>29</sup> Over the course of fieldwork the author came across both dedicated, selfless local authority figures and an exploitative, violently oppressive figure who is discussed in section 3.3

<sup>30</sup> See section 5.2.iv for example taken from CDRI report relating the influence of local authorities in land management processes.

prominent work on Cambodian civil society. However evidence uncovered during fieldwork, particularly when taking life history interviews, revealed Cambodians helping and assisting each other without kinship ties underpinning their actions.<sup>31</sup> These actions contradict the established conjecture of Cambodians as individualistic, self-preserving and self-promoting.

This thesis does not take up the responsibility of delving deeper into the historic reasons for the inaccurate portrayal of Cambodian civil society, however the evidence that emerged from fieldwork suggests that Cambodians, as is the norm for most people, exist within a complex network of relationships including kinship, social and professional networks.

How this translates into the ability individuals to organise is affected by the political economy of their circumstances. There is evidence of organisation across the country including farmer cooperatives<sup>32</sup> and the presence of strong trade unions in the garment sector. Civil society have been disputing the land management and titling process since it began, with varying levels of success however. This is likely due to a variety of factors and variation in circumstances, such as land ownership status and level of tenure security for example, or how well connected the individual behind the land appropriation is. Civil society and public freedoms through the 1990s were oppressed by Hun Sen and the CPP in the name of security (HRW, Three reasons that emerged from the household survey as affecting the respondents ability to organise

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<sup>31</sup> See section 4.2.ii for the life history examples of Tep and Lin, which contract the 1996 *Every House is an Island* report.

<sup>32</sup> See Heifer Cambodia 2011 report:  
<http://www.heifercambodia.org/Cooperative%20in%20Cambodia%20report.pdf>

however, were ineffective local leadership, the coercive individualisation of the dispute by the local authorities and the short period of time between eviction notice and demolition. The first point relates to discussion above regarding effective and ineffective local authority figures. Some respondents spoke about the inaction of their *sangkat* chief as a betrayal, whereas others accepted that neither they nor their leaders had little agency in the bigger scheme of things. A small number of households did protest,<sup>33</sup> however nothing happened as a result of it.

More widespread was the threatening nature of the eviction notice and the divisions created by the compensation mechanism. A family might have their compensation reduced or be dropped from the compensation register all together if they were seen to be trouble making or in compliant. Compensation mechanisms lacked transparency and led to inexplicable variation in compensation levels, further individualising the dispute.

A trend emerged in how eviction notices were issued and compensation accepted: the authorities waited until family members were at work, leaving elderly or adolescent relatives at home. The eviction notice was then issued and the elderly or adolescent relative was informed that if they did not accept the compensation claim immediately, they would receive no compensation at all. No time was given for the household member to seek advice or at times, even read the eviction notice. Should they hesitate, the officers serving the eviction notice threatened the household member with the imminent demolition of their home.

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<sup>33</sup> Data and analysis relating to whether or not household respondents protested their eviction is in section 4.4.

As a result of these tactics, the MPP successfully limits the motivation, political space and time to organise. Nevertheless whether due to increased international attention and media coverage, advocacy or NGO support, a small number of residents (such as those discussed in the Boeung Kak Lake area) are mobilising and protesting their evictions (Hughes & Conway, 2003).

Local NGO support for residents facing eviction has been an influential factor in organising and mobilising protests (UN-Habitat, 2007; Hughes & Conway, 2003). NGO staff have been criticised however as avoiding political campaigns, a lead usually taken by the larger international NGOs such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch (HRW). Amnesty and HRW are less active at the grassroots level but are better situated to criticise the government by publishing media statements and thematic reports, and are present in the country to monitor and observe the political and economic climate and any protests (UN-Habitat, 2007, p. 313). UN agencies and international embassies, particularly the US embassy are also lobbied for assistance. They are not immune from protest either; protestors from Boeung Kak Lake and Borei Keila who demanded the Bank leave Cambodia as a result of LMAP failings recently threw eggs at the World Bank Phnom Penh office.<sup>34</sup>

NGO staff operating at grassroots level are vulnerable however, as are the people protesting themselves. The example of local urban NGO STT is given in the following Methodology Chapter section 3.2.ii. STT was suspended from operations in

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<sup>34</sup> See Cambodia Daily article, 'Protestors Hurl Eggs at World Bank Office, Promise to Return', dated 16<sup>th</sup> February 2016 available: <https://www.cambodiadaily.com/news/protesters-hurl-eggs-at-world-bank-office-promise-to-return-108550/>

2011 for a year following the publication the report *Rehabilitation of the Railways: A Comparison of Field Data* that clearly demonstrated the MPP's systematic downgrading of buildings and infrastructure in their compensation calculations. Following the suspension staff were threatened and intimidated at the office and in their homes. They received thousands of emails threatening insulting them and even questioning their Khmer identity. Many staff left the NGO as a result. The suspension was the first step towards a proposed NGO law widely regarded as an attempt by the RGC to regulate and control the number and work of NGOs in Cambodia, which it argued had spiralled out of control<sup>35</sup>

Despite only nine per cent of people having access to the Internet in Cambodia (Freedom House, 2015), in all likelihood this percentage is higher in Phnom Penh due to the increasing number of Internet cafes sprouting up across the city. The Internet and social media have provided an alternative virtual space for civil society to communicate, organise and mobilise. Whilst some Internet content is blocked by the RGC a recent report by Freedom House *Freedom on the Net* rates Cambodian Internet access as 'partly free' scoring the Kingdom 47.5/100 (100 being least free). Blogs, websites, Twitter accounts and Facebook are all used to voice opinions, share news and different media. Crucial to this has been the development of search engines and computer operating systems that can process Khmer Unicode. The blog Sahrika (sahrika.com) for example, collects, records and translates Cambodian media coverage of land and housing rights issues. Urban Voice Cambodia

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<sup>35</sup> See Cambodia Daily article by Phorn Bopha and Zsombor Peter, December 2013, 'Government pushes ahead with NGO law', <http://www.cambodiadaily.com/archives/government-pushes-ahead-with-ngo-law-48245/>

([www.urbanvoicecambodia.net](http://www.urbanvoicecambodia.net)) uses crowdmapping software to receive reports from the public regarding events and issues in Phnom Penh, for example black outs or flooding, allowing the user to pinpoint the exact places affected by the event. However draft cybercrime and telecommunications laws were leaked in 2014 that pointed towards the RGC's intentions to heavily monitor and censor the mobile phones and the Internet, following the example set by their regional neighbours Thailand, Vietnam and China, all of whom were rated 'not free' by Freedom House.<sup>36</sup> The RGC's lack of technical knowledge and expertise means that for the time being at least, that the Internet remains a potentially powerful civil society resource.

In the mid 20<sup>th</sup> Century Phnom Penh was known as the 'Pearl of Asia'. In recent years the slogan, 'Phnom Penh: The Charming City' has been promoted by the MPP in an attempts to 're brand' the city as a delightful, clean, charming, safe and attractive destination. The MPP have gone as far as to print banners and hang them around popular areas and tourist attractions including the Independence Monument and Wat Phnom as though through repetition, this will permeate the consciousness of Phnom Penh's residents and guests.

The process of 'beautification' in Phnom Penh began back in 1996 under Mayor Chea Sophara (Hughes, 2003 IIAS). His vision for a beautiful, clean and prosperous city aimed to raise Phnom Penh to its former glory as the go to destination in Southeast Asia. The process has been reinvigorated in recent years guided by the 2005-15 Phnom Penh Development Strategy (PPDS). The PPDS addresses the development of the city through five main visions: land use and housing; environment and natural

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<sup>36</sup> Laos did not appear in the Freedom House 2015 report *Freedom on the Net*

resources; infrastructure and transportation; social service; and economic development.<sup>37</sup> The pursuit of these visions can be seen around the city as public spaces are being rebuilt and landscaped along the riverside and boulevards, roads are being widened and bridges built. Waste disposal is now compulsory for households in an attempt to clean up the city's streets, tied into payments made for electricity. Even cars, dusty and dirty from driving through the provinces, must be cleaned as they enter the city, or be subjected to fines.

The urban poor however are an obstacle to the realisation of this vision. Chea Sophara was clear that his vision of Phnom Penh did not include the urban poor when he remarked in an interview in 2001, *we want to keep a high standard of living by not encouraging the poor to live in the city* (Hughes, 2003, IIAS)

Rather than engage in poverty alleviation programmes or encourage equitable and inclusive development Chea Sophara and the MPP pursued forced evictions and relocations as discussed above, and when deemed necessary the quick, albeit temporary, fix of 'street sweeping' (Cambodia Daily, 2009; Next City, 2014; Phnom Penh Post, 2012; Hughes, 2003, IIAS). 'Street sweeping' involves vehicles driving around Phnom Penh arbitrarily detaining homeless adults and children, drunks, drug users, sex workers and anyone deemed to be undesirable. Much like a stray dog is impounded, people are literally picked off the street and incarcerated. The period of detention ranges from a few days to a few years. Their presence does not fit in line with the image the MPP are trying to portray and so they are detained and taken to Prey Sor or Prey Speu, 'vocational' centres for 're-education' (Cambodia Daily, 2009;

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<sup>37</sup> The PPDS is investigated at length in section 5.2ii

Next City, 2014; Phnom Penh Post, 2012). Former inmates have reported that there are no toilets, no running water and no electricity in the cells. They are given basic rations of food, medicines, including antiretroviral drugs are confiscated and inmates are abused at the hands of the guards (Cambodia Daily, 2009). An interviewee compared Prey Sor to S-21, the KR site of torture and imprisonment.

Street sweeping happens most often when dignitaries or important events are hosted in the city, such in preparation for the ASEAN conferences from as early as 2002 and most recently in 2014 (Straingo, 2010; Phnom Penh Post, 2002). The homeless and other undesirables are considered to be an embarrassment and a stain on the image of the city and the country. The continued process of street sweeping has been condemned by local NGOs for over a decade and more recently by UNICEF and the UNOHCHR following reports of children as young as one year old being taken to Prey Speu (Cuddy, 2014).

In her short piece for the IIAS Newsletter, Hughes discusses the process of beautification in the context of the MPP's attempts to control public spaces. In her article beautification runs parallel to the MPPs violent clampdowns on political protests and marches, the grenade attack and manipulation of fear. By dominating public spaces, the MPP undermines and closes in on the limited resources and strategies of the urban poor to organise and challenge the authorities (2003). Springer develops upon this theory of political geo-spatial control, relating the oppression of protests in public spaces to Cambodia's violent neoliberalism and patron-clientelism (2010). This runs hand in hand with corruption and bribery and is central to the 2007 UN-HABITAT report *Enhancing Urban Safety and Security: Global Report on*

*Human Settlements*. This report provides evidence of corruption and patron-clientelism in Phnom Penh through case studies showing how companies owned by prominent local and national politicians, were given leases to land privately owned on the grounds of beautification (pp. 312-313).

### **2.3 Conclusion**

This background history chapter began by outlining important events in Cambodia's recent history. Historical context is useful in most instances to understand how institutions and organisations came about and what were influencing factors in the decision making process. In the first part of this chapter, the internal political divisions, regional conflict and the preoccupation of the international community with an ideological war and indifference to Cambodia, created the circumstances that led to the KR seizing power. No one could have imagined the horrors that would take place in the following years however the repercussions of the KR regime, ensuing civil war and peacebuilding project are still being felt today. This is not only in regard to the missing generations of Cambodians, forced marriages, land mine littered countryside and the failed land titling process, but evident in the institutions and organisations that govern Cambodia today.

The historic rise and fall of Phnom Penh and its on-going mismanaged development present a distilled version of the corrupt politics and deliberate exploitation of the poor that plagues Cambodia nationwide. An understanding of the city and its changing boundaries is essential to addressing the process of DIDR as changes made to city boundaries are politically and economically motivated. The MPP is openly

forcing the poor out of the city centre to the margins of society through eviction and street sweeping. However the MPP's chokehold of residents is not absolute and despite their best efforts to dominate public spaces and contain protests, civil society is creating spaces for action with the assistance of local and international NGOs.

### **3. Methodology**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

An essential component of this thesis is the contribution of data collected during fieldwork. Fieldwork was undertaken from August 2011 to May 2012, in and around Phnom Penh. During this time data was collected on 122 households across seven sites, three sites facing eviction (45 households) and four resettlement sites (77 households). As a result information was collected on 693 household members relating to education, income, expenditure and wellbeing. This detailed body of data has not been replicated elsewhere in regard to the urban poor in Cambodia.

##### *3.1.i Objectives*

80 per cent of the Cambodian population live in the rural provinces and therefore, rural livelihoods and rural development are the dominant narratives for Cambodian scholarship, international donors and development policy. Development policy however, has not caught up with changes in Cambodian society or economy, as the services industry and garment manufacturing has taken over from rice as Cambodia's main export, shifting the economy from its tradition agricultural base to a reliance on the industrial sector (Godfrey, et al., 2001; Slocomb, 2010). Cambodia's urban areas are home to the majority of the garment factories and are therefore increasingly important industrial sectors as well as centres of power and governance. However, in a country experiencing rapid inequitable development, particularly in the urban environment, an increased understanding and appreciation of urban poor lives and

labour opportunities is missing and has become an obstacle to meaningful efforts to alleviate poverty for a growing urban population. This research fills this space in existing scholarship by providing detailed mixed methods research and analysis.

### *3.1.ii Research questions*

This research is guided by two related research questions:<sup>38</sup>

- 1. Who are the urban poor and what resources, networks and mechanisms do they rely upon?*
- 2. Does existing development policy respond appropriately to urban poor issues? If not, why not and how can this be addressed?*

The first question was intended to create a better understanding of contemporary urban poverty. Although a single question, it opens up the possibility of a myriad of questions and allows for a fresh investigation unbounded by pre-existing assumptions of urban poverty; who are the urban poor? How did they find themselves in these circumstances? What jobs do they do? How do they survive? What are their experiences of development? Having understood the circumstances of the urban poor; captured the livelihood strategies and the daily challenges they face, the second question arises: fundamentally, does development policy address these challenges? If yes, how? And if no, why not and how can this be remedied.

The two research questions inform the structure of this thesis as Chapter Four and Five address the questions respectively. However the previous, outlining the historical context for this research, sets the tone for the rest of the thesis. The historical

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<sup>38</sup> See introduction for how these research questions came about

background chapter offered an initially broad historical perspective drawing out and highlighting important events, policies and laws that have shaped contemporary Cambodia. After this a more focused history of Phnom Penh was established. In addition the section contains an investigation the relationship between the government and the urban poor that will be continued in Chapter Five. The section explored the characteristics of the relationship between government and urban poor including the lengths the government goes to ‘beautify’ the city, if only to give an appearance of prosperity and development. This section begins the argument that the Cambodian government has failed to fully commit to equitable development in the country. This failure will be evidenced empirically in relation to the urban context in Chapter Four and in terms of development policy in Chapter Five. Development plans and policy are identified as being misguided from the very beginning due to the lack of understanding and recognition of the complexity of urban poverty, urban labour markets and urban land issues. This research argues that this in turn has led to the increased insecurity and vulnerability of the urban poor. Whether this failure is accidental or calculated will be discussed at length, before the argument that the urban poor are deliberately being kept poor, insecure and vulnerable is presented.

This methodology chapter unpacks the research techniques used in fieldwork and the ensuing analysis. Ensuring that the fieldwork speaks to the research questions was important yet equally was the flexibility to respond to events taking place on the ground. To best respond to the set research agenda as well as versatility to adapt to the emerging situations in Phnom Penh, a mixed methodology was assumed. This will be discussed at more length in the following section.

As outlined, Chapter Four speaks to the first research question. Beginning with a discussion of primary data from the case studies, the investigation will unpick existing assumptions of who the urban poor are and lay bare the reality through life histories and statistical analysis. With an understanding of who the urban poor are and where in the Cambodian context they come from, the second half of the question examines what resources; mechanisms and networks relationships the urban poor rely upon. This is achieved by dividing the analysis along the lines of livelihoods and housing, combining empirical data with discourse analysis to portray the nuances, and what determines those nuances, in everyday life for the urban poor. The purpose of this structure is to give equal importance to livelihoods and housing conditions, whilst emphasising their inherent nature. This intrinsic relationship is reinforced through the discussion of experiences of development, where those respondents in resettlement sites voice demonstrate the negative impact resettlement has had on their livelihood generating opportunities. This impact is demonstrated empirically using a 'before' and 'after' analysis of household income and expenditure and compensation. Life histories, statistical and discourse analysis will be infused with analysis of the media and news reports to create a narrative of urban development from the urban poor perspective. Finally Chapter Four concludes by raising issues identified through data analysis and discussion, of concern to the urban poor and what from their perspective, would be beneficial in terms of alleviating poverty.

Having addressed the first question in Chapter Four, Chapter Five begins with a theoretical discussion of development before introducing the different development policies adopted by the RGC. Broader Cambodian development policy will be situated within academic debate concerning development before the chapter turns to

the urban poor issues identified in the previous chapter. These will be addressed again through livelihoods and housing lenses, using labour law and the human rights discourse to illustrate the inadequacies of the existing approach to urban poverty alleviation through development. In particular this chapter scrutinises existing theory and policy relating to the provision of private property rights as a means of poverty alleviation, offering tenure security as an alternative, to reinforce the argument presented in this thesis, that where one lives matters for the livelihood opportunities one has. Owning a land title or renting a home makes little difference when you can be evicted regardless, inadequately compensated and resettled kilometres away from your source of income.

The thesis concludes with a summary of findings responding to the two research questions, illustrating how this research has answered the questions posed. The contributions this thesis makes to the understanding of urban poverty, political economy of livelihoods and DIDR will be set out, followed by the identification of areas of potential further research uncovered by this thesis.

### **3.2 Methods of inquiry and analysis**

Traditionally research methods have been divided into two camps, quantitative and qualitative. The robust statistical nature of quantitative data analysis is attractive to many researchers of economics, political science and many other disciplines, whereas anthropologists and psychologists use the illustrative detail drawn from observation and discourse analysis regularly. Both are able to make invaluable contributions to scholarship, provided they are conducted carefully and ethically.

### *3.2.i Mixed methods: The best of both*

‘Treating qualitative and quantitative approaches to research as incompatible is neither helpful nor realistic when it comes to research activity’ (Denscombe, 2010, p.138). The false dichotomy of quantitative or qualitative research methodologies only restricts the range of research tools available for researchers to use. This research argues that the researcher should be free to engage with the full methodological tool kit and utilise whatever methodologies he or she decides are appropriate to the research question and context. A mixed methodology, otherwise known as ‘integrated research methods’, is the combination of both quantitative and qualitative research methods in a single research project. This approach offers improved accuracy by using different methods to understand the same subject. When similar results occur, the researcher can be more confident. When they don’t, he or she can investigate as to why not. And as Narag and Maxwell point out from their ‘lessons learned’ article from their field research in slum areas of the Philippines, what is planned in the build up to fieldwork, rarely materialises once in the field due to unforeseen circumstances and unanticipated challenges (Narag & Maxwell, 2013). Whilst guidelines and preparation are important, so is the ability of the researcher to be creative, responsive and flexible in the face of difficult circumstances (Narag & Maxwell, 2013, p. 312). The researcher, once in the field, can ‘learn by doing’, build on experiences and therefore adapt their methodological approach to respond to challenges and solve problems.

Triangulation between the two methods, understanding the relationship between the different results, can enhance findings by adding detail and alternative perspectives. For what quantitative lacks in detail, qualitative can compensate for and vice versa.

By using a mixed methodology the researcher is able to capitalise on the strength of different methodologies e.g. survey with fixed and open-ended questions (Denscombe, 2010; Laws, Harper & Marcus, 2003).

With these research objectives in mind a mixed methodological approach was decided upon when designing my research objectives and analysis. I pursued a mixed research methodology and ran both quantitative and qualitative analysis to unravel, reveal and illustrate the intricacy of urban poverty. By doing so I was able to draw conclusions as to the relevance, appropriateness and effectiveness of development strategies, to make recommendations for improvements based upon my research findings.

In acknowledgement of the complex, dense, diverse and dynamic character of urban development (Beall et al. 2012) and in particular urban poverty, a mixed methods approach emerged as the most appropriate research methodology. The flexibility of the mixed methods approach, the ability to observe, ask questions outside of the household survey and conversation with respondents, enabled the researcher to navigate difficult or controversial subjects, such as household debt or interactions with local authorities. Therefore, fieldwork included elements of quantitative and qualitative data collection including a household survey, life history interviews, semi-structured respondent interviews and key informant interviews, as well as archival research. By illustrating statistical analysis from the household survey with discourse analysis from life histories and interviews, the complex reality of urban poverty is revealed.

Figure 6 shows the relevant questions, methodologies employed and respondents contacted where appropriate. Each of the different methodologies will be addressed in turn in this section, followed section 3.3 explaining the problems and practicalities of fieldwork, concluding with an ethical considerations section.

<b>Fig. 6 Research questions, methodology and respondents</b>		
<b>Questions</b>	<b>Methodology</b>	<b>Respondent</b>
1. Who are the urban poor and what resources, networks and mechanisms do they rely upon to survive?	Household survey	Household respondents and household members
	Life history in depth interview	Selected respondents
	Archival research	
	Statistical analysis from household survey	
	Discourse analysis from life histories	
	Discourse analysis from semi-structured informant interviews	
2. Does existing theory and policy respond appropriately to urban poor issues? If not, why not and how can this be improved?	Archival research	
	Semi-structured key informant interviews with:	Key informants: Journalists NGOs / IOs Local Authorities Government Ministers

### *3.2.ii Case study selection*

The use of case studies enables the researcher to understand the complex relationship between factors as they operate within a particular social setting (Denscombe, 2010).

Case study selection therefore was important as this would set the tone for the entire research project as well as set the variables for comparison. During initial preparation

for fieldwork, former colleagues were contacted at CVCD, a local education NGO, to establish the possibility of utilising this network for fieldwork. However, the NGO had found itself in precarious circumstances and it was decided that this would not be the most effective access point to the urban poor settlements. Further, the research being conducted was critical of the government and therefore was not received well by CVCD who have historic ties with the government and implement the government's non-formal education programme.

As a result alternative contacts were sought and after a period of scoping, meetings with NGOs, other PhD students, journalists and former colleagues, the local urban poor NGO STT emerged as an organisation with a strong community connection. However, the government in July had suspended STT. For a couple of years prior to this research, the RGC had been preparing to enact a controversial NGO law<sup>39</sup> and had taken the first steps towards this with the suspension of STT. Despite recent events, STT were contacted and despite their circumstances, afforded access to their extensive data on urban poverty, urban poor communities and relocation sites as well as other resources. Through the generosity of STT, this research was able to gather information on urban poor settlements including their location, number of households, contact with NGOs and land registration status. With this foundational data, this research was able to make informed decisions, contact and select potential case study sites. However upon contacting case studies, it was made explicitly clear that this

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<sup>39</sup> NGO law widely regarded as limiting autonomy and an attempt by the government to regulate and control NGOs. See Cambodia Daily article by Phorn Bopha and Zsombor Peter, December 2013, 'Government pushes ahead with NGO law', <http://www.cambodiadaily.com/archives/government-pushes-ahead-with-ngo-law-48245/>

research was towards a doctoral thesis in the UK, not part of an STT project and that the researcher was a student, not an STT representative.

Two sites quickly excluded from the case study selection were that of Boeung Kak Lake<sup>40</sup> and Borei Keila.<sup>41</sup> These two sites were gaining daily media coverage and were particularly controversial. As a consequence they were potentially dangerous areas to enter as demonstrators were being attacked by public and private police forces and illegal detentions and imprisonments were taking place. The decision not to contact these sites was made, however their progress was followed closely in the media. Instead this research decided to focus sites that had received little or no media attention, apart from one: ADB Railway Rehabilitation Project (RRP). The RRP site was contacted because of its presentation as a ‘model’ resettlement site that others may aspire towards. In total three settlements that were facing eviction and four resettlement sites were contacted. These sites were selected for their accessibility, size, current locations and original locations from the central *Khans* of Phnom Penh, as well as the date of their resettlement. In total 10 sites were contacted but three sites could not be distinguished and/or located from surrounding settlement areas. This can be a common problem in informal sites, as their growth and population are unrestricted and the name either non-existent or not widely known.

Research for this thesis was limited by both time and funding. Therefore rather than take random samples or attempt to contact every site, this research recognises that a

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<sup>40</sup> Boeung Kak Lake see sections 4.2, 4.3, 5.2 and 5.5.

<sup>41</sup> For more information on Borei Keila see section 1.2ii; Cambodian Human Rights and Development Association ADHOC website: <http://www.adhoc-cambodia.org/?p=1136>

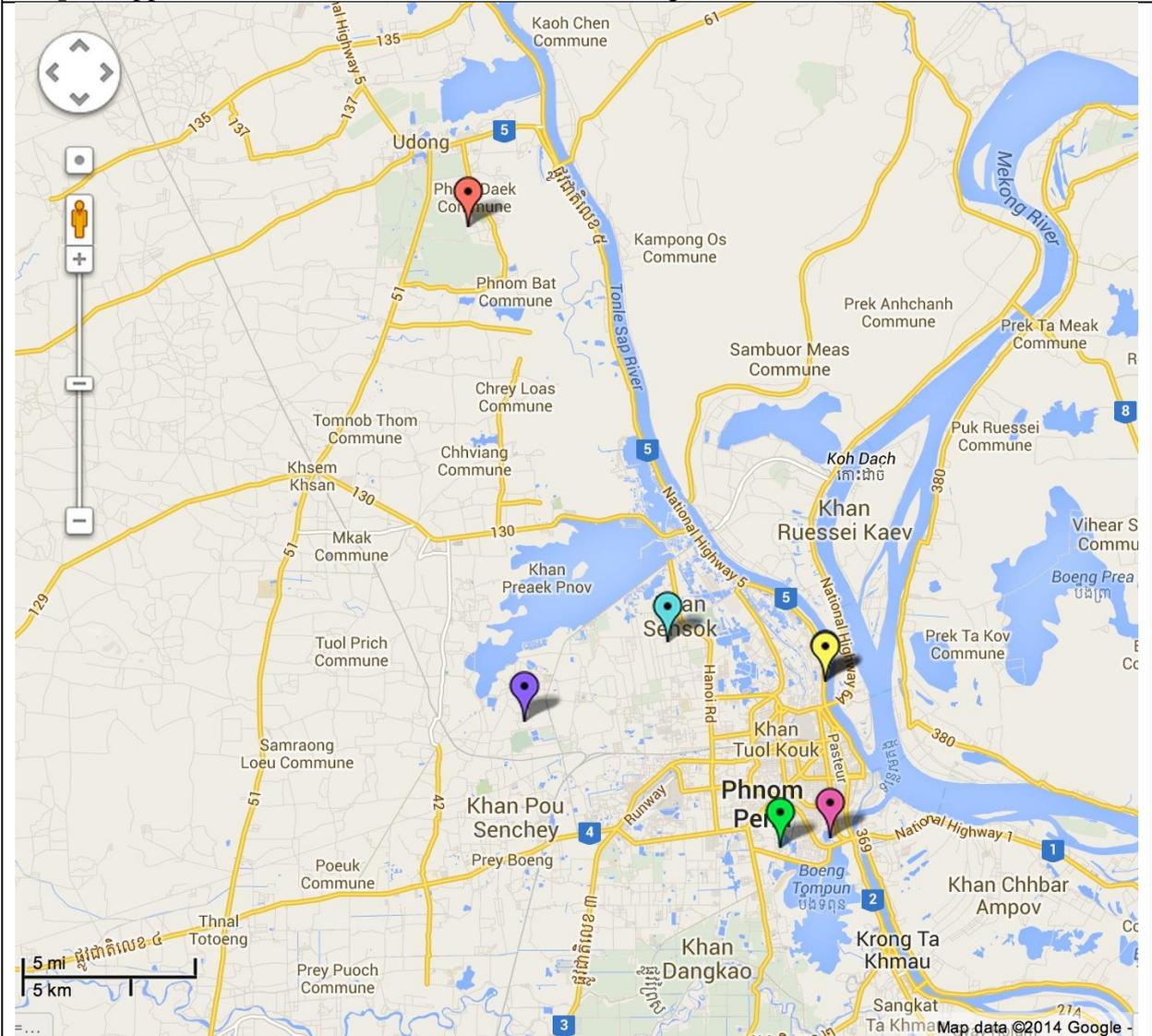
bias emerged as only settlements identified by STT were contacted, although their data set was the most comprehensive in the city. Further, the accessibility of sites, as well as the selection of sites with differing criteria could be argued to be problematic. However after three failed attempts at identifying and contacting sites, resulting in weeks being lost, it was decided that sites would be selected that were known to STT staff as accessible and experiencing different degrees of assistance. Further, sites were only visited during the mornings and early afternoons and therefore resettlement sites in the provinces surrounding Phnom Penh were discarded. This choice was a safety precaution as roads were particularly dangerous after dark, but on the advice of STT staff that stated that alcohol and drug abuse and domestic violence were a big problem amongst the poor, particularly in the late afternoons and evenings.

### *3.2.iii Presentation of case studies*

Map 9 and Figures 7 - 13 outline the settlements included in the household survey. As explained above, due to the complexity and variation of each informal settlement and resettlement site, a varied selection was made to gain an understanding of the breadth of experience of urban poverty and forced resettlement. Sites CH1, RK1 and RK2 are in central Phnom Penh and were contacted due to their being located in desirable parts of the city undergoing vast developments. All three sites are facing eviction. R\_TK1 site was chosen as a case study as the residents of this site actively and regularly engage with NGOs and the media, as their resettlement was overseen by ADB and AusAID through the RRP (ADB website; STT, 2011). Although it should be noted that this resettlement site was one of numerous sites created by the ADB's RRP. This resettlement is portrayed as the model resettlement as families are offered sites with state provided sanitation infrastructure in place, water and electricity. However, the

project is highly controversial as criticism of the compensation allocations in a report by local urban poor NGO STT resulted in their suspension in mid 2011 (STT, 2011). R\_ME1 resettlement site is the oldest site at over a decade old, whereas the R\_ME2 site was forcibly resettled in 2009, R\_ME3 2008-2010 and R\_TK1 in 2011. R\_ME1 is a 'forgotten site' in the sense that promises of water, sanitation and public electricity made by the government have never been fulfilled. As a result, of the 100 plots available less than 25 per cent are inhabited. Site R\_ME2 is the furthest from Phnom Penh at over 50km away. R\_ME2 is home to only a single family; the 500 land plots available in the site are all but abandoned, leaving the single household feeling vulnerable, insecure and exposed. The family feared the local criminal gangs who had attempted to kidnap and coerce their son into joining and at the time of contact, were being harassed and threatened. The final resettlement site is R\_ME3, a different resettlement as the three aforementioned, as its location is still relatively close to the four central *khans* and there is a factory nearby. This site was chosen, as it was the only example whereby the residents claimed to have benefited rather than lost out during the process of resettlement.

**Map 9.** Approximate locations of fieldwork sites (Google, 2014)



Case Study settlements facing eviction		Case study resettlement site	
	<b>CH1</b>		<b>R_TK1</b>
	<b>RK1</b>		<b>R_ME1</b>
	<b>RK2</b>		<b>R_ME2</b>
			<b>R_ME3</b>

**Fig. 7 Case study site CH1**



*Khan Chamkarmon*  
Settlement facing eviction.  
Contacted October 2011  
39/68 (57 per cent) household surveys conducted

Note: Many community members originate from the former controversial eviction sites, Dey Krahom and Koh Pich that were burnt to the ground in an apparent arson attack. Their houses had been burnt down in a suspicious fire.  
Contacted October 2011

**Fig. 8 Case study site RK1**



*Khan Russei Keo*  
Settlement facing eviction.  
Contacted April 2012  
2/2 (100 per cent) household surveys conducted

Note: Only 2 households remained after approximately 39 were evicted earlier in the month

**Fig. 9 Case study site RK2**



*Khan Russei Keo*  
Settlement facing eviction.  
Contacted April 2012  
5/12 (25per cent) household surveys conducted

Note: Formerly relocated from an area 50-100m away, but returned from relocation site as site unsuitable for habitation. Currently living immediately behind Chrang Bak in the vacant space between the back of the houses and the river.

**Fig. 10 Case study site R\_TK1**



*Khan Pou Senchey*

Relocated September 2011 from Railway line and station in Khan Tuol Kork

Contacted March 2012

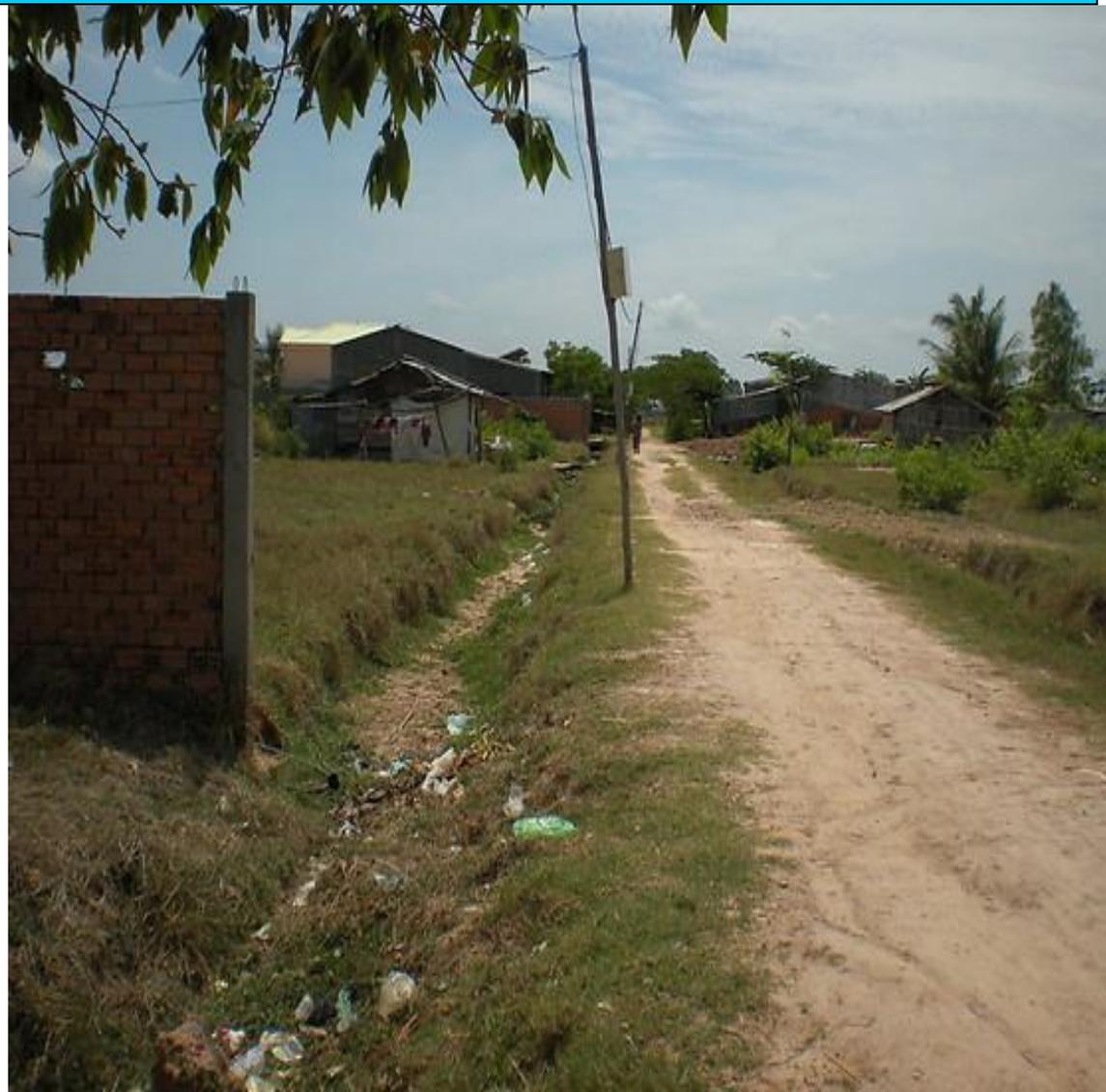
39/100 (31 per cent) household surveys conducted.

26km from central Phnom Penh

Resettlement land purchased by the government.

Infrastructure supported by the government: Electricity, water and toilets

**Fig. 11 Case study site R\_ME1**



*Khan Sen Sok*

Relocated 2001/02 from Tonle Bassac and Bouding area in Khan Chamkarmon.

Contacted April 2012

4/28 (14per cent) household surveys conducted

15km from central Phnom Penh

Resettlement land purchased by the government.

Note: Only 3 relocated families from original 100 remain. Other residents bought plots from relocated families. No water, no sanitation, only private electricity.

**Fig. 12 Case study site R\_ME2**



Kampong Speu Province (No longer in Phnom Penh)  
Relocated 2009 from *Khan* Steung Meanchey  
Contacted March 2011  
1/1 (100per cent) household surveys conducted

54km from central Phnom Penh  
Land purchased by the Municipality of Phnom Penh.

Note: 504 plots of land marked, however entirely abandoned except for one remaining family

**Fig. 13 Case study site R\_ME3**



*Khan Meanchey*

Relocated 2009/10 from Steung Meanchey and Tuol Kork areas.

Contacted March 2012

39/120 (27per cent) household surveys conducted

8km from central Phnom Penh

Land purchased by the Municipality of Phnom Penh

Note: within 100m of a garment factory and excellent transport links

### *3.2.iv Household survey*

A household is a common unit of analysis. However what constitutes a household varies across the globe.<sup>42</sup> In Europe the household is usually a unit used to describe a family of immediate relation, occupying a single housing unit. The traditional emphasis on the nuclear family that may form an assumption in Europe (although this is certainly changing) cannot be applied to other continents. For example the familial aspect can be dropped altogether and the emphasis placed upon the housing unit rather than the relationships between of those who occupy the unit. Another classification of a household could place an emphasis on the arrangement between people living together, such as the sharing of food or other goods, which may result in multiple households living in a single housing unit. Therefore economic relations rather than familial, may be used to define a household. Whereas this research began using the terms family and household interchangeably, what constitutes a household and or a family in Cambodia are not necessarily the same thing. Whereas Cambodian typically families live together in a single housing unit, this frequently includes extended family and distant relatives. However, due to high rent prices in Phnom Penh, this research occasionally came across multiple families, friends, couples or individuals living in a single housing unit and sharing rent, however keeping all other expenses separate. Therefore, this research has taken the emphasis on household income and expenses as indicating a household, rather than the housing unit or the relationships between cohabiters.

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<sup>42</sup> Discussion of what constitutes a household based around UN Statistics Division definition of households and families:  
<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/sconcerns/fam/fammethods.htm>

As a methodological strategy, a survey may be conducted in a number of ways including via the telephone, *face-to-face*, or left with respondents to fill without the presence of the researcher. Surveys can also be designed to respond to a specific point in time or be longitudinal. They are able to generate both qualitative and quantitative data as well as provide the opportunity for observation and comparison (the good research guide, pp. 5 – 12). A semi-structured household survey was chosen as the focal research method for this thesis to act as an anchor, grounding the extended interviews and life histories in data regarding the everyday lives of the urban poor. Surveys were conducted *face-to-face* to enable the researcher to observe, ask and respond to questions from the respondents.

In expectation of collecting both qualitative and quantitative data a semi-structured household survey was prepared prior to fieldwork. However after discussion with other doctoral researchers in the city, the survey was amended as it was recommended from experience, that it was usually acceptable for a survey to take between 30 – 60 minutes but thereafter respondents would be less willing to respond to questions. The survey was therefore designed in two parts. The first section was quantitative with primarily tick box or short spaces for responses. This section sought details about who lived in the household, details of their education and employment as well as household expenditure and access to services. The second half of the survey was qualitative and more focused on experiences, responses and opinions of urban development. For surveys taking place in resettlement sites a third quantitative section was included to collect retrospective data prior to the resettlement process on household income and expenditure. This was necessary to evaluate an extra ‘before and after resettlement’ line of analysis regarding their lives before and after their

relocation. Whilst the author undertook extensive language training before fieldwork, the household survey was conducted with the assistance of a Khmer research assistant. All interviews were audio recorded to allow for subsequent checking of the accuracy, quality and consistency of translation as multiple research assistants were employed (Berazneva, 2013). All household surveys were conducted with the author present except for a small portion of the first case study. It was during the first case study site that the decision to allow research assistants to conduct the survey alone was taken, however this resulted in missed fields and unclear responses. Further, important details were often divulged in comments and anecdotes outside of the household survey. Therefore after completion of the household survey in the first case study site, the decision for the researcher to be present for all household surveys was made.

As the linguistic ability of the author strengthened, she was able to follow the survey and ask questions to confirm answers. Eventually the researcher was able to conduct parts of the survey, which was beneficial for two reasons. First that this built rapport with the respondents as communication was made directly with the respondent rather than communicate through a third party. Secondly, the researcher was able to verify answers or ask for further clarification on points of interest more easily.

Surveying households primarily took place in the property itself with the head of the household. However, one settlement requested to meet at the Community Representative's house. This proved to be unfruitful as people waiting to be surveyed interrupted the respondent replying to the household survey. It also became evident that respondents were omitting certain details or gave different answers to questions,

knowing that their neighbours and friends were present. As soon as possible, household surveys conducted in this manner ceased. Instead, waiting respondents were given numbers and the household surveys were conducted individually in the home of the respondent. This is one example of the researcher learning and adapting the methodological process to the circumstances presented.

This research aimed complete household surveys with a minimum of 25 per cent of households in a site. Initial attempts at random selection were not fruitful as during the day people are at work and therefore many of the houses were empty. Instead household surveys were conducted with any household in the site who were willing to take part. This generally fell between 25-50 per cent of residents per settlement, excluding the sit with a single household and site R\_ME1, in which only 14 per cent of households were willing to take part. A bias mentioned above becomes evident here, as sites were visited during daylight hours. Therefore household were all members work were excluded, as were households unwilling to partake in the survey due to the absence of the head of the household.

When possible, Community Leaders or Representatives were contacted prior to beginning the survey. This served not only to introduce the researcher and research objectives but also to confirm whether the settlement location and its land registration status. How individual households were contacted depended on the organisation of the settlement. Where a Community Leader or Community Representative was present, they were contacted, usually by telephone and informed about the intended. Often the Leader or Representative encouraged residents to take part in my survey. In settlements without a formal representative, a site visit was conducted a few days

prior to beginning the survey to introduce and explain the research and allow time for households to consider whether they would like to take part. A verbal introduction was the most effective, as opposed to a written handout, as literacy levels were often very low in the sites, whereas word of mouth spread very quickly. Prior to each household survey, the researcher repeated the introduction, explained the survey process and requested permission to proceed. The survey was only completed in each site when all households who were willing to take part had done so.

### *3.2.v Life histories*

Life histories reveal information about the respondent through their own memory and narrative (Thompson, 2000). Life histories are useful at mapping an individual's (or group, or community's) life over time, which can in turn be linked, compared and contrasted to social, political or economic events in history (Denscombe, 2010). Life histories in his research were used to gain a more detailed understanding of the events affecting the lives of poor Cambodians and the opportunities, if any, there have been to improve their well-being. Three informants were chosen to conduct in depth life history interviews with. These three informants were selected because of their willingness to talk and the detailed accounts they gave during the household survey. The life histories were loosely guided by a series of prompts, however informants were able to tell their own story in their own words. By allowing the informant to recall their own life rather than respond to questions, they emphasise the things that are most important to them, worry them, or that stand out in their memory. This insight is invaluable in understanding the forces and events that have affected the life trajectory of members of urban poor settlement sites. By understanding what is

important to respondents, whether it is family, health, religion, money, property or otherwise, steps that can be taken towards alleviating their concerns can be taken.

### *3.2.vi Key respondent interviews*

A series of semi structured key respondent interviews with a variety of NGOs and IOs operating in Cambodia were organised. Local authorities and Phnom Penh City Hall were contacted numerous times, but this research was persistently refused an audience, with no reason given. A former District Chief willing to meet and be interviewed was found however, upon hearing my refusal by the local authorities. Informal meetings were also held with ADB and AusAID representatives. The format these interviews took depended on the interviewee and whether the interview was taking place in Khmer or English. However, I used semi-structured questions to prompt and guide the interview to try and have my questions answered, whilst not preventing the respondent from discussing what they believe to be important and relevant.

Representatives from the following organisations were interviewed: Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, AusAid, Asian Development Bank, Cambodian Labour Federation, Independent Democracy of Informal Economy Association (IDEA), Bridges Across Borders Cambodia (BABC) (renamed Equitable Cambodia in 2012), Sahmakum Teang Tnaut (STT), LICADHO, Community Managed Development Projects.

Interviews with *tuktuk* drivers and *motodop* drivers were also conducted. These interviews served two functions in this research. Primarily these interviews were

collected to gauge the different perspectives of the public towards on the government's development plans and attitude towards Phnom Penh's urban poor. However these interviews have also contributed to the discourse of insecurity and informal economy.

### *3.2.vii Archival research*

To fully understand the complex political and economic context of contemporary Cambodia, in-depth archival research was conducted. Archival research can reveal and lead to the reconstruction of events that resulted in particular historic events in contemporary national and municipal policy and its enforcement. Archival research provides an opportunity not only to piece together events and domestic and international interests that have created the environment in which evictions take place, but is also an opportunity to understand the different perspectives of those being evicted, the government and international investors.

There are a number of different libraries, documentation centres and archives to choose from in Phnom Penh. Archival research sites visited included CDRI, STT library, The National Archives, The National Library, and the JICA library. However, access to these archives or to sensitive documents can prove tricky. Whereas university libraries, NGO and IO libraries as well a couple of public libraries were easily accessible, requesting particular documents within the National Archives in relation to UNTAC files, was met with refusal. These files were not yet available online and therefore inaccessible otherwise.

Much of the Cambodian law is unavailable online or in Khmer script and therefore it was essential to locate translated copies of Cambodian land and labour laws. However an increasing number of research blogs and processes of archive digitalisation meant that the number of resources now available on the internet has increased significantly since my last visit to Cambodia in 2010.

### *3.2.viii Fieldwork summary*

Figure 14 outlines a fieldwork timetable for this research. Doctoral fieldwork was conducted between August 2011 and May 2012 in and around Phnom Penh. After a period of settling, scoping and networking, seven settlements in total were contacted: three sites facing eviction and four relocated sites. 14-100 per cent of households were surveyed in all seven sites. Alongside the household survey, three life history interviews were conducted and seven shorter interviews with *tuktuk* drivers. Key informants from various stakeholders were interviewed and archival research was conducted. Throughout the entire duration of fieldwork, Khmer language lessons were attended.

<b>Fig. 14 Fieldwork Timetable</b>		
<b>Phase</b>	<b>Month</b>	<b>Activity</b>
Phase I: Orientation, scoping & logistics	August 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arrived in Phnom Penh 18<sup>th</sup> August.</li> <li>• Reconnected with existing personal network and engaged with NGO connections initiated earlier in the year by email.</li> <li>• Found accommodation and bought a bicycle</li> </ul>
	September 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Started scoping for potential communities to work with.</li> <li>• Began language training with a personal tutor.</li> <li>• Met with other Research Students in Phnom Penh to talk about the practicalities of fieldwork in Phnom Penh</li> <li>• Drafted household survey questionnaire</li> <li>• Hired two permanent assistants and three temporary assistants.</li> <li>• Decided upon three communities to contact. One community was unsuitable to work with; the second could not be located. Successful contact was made with the third community in Chamkarmon</li> </ul>
Phase II: Survey & Interview	October 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visited site three times before beginning survey to become familiar with community dynamics.</li> <li>• Finalised survey questionnaire for the community.</li> <li>• Conducted settlement. 39/68 households completed the survey.</li> <li>• Interviewed the Director of Cambodia's Informal Economy Trade Union</li> <li>• Began archival research</li> <li>• Continued language training.</li> </ul>
	November 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Began inputting data from survey into .xl</li> <li>• Conducted two life histories with two key informants from settlement.</li> <li>• Continued archival research</li> <li>• Conducted interviews with tuktuk drivers.</li> <li>• Continued Language training</li> </ul>
	<b>December</b>	<b>Back in London</b>
Phase III: Renewed scoping & logistics	January 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Began scoping for relocated communities to contact.</li> <li>• Loss of data due to computer malfunction</li> <li>• Continued language training</li> </ul>
	February 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decided upon four relocated communities to contact to assess suitability for interviews.</li> <li>• Finalised household survey questionnaire for the relocated communities.</li> <li>• Conducted two more interviews with tuktuk drivers.</li> <li>• Continued language training</li> </ul>
Phase IV: Survey & Interview	March 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contacted the three resettlement sites to survey. Each community took roughly one week to survey 25% of households.</li> <li>• Contacted relevant government ministries, local authorities to request interviews. Access denied.</li> <li>• Continue language training.</li> </ul>
	April 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Surveyed fourth resettlement site.</li> <li>• Conducted key informant interviews with NGO workers.</li> <li>• Surveyed two settlements facing eviction</li> <li>• Continued archival research</li> <li>• Continue language training</li> </ul>
Phase V: End of Fieldwork	May 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finalised archival research</li> <li>• Finished scheduled interviews with NGO workers and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights</li> <li>• Concluded any remaining interviews and responsibilities.</li> </ul>

### 3.3 Problems and practicalities of fieldwork

Time spent prior to doctoral fieldwork in Phnom Penh, from March to July 2010, laid the foundations necessary for conducting research in the city. During this time a network of contacts was developed and a familiarity with the city. This prior experience was essential in planning fieldwork was scheduled as adaptably as possible to accommodate challenges and obstacles. A practical issue unforeseen at the time of planning however was transport to settlement sites. The cost of hiring a *tuktuk* or *motodop* daily for the purpose of fieldwork was impractical due to the large distances to travel and difficulties in locating settlement sites. A *tuktuk* or *motodop* would have to have been hired for the entire day, as there was little chance of finding a *tuktuk* or *motodop* to travel home from some of the more remote settlements. The decision therefore was made to learn to drive a scooter, hire one at \$30 per month and learn to use a handheld satellite GPS. This decision presented different difficulties and dangers as road conditions in the city are variable, traffic is treacherous and the scooter was loaded with two persons and the necessary household surveys and equipment. Further unforeseen problems at the time of planning were the increasingly frequent power surges and power cuts across the city. This led not only to delays in completing daily tasks, communications, data inputting and analysis, but the demise of a laptop and subsequently the loss of input data.

Whilst most obstacles faced during fieldwork were overcome in one-way or another, there were instances that no planning or solution could be found for. An excerpt from the author's research journal in May reads:

*I've waited for days to speak to the Archivist at the National Archives and upon being told of the presence of a full catalogue of UNTAC files, I paid an extremely high fee. I was then however denied access to the UNTAC files because they had not been*

*organised in the approximate 20 years since their departure. I offered to organise the files myself, free of charge, but was turned away. Around the same time I was trying to speak with the Municipality of Phnom Penh regarding their Strategic Development Plans for the city. After submitting the appropriate documents and letters in person as requested and being approved, I waited for three days in their offices before being told I was not granted permission to speak with them. A few weeks later a colleague of mine was seen within minutes of submitting his request. I submitted my forms again, but have heard nothing back.*

The following section outlines conditions and circumstances planned for during fieldwork and the advantages of a mixed methods approach, which allowed the adaptability to respond to unforeseen events.

### *3.3.i Field assistants*

Field assistants were recruited through personal and professional networks. Those who applied were interviewed to gauge their grasp of English but also their attitude towards urban poverty. Some potential assistants were not comfortable talking to the poorer residents of Phnom Penh or could not provide sufficient assurance of political sensitivity/neutrality. Assistants who demonstrated an understanding of development and an interest in the objectives of the research were selected.

Field assistants were trained on the overall research objectives so as to understand the context of the household survey. Following this, the entire survey was explained in English and Khmer to make certain that field assistants understood the questions and used the appropriate words in the field. Often assistants made notes on an extra copy of the survey, which they brought with them for clarification, and occasionally

suggested different phrasing of question. This input was important for phrasing and selecting the appropriate vocabulary.

The survey conducted in the first settlement surveyed was slightly different from the following six sites as two and later five assistances were recruited. This was due to the time restriction for conducting the survey (only being able to speak with respondents on their lunch break from 13:00-15:00). The two initial assistants understood the survey in depth and so split and paired with the new assistants to create two teams. The new assistants worked alongside the original assistants, as the researcher moved in between the teams checking and monitoring their work. Once the survey was complete, it was decided against repeating this methodology, despite its efficiency. This was due to the numerous errors made on the surveys and the importance of being present during each survey so as to be fully aware of each respondent's unique experiences. Following the first survey the format of the survey was also streamlined to make the recording of answers more efficient.

In 2012 a new field assistant was hired, with whom three large settlements were surveyed. This continuity was invaluable; however he migrated to Korea in mid-April. The final three settlements were smaller and surveyed with the same assistant, which again brought the benefit of continuity.

Whilst it would have been best practice to have had a single research assistant throughout the household survey, this was not possible. However as mentioned above, this problem was limited as much as possible through the audio recording of interviews and accuracy checking conducted.

### *3.3.ii Language and literacy*

An intensive Khmer language course at the South East Asian Studies Summer Institute in Wisconsin-Madison, USA was attended prior fieldwork and language tuition continued with a professional language tutor throughout fieldwork. However the benefits of language acquisition soon paid off, as the author was able to pose questions and understand the answers of respondents and ask subsequent follow up questions. Being able to speak Khmer enabled the author to build rapport with colleagues and respondents, to follow the surveys, interviews and answers. It also meant that details and extra pieces of information outside of the scope of the research questions were not lost, which added significant value to the interview process. Consequently the benefits of language acquisition were not only invaluable for day-to-day communication but allowed the researcher to access information that otherwise would have gone unrecorded.

However, as in all languages, the numerous different accents, dialects and uses of informal language or slang were at times beyond the authors comprehension and therefore all research was conducted alongside native Khmer field assistants who were able to explain in more depth. In the beginning the input of field assistants was essential as it can be considered rude to ask questions of a certain nature directly, which may have had an impact on respondents' willingness to speak openly. Subjects such as divorce, household debt and health are not subjects that can be approached 'head-on'. Instead, the survey was restructured and the author worked with the Khmer language tutor and field assistants to make the flow of questions more appropriate and verbally less abrupt. One such example was the translation of the verb 'to be scared'. The objective in this instance was to discover how respondents felt about their

forthcoming eviction. Towards this the word 'scared' had been translated into the Khmer word *kl'aatch*. This word is inappropriate in this context as it purports to feeling spooked or frightened, such as by a ghost. The word *p'hie*, meaning to be *worried*, was much more appropriate.

Another problematic linguistic issue occurred early in fieldwork. One of the first respondents approached in the first settlement asked what was happening. The field assistant answered that she was there to conduct research for the author on 'urban poor people'. The respondent was shocked and embarrassed. To have called her 'poor', by association, challenged her dignity and identity. The author apologised in Khmer and replied that the research was focusing on urban development.

Relating to the problem of translation, researchers face the question of whether to have work translated literally or meaningfully. That is to say, whether the Khmer was literally translated and as a result, may occasionally make little sense in English. Or whether the meaning of the Khmer was translated and therefore interpreted by the translator into English. As the field assistants employed were not professional translators they were asked to translate directly from Khmer to English. In the knowledge that their vocabulary may not adequately convey the translated meaning, this was seen as the most appropriate translation approach. In the event that something was unclear, this was discussed with the field assistant or if something persisted in being problematic, the Khmer language tutor was hired to translate the work professionally. Whilst it would have been desirable for the Khmer tutor to translate all of the interviews and work, this was not possible due to his teaching commitments.

Towards the end of fieldwork, the author considered a change in how the household surveys were conducted in order to contact as many settlements as possible. Printing and distributing household surveys to settlements, to be filled in independently by the households was considered. The survey was modified and amended to become a majority of multiple-choice questions with extra pages for open-ended qualitative questions. However, after a quick review of already completed surveys and after speaking with colleagues, this methodological change was rejected. A large proportion of respondents contacted so far were illiterate and there was concern over the authenticity of responses as village chiefs vary in their control over the residents in their village. It was feared that village chiefs might intervene, edit or censor the survey and/or responses. Further, listening and speaking with the respondents one to one had allowed great opportunity for clarification and further detail that would be missing from these surveys.

### *3.3.iii Ethics, safety and security*

The ethical component of conducting field research, particularly amongst vulnerable people, must be taken into account in every stage of the research process (Wood, 2006; Cramer, Pottier & Hammond, 2011; Malici & Smith, 2012). The planning, execution, analysis and dissemination of results all involve ethical considerations. This section outlines these considerations before, during and after fieldwork, however there are some common themes that resonated throughout. This fieldwork research was conducted at all times within the law. No bribes were paid and no money was given to respondents at any time. Research was conducted honestly, transparently and considerately. Conclusions have been drawn from fieldwork data and analysis without

elimination, manipulation or distortion of results. At all times this research adhered to the doctrine of 'do no harm'.

The researcher is a British, white, 26 year old female and was aware that certain ideas and expectations would surround her identity: for example, that perhaps she was an aid worker, English teacher or a tourist and did not speak Khmer; and/or that she was wealthy, would have access to organisations, money, aid, the international media.

These assumptions may have at times been detrimental to fieldwork as they may have altered respondent's replies to questions, however they may also have been useful as curiosity surrounded the researcher and her presence in an urban poor community. To satisfy this curiosity the researcher answered questions as openly as possible, when appropriate. Humour was discovered to be a useful tool for breaking down assumptions and stereotypes, particularly phrases in Khmer that play with word order and syntax.

Prior to commencing a household survey, each site was visited to introduce the research, researcher and field assistant to the representative or village chief where possible. In the event that the site was not organised as a community, the researcher walked around and spoke with residents. This slow introduction to the household survey allowed the research objectives to be disseminated by word of mouth and allowed the researcher to gauge the plausibility of conducting a survey in the site, depending on the response and welcome of site residents. Residents would be informed of an approximate household survey agenda and asked what days and times would be most suitable for them to take part should they wish to. Upon two occasions the conduct of household surveys was helped immensely by the settlement

representative and chief with official maps of the area and information about the resettlement and development plans. At no point were settlements visited with NGO workers or other foreign nationals and at all times it was made as clear as possible that no financial or other assistance could be provided. At all times the researcher and field assistants were open and honest about their backgrounds and research objectives, and were respectful when residents refused to take the survey or answer a particular question (Malici & Smith, 2012).

Aware of the saying ‘time is money’ and that respondents were willingly offering their free time to assist this research, a small gift of gratitude was offered to each household. Money was not offered, as this was not a transaction or payment for an individual’s time. Further the researcher was concerned that money may false responses from respondents trying to provide the ‘correct’ answer in return for more money (Malici & Smith, 2012). The ethical implications of payment were also unclear and therefore payment decided against. Further, robbery either of the respondents or the researcher was a very real possibility. If it became known that relatively large sums of money were being carried, this may have exposed respondents or field assistants to potential harm (Malici & Smith, 2012, p.194). Instead a gift of gratitude, decided upon after discussion with the Khmer language tutor and field assistants, was offered to survey respondents: a *krama* (traditional Khmer scarf), a bar of antibacterial soap and notebooks and pencils to any number of children studying in the household (otherwise two notebooks and two pencils). To respondents with whom lengthy life history histories were conducted, two packets of dried noodles, tinned fish, tinned condensed milk, a *krama*, antibacterial soap, notebooks and pencils were offered. These items were not luxurious gifts but practical

items that, despite their low cost, would potentially be unaffordable. The offer was occasionally refused, however, when stressed that it was not payment but a gesture, the gift was more often than not accepted. In a small number of circumstances, such as a household living in extreme poverty, without clothes for the children for example, extra *kramas* and soap were offered.

Personal safety as well as the safety of the respondents and assistants was of utmost concern. Everything was done to prevent and pre-empt any problems, however on one occasion the author found herself and her assistant in considerable danger. The following is an excerpt from the researcher's fieldwork journal from April:

*I was near the completion of my survey in a resettlement site R\_TK1. Until that moment I had experienced nothing strange and no problems. Everyone had been very kind and willing to speak with me. I was in the middle of a survey with an older man when I heard a walkie-talkie. I hadn't seen any walkie-talkies in the site before and was a little surprised but not concerned. Shortly after a brief exchange with the man's wife and an unknown person could be on the other end of the walkie-talkie. A woman, I would estimate in her thirties, approached my assistant shouting. I couldn't follow the conversation, but after a heated exchange on her part, my assistant and I left the house and returned to our contact in the settlement, the community representative.*

*It transpired that there was a challenge to the community representative's position within the community, which was seen as privileged. There was also a much more serious conflict between the newer settlement (NS) that I was surveying and the older settlement (OS). The NS was seen as being privileged with toilets, doctors and medicine and overall, much better compensation packages than those in OS had received. When the NS arrived the OS assumed control*

*over their site however residents of the NS resisted this. The situation was made more complicated as the access road to NS branches off of the OS access road and so the OS have been blocking access to the NS. The chief of OS had connections with the Cambodian People's Party and abused these connections to block services such as doctors and assisting NGOs to NS and steal money from their bill payments resulting in the cutting off of electricity and water. In recent weeks the chief of OS has apparently become increasingly violent and staged road accidents. My contact in the NS had a few weeks earlier been pushed from her moto and hospitalised. She lost two toes in the 'accident'.*

*My presence in the community without asking the permission of the chief of the OS, who claimed power over the NS, has resulted in my assistant and I being threatened with another 'road accident'. As far as I knew the settlements were two individual sites and I had seen no signs, experienced no difficulties or heard any mention of the conflict. Worried for my safety, the community representative of the NS gave my assistant and I a 4 moto escorted journey back to the city along an alternative road that was much longer, but considered safer.*

*Months later it was reported that the chief of the OS and his allies, whilst drunk, fired shots into the house of the community representative and attacked the residents with chains and handmade weapons. A number of residents were hospitalised but thankfully the NS community representative had heard rumours of the attack earlier in the day and moved her family to stay with relatives.*

The researcher was deeply concerned that her presence in the site may have compromised the safety of my respondents. Had any indication of the conflict been made known prior to commencing the survey, the survey would not have been conducted. As it transpired, the event took place after more than 30 households had

been surveyed and a life history been taken. Despite having been spent over a week in the site, not once had any household respondent or the Community Representative mentioned any problems with their neighbouring community.

This event raised a number of issues that had not initially been appreciated or recognised by the researcher regarding resettlement: the importance of location of the site in terms of proximity to other settlements, the apparent inequality in services provision, infrastructure and compensation within and between close settlements, and the power of local political leaders. As a result of these events, increased checks were made with NGOs and colleagues prior to contacting a case study site. However these events also added a previously unknown dimension to fieldwork analysis.

Despite taking appropriate vaccinations before departure and medicines during fieldwork, the researcher fell ill whilst in Cambodia. Spending long hours under the tropical sun in the extreme heat was less of a problem for field assistants but resulted in regularly bouts of dehydration, migraines and heat stroke for the researcher. In one settlement next to an open sewage canal, the researcher's body reacted so badly to the heat and unsanitary conditions that a rash broke out and covered her entire body for the duration of the survey in that settlement. Stomach pain and general sickness were weekly (sometimes daily) occurrences, although this was not unusual amongst the expat community who were not as gastronomically resilient as the local population. The researcher was however hospitalised twice: once with gastroenteritis and once with amoebic dysentery. Bed ridden for a week and suffering fatigue, sickness was a further unexpected challenge to this research. Whilst this must be an occurrence

experienced by other researchers, no methodology literature was found relating to illness and the ability of a researcher to achieve their research agenda.

Whilst every effort was made to build rapport and make respondents feel comfortable, there were boundaries that were not crossed, however. For example, no alcohol was consumed with respondents. Phone numbers were not exchanged and no friendships were established with respondents. Despite occasionally persistent questioning, the researcher's personal life was not discussed in depth nor was her social habits or where she lived in the city. This avoided the creation of relationships or feelings of dependency or responsibility between the researcher and the respondent.

### **3.4 Conclusion**

The choice of taking a mixed methodological approach to fieldwork was an attempt to approach urban labour and land issues from as many angles as possible so as to capture its complexity. This also facilitated a flexible, adaptable and responsive methodology. Given time and funding constraints, the largest number of case study sites possible were contacted and surveyed, in the most robust process possible. The following chapters present and triangulate the findings of these household surveys, life histories, key respondent interviews and archival research. The analytical framework outlined in the introduction is used to challenge preconceptions of urban poverty, labour and land issues and identifies the theme of insecurity throughout the analysis.

## **4. Who are the urban poor and what resources, networks and mechanisms do they rely upon?**

### **4.1 Who are the urban poor?**

Poverty is usually characterised as a rural problem in low and middle-income countries (Sheng, 2010; Beall & Fox, 2009). While with the rate of urbanisation and economic growth may be contributing to the fight against poverty overall, the plight of the poor in urban areas is overlooked as poverty manifests itself differently in rural and urban settings (Beall & Fox, 2009; Gilbert & Gugler, 1994). Alternative means of survival, such as foraging and subsistence agriculture, are unavailable to the urban poor (Mitlin & Satterthwaite, 2013). A cash income is essential as access to food, accommodation, transport, water and toilets is commoditised. The necessity of a monetary income, poor housing conditions, exposure to crime and violence and insecure livelihoods create a particular urban strain of vulnerability different to that of rural areas.

The following discussion of data collected during fieldwork is aimed at picking apart urban poverty to better understand the reality of urban poor livelihoods and coping practices (Goodhand, 2004; Williams & Windebank, 2003). This section will outline demographics from three urban settlements facing eviction and four resettlement sites. The resettled households provided information regarding their household before and after their resettlement. Beginning with a breakdown of the survey and household respondents, analysis into household income, expenditure, savings and borrowing, job types and other coping mechanisms will be presented. This relates to the second part

of the first research question: *what resources and mechanisms do they rely upon to survive?* What emerges are livelihood strategies that are multiple and complex, with both formal and informal elements. The empirical findings of this research will be situated within academic debates surrounding informal economy and labour insecurity. However, without an appropriate term to encompass the complexity uncovered, specific to the urban environment, this section will offer a more accurate illustration of what the author has termed the urban poor economy.

#### *4.1.i The household survey*

Household surveys were conducted in Phnom Penh from October 2011 to April 2012. In total, 122 households were surveyed: 45 households facing eviction from three sites in central Phnom Penh and 77 households from four resettlement sites in the surrounding area.

These case studies represent the breadth of urban settlements in Phnom Penh as well as the various outcomes of forced resettlement. Sites CH1, RK1 and RK2 are sites facing eviction, whereas sites R\_TK1, R\_ME1, R\_ME2 and R\_ME3 are resettlement sites. The circumstances of each site were unique: CH1 site was chosen due to its large size and central location. CH1 is located within the central *khans* of Phnom Penh to the south. The site appears to be an island or reclaimed land within a lake and is accessed via a single wooden bridge. However the lake is predominantly sewage as the city's sewage canals run directly into the lake. The sewage canals are open canals and treated with chemicals at various points. As a result the water is a deep blue-black colour and rubbish thrown into the canals also collects at the site. The smell of rotting sewage was so strong it became overwhelming for residents, many of whom suffered

headaches and ill health. However this site was centrally located and there was a wood workshop onsite, providing opportunities for various manual work and services. The site had been earmarked for development, but nothing had been heard by residents in regards of their eviction for over two years. As a result many believed it would not happen, while others speculated as to when they might be moved and what the site might be turned into. Residents had heard rumours of the site becoming a water or sewage treatment plant, or a shopping mall. Many residents in site CH1 had been previously evicted from other sites in Phnom Penh, most commonly from Koh Pich, an island adjacent to the city, after the Koh Pich fire of 2001.<sup>43</sup> This phenomenon of households and individuals experiencing multiple evictions will be raised at length in the discussion of experiences of resettlement later in this chapter.

RK1 and RK2 were chosen as central sites earmarked for development. The sites were roadside to the north of the city, beyond the Cambodia-Japan Friendship Bridge. Although not strictly in the central four *khans*, the sites were close to the heart of Phnom Penh, Wat Phnom. However, RK1 had partially been evicted prior to our arrival, the respondents that remained informed the author that they had been allowed to remain as they had paid the police high sums of money. Residents in site RK2 were the remaining residents of another eviction a few hundred metres away. The RK2 respondents had been left off of the compensation and resettlement lists, for reasons unknown to them. Therefore as they had not been resettled, they decided to stay. However their homes had been completely destroyed and the land fenced off. With little alternative, they grouped together and were living on the riverbank. Despite the

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<sup>43</sup> See local urban NGO, STT's 'Facts and Figures' report here: <http://www.adhoc-cambodia.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/STT-Resettling-Phnom-Penh-Facts-and-Figures-December-2012.pdf>

inevitable rise of the river in just a few months, residents had built homes and laid a concrete path.

Site R\_TK1 was selected as it was a large site and the resettlement had been organised by AusAID and the ADB. The residents of R\_TK1 were evicted and resettled as a result of the Rehabilitation of the Railways Project coordinated by the ADB and AusAid. This relocation site was supposed to set the example for resettlement projects in the country, however it has faced enormous criticism from residents, Cambodian and International NGOs (STT, 2011; Amnesty, 2011).

R\_ME1 is an older resettlement site, selected to illustrate the failure of development policies and plans to materialise. This site was promised state connections to water and electricity as well as proper roads. None of these have transpired and residents had little hope of seeing improvements any time soon.

R\_ME2 is a resettlement site of over 500 plots, over 50km away from Phnom Penh. However R\_ME2 was abandoned by all but one family. The site was considered too far to commute to Phnom Penh, with no markets, schools, labour opportunities or even a water supply close by. It was chosen to illustrate the abandonment of unsuitable resettlement sites.

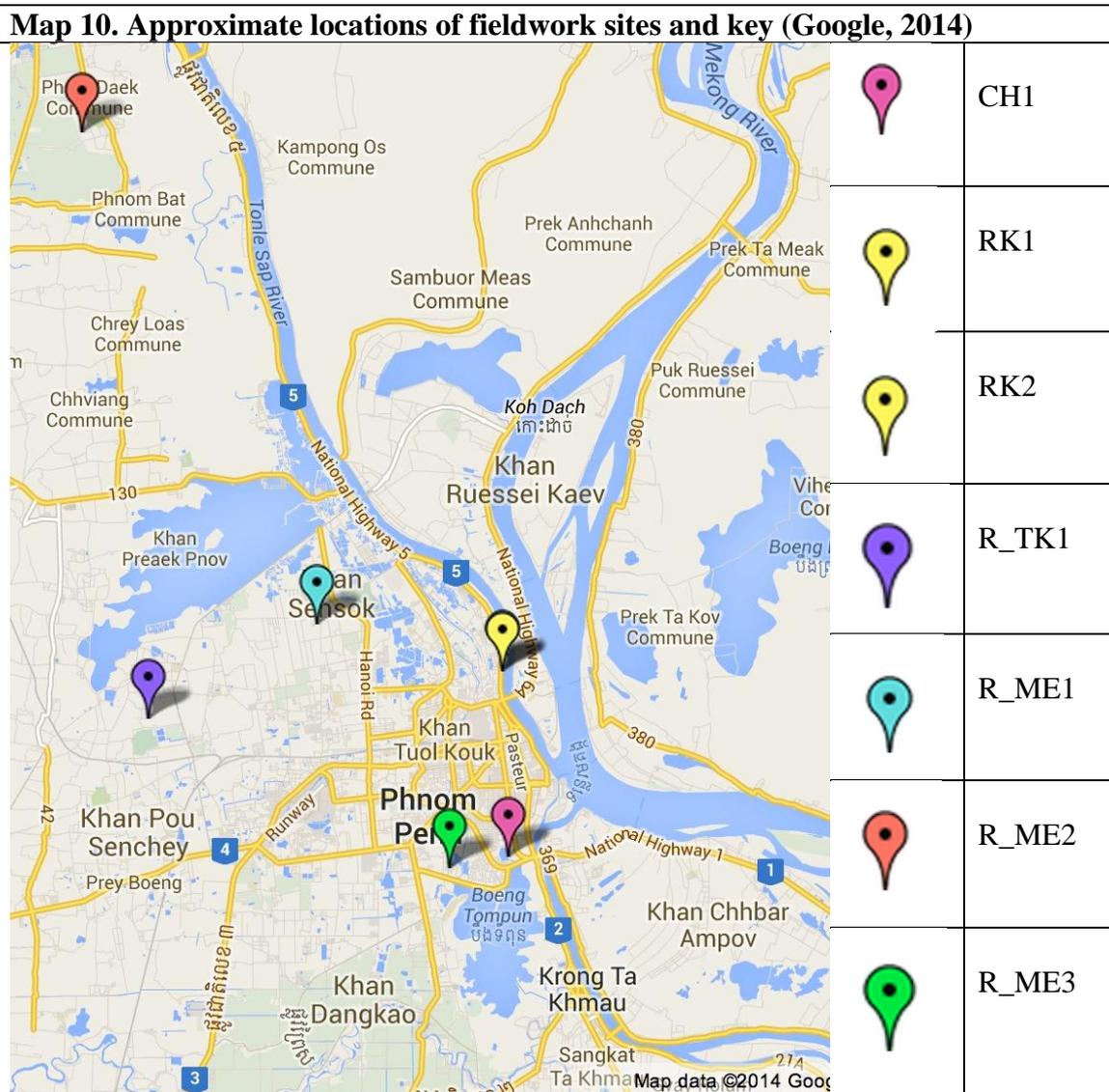
Finally R\_ME3 is a resettlement site close to the city, within 100m of a garment factory with good roads and markets, health centres and schools nearby. This site was chosen as it showed the maintenance or potential improvement in livelihoods and wellbeing that is considered to be an essential part of the resettlement process.

<b>Fig. 15 Case study summary</b>				
<b>Site Ref</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Distance from Wat Phnom (km)</b>	<b>No. Households Surveyed</b>	<b>%</b>
CH1	Facing eviction	6.5	39/68	57%
RK1	Facing eviction	2	2/2	100%
RK2	Facing eviction	2	5/20	25%
R_TK1	Resettlement site	26	39/126	31%
R_ME1	Resettlement site	15	4/20	20%
R_ME2	Resettlement site	54	1/1	100%
R_ME3	Resettlement site	8	32/120	27%

Figure 15 shows the percentage of households surveyed from each site, their eviction status and distance from Wat Phnom. Wat Phnom, the pagoda sharing the same name as the city, has been taken as the marker from which distance is measured due to its central location and cultural importance. These distances have been mapped (see Map 7) and what is immediately observable is that some of these sites are a considerable distance, over 50km, from the city. The location of sites is important as this affects commuting costs. Costs and distance will be discussed in detail below, however to illustrate the point, 1 litre of petrol in Phnom Penh costs roughly \$1.25 and covers 25km economically. If a site is 25km from Phnom Penh, at least \$2.50 is required simply to cover the cost of petrol to go to and from the city. Construction workers and *motodop* drivers earn roughly \$2.50 - \$3.75 per day. Therefore construction workers or *motodop* drivers who live 25km from Phnom Penh would potentially earn \$0-\$1.75 per day, allowing for the cost of petrol for their commute. The actual profit of a *motodop* driver would be in fact far less if we consider *motodop* drivers require more petrol to drive their customers around within the city.

As well as household data, information on all household members was collected including age, gender, marital status, education status and income contributed to the household. As a result, this section will present data on 122 households and 670

household members identified and willing to partake in the survey. Gaps in information are evident in a small number of instances. This is as a result either of hesitation on the part of the respondent to reply to a question, in which case the variable was left blank or poor wording of the first household survey draft, for example requesting ‘relationship to the respondent’ which does not indicate gender.



#### 4.1.ii Household respondents

Household surveys were conducted by speaking with a household respondent. Typically this was the head of the family (Khmer: *Mae Krusah*), an elder of the *Mae Krusah* or the spouse of the *Mae Krusah*. In this survey, 87 per cent of respondents were female and only 13 per cent were male. The status of *Mae Krusah* is not necessarily restricted to men, as 34 per cent of female respondents were considered to be the *Mae Krusah*. This is in contrast to household and family studies, which routinely place a male figure as the head of a household in Cambodia (McKenzie-Pollock, 2005). Nor can it be assumed that females take on the role of *Mae Krusah* only in the absence of a male, as 28 per cent of female *Mae Krusah* were married, 17 per cent were divorced, 53 per cent were widowed and only one was unmarried. On the other hand 100 per cent of male *Mae Krusah* were married. This challenges the understanding that women only take over as head of the household in the absence of a male, in circumstances such as in times of conflict or as a result of genocide (Kumar, 2001).

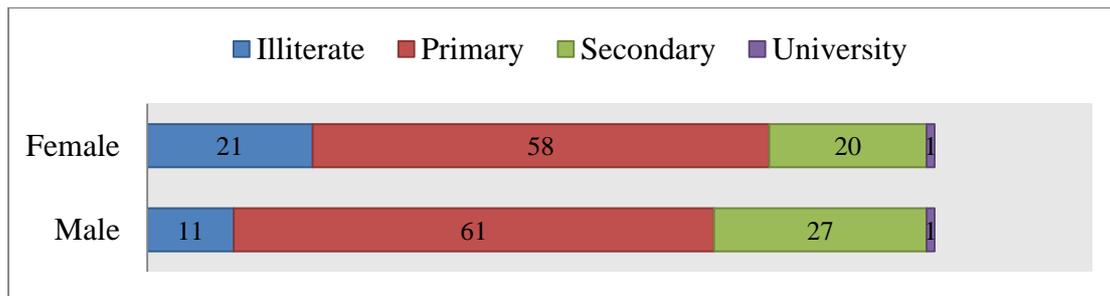
All respondents were over 18, the average age of respondent being 44 years old. 71 per cent were literate. Of this 71 per cent, 48 per cent had stopped education at primary level, 23 per cent had attended some secondary education and one respondent had attended university. Of the illiterate respondents (29 per cent) all but one was female. However, the university-educated respondent was also female. Education will be discussed, amongst other things, in the next section with the larger household member statistics.

#### *4.1.iii Household members*

693 household members were recorded in the household survey. However, some individuals requested that their information not be included and therefore the following information concerns the 670 whose consent was granted. Some information is missing, for example when the age or education level of a household member is unknown. This is often due to extended family members and friends living within a household. However, for 11 individuals the gender was not noted. Instead 'friend' or 'relative' was entered on the form. This is likely due to the earliest survey having a 'relationship to the respondent' question rather than a specific gender question for household members. Occasionally it was possible to listen back to the audio recordings and clarify information, however as Khmer names are not necessarily indicative of gender this was not always possible. Therefore, whilst the information of all consenting household members has been included wherever possible, in a small number of cases it is missing and has been indicated as such.

Of the 670 household members, 53 per cent (355) were female, 45 per cent (304) were male and 2 per cent (11) did not have their gender specified. Figure 16 shows the literacy levels by gender. We can see that whilst 79 per cent of females and 89 per cent of males are literate, female illiteracy figures (21 per cent) are almost double that of male illiteracy levels (11 per cent) which are nonetheless, still significant. Figure 16 also indicates that whilst the majority of male and females attend primary school, the numbers drop drastically for secondary education: only 20 per cent of female household members had received some secondary education and 27 per cent of males. However this is not indicative of the household member having completed their primary or secondary education, only that they received some schooling at that level.

**Fig. 16 Education levels by gender (%)**



The variables of primary, secondary and university education were recommended after consultation with a current teacher, as these categories would be understood by Cambodians despite the changes in education system in the years during and after conflict. The former education system, based upon the French model implemented during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, had been deconstructed under the Khmer Rouge and teachers deliberately targeted for extermination. Throughout the 1980s the education system in Cambodia mirrored that of the Vietnamese system, likely due to their presence in the country, but was restricted in scope by political disagreement as to the appropriate curriculum. The education system was reformed with the early development plans after the presence of UNTAC in the early 1990s. A further system of informal education is acknowledged by UNESCO but not accounted for by the RGC. This relates to preparation for schooling via teaching at home.

At present the government oversees a dual system of formal and non-formal education (NFE) through the Ministry of Education (UNESCO, 2010). The formal education structure is that of primary, secondary and higher education run by schools and institutes supported by the government, for which students pay subsidised fees. Teachers at these institutions receive their wage from the state. Despite it's name, NFE is considered an official avenue of education by the government as they

recommend a curriculum and offer guidelines. Apart from this, responsibility for providing education is held by a third party. These third parties are commonly a local or international NGO, a community scheme or classes conducted by Monks and Nuns at the local pagoda. NFE is relied upon to provide education for the poor and disadvantaged, minority groups and those aged 15 – 45 (RGC National Policy on Non-Formal Education, 2002). Whilst there are the formal and NFE policies in place, education in Cambodia faces many obstacles including corruption, low teacher wages, limited resources, migration and seasonal work (UNESCO, 2010).

One respondent, a teacher, discussed at length the problem facing the Cambodian formal education system. He stated that teachers are paid so poorly that they run extra classes and charge students a premium for these extra classes. To make sure all students pay for extra classes, only half the curriculum is taught in normal teaching hours. Therefore these extra classes are not added support for students, but are in fact half of the curriculum. This practice was widespread he claimed and posed further problems. The teacher who was considered to be more senior had the monopoly on extra classes. Therefore as a more junior member of teaching staff, he was unable to benefit from giving tutorials and subsequently was unable to supplement his income and unable to support his young family.

One of the *tuktuk* drivers interviewed, Tom, commented on corruption within the public school system from the perspective of a parent, but also revealed another issue facing graduates who wish to become teachers in the capital:

*The public school, a lot of corruption. pay 1000KHR per day to public teacher, but private education cost the same! Just pay at the end of the month. Teacher in Phnom Penh can earn more but if a teacher graduate wants to stay in Phnom Penh, has to*

*pay \$10,000 if you want to stay. Otherwise you go to Koh Kong! Preah Vihear! (Provinces very far from the capital). Yeah sure. Corruption, sure! Pay \$10,000 USD to Ministry of Education. Got to clean from top down. Like sweeping steps. Clean the bottom, just gets dirty from the top. If you have money you have everything*

Tom knew of the corruption facing new teachers as his nephew had graduated and wanted to teach in Phnom Penh, but could not afford to pay \$10,000 USD to the Ministry of Education. In his analogy that follows, ‘like sweeping steps’, Tim refers to the need to tackle corruption from the top, rather than the bottom: If one sweeps the bottom step first, dirt from the steps above will fall on it as they are cleaned. If you sweep the top step first however, all the steps will be cleaned. Therefore, tackling corruption amongst teachers is futile if corruption remains in the Ministry of Education.

Other education issues to consider are that of the quality of education and cheating amongst students in school. This has recently come to the media’s attention as after a recent crackdown on students cheating in exams led to 70% of students failing their year 12 exams in 2014. Year 12 exams are the Cambodian equivalent to the UK A-Level examinations and determine a student’s entrance to university. Of the 90,000 students who took the test, only 11 were awarded an A. This comes in contrast to the 80% of students who passed their exams in 2013 (Guardian, 2014; Radio Free Asia, 2014; Phnom Penh Post, 2014). The failure of schooling attendance or presence of a school certificate to guarantee an education is extremely problematic for collecting data on this subject. This research however proceeds on the basis on the information offered by respondents was not given in order to benefit themselves financially or otherwise, and therefore unlikely to prompt exaggeration.

4.1.iv Rural-urban migration

**Fig. 17 Provincial Origins of Household Respondents**

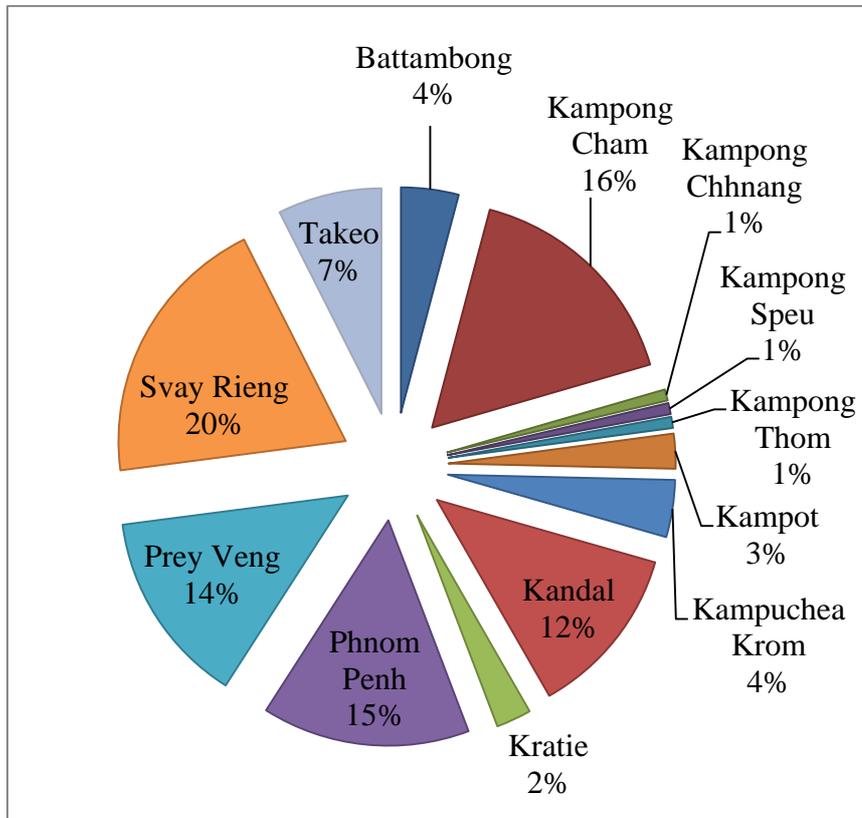


Figure 17 displays the provincial origins of household respondents. Of the 122 households surveyed, only 15 per cent of respondents were originally from Phnom Penh. The remaining 85 per cent had migrated to the capital. 62 per cent of those from outside Phnom Penh came from the provinces immediately East and North East of the capital, between Phnom Penh and Vietnam: Kandal (12 per cent), Prey Veng (14 per cent), Svay Rieng (20 per cent) and Kampong Cham (16 per cent). Migrants from as far away as Battambang (4 per cent) in North West Cambodia were also included in the survey. Respondents commonly stated the reason for their migration to the city was to earn more money to support their families in the provinces. A *tuktuk* driver interviewee described the draw of the city:

*You know in Cambodian countryside is very hard to find a job. But you know if you want to make a business in the countryside you cannot, old people they start before you, the business already there, it is hard to get business from them... If you come from the countryside, you know if you want to rent apartment close to the city, expensive, if you go outside to suburb is ok. Some people come from the countryside can rent small room 2.5x2.5m room, near airport. Share bathroom, around \$15-30 USD per month. Especially for garment factory. Eat not so good, where they live pollution, noisy, dirty, but no choice. No choice. Debt? Die? Miserable? Which you chose? You choose miserable.*

Migration to the city is also seasonal as people live in the city and return home to the provinces during rice planting and harvesting times. However another interviewee described that this the reverse is also true, that people who live in the countryside come to the city for work for a couple of weeks at a time:

*If someone sleeping in his tuktuk, he is from countryside. His family in countryside and maybe he comes for two three weeks and goes home. But it is not good sleep. So I can say all the driver of tuktuk around 90% from provinces so after the collect and cut the rice, they go and come and work. You know in Phnom Penh around 2.5million so the real Phnom Penh people around 30-40% but 60-70% from province and come but driver a tuktuk, 90% from countryside. Depend on the driver, house in the countryside, after tuktuk driving job he go home feed the pig, chicken, grow rice. A lot of local jobs in the countryside.*

The interviewee here has described how people avoid paying for accommodation by sleeping in their *tuktuks*. Therefore they are able to save as much money as possible and return home with supplementary income.

There was an overwhelming sense that many respondents did not like the city and would, if they had the choice, return to their families and homes in the countryside. This speaks to the importance of the family as a means of support, but also identity,

pride, safety and strength in Cambodian society (McKenzie-Pollock, 2005). The same interviewee quoted above, stressed his desire to return to the countryside despite earning good money in the capital:

*I don't like to live in Phnom Penh but I have no choice. For me I want to have a house near a local market in the province. I want my wife to have a stall in the market, but in the province not in Phnom Penh, it is too big for me here. You know the market in countryside is not too big, is small, you want to relax, you want breeze... I can drive easily, play volleyball. This is what I done when I was young. In Phnom Penh I don't have a choice. In future maybe I sell my house and I build local house and then I can open a farm behind my home and in front my home I can sell groceries with my wife, or I can repair motorbike. This is what I want. I don't like competitive job. For the city when you are young, happy place, disco, but when you have family, you are thinking man, you're a husband and father.*

#### **4.2 What resources and mechanisms do they rely upon to survive?**

This section takes a closer look at individual job types and the urban poor economy. The relevance of the term urban poor economy will be reinforced through engaging with debate surrounding the informal economy and the presentation of job types and income data. Job vulnerability and insecurity will be addressed and the case for the term urban poverty reiterated. The presence of what the author has termed horizontal regulation will also be demonstrated through qualitative analysis. Moving on from the individual level, household income will be looked at including expenditure and prices, alternative sources of livelihood support, and saving and borrowing. Data from all seven sites will be presented to demonstrate the disparity between sites. The obvious line of comparison is that of sites facing eviction and those in resettlement sites,

however variations within these groups will be highlighted and suggestions for influential factors identified.

#### *4.2.i The informal economy and decent work*

This section will develop on the informal economy discussion begun in the introduction. Relevant academic debate relating to current discussions of labour, insecurity and informal economy will be addressed, followed by ILO definitions of informal economy and associated terms. Crucial to this are the ILO Decent Work Agenda, which will be addressed using the case study of the ILO Better Factories Cambodia programme.

#### The informal Economy

The term ‘informal economy’ first emerged in the early 1970s in Hart’s article on Ghanaian informal income opportunities in the *Journal of Modern African Studies*, and the joint UNDP and ILO report on employment and inequality in Kenya. Both texts challenged the Marxist idea of a surplus of unemployed people, the ‘reserve army’ (Hart, 1973; Denning 2010). The informal economy did not disappear with the growth of capitalism and mechanisation, as many foretold it would, instead the informal economy expanded and permeated every country across the world (Harriss-White, 2010). Since this realisation in the 1970s, the informal economy became an umbrella term for all kinds of economic activity outside the taxed and regulated formal state economy. Precisely because such activities are by definition beyond the reach of official regulations and statistical and fiscal monitoring, it is inherently difficult to secure reliable quantitative estimates of the scale and scope of ‘informal’ economic activities. However, despite its extensive use, definitions are vague and

have been criticised as offering little analytical purchase (Oberai, 1993; Godfrey et. al, 2001; Rizzo, 2002).

Whilst there has been a departure from the constraints of a binary approach to the informal economy which is outlined below shortly in discussion relating to the ILO's Decent Work Agenda, the term persists in scholarship as academics acknowledge its shortcomings but grapple with how people operate outside of state regulation, what this means, how it presents in countries transitioning from war to peace and what the consequences of these unregulated economic practices might be for development. In this regard it is useful to review the literature of how unregulated economic practices are conceptualised and how these conceptualisations might relate to the Cambodian context. This discussion sets the scene for the urban specific angle offered in this thesis, which calls for an understanding of the *urban poor economy*.

Unregulated economies are complicated in peacetime but even more so in the context of a country undergoing a transition out of armed conflict such as Cambodia was throughout the 1980s and 1990s due to the necessary disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of troops, refugees and internally displaced persons who require employment and homes (del Castillo, 2010). The subdivisions of *combat*, *shadow*, *coping* and economies have been offered by Goodhand (2004) to understand how informal economies and their actors behave in the specific context of armed conflict, reconstruction and state building. The *combat economy* refers to economic resources, their production, allocation and mobilisation, aimed at disempowering particular groups within a conflict. The *shadow economy* speaks to economic activity unregulated by state institutions and finally the *coping economy* encompasses

population groups who 'cope' i.e. survive through diverse livelihood strategies aimed at maintaining their asset base. However Williams and Windebank, in their book 'Poverty and the Third Way' (2003), argue that an ability to 'cope' is not determined simply by household economic inputs and outputs. For example two identical households may have the same income, but one has the support of support of a family member to care for their children whereas the other has to pay for childcare, therefore creating an extra expense (Williams & Windebank, 2003, p. 79). Instead, our analysis of whether a household can 'cope' or not, must take into account the ability of the household to call upon services or acquire the goods they deem necessary (Williams & Windebank, 2003, p.80). Williams and Windebank refer to this as *coping capability* (2003), emphasising outputs and an ability to complete work, rather than simply measuring household income to understand poverty. Williams and Windebank place wellbeing and the ability to meet needs and desires on an equal level with providing food and shelter for a household. Taken *prima facie* this understanding of alternative means of supporting household income through means other than income is relevant to the objective of this research. It is exactly the non-monetary factors that are overlooked, but essential in our understanding of urban poor lives and their wellbeing, which are disregarded in much academic and policy related discussion of the informal economy.

However Williams and Windebank's inclusion of desires in the *coping capabilities* may stretch a little too far, as the presence of carpet in a home or the whether or not an individual has two pairs of outdoor shoes (2003, p. 81), goes beyond that of 'coping' and into the realm of 'luxury'. People from all walks of life have unfulfilled desires, such a new kitchen or a foreign holiday once a year, but this does not indicate

that an individual is living in poverty. Rather, the political economy approach to urban poverty pursued by this research combines the importance of the diversity of livelihood strategies identified by Goodhand's *coping economy* with the significance of non-monetary factors and the ability to acquire what households deem necessary, from Williams and Windebank's *coping capabilities*

Unregulated economic activity can have a positive presence by providing a supportive network and essential goods during and after a conflict. Social and household economic practices, non-monetary exchanges between small personal networks, (Wallace & Latcheva, 2006; Pugh, 2004) become lifesaving during a transitional context to create the *coping economy*, filling legitimate deficits in social welfare under a weak state. Attempting to wipe out or regulate these kinds of practices, which have been criticised as undermining the state by increasing corruption and exploitation (Wallace & Latcheva, 2006; Pugh, 2004), could be devastating to poor and or remote communities, as this would take away the safety net of those who are most vulnerable. The removal of the *coping economy* would eliminate social-welfare elements that a weak state simply cannot provide (Pugh, 2004).

Taking analysis further along the trajectory of development, from transitioning economies to economies in developmental states, issues may arise when essential coping/informal economic practices become consolidated beyond that of survival and begin to undermine the legitimacy of the state or formal state economy, such as through tax evasion. A-legal practices (a-legal, as opposed to illegal due to a lack of jurisdiction or law rather than breaking the law) may become illegal once regulatory institutions, rules and laws are formed; making practices illegal that may have

previously existed in an a-legal economy. Wallace and Latecheva, whilst acknowledging the genuine supportive role social and household economies can play, argue that *black economies* (criminal and corrupt activity outside of the formal economy) erode confidence in the state and public institutions, and also increase the perception of corruption (2006). Affecting public spending by lowering the tax intake, distorting government figures for employment income and consumption (Schneider & Enste, 2000), so-called *black economy* activity can undermine a fragile government and increase the risk of a return to conflict. It has been argued, however, that unregulated economies can actually have a laundering effect; forcing a corrupt formal economy to reform as persons launder their money, by-passing the added cost of bribery and private accumulation via incorrupt informal economic practices and therefore mitigating government induced distortions to enhance formal state economic activity (Pil Choi & Thum, 2005). Whilst both are plausible occurrences and perhaps applicable in other transitioning states, the corruption and nepotism that plagues Cambodia has been institutionalised both locally and nationally. The *coping economy* (Goodhand, 2004) or *safety nets* (Pugh, 2004) form an essential mechanism of survival for Cambodians and extend beyond a transition from war to peace. They become normalised means to support a household, external to state mechanisms or initiatives (Goodhand, 2004; Pugh, 2004; Rizzo, 2002). These unregulated economic coping practices during times of peace are more commonly referred to as the informal economy. However in peacetime or conflict, these informal coping mechanisms resonate insecurity.

Lyons and Snoxell (2005) highlight just how insecure informal economy workers are through their research into informal traders' ability to withstand 'shocks' through

social capital. Social capital is a popular but difficult to define term, resting upon the assumption that social, political and economic networks are important for desirable outcomes (Fine & Lapavistas, 2004). For example, colleagues, friends or family may be able to provide financial, political or personal assistance in a time of need. Social capital is problematic, however the focus of this thesis is on another part of Lyons and Snoxell's article, the presence of 'shocks'. These shocks may be national issues such as currency devaluation, but may also be individual issues such as a family member falling ill, forced displacement or the death of a family member. An example of a shock identified in my research was the changing of utilities payments. Payments for electricity could be paid weekly or monthly. This was within the saving capacity of the respondents. After resettlement, however, electricity bills were ordered to be paid quarterly. Saving for three months electricity was beyond the capacity of respondents and, as a result, many had had their electricity cut off. A village chief who had taken responsibility for all payments to the electricity company exacerbated the situation. The chief not only failed to pay their bills on time, but squandered the electricity money on alcohol. He was however powerful, aligned with the local authorities and not afraid to use violence against the residents.

For Lyons and Snoxell the ability to create and enhance social capital is one mechanism for surviving such shocks. They also correctly identify female informal traders as particularly exposed, as women make up a higher percentage of workers in the informal economy according to the ILO (2002). Yet for Lyons and Snoxell the informal economy is once again limited to traders and little attention is paid to the other forms of economic activity within the informal economy. In denying the

complexity of the informal economy, Lyons and Snoxell advocate the notion that informal economies hinder economic progress.

Breman describes another aspect of insecurity for informal economy workers: perpetual mobility (Breman, 2004: p. 232). Developments in transport and transport infrastructure have resulted in workers not only migrating internally but internationally. Further, in 1995 the World Bank's *World Development Report* declared that the informal sector was not a cause of, but a solution to poverty (World Bank 1995). By abandoning the formal sector and low employment figures, the Bank advocated informal employment as the best means of guaranteeing employment friendly growth (Breman, 2004: pp. 236-7). This, Breman argues, increases the vulnerability and migration of informal sector workers as a consequence of exposure to the global economy, thereby creating a free for all (1996, p.12).

The scale of labour insecurity became evident during the lengthy discussions with household members when asked about their jobs and how often they worked. Often respondents were unable to give even approximations of how many times a week or month they might work, as they simply could not say. They might work two or three days on week, five days the next, but only a single days work for two weeks. In these circumstances, the most recent week or month was taken for the survey. Similar issues arose when trying to estimate wages. A successful day for some sellers may see them earn \$5 USD, however some days they might make a loss. Often they were unable to explain the reason behind this variation. Occasionally, one respondent explained, that this was down to circumstances out of their control, such as poor quality produce bought at the wholesale market. Poor quality produce may come

about after a bad harvest or if fresh vegetables are bruised and damaged in transit as a result of not being packed sufficiently. This leaves street sellers in a predicament as to whether to buy damaged goods or go a day without an income. However having already spent money for transportation to the wholesale market, they are already at a loss. Reluctantly they buy poor quality vegetables to sell, knowing that they will likely lose money that day.

The most precarious circumstances were those from respondents completing manual labour tasks in R\_TK1. Both males and females loaded and unloaded 25-60kg rice sacks from trucks. Workers in this instance waited by the side of the road to be picked up by the trucks if they were needed. Sometimes the trucks arrived three times per week, sometimes they didn't appear for two weeks. Due to their resettlement location, far away from main roads and with little passing traffic, it was unlikely that they would find any other labour opportunities.

Poor health was a contributing factor to labour insecurity. On the most basic level, many of the respondents and their families do not have shoes meaning that not only are small cuts prolific, but these cuts are open to infection. In site CH1 in southern Phnom Penh, many women complained of headaches and illness. This may be a result of living over and next to open sewage in 40-degree heat. A life history given by a respondent in CH1, named Srey for the purposes of this research, explained how ill health stopped her from working and had lost her a training contract to be a pharmacist's assistance and a much sought after garment factory job, as her headaches and stomach aches were so painful she could not attend work regularly.

*I started working as a cleaner in a health centre. I knew someone who already worked there and they got me the job. When I was working there I began to help the*

*Pharmacist at the centre and after a while, he offered to pay for me to train to become a pharmacist assistant. I wanted to be a pharmacist assistant so much! But I couldn't. I get so sick with intestinal problems and stomach problems that I could not work regularly. I have to go to hospital to have injections in my stomach. I also think too much and because of this I get sick. When we have money I feel ok, but when we have no money, this is the time when I get sick. I had to stop my work at the health centre because I could not go in regularly. Later I got a job at a garment factory, but I could only work for two weeks. The conditions were so difficult and I became sick again. In the garment factory if your job requires you to stand, you have to stand all day. If your job needs you to sit, you have to sit all day. It is not good for your health. There are artificial bright lights and no fresh air, only air conditioning, which makes you sick. Now, when I am feeling well, I sell snails and shells to eat from a cart along the street. But some days I am too sick to do this. When I am sick for a long time but need money, I make and sell borbor (rice porridge).*

In her account Srey describes the arduous conditions of garment factory workers and the different labour opportunities open to her, however also how her poor health has affected her job prospects and ability to keep a regular job. Srey describes how at times of low income, her illness becomes worse. Whereas Srey experiences unemployment as a result of ill health, the sudden ill health of a family member, a health 'shock' can lead to the impoverishment of an entire family. A recent study from China on health payment-induced poverty investigated the financial impact of a health 'shock' to find the consequences are catastrophic and equivalent to a poverty trap (Yang, 2014). . The WHO's 1999 report, 'Labour market changes and job insecurity: a challenge for social welfare and health promotion', found that not only was ill health a problem for job security, but job insecurity was a major contributor to ill health. R. Moynihan writing in the *British Medical Journal* in 2012 emphasized that chronic job insecurity is more dangerous to an individual's health than unemployment. Both texts argue that increased job security is not only being good for

production rates and profit, but is highly beneficial to an employee's health. However, insecurity and informality too often go hand in hand.

### The Decent Work Agenda

A shift towards recognising the variation within the informal economy took place in 1999 at the International Labour Conference with the paper titled 'Decent Work' (ILO, 1999). This was further developed in reference to the informal economy with the paper 'Decent Work and the Informal Economy' (ILO, 2002). Emerging from this recognition of the diversity of the informal economy and the continued ambiguous use of the term, the Decent Work Agenda (DWA) was set. The DWA aims to put into action the goal of the ILO, to *promote opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and productive work, in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity* (ILO, 2006, p. 3), through the implementation of four key objectives:

1. Employment - *opportunities for employment, investment, entrepreneurship and development in the aim of creating sustainable livelihoods.*
2. Rights - *establishing or reinforcing labour laws that recognise and respect workers rights, in particular for the poor and disadvantaged.*
3. Social Protection - *ensuring working conditions are safe including the provision of breaks and length of working hours, access to healthcare and compensation for loss of income as well as respect for family and social values.*
4. Representation - *allowing and facilitating workers and employers organisations and dispute resolution mechanisms. (ILO website, Decent Work Agenda)<sup>44</sup>*

The DWA set the ball rolling for a new approach to informal workers and informal economies, taking into account the nature of employment as well as work within formal and informal enterprises. As a result the ILO works with a variety of

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<sup>44</sup> Available here: <http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/decent-work-agenda/lang-en/index.htm>

terminology relating to informal workers, places of work and means of employment.

These include:

1. *The informal sector*: production and employment that takes place in small unincorporated or unregistered enterprises.
2. *Informal employment*: employment without social insurance/protection that takes place in both the informal and formal sector.
3. *The informal economy*: all units, activities and workers defined above and their outputs.<sup>45</sup>

This breakdown is further detailed by dividing informal employment into two categories: informal self-employed and informal wage employment. The informal self-employed includes employers in informal enterprises, contributing family workers, members of informal producers cooperatives and own account workers (Chan, 2012, p. 7). Informal waged employees are those working without social insurance or protections that are usually associated with formal contracted employment. Work that falls under this category includes domestic workers, manual labour, part-time workers, undeclared and unregistered workers (Chan, 2012, pp. 7-8).

The ILO's DWA is informed by this more detailed understanding of informality in the workplace, defining 'decent' work as follows:

*Decent work... sums up the aspirations all people have for their working lives; for work that is productive, delivers a fair income with security and social protection, safeguards basic rights, offers equality of opportunity and treatment, prospects for personal development and the chance for recognition and to have your voice heard.*<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Informal sector defined at the 1993 ICLS, informal employment defined at the 2003 ICLS and the informal economy definition from Chan WIECO working paper, 2012, p. 8.

<sup>46</sup> Quote taken from ILO website's Decent Work page available here: <http://www.ilo.org/asia/decentwork/lang--en/index.htm>

The ILO goes on to state that decent work is central to poverty alleviation efforts and ultimately is the foundation of peace and security in society. As a result the DWA has become part of the Millennium Development Goals and informed the recent World Development Report (WDR) 2013 titled 'Jobs'.

The WDR Jobs report builds on the foundation of the DWA by identifying the importance of jobs and job creation for development as well as self-esteem and happiness (WDR 2013, p.2). The report explores how job creation can be encouraged, such as through education or on the job training; whether or not improvements in industry in one country will come at the cost of jobs in another country; how people and jobs are able to withstand 'shocks', and how workers can be reallocated from areas of low productivity to greater productivity are addressed. The report identifies a typology of challenges facing jobs and development, highlighting the different issues facing agrarian and urbanizing countries, youth unemployment and aging societies, resource rich nations and small island nations and conflict affected areas.

Despite its length and breadth, however, the starting points of reference, of the waged and unwaged worker, fail to acknowledge the complexity of job types and the influence of external factors including social, cultural and political contexts that influence job opportunities in developing countries (van der Hoeven, 2012). The report doesn't clearly define what it means by 'good jobs' and how these differ from 'decent work' (Bretton Woods Project, 2012). As a result recommendations for 'good jobs' to tackle the challenges identified are vague. For example, in response to the challenge of urbanising countries, recommendations are to provide opportunities for women. What this report does not recognise is that in many urbanising contexts and

rural for that matter, women are already working in paid employment as well as at home. Women at home frequently support the trade of other members by preparing goods for the market, making handicrafts, completing jobs that can be done in the home as well as taking care of family members and other essential domestic work. For example in site R\_ME3 one woman who was at home during the day taking care of children and her elderly father also prepared fresh pineapples for other family members to sell. As the hot sun dried the fruit out, rather than take all the pineapples to sell throughout the day, the family members came back periodically to collect fresh pineapples to sell on the streets. This meant that pineapples were kept fresh but also limited the number of unsold pineapples at the end of the day. In another group of households, bags of clothes fresh from nearby garment factories were delivered to the houses by *motodop* in the morning and collected at the end of the day. Any family members at home, children and the elderly included, took a piece of clothing and trimmed the loose threads of garments using small shears. This was done ad hoc throughout the day and it supplemented the income of the household. Work therefore was completed around other tasks and due to the relative ease of the task, could be completed by young children and adults, and when time became available. For example some children were trimming threads when they came home from school for lunch, whereas the grandmother sat under a palm tree for shade and socialised with other residents for most of the day, whilst trimming threads. Another woman who stayed home during the day used old newspapers to make gift bags, which were bought by a local handicraft enterprise to present their goods. In this instance the woman was given piles of newspaper, string and glue by the organisation, which she bought from her own supply of the bags she made. These examples demonstrate jobs, or informal economic activity, which would not necessarily be classified as 'decent jobs'

but are achievable and flexible to allow women, or whoever is at home, to contribute directly and indirectly to household income whilst caring for children, other family members and completing domestic necessities.

Ben Selwyn identifies three further issues with the DWA: the inability to explain work that is not ‘decent’, weak enforcement and the DWA’s weak conceptualisation of class relations under capitalism (Selwyn, 2014). Significantly, Selwyn demonstrates the DWA’s inability to identify the causes of ‘indecent’ work by outlining assumptions underpinning the approach, namely the assumption that improper policy choices and unsuitable micro-institutional structures are the cause of indecent work. The case study of the ILO in Cambodia is pertinent here through their Better Factories Cambodia (BFC) project.<sup>47</sup> There is scarcely a more monitored programme which involved United States of America and Cambodia signing a three year textile and apparel exports on the condition of better working conditions and pay for Cambodians employed in the sector. However despite the boom in the industry and employment in the sector, the garment industry is plagued with political interference in trade unions, unsustainable working hours and poor working conditions, disputes over pay and unfair dismissals (Selwyn, 2014; Arnold, 2013). And whilst all factories in Cambodia must sign up to the better factories programme, the BFC has no power to punish those who do not enforce its policies. (Rollet, Phnom Penh Post, 1<sup>st</sup> October 2015). This reflects Selwyn’s second critique of the DWA, the lack of enforcement.

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<sup>47</sup> See website: <http://betterfactories.org/>

When discussing enforcement of DWA norms, Selwyn argues that despite the World Bank and the ILO focusing on decent work and jobs in the 2013 report, there is a lack of practical implementation of these norms. Strategies of mobilisation for trade unions are missing whilst the struggle of workers is not recognised as a contributing factor to DWA. Instead, elite actors dominate the discourse and use the DWA as a brand enhancement strategy, whilst negating the principles the DWA advocates. For Cambodia this can be seen in the BFC programme which was recently congratulated for its performance by the World Bank (Rollet, 2015) yet the BFC was described as a failure in a recent report from Stanford Law School and Workers Consortium (2013). This report titled *Monitoring in the Dark*, described BFC factories as prioritising factory owners and international buyers interests over those of factory workers, failing to address wages and worker disputes and a general lack of transparency (Stanford Law School, 2013).

Selwyn's final critique concerns the DWA's conceptualisation of class relations under capitalism. It is argued in his paper that the DWA fails to recognise an essential component of neoliberal capitalism: the systematic exploitation of the workforce. This oversight leads the DWA to assume that if the right institutional context can be created, capitalists will not exploit their workforce. However for factories in Cambodia to compete globally, under the BFC exploitation of a poor workforce has been an essential factor (Selwyn, 2014) and maintaining this exploitation, or working to increase it, has been the reality of the garment industry in Cambodia.

Rather than decent work underpinning a society's peace and security, it has resulted in insecurity, deepening poverty and further exploitation. And alternative argued for

by Selwyn is that of a ‘bottom up’ approach where reform is guided by workers and worker led reform. By prioritising the elites and institutional arrangements over workers and worker-led struggle, the DWA is disarming the people it is designed to support. Instead the prioritisation of workers and worker-led reform should form a basis for context specific short term, medium and long term goals (Selwyn, 2014).

Global changes in labour and employment, such as the shift from industrial work, agriculture and farming to service provision and activities, outsourcing of services overseas and the increasing urbanisation of the work force have been identified by Standing (2010). Standing addresses these changes from the perspective of poverty alleviation and increasing insecurity to argue that social policy, not labour markets, are most appropriate at tackling economic insecurity and poverty. Labour markets instead are better placed to tackle economic function and efficiency.

The discussion of DWA, which began in response to the attempts of the ILO to disaggregate the informal economy, appears most predominantly in the BFC programme that focuses on contractual work within the garment industry. Many respondents saw factory work, despite the poor working conditions, as a highly desirable job. This research will return to factory workers and other formal employment in the following section, which argues for a term, which reflects the urban context and non-monetary contributions to households such as support, and preparation alongside opportunistic monetary income from desirable goods.

#### 4.2.ii *The Urban Poor Economy*

*Cities in developing countries have substantial surplus labour in various guises. Their labour force continues nevertheless to increase, swelled not only by natural population growth but also by rural-urban migration that accounts for more than half of urban growth in most developing countries (Gugler, 1997, p. 114)*

Cities are centres of power and wealth, but also of surplus. Surplus labour is nominally spoken about in an inevitable sense. It is assumed and usually accepted that a certain level of the population will not contribute to social good. The argument, that surplus population is a bi-product of development, can be traced back to the work of 18<sup>th</sup> Century scholar The Reverend Thomas Robert Malthus. Malthusian scholars theorise population rise and fall through a series of positive checks that increase the death rate and preventative checks that decrease the birth rate. Through these checks, which include famine, disease, war, contraception, abortion and celibacy, the population is self-correcting. During the process of these checks exists a surplus population. This 18<sup>th</sup> Century work has been interpreted by scholars to argue that capitalism facilitates progress, a rise in productivity and population, which includes checks resulting in the exclusion of parts of the population from enjoying this progress and productivity (Duffield, 2007). In other words, progress for some can only come at the cost to others. These ‘others’ are the poor and marginalised, the surplus population, collateral damage or ‘human debris’ (Arendt, 1951).

Marx drew his theory of capitalism from classical political economy, in particular the work of Ricardo: a system of generalized commodity production whose output is bought and sold on the market. Ricardo portrayed modern society as an antagonistic class structure made up of landlords, capitalists and workers who can only increase

their respective shares of the net product by reducing those of others (Callinicos, 1999: p. 86). For Marx, class formation and relations are key features of capitalism. Labourers, unlike slaves or workers in a feudal system, are doubly free (free from the control of owners/lords, and free to sell labour power to any bidder) but compelled to sell their labour power to survive. Capitalists are equally compelled to innovate by the logic of competition. Marx rejected theories developed from the starting point of the individual, however the abilities of the individual to innovate and produce, i.e. social production, set the foundation for the development of class through the relationship between those whom exploit and those whom are exploited. Labour production, for example, is a type of social production. Marx's belief that capitalism created a 'reserve army of labour', a proportion of the population permanently unemployed, has come to be understood as a necessary part of employment relations of employment and unemployment (Ceruti, 2010, Denning, 2010: p. 84). Marxist theory of primitive accumulation accounts for the reserve army of labour as a result of the transition from collective to private property rights. Harvey (2004) develops the theory of primitive accumulation to argue that the reserve army also comes about through accumulation by dispossession whereby the powerful few dispossess the weak majority of land and wealth. Harvey might argue that this is the case in Cambodia due to the selling off of public goods such as land, lakes and other natural resources. This may also be the case in relation to the forced evictions taking place in Phnom Penh whereby the government is sectioning and selling off lucrative parts of the city, despite the fact that people have been living in these areas for decades.

Neoliberal economists argue that involuntary unemployment doesn't exist: unemployment is either voluntary or due to a backlog in the labour market (Denning,

2010: p. 85). This may tie into the luxury of unemployment hypothesis discussed in the introduction (Gilbert, 1994; Gugler, 1997). This hypothesis supposes that unemployment is a luxury of those who can afford to be unemployed. Those facing real hardship cannot afford to be unemployed and do not have the savings or family support to fall back upon.

This thesis has not found evidence to support this hypothesis however.

Unemployment was rare in this study, however a small number of cases were found.

In these circumstances it was usually due to ill health or old age that a household member was unemployed. In this instance, the unemployed member usually takes on household duties, caring for children, cooking, cleaning or preparing goods for sale by other members of the household. Unemployment for an individual without a family or friend to rely upon however is a disaster and an issue of life or death. One life history respondent, Tep, described how as an orphan he had fled exploitation and physical abuse by his employers:

***Tep:** My parents disappeared when I was young. For a while I lived and worked for an old man. The old man brought me Phnom Penh to go to an orphan organisation he said. However, I was cheated, and he sold me to a rich man. I had to do a lot of work for him on the farm for one year. He said that the contract is one year, so I could not leave before the contract. But I stay there many years. Then I decided to run away from that place but the rich man's guards tried to find me, they wanted to catch me back. The rich man was a nice guy, but his wife and child were not kind. In early morning, at 4 am, I had to clean pigs' cages, feeding them. I also look after the cows on that farm. I worked from very early to very late. I tried to run away many times but they brought me back. But then one time I ran away to Phnom Penh, but I was robbed my first night as I slept under a bridge. I don't know where to go. I couldn't find work; no one would hire me. I tried to be an ejai (recyclables collector) but people beat me and pushed me away. I didn't know what to do, so I went to a Wat. The*

*monks in the Wat allowed me to become a monk, and gave me an education in the Wat.*

Tep did not chose unemployment; rather he tried everything he could do to avoid it. The respondent recalled how in feeling hopeless and destitute he went to a Wat to pray. It was here that he met a monk who took pity on him, offered him food, clothing, a place to live and gave him an education. It was as a result of this education organised by the monks at the Wat that the young man was able to learn to read, write, learnt numeracy and began to learn English. With these skills, he was able to find a job as a security guard in Phnom Penh. At the time of interview Tep had left his security guard job and had become a *tuktuk* driver. Excerpts from his interview continue below.

Guy Standing's (2011) work identifies the emergence of a section of society he calls the *precariat* – a 'dangerous new class'. The members of Standing's *precariat* are unaware of their status: for the *precariat* is not a class as far as the working class or middle class are concerned, but a class 'in the making' (Standing, 2011). It is made up of three groups. The Atavists Standing identifies as descendants from traditional manual labourers and lives, angry at the status quo and the inability to reproduce the past. They are 'alienated, anomic, anxious and angry' (2011) and as such, blame migrants and politicians for their precarious situations. The Nostalgics are alienated, angry, anxious and anomic yet they are different to the Atavists as they are migrants or ethnic minorities. The Nostalgics are also politically timid and unable to relate to society, yet are without a home. Finally he describes the Progressives, a large group of educated people who feel duped and denied the future they were promised through their pursuit of education and qualifications. One unifying characteristic of the

*precariat* is labour insecurity. The *precariat* are not just insecure, but have accepted the expectation and accept a life of labour insecurity lies before them (Standing, 2014). The *precariat* largely consists of youth and is also disproportionately female (Standing, 2011; Breman, 2013).

However, whilst Standing's book may be useful to understand the emergence of youth rioting in Europe in the past decade, Standing's focus on Western and advanced economies, drawing from similarly western media, lacks historical contextualisation and offers little more than a one-size-fits-all model for understanding insecure labour conditions (Breman, 2013). Standing's *precariat* class fails to acknowledge or accommodate localised histories, economies, cultures and politics. It also paints a negative and aggressive picture of the insecure work force, which he argues is looking to blame, name and shame people for their undesirable circumstances. Participation in the informal economy is for some a choice, as he himself wrote in his 2010 article. For example many of the small business owners and *tuktuk* drivers explicitly stated that their choice of profession was their choice. Opportunities existed for young men to work regular, contracted hours, but that these jobs were undesirable.

Alongside and very much bound to the characteristics of labour insecurity in Cambodia is a culture of violence and instability. As discussed at length in the historical background chapter, Cambodia has experienced civil conflict since the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century. The 1991 Paris Peace Accords were ineffective in their peacebuilding efforts and rather than create a peaceful democracy have rather legitimised violence and coercion. Violence used to control and coerce the population, and to dispose of opposition to the government, continues today (HRW, 2012). The title of the HRW

report, *“Tell them that I want to kill them”*: *Two decades of impunity in Hun Sen’s Cambodia* uses a quote from Prime Minister Hun Sen’s Deputy Chief of his private bodyguard unit, Hing Bun Heang in response to journalist questions regarding the 1997 grenade attack against Hun Sen’s main political opposition, Sam Rainsy. The report examines politically motivated murders from the early 1990s including that of prominent Trade Unionist Chea Vichea in 2007 up to the more recent incidents, such as the murder of the environmental activist Chut Wutty in 2012. In just two years since the publication of this report, politically motivated violence against trade unionists and land activists has resulted in false imprisonment and multiple deaths due to police using electric cattle prods and live bullets to disperse peaceful protests (The Guardian, 2014; Phnom Penh Post, 2014).

Household respondents were faced with threats and coercion on a day-to-day basis. Respondents who were street sellers selling snails for example, spoke of being targeted by the local police. The police would track them down and fine them for creating a public mess as the shells of the snails eaten by their customers were left in the street. In a similar circumstance, police officers and security guards might fine street sellers who walk past their properties, down certain popular streets or past markets. These fines were completely arbitrary but sellers were faced with physical abuse or destruction of property if they refused. The insecurity bred by constant threat of arbitrary arrest, fines and imprisonment is a clear feature of the case studies of urban poor settlements facing eviction and those in resettlement sites. Caroline Moser’s work on Latin America categorises urban violence in order to create a ‘roadmap’ for its eradication (2004). Along with her colleagues, Moser charts violence thematically (political, institutional, economic, social) against the

perpetrators (state, non-state, gangs, street children) and its manifestations (armed conflict, territorial, theft, riot, sexual violence etc.) (2004, p.5). Her classification of the routine, daily violence such as exclusion, threat and bullying mentioned above, are classified as social violence, which is perpetrated by family and friends. In fact, local authorities in many cases perpetrate this type of violence. This kind of violence is more akin to Galtung's structural violence, where violence is embedded into social structures and norms, a limitation that Moser acknowledges (Moser, 2004, p. 6). Another example of structural violence in Cambodia are the forced evictions taking throughout Cambodia. The evictions in Phnom Penh are frequently violent as the police and private security companies clear the path for international investment via the forced eviction of urban poor communities living in desirable and profitable urban areas. The eviction process not only destroys their homes and divides communities; it also removes the income generating opportunities of informal economy workers dependent on selling their labour power to the urban labour market (Mgbako et al., 2010). Few opportunities exist for the urban poor when they live in isolated resettlement sites twenty kilometres out of the city.

It is within the specific nature of the context in Phnom Penh, that of surplus labour, ILO supported neoliberal capitalist development aimed at exploiting the workforce for profit, politically motivated violence and perpetuated insecurity, that this research comes to address the livelihood strategies of the urban poor. The remaining part of this section will use data collected during fieldwork regarding job types and income, to argue the case for the need of a term to describe life within the aforementioned context.

Figure 18 displays the variety of job type, arranged in cumulative order with absolute numbers and percentages indicated. The variables of student, unemployed, retired, cannot work due to illness and did not respond, amount to 242 household members, or 36.1 per cent of household respondents, as they do not regularly contribute to household income or saving practices. However, it must be noted that these members of the family perform other essential tasks such as looking after younger family members, cooking, cleaning, irregular small-scale production of goods such as the preparation of fruit for sale etc. Their presence and assistance indirectly contributes to the household by allowing other household members to work. The following statistics nonetheless relate to the remaining 428 household respondents from the seven settlement sites that regularly directly contribute to the financial income of the household.

The diversity within the job types is vast, from professional lawyers and famous musicians to beggars and collectors. The largest groups at the bottom of the second column indicate the highest frequency of job type, these are Factory worker at 14.49 per cent, Street seller: Food at 13.55 per cent, Domestic Labour at 12.62 per cent, Construction at 10.98 per cent and Driver: *Motodop* at 7.48 per cent.

By using the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO), we can gain a clearer idea of the spread of employment engaged in by household members (Figure 19). Through this classification system, we can see that the main areas of employment for household members are services and sales work (40.89 per cent), elementary occupations (27.34 per cent) and plant and machine operators and

assemblers (23.83 per cent). The lack of skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers is likely a function of the urban emphasis of this fieldwork.

**Fig. 18 Variety of job type collected from household survey**

Job Type	No.	%	Job Type	No	%
Beautician	1	0.23	Street seller: Drinks	2	0.47
Beggar	1	0.23	Cook / Chief	3	0.70
Driver: Taxi	1	0.23	Laundry	3	0.70
Driver: <i>Tuktuk</i>	1	0.23	Security guard	3	0.70
Engineer	1	0.23	Soldier	3	0.70
Fortune Teller	1	0.23	Cleaner (Domestic)	4	0.93
Hair dresser / Barber	1	0.23	Driver: Delivery / Moving	4	0.93
Lawyer	1	0.23	Mechanic	4	0.93
Musician / Singer	1	0.23	Crafts: Handicraft	5	1.17
Nanny	1	0.23	Street seller: Other	6	1.40
Sex worker	1	0.23	Street seller: Deserts	7	1.64
Skilled: Tailor	1	0.23	Skilled: Carpenter	8	1.87
Street seller: Toys	1	0.23	Agricultural worker	10	2.34
Teacher	1	0.23	Shop worker	11	2.57
Village representative	1	0.23	Collector (Ejai)	13	3.04
Waiter	1	0.23	Shop owner	15	3.50
Business owner	2	0.47	Market seller: Food	16	3.74
Cleaner (restaurant)	2	0.47	Manual labour	28	6.54
Cleaner (vehicles)	2	0.47	Driver: <i>Motodop</i>	32	7.48
Driver: Cyclo	2	0.47	Construction	47	10.98
Hotel worker	2	0.47	Domestic Labour	54	12.62
Secretary / Admin Assistant	2	0.47	Street seller: Food	58	13.55
Skilled: Electrician	2	0.47	Factory worker	62	14.49
			<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>428</b>	<b>100</b>

Ref	Fig. 19 ISCO -08: Major Groups codes	No.	%*
0	Armed forces occupations	3	0.7
1	Managers	3	0.7
2	Professionals	8	1.87
3	Technicians and associate professionals	2	0.47
4	Clerical support workers	2	0.47
5	Service and sales workers	175	40.89
6	Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers	-	-
7	Craft and related trades workers	16	3.74
8	Plant and machine operators, and assemblers	102	23.83
9	Elementary occupations	117	27.34
*percentage of 428 household members who regularly contribute to household income and other economic coping practices			

However, whilst the ISCO is useful in categorising the different kinds of employment, it fails to contribute to the understanding of the division between the formal and informal employment sectors. This research has attempted to bridge this gap by combining the ISCO classification framework with the ILO's definition of the informal sector. There are two interpretations of the ILO's informal sector definitions: firstly, that there is an intrinsic relationship between non-registration and informality; secondly, that there is a denial of the intrinsic relationship of registration and instead an emphasis on the informal sector as a form of production, recognising non-registration as a characteristic, rather than an indicator, of the informal sector. (ILO 'Measuring Informality', 2013).

*This broad definition is operationalized for statistical purposes and the informal sector defined as comprising those household unincorporated enterprises with market production that are:*

- 1. Informal own account enterprises (optionally, all, or those that are not registered under specific forms of national legislation);*
- 2. Enterprises of informal employers (optionally, all those with less than a specified level of employment and/or not registered and/or employees not registered)*

*(ILO, 1993) Informal Sector definition*

This research has taken the second interpretation since determining the registration status of employers, employees and an enterprise was a near impossible task during fieldwork. By recognising non-registration as a characteristic rather than intrinsic to the informal sector, we are free to explore other characteristics and intrinsic relationships.

Therefore in combining the second interpretation of the ILO's informal sector definition with the ISCO major group codes, this research can demonstrate the formal nature of employment for people considered to be part of the informal economy.

Figure 19 breaks these down into ISCO categories to demonstrate this, showing that 38 per cent of household members are employed in jobs considered to be part of the formal sector (163) and 62 per cent (265) in the informal sector. The majority of informal sector workers are employed in service and sales work (58.5 per cent) and elementary occupations (24.9 per cent), whereas the majority of formal sector workers are employed as plant and machine operators, and assemblers (40.5 per cent), followed closely also by elementary occupations (31.3 per cent).

Figure 20 demonstrates that the urban poor, considered to be part of the informal economy, partake in formalised professions. One may also deduce from the varied job types, that the formal and informal economies rely upon each other enormously. Street sellers wait outside garment factories for the thousands of workers to break for lunch. *Motodop* drivers take construction workers to work. Mechanics fix the cars and *motos* of businesses men and hotel workers. These jobs are reliant and sustained by the interaction between formal and informal workers. In the following section, suggestions are offered for a more relevant and responsive categorisation that can accommodate such variation whilst acknowledging the urban context and non-financial contribution of household members who stay at home, ‘the urban poor economy’.

**Fig. 20 Percentage and number of informal and formal sector workers in each ISCO labour classification**

Ref	International Standard Classification Occupations -08: Major Groups codes	Informal Sector		Formal Sector	
		%	No.	%	No.
0	Armed forces occupations	.		1.8	3
1	Managers	0.8	2	0.6	1
2	Professionals	0.4	1	4.3	7
3	Technicians and associate professionals	.	.	1.2	2
4	Clerical support workers	.	.	1.2	2
5	Service and sales workers	58.5	155	12.3	20
6	Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers	.	.	.	.
7	Craft and related trades workers	1.9	5	6.8	11
8	Plant and machine operators, and assemblers	13.6	36	40.5	66
9	Elementary occupations	24.9	66	31.3	51
	<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>265</b>		<b>163</b>

Gugler (1997) and Gilbert (1994) argued that the informal economy is not a desirable form of employment and is beneath that of formal employment, and even unemployment. However this research argues, in line with Standing (2010), that in fact working in the informal economy for many is a choice and not a result of falling out of the formal sector. This is illustrated by the seven interviews conducted with *tuktuk* drivers and from speaking with household respondents. All of the *tuktuk* drivers interviewed expressed that it had been their choice and was their preference to work in their line of work. One of the drivers had been a security guard for a wealthy family, earning regularly \$70 per month. Despite liking the job, the family and the regular income, he left the job to become a *tuktuk* driver. When asked why, he replied that in the peak season he could earn up to \$500 USD per month, and in the low season just \$40 USD per month. However he preferred to work for himself and felt that it was better to have a seasonal high income of \$500 USD than a regulated income of \$70 USD. *Tuktuk* driver Chhet explains his reasoning for leaving work as a security guard, knowingly choosing informality:

*Chhet: I was a security guard when I first moved to Phnom Penh (1993). I was paid \$60 per month. I got married and became a motodop driver because I could earn more money. Yes a security guard's money is regular and a Motodop Driver's money is irregular, however I could still earn more money driving a moto: \$3-\$4 per day. Then in 2005 I bought a tuktuk. 2005 - 2008 I could make \$12-\$15 per day. However since 2009 I make only \$7.50 per day. I think the change is due to many, many more tuktuks on the road, so the competition is high. But also people take taxis more now, the taxis are taking our business.*

This story was repeated with the other *tuktuk* drivers interviewed, some recalling stories of poor working conditions, exploitation and maltreatment under former bosses. The following are three excerpts from interviews with *tuktuk* drivers Den, Tep and Tom, discussing how they came to be *tuktuk* drivers. In all three instances the drivers left formalised jobs in a factory, a hotel and a security company:

*Den: Before my wife and I worked in a factory. The days were long, the money was ok but we were sick a lot. The factory was the one where you print on clothes. The smell was bad, it was so bright inside, we got sick a lot but we carried on working there. Anyway, they closed the factory, they said it went bankrupt. It burnt down. We could have found jobs in other factories but I can't work like that any more. I decided to buy a tuktuk. I prefer working as a tuktuk driver to the factory because I like working by myself, I like making my own money and I can have enough time to relax. I want to get a good spot at the market but they are full. The drivers have been there for many years, I only started four months ago. Olympic or Orrusei market, because many people go there, but it is difficult without parking. If we want to park we have to talk to the manager and pay money. I cannot go to the riverside because I don't know English. But I hope I will get a parking space soon.*

Jobs in factories, despite the often poor working conditions, are highly desirable because of the regular income and the ability to earn over time. However Den chose not to pursue another factory job, preferring to become a *tuktuk* driver. At the time of interview he was parked on a back street, unable to park any closer to the market.

However, as above, he expressed the hope that he would one day be able to park in a good site.

**Tim:** *When I first came to Phnom Penh I worked at the hotel reception. I worked there only one year then I started to drive a tuktuk. I didn't like working at the hotel. My boss was not good and I didn't make much money, maybe \$80 for one month. Tuktuk means freedom. I am a free-bird... But yunno my job sometimes good, sometimes broke, because we have a lot of tour company in Cambodia. They collect a lot of tourist from yunno Asia, Western (countries), they are cheaper than us because they are a company with a lot of people. Sometimes broke, eat bai at home!<sup>48</sup> On average per month make around \$600 USD... Same same but different. You know this saying? Is meaningful. Some driver is successful, some driver is not successful. You can ask me (what) I (find) difficult, the first is to find the customer, the second is gasoline is expensive, the third my job is dangerous job. I must be careful all the time, the car has four wheel but we have only one wheel to break. You need the time and cannot drive close to cars. And then parking, is not easy to find a working place. I don't put my tuktuk at home I leave it at the national hospital, I leave there and I have motorbike to go home, because is hard, make my back ache, a lot of gasoline, a lot of time, bumpy, holes, where is the road?! Just holes! If rains not easy to drive. \$12.50 to leave my motorbike and tuktuk. Is ok no problem. My problem is customer!*

Tim's interview was conducted in English. Tim had studied English at university and had worked in a hotel prior to becoming a *tuktuk* driver. However he didn't like working at the hotel and was able to capitalise on his linguistic skills and was earning a very good wage for a *tuktuk* driver.

**Tep:** *When I left the Wat I became a security guard. I work for a security company. The company sent me to guard at an NGO that helps people read. People in the organisation liked me, and they help me a lot. The helped me to get Cambodian National ID card. Before, I did not have it because I don't have family. I got paid \$90 to be a security guard, but I could not save much money. The money I earned was*

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<sup>48</sup> 'Eat bai at home', *bai* is Khmer for steamed white rice, this is a common saying that suggests one does not earn a lot of money and so must go home to eat their lunch.

*spent on renting a place to stay, food, transport and learning English. I could not save enough money. I decided instead to hire a tuktuk. It cost \$150 USD per month to hire a tuktuk. When I had the tuktuk I started to earn enough to cover the rent for it, my home and food. I am able to save money being a tuktuk driver. Being a tuktuk driver is different from being an employee. The boss always complained when we did not well at work. Now I am my own boss. After I pay for everything I can have \$50 USD left. Then after renting for so long, I wanted to buy my own tuktuk, I had some money saved but not enough,<sup>49</sup> but one of my regular customers, a Frenchman loaned me 1000\$. I had enough money to buy this one. I have to pay the money back every month for one year. Now, I only have two month left.*

Tep, a *tuktuk* driver who gave a full life history, also left regular work with an organisation that provided security guards to companies, NGOs and families. He usually parked his *tuktuk* outside an apartment block occupied by international staff, many of who worked for the UN and other international NGOs. As a result, Tep had many regular customers. However, a couple of days after this interview, Tep had his *tuktuk* impounded by the police, from where it went missing. Tep described that the police will impound *tuktuks* to earn extra money through fines. The fine could be anything from \$20-200 USD. Tep paid \$200 USD fine, yet Tep's *tuktuk*, with just two months left to pay off his loan, had gone 'missing' from the impound. He believed the police had sold it. The news was devastating to Tep, but what could he do? He decided that in order to keep the loyalty of his customers, he would rent another *tuktuk* while he pursued informal leads in an attempt to get his own *tuktuk* back. As the drivers know the city well he was confident that if the *tuktuk* was in the city, he would find it. However if it had left Phnom Penh, he may never get it back.

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<sup>49</sup> In 2011 a *tuktuk* carriage and motorbike cost \$1200-1500USD depending on the style and quality

Another example of the choice to remain part of the informal economy comes from one of the life history respondents from the site CH1, named Lin for the purposes of this research:

*I came to Phnom Penh with my mother in 2001. My mother had been forced to marry my father during the KR but the KR killed him after I was born. We have farmland in Prey Veng province but one year, about 11 years ago, we had a bad harvest and we did not make enough money to pay for the seed we had used. We were in a lot of debt, so my mother and I came to Phnom Penh to look for work to pay off our debt. I lived with my mum and took care of her but we were very poor. I have rented this house in Phnom Penh all the years I have been here. When I first came to Phnom Penh I made and sold small cakes, but there was no profit in this. I stopped after a short time and ever since I have collected ejai (recyclables). We paid off our debt in two years. However when my mother died, I did not have enough money to pay for the funeral. The landlord who rents these houses took pity on me and paid for her funeral. The landlord is a good man and knows that since the rent has gone up from \$10 per month to \$20, some months I cannot afford to pay rent, but he does not kick me out. I pay what I can and he lets me stay. I used to rent an ejai cart (a cart to collect recyclables) from the landlord for 2,000KHR per day as well, but he understood that I could not afford to rent this cart, pay rent on the house and earn enough money to pay for food for my daughter and I. So the landlord gave me the cart. I bring him all of my recyclables so that he can sell them and he lets me use the cart rent-free. I can make 500KHR for 1kg of cardboard. Normally I do two collections and so I can collect 100kg of cardboard. I can sell my cardboard to the landlord for 500-600KHR per kg. I can sell plastic to him for 1,500KHR per kg, aluminium cans for 6,000KHR per kg (roughly 63 cans) and scrap metal for 1,100KHR per kg. I only collect ejai from the street, some people buy from houses and restaurants but this is too expensive.<sup>50</sup>*

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<sup>50</sup> The assistance given to Lin contradicts established beliefs on Cambodian civil society that emphasises that people are individualistic, self-preserving and self-promoting. See section 2.2.

From Lin's life history, it becomes clear that a single bad harvest can have catastrophic effects, forcing Lin and her mother to leave their home and move to Phnom Penh to pay off their debt. However, Lin was fortunate to rent her home and ejai cart from a landlord who is willing to accommodate her precarious circumstances. Had Lin rented her home or ejai cart from the formal sector, she may not have been so lucky and may have faced eviction and had her ejai cart confiscated. The informal nature of her work allows Lin to survive difficult periods of low income, as her home and her ejai cart are secure. Further, Lin remains in Phnom Penh despite having paid off her debt. When asked why she did not return to the provinces Lin replied:

*I want to go back to Prey Veng one day. I still have my land there and family there. But in Prey Veng it is hard. People do not pay for things; instead they like to use credit. Because they use credit, I have to use credit as no one pays for the things they buy from me and so I have no money. In Phnom Penh people pay for their things and it is easier to manage the debt.*

Lin's response characterises an important difference raised at the beginning of this chapter between rural and urban contexts, from the perspective of those living in poverty: cash and credit. In the countryside credit and debt can be built up with neighbours and paid off with exchange of goods or small payments, as customers are neighbours and are unlikely to disappear. However as Lin mentions, it may take a long time for payments to be made. Whereas in the city, people are more transient, your customer base is passing crowds, and a small business or street seller must be paid immediately. If you do not have the money, you do not receive the goods (Mitlin & Satterthwaite, 2013). In site CH1 it was mentioned that often people who could no longer afford rent or pay for goods, vacated their homes during the night so as to avoid payment and embarrassment. During the process of this fieldwork, two households contacted for the survey 'disappeared' before the survey was complete.

These residents owed rent money but had fled and were therefore effectively unable to return to that part of the city because of their debt.

This chapter has thus far engaged with the debate surrounding the informal economy, its use, definition and applicability. It is clear that despite attempts by the ILO to further define the informal economy that ambiguity persists in its use as a term. The main two critiques from the perspective of this research are the lack of acknowledgement for non-income generating initiatives that can support a household, whether this is cleaning and raising a family and therefore removing the cost of childcare, and the use of desirable objects for opportunistic earning potential, such as having a mobile phone, bicycle or motorbike. These desirable objects will be discussed further below. The term informal economy does not distinguish between the rural and urban contexts, despite the different challenges this presents. The living circumstances of many people in the countryside comprise of a traditional family home. The family unit can provide essential support and provide a 'safety net' for people who fall ill or lose their jobs. However many people in Phnom Penh have left their families in the provinces and are alone in the city trying to earn as much money as possible so that they can send money home. Individuals rent rooms alone, sometimes groups of individuals get together and share costs. Yet the safety nets associated with rural life such as family, or credit with local businesses, are not present in urban areas. In Phnom Penh, money is what counts.

However this economic focus on basic income misses the ingenuity of the urban poor who use multiple strategies for generating their livelihoods. This includes collective buying and price setting, ejai, renting out of desirable objects, growing small crops or

having small livestock, having family members prepare goods for market around their other work etc.

To acknowledge the diversity of livelihood generating actions, the formality of what has been described as informal and to bring to the forefront the importance of the urban environment, this thesis suggests the term 'urban poor economy'. The term was defined in the introduction but in order to highlight the possible critiques of the term the definition is repeated below:

*The livelihood generating and coping practices of individual residents and households in urban areas, living close to a city-specific poverty line.*

It is important to stress that this term is born from the Cambodian context and specifically used to portray the urban poor of Phnom Penh; it has not been designed for projection onto other urban poor populations. However, it may be useful in offering points of comparison to other Cambodian cities or capital cities in the South East Asia region and broader global south.

The urban poor economy does not include violent or criminal behaviour however it does include previously discussed a-legal behaviour due to gaps in policy and law. This is to shed the characteristic of criminality, which has been used to paint all informal economy workers with the same brush.

One critique of the urban poor economy may be that the term simply replaces the informal economy. This is not the case, however. Firstly, the specificity of the geographical location as indicated by the 'urban' part of the term challenges the geographic bias of the rural environment in Cambodian specific informal economy

discourse. The distinction between rural and urban experiences of poverty is essential for development. Secondly, the term encapsulates the interaction and shared characteristics of the formal and informal economies, rather than focusing solely on the informal aspects. Thirdly, the term urban poor economy might be criticised as having little analytical use due to the breadth of what the term entails. In this respect the author acknowledges the diversity and complexity, however the term was not designed to be used to 'measure' the urban poor. Instead, the term is an acknowledgement of the specific history, social relationships, actions and other livelihood generating practices undertaken by the urban poor. The term has emerged from engaging with the urban poor as a result of this fieldwork, it was not prescribed or imagined prior to fieldwork. This reflects the same intentions of Hart who first intended the informal economy to refer to social organisation rather than something that was to be quantified and measured.

However the term could be used by policy makers and development workers to acknowledge and recognise challenges facing the urban poor and work to remedy these. In whatever respect the term is used, at the forefront of the term are the urban poor residents themselves: their lived experiences and day to day activities.

Finally this research acknowledges that an urban poor 'class' may indicate an urban middle class and elite. Whilst this is an extension beyond the scope of this research, it is believe that a more nuanced and geographically appropriate understanding of an emerging middle class in urban areas of Cambodia as well as the elite is appropriate and necessary.

#### 4.2.iii Horizontal Regulation

Finally before consulting the household survey data in detail, this research challenges the core underlying assumption of the informal economy, that it is unregulated. This research has already shown the breadth of job type within the informal economy, yet to assume that small vulnerable enterprises and businesses can be productive and profit making without some form of regulated processes seems naïve. A recent publication titled *Organising Women Workers in the Informal Economy: Beyond The Weapons of the Weak* (2013) edited by Naila Kabeer, Ratna Sudarshan and Kirsty Milward responds to the formalisation within informal economy debate through discussion of how and why women in the informal economy have organised themselves. The women in question are defined as informal economy workers, using ILO definitions given above, who have united through struggle to demand recognition for the work they do, increased their bargaining power with employers and the state, and broadened their emancipatory potential. The book offers case studies from India Brazil, South Africa and Thailand to demonstrate the various ways women, who are often poorer and more insecure than their male counterparts, have come together to form organisations and trade unions in the informal sector. The ILO described the enormity of the task facing these women in their 2004 *Organising for Social Justice Report : the needs and problems of such a diverse work force are as varied as the barriers and constraints they face in organising* (p. 45).

The Kabeer et al publication focuses primarily on trade unions and organisations of informal workers drawing on case studies of litter pickers, sex workers and other informal work undertaken by women. The chapter authored by Kabeer, Milward and Sudarshan. 'Beyond Weapons of the Weak' (pp. 1-48), identifies the impetus for

organisation of workers as commonly external from than from the women themselves. They identify NGOs, both local and international, and the educated middle class as often being the driving force behind initial attempts at organisation (2013, pp. 5-6). As informal workers are often self-employed, geographically isolated and working under causal conditions, the challenge of building a shared identity is crucial for unity and organisation. Other divisions such as race, ethnicity, class, caste, legal status etc. can undermine the struggle for better working conditions and improved wellbeing (2013, p.13). Particularly interesting is discussion of ‘soft power’<sup>51</sup> resources available to organisations such as education and increased awareness. This may materialise as sexual health education, employment and workers rights education or awareness of free health clinics, government grants for child support or compensation. In one example, an Indian sex worker organisation created childcare centres for their members to use, which doubled up as a centre to disseminate information and have meetings (2013, p.26).

There has been an attempt to organise *tuktuk* drivers into a type of trade union for informal workers by a group called Independent Democracy of Informal Economy Association (IDEA)<sup>52</sup>. IDEA is actually an NGO, not an official trade union, which attempts to support informal workers through ‘soft power’ resources such as education on labour rights, and traffic rules and regulations, and assistance in appealing traffic fines. Whilst the group is open to all informal workers, it primarily

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<sup>51</sup> In the 1980s Joseph Nye developed the term ‘soft power’ to refer to an ability to persuade, attract or co-opt rather than ‘hard power’, which involves coercive actions and force. Although originally used by Nye to discuss the actions of states (see his 2004 book *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*) it has been used in this instance as a ‘weapon of the weak’, a reference to James C. Scott’s book published in 1987, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday forms of peasant resistance*.

<sup>52</sup> See IDEA’s website: <http://www.ideacambodia.org/pages/index.php>

works with street sellers, *motodop* and *tuktuk* drivers. When IDEA was raised in discussion with drivers, the author was met with mixed responses. Only one *tuktuk* driver interviewed, Sok, was a current member of IDEA and displayed their logo on the side of his *tuktuk*. Sok replied the following when asked why he had joined the organisation

*Sok: I join IDEA because if I have a problem with the traffic police or other tuktuk they can help. They have office in Phnom Penh, also Siem Reap, Sihanoukville and Banteay Meanchey province. They are moral. I don't pay fee to be a member but if I go to a workshop something like this, for the trainings on traffic law and regulations, road safety you know, is free but they ask for 2,000KHR to pay for lunch and a snack and drink. But I never had a problem with police or other driver so far.*

The majority of *tuktuk* drivers however, were suspicious of IDEA and avoided them.

*Tuktuk* driver Van described his experience with IDEA:

*Van: Before I was a member of IDEA. When I carry the goods (clothes) for customer to Olympic market the police caught me. Then I asked IDEA for help, but they could not help me. The police charged me. Apparently the goods I bought to the market were illegal, the owner had not paid tax. But I was still fined even though they did not belong to me. IDEA spoke to the police, but could not solve the problem. They asked money from me for the cost of the petrol to get there, and then I no longer trusted and left IDEA.*

From the experience of Van, IDEA provided no assistance in challenging his fines and then requested money to cover their costs, despite failing to assist him. Van saw little advantage to being a member when they did not provide assistance as they had promised through membership and they had, he believed, shown their true colours by asking him for money. Den, who had only recently become a *tuktuk* driver had heard of IDEA but upon asking if he would become a member or consider membership he replied *I am not a member. They have no principles. They are no better than the*

*traffic police*. When asked to elaborate, he declined to answer. Perhaps Den had had a bad experience with IDEA or had heard stories from other drivers, whatever the case, suspicion and distrust of the organisation was commonplace amongst those interviewed. The comparison with the traffic police, a largely arbitrary corrupt presence on the roads of the capital, reflected Den's perception of IDEA as also corrupt. If we refer to earlier quotes from drivers relating to why they had become *tuktuk* drivers, overwhelmingly they had stated the freedom of earning their own money and the absence of an employer to report to as significant contributing factors. For many it appeared as though this freedom would be sacrificed with membership to IDEA. IDEA was perceived by many as corrupt, intent on controlling *tuktuk* drivers and taking money from them.

The reaction to the attempts to organise *tuktuk* drivers by IDEA has apparently not been met with much success, despite their presence in several urban areas of Cambodia. Harriss-White criticises the unsymmetrical and selective creation of organisations such as guilds and trade unions within the informal sector as 'vertically structured' and themselves modes of control and informality in their administration, perpetuating patronage and commonly linked to political associations or societal hierarchies (2010, pp. 172-3). Perhaps more needs to be done to clarify IDEA's objectives and establish realistic expectations of what they can achieve through their soft power resources. More could be done to create a shared identity amongst its members and potential members, so that membership has value and meaning. Nevertheless the organisation is seen as a top down initiative, instigated and run by professionals rather than the *tuktuk* drivers themselves. This is perhaps a contributing

factor to the distrust of the organisation, as *tuktuk* drivers do not identify with the staff of IDEA.

The level of organisation between women in the informal economy, as discussed above, has not emerged in Phnom Penh amongst men or women of the urban poor economy, to the extent described in the case studies included in their book.

Conceivably IDEA is the beginning of a shift towards increased organisation of the informal sector workers, or perhaps social institutions are more relevant as economic regulators at present. Harriss-White discusses the presence of social institutions as economic regulators in her article examining the Indian informal economy (2010). Her work identifies four social institutions, gender, life cycle, caste and class (2010, pp. 172-174). Gender is a social economic regulator through gender having a crucial role in defining what jobs are open to individuals, but also as women disproportionately more so than men are expected to give up their jobs to have a family and/or take care of family members who are sick or elderly. The life cycle of the urban poor is also an economic regulator as labour opportunities change from child labour through to adulthood. There is scarce a 'retirement' age for the urban poor and thus decline in health or work related injuries usually bring an end to employment. However other ways in contributing to a household income are still possible. Harriss-White's case study of India identifies the rigid caste system as a social institution that shapes the ideologies of work and status, however more relevant perhaps in Cambodia and other countries is the class system. Class can encompass several 'fault lines' that may affect ones ability to engage with the labour market including education, religion and provincial origins (2010, pp. 172-174).

Social institutions to an extent perform economic regulation across societies as a whole, not only amongst poor. The influence of gender, life cycle, and class are certainly relevant to the Cambodian context, as they are in most societies. However this cannot explain the level of organisation present amongst *tuktuk* drivers and street sellers. Nor does the peer-to-peer relationship mimic the discussed examples of trade unions and organisations through the case studies outlined in Kabeer et al's book. However, Kabeer, Milward and Sudarshan offer advice from their work that is relevant to the creation of the term *horizontal regulation*, but also the entirety of this thesis:

*One critical lesson that comes out of our analysis is the importance of starting with the experiences and realities of the workers themselves (Kabeer, Milward and Sudarshan, 2013, p. 40)*

Therefore, following this advice, this research identifies what has been termed by the author, *horizontal regulation*: the regulation of locations and selling sites, commodity purchase, selling and service prices, by those active within a similar trade or physical space. This term has emerged from descriptions of street seller practices and *tuktuk* driver relationships, given by street sellers and *tuktuk* drivers *themselves*. Horizontal *regulation* can be characterised as peer to peer, in contrast to vertical regulation, which can be characterised as top down or regulation from an employer or institution to an employee. For instance, *tuktuk* drivers have particular locations upon which they have a monopoly of service, for example outside of a market or hotel. *Tuktuk* driver Thom explained:

**Thom:** *The teams arrange themselves. Since tuktuk first start in Cambodia people found their place that they are comfortable for the past 15 or 20 years and the team system start when so many tuktuks start and the competition got too high. The team system start probably 10 years (ago). In the team there is a team leader that the*

*members vote for. The team leader is responsible to make sure everyone take their turn and get fair amount of business and if there is any problem with the hotel or another team the team leader can sort out. Also if someone new want to join the team the team leader need to ask everyone and they vote and the team leader can't just let someone in himself. So people usually hang around their own team in their own spot because they are comfortable there and can get business. Even they take the customer somewhere else they don't hang around there to wait for new customer. They normally go back to their spot. But at the big tourist place like Tuol Sleng (S-21 genocide museum) sometimes its more freely and people can take a customer from there even if not part of the team... It a bit different for every team probably.*

Occasionally *tuktuk* drivers even pay hotel managers or market owners for prime locations. An earlier quote from *tuktuk* driver Den detailed how he had recently become a *tutuk* driver and was hoping to get a parking space at a popular market. However these are in high demand and a payment to the market must be made. A *tuktuk* driver therefore cannot simply stop on another person's site and take their potential customers. There must be an agreement, overseen by a hotel/market or a team leader. The agreement usually relates to the number of drivers present, how well each driver is known to each other and how trust worthy they are, perhaps even price setting, before another driver is allowed to park outside certain parts of the city. Consequently there are agreed arrangements between *tuktuk* drivers and *tuktuk* driver teams as to their presence within the city. Another driver Tim also worked on the riverside, but moved up and down the promenade. Tim elaborated further on the presence of teams:

**Tim:** *Is very hard, some hotels have teams and some teams stay in some places, so if you are new, you have a tuktuk and speak English, but if you don't know someone, it is not easy to find a place to work. It has become more difficult... I come to this spot (riverside) for me I always move along the Mekong riverfront. I don't like to stay in front of one hotel because the hotel around the river front, if you stand in front the*

*hotel, the tourist walk out and they never take a tuktuk because they walk out and from here to somewhere like museum or palace is very close so they can walk. The team, like around Raffle Hotel, This is a team, they have around twenty driver, they got an organisation, arrangement, only twenty no more, but here is no problem, everyone can come and work. But it depend on your ability, if you have ability, good English, you can. Business depends on ability... but for me yunno, I can say, I am a driver who knows a lot. I never go west but I know the western culture and I always tell my customer to be careful in my limousine! Take care of bags, cos here is different... exactly, some months is good for tourist. March to August is low. From September to February is good. 6 month low 6 month high. Weekend is the busiest time. You know boxing, apsara dancing, lots of programme. Depend on the programme, you say oh you want to see kick boxing sir? I can say in the mornings not busy, tourist come here on holiday take a rest! Say about 10am people decide to go yunno, go killing field you know. But now, even though high, because of tour company. The tour company collect tourist from everywhere. They have partner business abroad. So now is high time, but for me it is not. The tour company you know, they have website, everything, partner, business... for me? nothing, only me! But right now I don't think about other job, but I cannot guess the future.*

*If you stay in front of apartment or flat, foreigner area, like BKK1 you can have regular customer, but not expensive, just normal price. But this (location, the riverside) is just for tourist. But the most popular area in Phnom Penh is where the foreigner like to live and stay, BKK1 and around Russian Market, S-21 (genocide museum) but for me I work for tourist not local or foreigner... Yunno from 2007 to now is very hard to make business with this job, but before 2007 not lots of drivers now the job is famous, before is better. Not only my job, but all sellers in the market, everyone, but now everyone from countryside is coming here. It is narrow from one day to one day. Very narrow.*

Tim described above how the different locations across the city speak to drivers with different abilities and expected income. Some *tuktuk* drivers might prefer to have regular customers and therefore might situate themselves in the highly international

area of Phnom Penh, Boeung Keng Kang 1 (BKK1). A *tuktuk* driver might drop someone off to work each day, drop their children off to schools and do the subsequent daily pick ups as well. This will result in a regular income, but the driver will be limited in how much they can negotiate their prices. A different driver might be able to become part of a team on the riverside where there are many tourists. Having tourists as customers provides an opportunity for drivers to inflate prices or encourage tourists to do extra tours and programmes, as tourists are unaware of how distances and prices. An income in this area might be more irregular, some drivers may only have one or two customers a day, but just two journeys at inflated prices could be very lucrative. However to be in these locations the *tuktuk* driver must have a good command of English and/or French so as to communicate with their customers. If a driver cannot speak English or another foreign language, their opportunities may concentrate around markets or Khmer hotels. The customer base in these areas is predominantly Khmer and distances are usually local. The drivers in these instances are dependent on frequent short journeys. However these areas are also highly desirable and a new driver requires some lead, a friend or relative, to open the opportunity for them to join a team.

If a driver is considered to have broken this arrangement, they may be exiled from a part of the city and victim to abuse or even destruction of property. This research argues that there is a form of regulation present here whereby the rules are created and reinforced by those to whom they apply. The presence of this regulation is also found amongst street traders, for whom there are commonly agreed locations within the city for individuals to sell their products or produce. However unlike the *tuktuk* drivers who are free to negotiate their fee, the price of goods is commonly set by sellers

verbally whilst they prepare their products and produce, before they set out for the day. This ensures that individuals do not undercut each other and therefore expect a decent price for their items. If a seller undercuts the other sellers, they may be excluded from collective buying power, verbally attacked or beaten, or banned from parts of the city. Again here it is clear that there are rules that must be followed amongst sellers, to ensure that they earn enough money to survive. These rules are set by themselves and are upheld by themselves. One household respondent explained their own horizontal regulations:

*Every morning, first light, we go to the market and buy fresh shells. By buying all together we get a good price. But some days the shells are not so fresh. Some days so bad we cannot buy them. Some days no shells for sale at the market. Then we bring the shells back in buckets and everyone gets what they paid for but normally we get one large bucket each. There are maybe 20-30 people or more here who sell shells everyday. Some people own their shell cart but most people rent it from a man across the water. Some people add salt or chilli to the shells. I keep chilli in a bag and someone can buy it as extra. Depending on the price we paid for the shells in the morning, we set a price per tin of shells.<sup>53</sup> The people who have been here the longest, like me, we have our areas set. For me my business is around Steung Meanchey. I do a good business here. No one else from our group is allowed to sell there unless they ask me or I have finished. Other people sell near the markets. Some people walk the streets and go by schools and businesses. Some people have to walk a long, long way to sell their shells but if it is a good spot it is worth it. If you are new, you are allowed to buy shells but it is up to you to find a new place to sell them. Also, whether you sell all your shells or not, you have to pay for them.*

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<sup>53</sup> Shells sellers fill an old tin can with shells as a measure. These are then put in a plastic bag for the customer to take away. If the seller doesn't have plastic bags, the seller will wait for the person to finish eating the shells from the tin before continuing on.

The shell sellers had a small window to sell their stock, as the shells were exposed to the heat and sunlight on the open cart tops. As the sellers sold on the streets, the shells were out in the sun and heat for the entire morning and by the afternoon would have gone bad and were lost stock. Therefore with just the morning and lunchtime to sell, competition over location was fierce. The settlement site was littered with heaps of unsold shells, rotting in the sun. One household respondent in particular, a young woman, mentioned that the collective buying of the shells was a reason she had rented a small room in the site. However the respondent was not successful in her selling, and a few weeks later ‘disappeared’ one night owing rent to the landlord and money to the shell sellers.

The term *horizontal regulation* may be understood in a similar vein to that of Frances Stewart’s ‘horizontal inequalities’ (Stewart, 2002). The notion of horizontal inequalities aims to understand the relationship between cultural groups in society and had been used by Stewart and the UK’s Department for International Development’s Centre for Research on Inequality, Human Security and Ethnicity (CRISE) to identify economic, social and political horizontal inequalities as causes of conflict (CRISE, 2010). Whilst the similarities between the concepts goes awry here, the initial conceptualisation behind horizontal inequalities can be useful for understanding horizontal regulation in that the point of focus is the relations *between* groups (or within groups or between individuals in this case), rather than between the state and a group. A similar concept has been found in European law, that of Direct Impact Effect (EU legislation summary, 2010). Direct Impact Effect has two forms, horizontal and vertical. Vertical Direct Impact Effect is a consequence of relationships between an individual and a state. Horizontal Direct Impact Effect is a

consequence of a relationship between two individuals. However whilst these definitions legislate the ability of an individual to call another individual or a state before a national or European court, they illustrate another example of a consequential peer-to-peer relationship. Whereas *horizontal regulation* is an important concept as it challenges a core assumption of the informal economy that it is unregulated, moreover the term presents a nuanced approach to current debate concerning organisation within the informal economy. *Horizontal regulation* offers an alternative discourse to narratives within debate and prefixed assumptions surrounding means of organisation, trade unions and social institutions as economic regulators.

#### *4.2.iv Household livelihood data*

To develop a more detailed understanding of household income the data has been broken down into settlement averages. Unfortunately this was not possible to the same extent for household expenditure as respondents from resettlement sites struggled to remember accurate daily expenditure amounts on items such as food, transport, education, medicine etc. This can be explained by the fact that in some cases resettlement had taken place up to a decade earlier. The problem of information recall is a long standing issue for researchers (Bernard, Killworth, Kronenfeld & Sailer, 1984). However it was decided that income from jobs held when living in former sites was more reliable, as household respondents were more confident in giving accurate wage amounts, although the author recognises income recall too is problematic. In respect to this, when income was difficult to remember, further clarifying questions were posed, such as often another family member completed the same task or perhaps managed household finances. Data collected by the Cambodia Development Resource Institute (CDRI) and other sources concerning wages and

prices, particularly price increase and wage stagnation, will be discussed to contextualise the data collected.

Figure 21 outlines the average weekly pay of the different job types included in the household survey. The range between the highest and lowest incomes has been included so as to expose the variation within job types. This table affords an insight into the weekly incomes of various job types within the city.

However the reader should be aware that not all jobs are worked across seven days or for all of the year. This was mediated for as much as possible with, by calculating income based on number of days worked and income per day. The choice of representing income per month was made, as this would typify a month working, rather than annual income, as during the months of harvest work is frequently put on hold.

Income and expenditure are investigated in Figures 22, 23 and 24. When collecting this data the number of days worked on average each individual was accounted for. For example *motodop* drivers tend to work every day, as do construction workers. However, garment factory workers often work 6 days per week, but may work overtime. Number of working hours, days and months was taken into consideration when calculating weekly household income.

Figure 22 displays the average number of household members in each settlement, average household income and average income per household member (in \$USD). At the bottom of the table, the total averages are given. Despite central locations, the

**Fig. 21 Weekly income by job type, average per week, lowest and highest incomes, USD**

<b>Job type</b>	<b>Av.</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>Job type</b>	<b>Av.</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>High</b>
Agricultural worker	11.29	7.50	24.00	Lawyer	75.00	75.00	75.00
Beautician	24.50	24.50	24.50	Manual Labour	14.27	3.94	112.00
Beggar	8.75	8.75	8.75	Market seller: Food	10.79	5.00	63.00
Business owner	15.75	25.00	35.00	Mechanic	9.00	18.75	20.00
Cleaner (Domestic)	13.00	15.00	25.00	Musician	25.00	25.00	25.00
Cleaner (Kitchen/Rest.)	15.00	11.25	12.50	Secretary	13.13	5.00	37.50
Cleaner (Vehicles)	7.50	15.00	15.00	Security guard	21.88	18.75	25.00
Construction	16.18	1.25	26.25	Sex worker	15.00	15.00	15.00
Cook/Chef	16.00	5.00	22.50	Shop owner	12.43	3.50	525.00
Crafts: Handicraft	23.31	10.00	35.00	Shop worker	25.77	8.75	87.50
Driver: Cyclo	30.00	7.00	17.50	Skilled: Carpenter	8.95	6.25	75.00
Driver: Delivery/ moving	20.00	26.25	30.00	Skilled: Electrician	17.50	17.50	17.50
Driver: <i>Motodop</i>	13.99	2.50	52.50	Skilled: Tailor	10.00	10.00	10.00
Driver: Taxi	40.00	40.00	40.00	Soldier	18.33	13.25	18.75
Driver: <i>Tuktuk</i>	87.50	87.50	87.50	Street seller: Deserts	25.38	7.50	78.75
Ejai (recyclables)	15.79	1.00	26.25	Street seller: Drinks	35.00	35.00	35.00
Engineer	100.00	100.00	100.00	Street seller: Food	20.28	3.75	87.50
Factory worker	20.63	8.75	32.50	Street seller: Other	18.93	6.25	43.75
Fortune teller	125.00	125.00	125.00	Street seller: Toys	12.50	12.50	12.50
Hair dresser/ Barber	17.50	17.50	17.50	Teacher	43.75	43.75	43.75
Hotel worker	45.00	45.00	45.00	Village Representative	3.75	3.75	3.75
Laundry	23.33	8.75	35.00	Waiter	15.00	15.00	15.00
<b>AVERAGE TOTALS</b>					<b>26</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>51</b>

<b>Fig. 22 Average number of household members, weekly household income in \$USD and income per household member per day.</b>	
<b>CH1</b>	
No. in HH	4
HH total income PW \$	\$55.85
\$ per person per day	\$1.99
<b>RK1</b>	
No. in HH	4
HH total income PW \$	\$63.00
\$ per person per day	\$2.25
<b>RK2</b>	
No. in HH	5
HH total income PW \$	\$29.55
\$ per person per day	\$0.84
<b>R_TK1</b>	
No. in HH	6.6
HH total income PW \$	\$99.13
\$ per person per day	\$2.15
<b>R_ME1</b>	
No. in HH	5
HH total income PW \$	\$30.13
\$ per person per day	\$0.86
<b>R_ME2</b>	
No. in HH	5
HH total income PW \$	\$53.75
\$ per person per day	\$1.54
<b>R_ME3</b>	
No. in HH	6.5
HH total income PW \$	\$67.60
\$ per person per day	\$1.48
<b>TOTAL AVERAGES</b>	
<b>No. in HH</b>	<b>4.2</b>
<b>HH total income PW \$</b>	<b>\$53.30</b>
<b>\$ per person per day</b>	<b>\$1.81</b>

average weekly income varies dramatically from settlement to settlement, from as much as \$99.13 to as little as \$29.55, a difference of \$69.58 per week. Individually, this amounts to a difference of \$1.31 per household member per day. Similarly, income per household member per day ranges from \$0.84 to \$2.25. This wide variation would not have been evident if we had taken just the total weekly average at \$53.30 per household and daily \$1.81 per household member. Despite all settlements being considered urban poor and the residents being part of the 'informal economy', it is clear that there is much variation within this term relating to household income.

Figure 23 is a comparison of household income and expenditure, portrays the inability to meet household needs as four of the seven settlements exceed their weekly income. In settlement. Site RK2 is particularly shocking as households are in deficit by almost as much as they are bringing in therefore earning only half of what they need to survive. Households usually cover this debt by taking out loans and partaking in borrowing schemes (discussion to follow, see Figure 39).

Figure 24 evidences the importance of taking a more nuanced approach to household income and expenditure as the total averages tell a very different story when the figures are broken down by site. To put the figures into perspective, the national poverty line currently sits at \$0.61 (2,473KHR) per person per day, \$1 being roughly the equivalent of 4000KHR. However when we take into account that over 80 per cent of the Cambodian population live in rural areas, one might expect the national poverty line to be inaccurate in relation to the urban poor. This would be because of the inflated prices and cost of living in Phnom Penh, where prices for rent and daily goods are commonly double or triple their rural equivalent.

<b>Fig. 23 Comparison of average number of household members, average weekly household income and expenditure in sites facing eviction</b>			
	<b>Income</b>	<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>+/-</b>
<b>CH1</b>			
No. in HH	4	4	/
HH Total income \$USD	\$55.85	\$32.51	+\$23.35
\$USD per person per day	\$1.99	\$1.16	+\$0.83
<b>RK1</b>			
No. in HH	4	4	/
HH Total income \$USD	\$63.00	\$72.88	-\$9.88
\$USD per person per day	\$2.25	\$2.60	-\$0.35
<b>RK2</b>			
No. in HH	5	5	+0.4
HH Total income \$USD	\$29.55	\$57.44	-\$27.89
\$USD per person per day	\$0.84	\$1.64	-\$0.80
<b>R_TK1</b>			
No. in HH	6.6	7	0.4
HH Total income \$USD	\$99.13	\$43.40	+\$55.73
\$USD per person per day	\$2.01	\$0.89	\$1.12
<b>R_ME1</b>			
No. in HH	5	5	/
HH Total income \$USD	\$30.13	\$86.70	-\$56.57-
\$USD per person per day	\$1.28	\$2.48	\$1.20-
<b>R_ME2</b>			
No. in HH	5	5	/
HH Total income \$USD	\$53.75	\$33.00	+\$20.75
\$USD per person per day	\$1.54	\$0.94	\$0.60
<b>R_ME3</b>			
No. in HH	6.5	5.8	-0.7
HH Total income \$USD	\$67.60	\$41.55	+\$26.05
\$USD per person per day	\$1.66	\$1.02	+\$0.64

<b>Fig. 24 Average income and expenditure comparison in sites facing eviction and resettlement sites</b>			
<b>TOTAL AVERAGES</b>			
	<b>Income</b>	<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>+/-</b>
<b>Sites Facing Eviction</b>			
No. in HH	4.3	4.3	/
HH Total income \$USD	\$53.30	\$36.88	+\$16.42
\$USD per person per day	\$1.77	\$1.23	+\$0.54
<b>Resettlement site</b>			
No. in HH	5.8	5.7	/
HH Total income \$USD	\$62.65	\$51.16	+\$11.49
\$USD per person per day	\$1.54	\$1.28	+\$0.26

For example, on a good day a *motodop* driver in Phnom Penh might earn 10,000KHR (\$2.50), a construction worker 15,000KHR (\$3.75) and a garment factory worker 11,000KHR (\$2.75) per day. However these incomes, whilst above the national poverty line, are barely able to support individuals, let alone families, in Phnom Penh. For example rice per kilo can be as little as 700-800KHR in the provinces, whereas in Phnom Penh rice retails for 2200-3700KR (data for 2014, taken from [www.agriculturalmarketing.org.kh](http://www.agriculturalmarketing.org.kh) ).

The issue of price increase is not isolated to Phnom Penh or even Cambodia. It is a result of international factors as well as domestic demand and supply. CRDI's 'Impact of High Food Prices Report' (2008) identifies food prices increasing by 36.8 per cent nationally from 2007 to 2008, housing materials and transport by 27 per cent for the same period (CDRI, 2008, p.9). Focusing on the food prices, the report indicates that rice, the staple food in Cambodia, rose by 100 per cent March to July in 2007 and the same period in 2008. This was across all rice varieties as well. Meat rose by 50 per cent and meat and vegetables rose 20-30 per cent (CDRI, 2008, p.9). CDRI released

an assessment of the 2008 price rise, ‘Rapid Assessment of the Impact of Rising Food Prices on the Poor and Vulnerable and Policy Responses in Cambodia’ in 2012. This report attributed the price rise to three demand-side explanations and five supply-side observations. The demand-side explanations were the growing global population partnered with strong income growth in emerging economies, the increased production of ethanol and bio-fuel and precautionary actions taken by regional countries such as the Philippines, which imported higher quantities of rice in the first quarter of 2008 to avoid incurring further price increases (CDRI, 2012, pp. 4-5). Supply-side explanations included dwindling food stocks, slow productivity, poor weather conditions, high fuel prices and restrictions on export (CDRI, 2012, p. 5). The depreciation of the US dollar was also listed as a contributor to increased food prices paired with low interest rates at this time (CDRI, 2012, p. 6).

Figure 25 is a list of recent prices in Phnom Penh compared with prices for similar goods in the Province of Battambang. Battambang was chosen because there was the most data available for this province.<sup>54</sup> Figures were taken at their highest cost for the prices in Battambang whereas the figures for Phnom Penh were taken by a Cambodian research colleague in the Daemkor market in Phnom Penh in February 2014. Other prices for everyday goods were collected in Phnom Penh however comparative figures were not available. It is understood that this table is not by any means comprehensive however it does illustrate the higher cost of living in Phnom Penh for these basic goods, showing that goods in Battambang are as much as double the price in Phnom Penh.

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<sup>54</sup> [www.agriculturalmarketing.org.kh](http://www.agriculturalmarketing.org.kh)

<b>Fig. 25 The price difference for basic food goods between Phnom Penh and Battambang</b>			
<b>Item</b>	<b>Weight g/kg</b>	<b>Phnom Penh (USD)</b>	<b>Battambang (USD)</b>
Rice	1kg	\$0.55 – 0.93	\$0.20
Green leaf vegetables	250g	\$0.13	\$0.06
Pork	1kg	\$3.00	\$2.22
Chicken	1kg	\$5.75	\$3.75
Fish	1kg	\$3.00	\$2.00

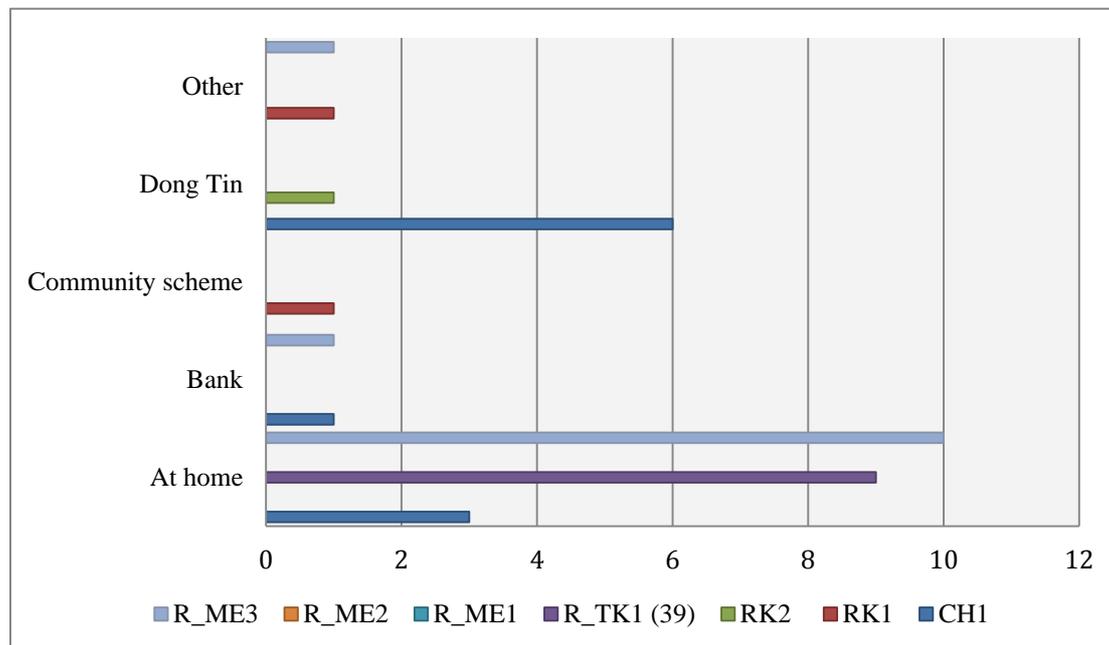
Both the 2008 and 2012 CDRI reports indicate that increases in food prices have negative consequences for the poor in both rural and urban settings, where obtaining food can be a daily struggle (CDRI 2008, p. 6; CDRI, 2012). When talking about the weekly cost of food for a household in Phnom Penh, the most frequent response was roughly 10,000R (\$2.50USD). However after speaking with a respondent who at first appeared to misunderstand the question, it became clear that she was asking for further clarification: basic food or nutritious food? 10,000R she explained, will buy you basic rations of rice and a few vegetables, but if a person wants meat and eggs and other more nutritious food the cost increases from 10,000R to 15,000-20,000R per week.

The cost of nutritious food and not simply subsistence has been highlighted in the CDRI 2008 report which recorded 50 per cent of people contacted for the report tried to save money by purchasing less nutritionally balanced and varied foods. Other strategies include parents eating less and giving more their children, skipping meals all together, work extra hours or extra jobs. These strategies have been identified as a contributing decline in health and well being as well as school drop out rates as young

people leave school to work or take care of sick relatives (CDRI, 2008, pp.58-59).<sup>55</sup>

What the above figures do not show us however are levels of household saving, borrowing and debt. Figure 26 presents a breakdown of settlement saving habits. It is clear that saving at home is by far the most common means of saving, followed by Dong Tin. Dong Tin is a rotating saving scheme, whereby one individual is held responsible for collecting and saving an agreed amount of money for an agreed amount of time from within a trusted group. Every week or month, money is deposited and those saving are able to request access to the joint funds. Each individual is only able to access the funds once per cycle, and must make their case as to the importance of the request.

**Fig. 26 Means of Households saving**



<sup>55</sup> The factors described here are known as food security issues and are discussed in detail in the CDRI 2008 and 2012 reports, and by the World Food Programme here: <https://www.wfp.org/countries/cambodia>

Dong Tin can be very risky however as the saving scheme relies upon trust. One respondent recalled their local Dong Tin collector running away with over \$500 USD. However community rotating saving schemes such as Dong Tin are being advocated in developing countries as they thought to encourage values such as democracy, community cohesion and reciprocity (Benda, 2013).

With large deficits to cover, money saving schemes and borrowing are commonplace in Phnom Penh. Overall 28 per cent of households were able to save money regularly, 71 per cent were not and 2 per cent did not respond. Of the 28 per cent that were able to save regularly, 64 per cent saved at home, 6 per cent saved with a bank, 3 per cent saved with a community saving scheme, 21 per cent saved using Dong Tin and 6 per cent saved using other means.

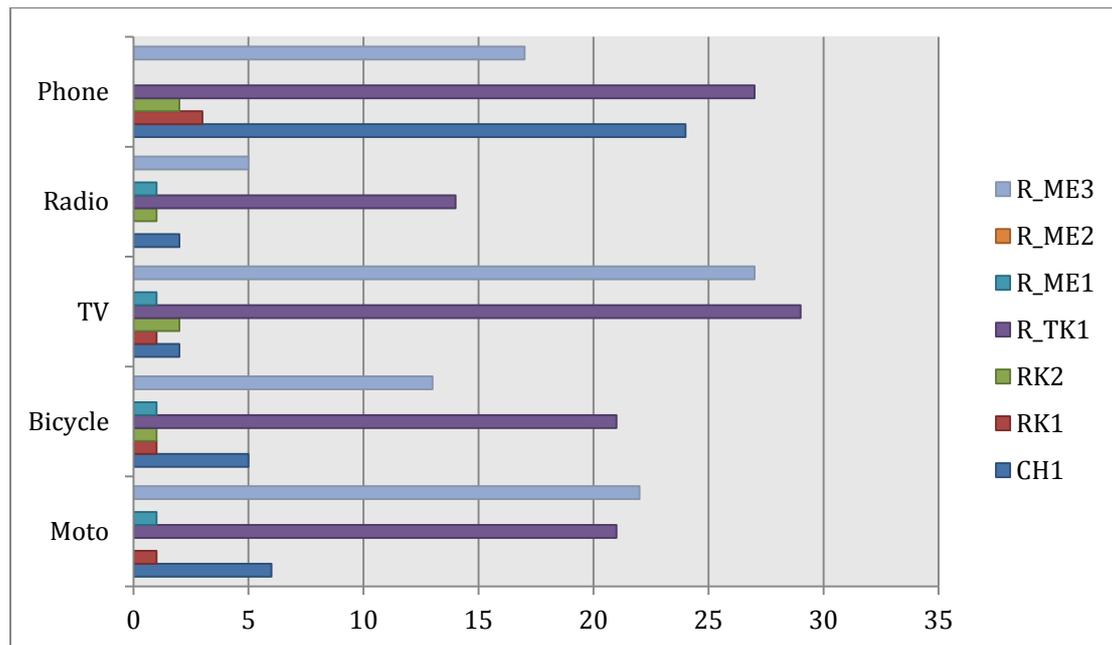
Perhaps surprisingly, the majority of households surveyed in Phnom Penh, albeit a marginal majority of 56 per cent, do not borrow money. 43 per cent do borrow and 1 per cent did not answer. Of the 43 per cent that do borrow, 21 per cent borrow from the bank, 4 per cent borrow from family members, 8 per cent from other sources, but the majority at 60 per cent borrow from private moneylenders. This is usually the case as to borrow from a formal organisation; one needs not only an official state identification card but also a bank account and often a land title. Without regular contractual income and a sizeable deposit, many Cambodians are denied bank accounts. The land registration process, which has been in operation since 2007 with the aid of the World Bank, has been fraught with corruption, nepotism and delay (HRW, 2013). Identification documents, if stolen, lost or damaged, cost money to replace. As a result, many Cambodians are denied access to secure financial

institutions because of these administrative hurdles. As a result, private money lending at extreme interest rates is the only option for many.

Other items that are desirable and useful for aiding or supplementing a household income include owning a *moto*, a bicycle, a TV, radio or a phone. A *motodop* can be used to earn money or take people to work, or both. One respondent allowed his friend to rent the *moto* from him during the day to work as a *motodop* driver provided that he take him to and from work. Bicycles can similarly allow people to get to work, to take children to school and earn income from renting them out. TVs and radios are useful not only for entertainment but can also be used to set up impromptu karaoke sessions or screen popular dramas, sporting events and films. Phones too are used to receive calls for work for casual labourers but are also rented out for people to make phone calls from. In this situation the cost of the call is supplemented with a small charge.

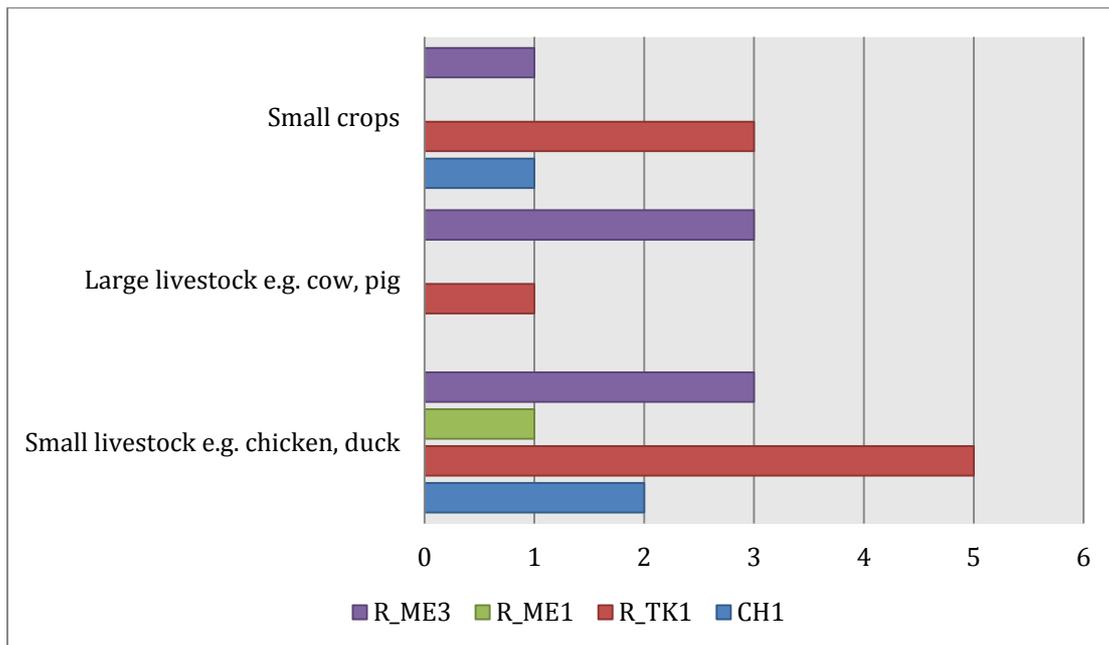
However, phones require credit and electricity for charging and  *motos*  require petrol and maintenance. These items may supplement income but will no doubt involve initial buying costs and significant running costs. Data regarding income on these items was not captured regrettably, as these are often ad hoc and opportunistic means of generating money, nonetheless their importance was evident from speaking with household respondents and members. Figure 27 displays their frequency in households facing eviction and former sites.

**Fig. 27 Frequency of desirable income supporting items**



In one of the central settlement sites, CH1, small crops and chickens were noted upon our arrival. The chickens were left to wander and the small salad leaf crops and morning glory, were being grown in the sewage. The chickens were kept for food however the small crops were sold at market, despite their unsanitary growing conditions. A large white rabbit was noted in one household, although this was kept for luck rather than food, the respondent replied. Perhaps the rabbit gave some means of income as well, however it was undisclosed. Due to the nature of living in highly urban areas, the presence of animals or small crops was limited. In resettlement sites however, there was increased space and it was more common to see small plants growing around houses and chickens. In one house in R\_TK1 there was even a cow. The cow had cost the owner \$200USD and was kept inside with the family. The presence of livestock and small crops in the case study sites is shown in Figure 28 however sites RK1, RK2 and R\_ME2 have been excluded from the graph as no residents were recorded as having either livestock or crops.

**Fig. 28 Livestock ownership and small crop farming**



A final opportunistic means of earning extra money was described by *tuktuk* driver Tim, who often allowed companies to advertise on his *tuktuk*:

*Tim: Poster you know, if they advertise on the street is more expensive, so you advertise on the tuktuk on the limousine, is cheaper, one poster in one place but tuktuk is everywhere. Depend on the price, if the poster is big no, but \$8 per month for small nice poster, is ok. Easy to get money. If the office is far then no, need to be easy to get the money. \$7 or more, depend on size and where is office. The wind blocked by the sign if too big.*

Advertising for companies, particularly phone companies, can be seen across the city and the country. Many *tuktuk* advertise all kinds of businesses from new bars and restaurants to political parties. When one household survey respondent was asked about the presence of advertisement umbrellas and banners surrounding her small shop, she replied that the items were given for free by the phone company when she bought sim cards and phone credit vouchers to sell. The phone company and the seller had found mutual benefit from these umbrellas: The phone company had free advertisement while the shop owner had shade to sit under and keep her items for sale

out of the sun. In the case of *tuktuk* drivers, they were paid extra money to advertise the posters.

The data presented in this section has outlined household monetary income and expenditure and the variety of alternative livelihood generating practices that together create the urban poor economy. The urban poor economy is characterised by urban poor resident's flexibility, versatility and resilience, which are demonstrated through the breadth of livelihood generating behaviours and opportunities demonstrated in this chapter.

#### **4.3 What are the present housing conditions of the urban poor?**

The above section focused on livelihoods and alternative livelihood supporting practices. This section shifts the focus on urban poverty to the living conditions of the urban poor and how the classification of tenure is vitally important in regards to development and forced evictions. The section begins by critiquing the terminology ‘‘ as a negative label that does not reflect the living circumstances of many respondents who took part in the household survey. Rather status of tenure is offered as a more appropriate means of disaggregating the different living conditions and offers a more nuanced understanding housing issues facing the urban poor. Tenure is also crucial as it is upon tenure status that compensation for evictions is calculated.

The rate of global urbanisation has exceeded all predictions and expectations and for the first time in the history of the world, the urban population exceeds that of the rural (UN-HABITAT, 2007). At the same time, urban poor houses are emerging and

growing at an astonishing rate as cities gain an average of 5 million residents per month (UN-HABITAT 2008). UN-HABITAT 'State of the Worlds Cities 2008/2009' report predicted that 60 per cent of the global population would be urban dwellers within the next two decades and that, by 2050, one in three people will live in a slum. In Cambodia the urban population has risen from 12.6 per cent of the total population in 1989 to 20 per cent in 2009. The percentage of the urban population living in low standard housing has risen from 72 per cent in 1990 to 78 per cent in 2005 (see Appendix 1).

The UN-HABITAT 2007 'State of the World's Cities' report uses the term slum to refer to urban poor dwellings. The report defines a slum household as a group of individuals living under the same roof in an urban area who lack one or more of the following criteria:

1. *Durable housing of a permanent nature that protects against extreme climate conditions.*
2. *Sufficient living space, which means not more than three people sharing the same room.*
3. *Easy access to safe water in sufficient amounts at an affordable price.*
4. *Access to adequate sanitation in the form of a private or public toilet shared by a reasonable number of people.*
5. *Security of tenure that prevents forced evictions.*

(UN-HABITAT, 2007).

It should be noted that employment and income levels are excluded from the above criteria, yet slum dwellers are commonly characterised as being poor unemployed or informal workers. The degree of deprivation, UN-HABITAT suggests, is indicated by how many of the above criteria apply.

Whilst this is useful for offering a framework to measure or investigate urban poor housing, the use of the word slum is contested in this research. Slums are historically synonymous with crime and deprivation, the lowest echelons of society existing in dark overcrowded back streets (Davis, 2006: pp. 20-22). In particular the Khmer word used in lieu of slum is *ana-tub-badai* or ‘anarchy’. Slum housing is therefore translated as anarchical housing. The word ‘anarchy’ is associated with disorder, criminality, anti-establishment and immorality and is therefore vehemently inappropriate as a term used to refer to urban poor housing. This research departs from this stereotype and the homogenisation of the urban poor. In fact many of the criteria set out by UN-HABITAT would render the majority of properties in Phnom Penh as slums. Tenure security for example, as will be examined in depth, is desirable but not guaranteed for any resident of Phnom Penh. Further, many families and households routinely sleep in one room, which exceeds the three-person threshold indicated in criterion 2. This is not seen as an indicator of deprivation, rather a normal part of family life. Equally the flooding experienced by residents in the capital, seemingly an annual event in recent years, is not due to individual housing in particular but is systematic of a municipal failure to maintain and develop flood defences.

An alternative to the negatively stereotyped term slum and the inappropriate criterion is UN-Habitat’s tenure classification that identifies the different variations in tenure as follows:

- *Formal rights:*
  - *Registered (including ownership, leasehold and use/occupancy rights).*
  - *Unregistered but documented (e.g. rental, rent to buy, unregistered leases, etc.).*

- *Group/family/household rights (e.g. customary/tribal/clan family rights, Islamic tenure types, community land trusts, etc.).*
- *Unregistered and undocumented (e.g. adverse possession, use or occupancy rights without certificate, customary rights).*
- *Irregular tenure:*
  - *Documented (e.g. written agreements between irregular owners and tenants, de facto recognition, illegal subdivisions, customary rights, tenancy at will, etc.).*
  - *Undocumented (e.g. as above but without documents).*
- *Homeless. (Payne, 2004).*

This typology of tenure may be useful for moving beyond the more simplistic distinctions of land owner, renter and homeless, as it reflects the variation in living arrangements of the urban poor. However, there are different degrees of tenure security amongst this typology. Khmero and Payne identify 12 further nuances to the Cambodian tenure system:

- 1. Pavement/mobile dweller,**
- 2. Tenant in informal housing,**
- 3. Unauthorised occupation of state public land or mobile boat house,**
- 4. Unauthorised occupation of state private land or building roof top,**
- 5. Unauthorised occupation of private land or building roof top,**
- 6. Temporary housing allocated by government agency,**
7. *Family registered book,*
8. *Social concession by the government,*
9. *Tenant in formal housing,*
10. *Court order after dispute,*
11. *Certificate of possession,*
12. *Certificate of ownership.*

Whilst the first six are considered to be informal tenure and the second six to be formal tenure, the level of tenure security is far less easily defined. For example one settlement may involve multiple forms of tenure categories, whereas those partaking

in 'unauthorised occupations' have a different level of security depending on whether the land is state private land or state public land (Khemro and Payne, 2004, pp. 184-185). State public land includes roads, parks, bridges, port and airports. The rights of the public to this land are inalienable. However the tenure of state private land, land used for government buildings, ministries, institutions and other vacant land identified as belonging to the state, may be redefined. This difference may seem negligible, however it is important for DIDR as unauthorised occupants of state private land are able to challenge their evictions and the tenure status of the land, whereas unauthorised occupants on state public land cannot (Khemro & Payne, 2004, p. 184; Payne, 2004, p.10).

Using this more detailed typology and following his fieldwork in Cambodia and the Philippines, Payne recommends a comprehensive pro-poor tenure regularisation policy. The first step towards this pro-poor policy is the cessation of forced evictions. Second, all extra-legal settlements should be surveyed for hazards and Temporary Occupation Licences (TOLs) offered to residents found to be living in hazardous locations. Payne calls for TOLs to be provided for all extra-legal settlements residents, making clear that these are not permanent titles, which Payne argues, will increase tenure security without driving up land prices. A range of locations, tenure options and developments should be offered to residents after an audit of planning and building developments, before a multi-stakeholder partnership is promoted, aimed at maximising public benefit from private investment in the city. Finally, Payne advocates for institutional reform of the public sector to tackle corruption but also build capacity and attract young professionals who would otherwise be drawn to the private sector.

Payne admits nonetheless, that whilst an occupier may have increased tenure security, that without land rights, the occupier may be constrained as to what can be done with the land (2004, p.169), such as building restrictions or restrictions on the number of tenants. However as Payne identifies, and this thesis advocates, priorities amongst urban residents vary. A formal land title may be a priority for the Cambodian urban elite whereas increased tenure security, although not necessarily a land title, may be the preference of the urban middle class. The urban poor however, prioritise proximity to labour opportunities over tenure security and land titles (p.170, 2004). This is evident from the building of homes in dangerous or unsanitary locations such as over sewers, beside main roads or along the riverbank (see the presentation of case studies in section 3.2.iii).

A preparation report for the 2007 UN-Habitat *Global Report on Human Settlements* by Graeme Bristol provides an insight into the MPPs approach to tenure security of the urban poor as a part of the development of Phnom Penh. Acutely aware of the problem of tenure security, the MPP and local NGOs and various interested groups met between 2001 and 2003 to discuss ways in which tenure security could be better managed and improved. A pilot project investigating the urban poor was established, beginning with a fact-finding mission to clarify the development strategy and processes including investigations into resettlement sites, land availability and site mapping (Bristol, 2007, pp. 44-46). Following this three case study communities were selected, mapped, analysed. The project marked a significant achievement: a collective, democratic and transparent approach to urban poor settlement upgrading precedent had been established. A city-wide vision was developed including a

practical alternative strategy to forced evictions, inclusive of the MPP, NGOs and residents, was a reality (Bristol, 2007, p. 45).

The tenure security pilot project was shelved soon after its completion and the inclusive development strategy abandoned by all levels of government (Bristol, 2007). Bristol's damning report makes it clear that political change will be a long time coming, however the poor must organise and look for alternative means of support:

*Security of tenure continues to deteriorate in Phnom Penh and throughout the country and does so largely because of land grabs motivated by development pressures, gentrification and beautification — most of which are motivated by money... The Cambodian government has, in that respect, failed its citizens, or certainly those who are poor. Under such conditions, if the poor are to gain any security of tenure they must continue to lobby the government for change, but, more importantly, they must find support in international investors, developers, companies, agencies and countries. They already have the support of the under-resourced local NGOs. They also have the support of the international NGOs such as AHRC, Human Rights Watch and COHRE as well as the support of the UN agencies and other governments. Although the communities and the local NGOs lack resources, they cannot wait for the government to change. One of the most urgent activities they can undertake in a coordinated way is the collection of information. Even the act of collecting data about one's own community is an act of solidarity and an organizational strategy. (Bristol, 2007, p. 47).*

After an impassioned report, Bristol's recommendations fall short. He rightly recognises that political change is not forthcoming and that alternative avenues should be explored, however he simultaneously identifies the urban poor as having support of NGOs, international organisations and transnational agencies, and calls for their support as the way to move forward.

Without a doubt, the opportunity to own land rather than rent land is likely to be met with open arms by the urban poor. What this research has identified however, is that the demands and strains on urban poor residents stem not simply from the lack of land titles, but from the absence of tenure vulnerability and job security. Owning land but being unable to work is less desirable than renting a house and being able to work.

As outlined in the methodology, this section will present data from seven settlement sites: three sites facing eviction and four resettlement sites. This section will address the housing conditions prior to eviction including the size, structure, tenure status, flooding, access to water and electricity, and proximity to local amenities such as schools, markets and health facilities. From this baseline understanding, an examination into the circumstances of respondents after DIDR will investigate how resettlement has changed the lives of respondents in Chapter Five.

#### *4.3.i Size, structure, ownership and access*

In a similar critique aimed at the word ‘slum’, the term ‘informal dwelling’ is also not appropriate for encompassing all dwelling types of the urban poor. ‘Informal dwelling’ suggests that a dwelling is self-constructed, vulnerable to the elements or to illegally occupying land. Four of the households from settlements facing eviction in the household survey however, lived in well-constructed permanent housing. Figure 29 shows a permanent well-constructed house and for comparison, an informal dwelling. The walls of the house on the left in Figure 29 are made of concrete and brick and the roof is a sheet of corrugated iron. The house on the left in Figure 30 on the other hand, is a basic wooden and bamboo structure with no doors, tarpaulin and plastic for walls and a palm leaf woven roof.

To call both houses ‘informal dwellings’ is therefore misleading. The term urban poor dwelling is used by in this thesis to relate to describe the homes of the urban poor, relating to the low income of the respondent, rather than the materials and structure of their home. Further detail regarding the dwelling infrastructure was collected during the household survey which recorded the size of plots, the primary materials of the dwelling structure, whether the dwelling had a toilet, whether it flooded during the wet season, and whether the access roads were well maintained.



The smallest plots recorded were 4m<sup>2</sup> however the majority of plots were between 4 and 20m<sup>2</sup>. The average plot was 28m<sup>2</sup> and the three households whose plots were between 100-200m<sup>2</sup> were all from site R\_ME3. Structures were predominantly made of wood, with over 108 households recording wood as a main structural material. 63 households recorded metal as the second most common, with concrete third frequent

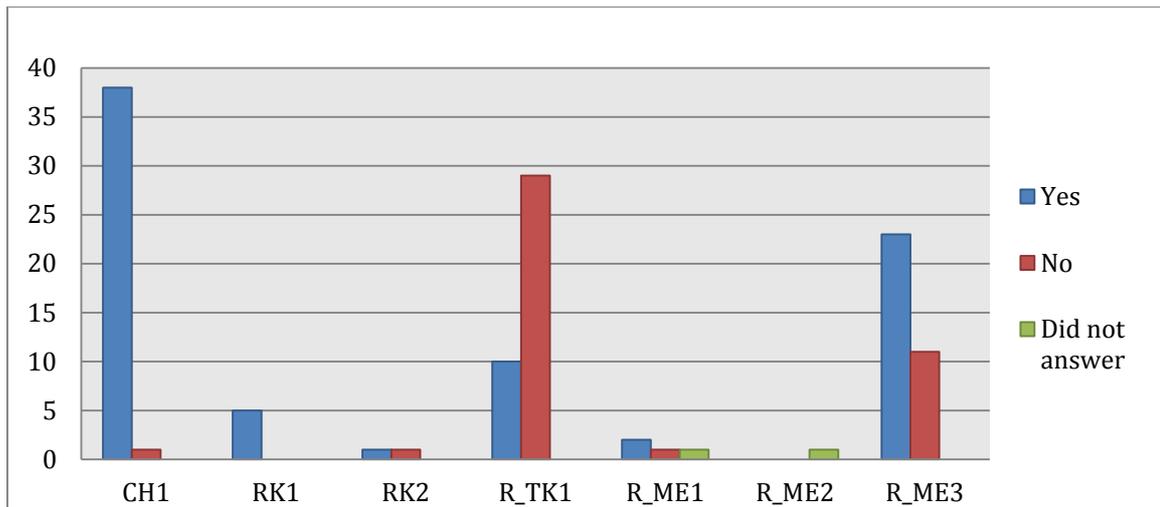
at 10, bamboo being recorded seven times, plastic and palm at five times each and brick only twice. Wood is a desirable material as it is easily shaped, replaced and does not retain heat in the property. Metal is commonly used for roofing however respondents often said that brick or concrete would be the most desirable building material, as these houses keep cool in the hot season and retain warmth during the cooler times of year. Whilst corrugated metal, plastic and palm are usually used for roofing and all other materials for walls and doors, regrettably what each material was used for not specified in the survey.

Regardless of the structural material however, many properties suffered from flooding and leaking during the wet season. Figure 31 displays the data collected on flooding in each settlement. Overall 79 out of 122 households suffered from flooding.

Flooding and leakage can undermine the structure of a building; spoil clothing, food or business stock. Regular flooding and living in damp conditions is detrimental to household member's health, particularly the vulnerable young and older members.

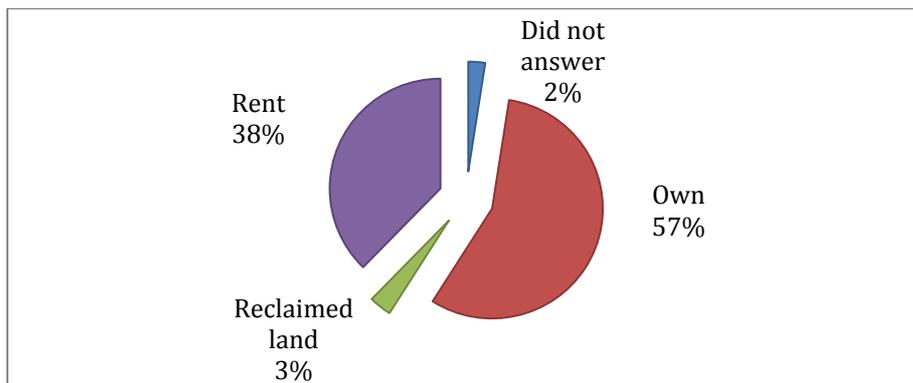
Flooding also facilitates the spread of communicable water borne diseases including cholera and hepatitis, and vector borne diseases such as malaria and dengue fever ('Technical Guidance for Flooding and Communicable Disease', [www.who.int](http://www.who.int)).

**Fig. 31 Does the property flood during the wet season?**



Results from the household survey regarding dwelling ownership status, Figure 32, shows that 57 per cent of the household respondents own or owned their properties prior to eviction and 38 per cent have or had a rental agreement. Only 3 per cent lived on reclaimed land. This amounts to four households.

**Fig. 32 Status of property**



Whilst this data is not indicative of causation, it can be useful to identify correlations, such as the correlation between rented property and the increased chance of flooding. CH1 contains almost entirely rental properties and suffered greatly from flooding, whereas households in R\_TK1 owned their properties and recorded fewer problems with flooding.

Regarding the condition of the access roads to the settlement, 67 per cent of households responded that they were in poor condition, 31 per cent said they were in good condition and 2 per cent did not answer. Poor road condition in this instance was defined as either being un-surfaced, as washing away during the rainy season or being full of pot holes. The majority of households from the positive 31 per cent are from R\_TK1 and were living in the heart of Phnom Penh, close to Wat Phnom at this time along the railway. This being the centre of the city in proximity to the business district of Phnom Penh and major access roads, is likely reason for the good condition of the roads. The majority of the households who responded negatively were from site CH1 and live in a less well-developed part of central Phnom Penh on the proposed sewage treatment site. Site CH1 is accessed by a rickety wooden bridge however internally; there are no roads, only trodden down earth and woodchips from a nearby workshop.

#### *4.3.ii Provision of utilities and access to services*

Access to sanitation and toilets is outlined as one of the indicators in UN-HABITAT's slum criteria. Figure 34 breaks down household access to a toilet. In this case, this indicates whether the household has their own toilet, as establishing what is *a reasonable number of people* (UN-HABITAT, 2007) sharing would be difficult to qualify. For example, 19 respondents in CH1 replied yes when asked if they have a toilet, but what they were in fact referring to was a separate wooden shack with a hole in the floor over an open sewer, used by a estimated 150-200 people (see Figure 33.).

**Fig. 33 Shared toilet facilities for an estimated 150-200 people in site CH1**



**Fig. 34 Do you have a toilet?**

	CH1	RK1	RK2	R_TK1	R_ME1	R_ME2	R_ME3	Total
No	19	5	1	10	3		11	49
Yes	18		1	29			21	69
Did not answer	2				1	1		4

**Fig. 35 Percentage of household access to water and electricity**

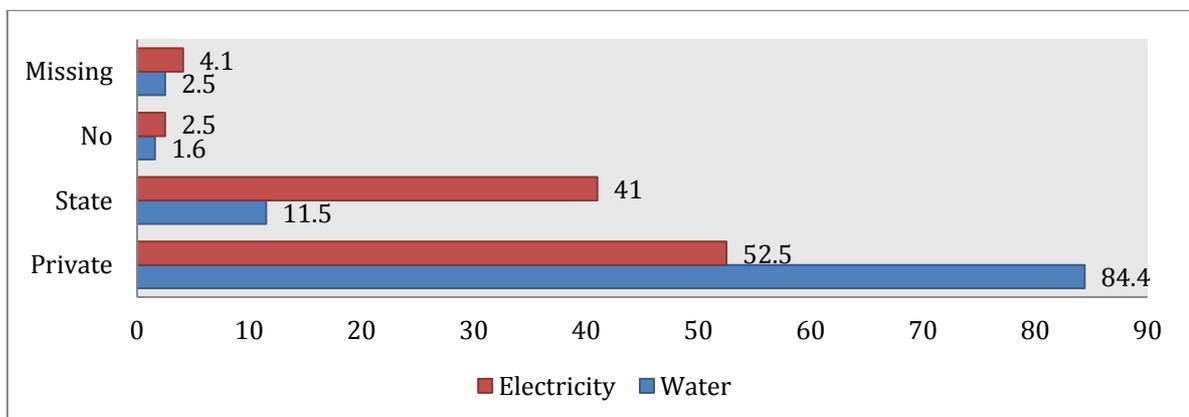


Figure 34 indicates that the vast majority of households surveyed, 84 per cent, rely on private water supplies and over half, 53 per cent, on private electricity connections.

Figure 35 displays the access and provision of water and electricity to surveyed households. Only 3 per cent of households had no electricity connection whatsoever and just 2 per cent lived without access to clean drinking water.

In Phnom Penh, and across Cambodia, it is desirable to have connections to the State run water supplier and electricity grid, as these are significantly cheaper than the private connections. In Phnom Penh this means having water supplied by the Phnom Penh Water Supply Authority (PPWSA) and electricity from Electricité du Cambodge (EDC). The term 'private water provision' includes purchasing water by the litre or bottle from companies as well as paying for a private connection. The use of a rechargeable car battery, as well as a private connection to a private grid, is included under the private variable. Royal Decree no. 164NS officially established the PPWSA in 1959. From 1958-66 the PPWSA built two new water treatment plants and renovated a third. However during the KR regime the water treatment plants were shut down and maintenance stopped on water pipelines, which were left to fall into disrepair. However with assistance from the French and Japanese governments, the three water treatment plants are functioning, however badly damaged pipelines have yet to be repaired throughout the city ([www.ppwsa.com/kh](http://www.ppwsa.com/kh)). The PPWSA has been recognised internationally as complete transformation from an ineffective, poor quality, corrupt organisation losing 72 per cent of water due to leakages and illegal connections in 1993, to an award winning service with a loss of only 6 per cent in

2003 (Brennan, 2012).<sup>56</sup> The PPWSA were awarded the Ramon Magsaysay Award for Government Service in 2006 and the Stockholm Industry Water Award in 2010. The PPWSA has been lauded as an exemplary service with the inclusion of pro-poor tariffs and civil society engagement (Brennan, 2012; Water Aid, 2009). However some of the more peripheral areas of the city have been waiting years for a connection to the PPWSA. With the rate of the expansion of Phnom Penh, it is may be the case that many more people will be waiting for many more years to come.

Electricity in Cambodia is purchased by the EDC from neighbouring Vietnam and Laos. Suffering a similar fate of the water treatment plants, electricity infrastructure was left to degrade during the KR regime. However despite renovations, a reliable electricity connection is scarce to be found in Cambodia, as blackouts are a daily occurrence for parts of the city (Phnom Penh Post, 2012). The EDC in 2012 provisioned 290 megawatts of electricity for Phnom Penh per day, however this was short of the 380-400 megawatts required per day (Phnom Penh Post, 2012). Unable to meet present requirements, the EDC have also predicted an increase in demand of 15-20 per cent per year, in line with urban expansion. The frequent electricity blackouts are not felt in all parts of the city however. The tourist areas of Phnom Penh are rarely hit and areas of the city that are home to government ministries, embassies and the Royal Palace are also saved from electricity cuts. An official from the EDC acknowledged the selective electricity blackouts, indicating that residential areas of Phnom Penh were sacrificed so as to allow for the 'special places' to remain connected (Phnom Penh Post, 2013). However, more recently the entire country

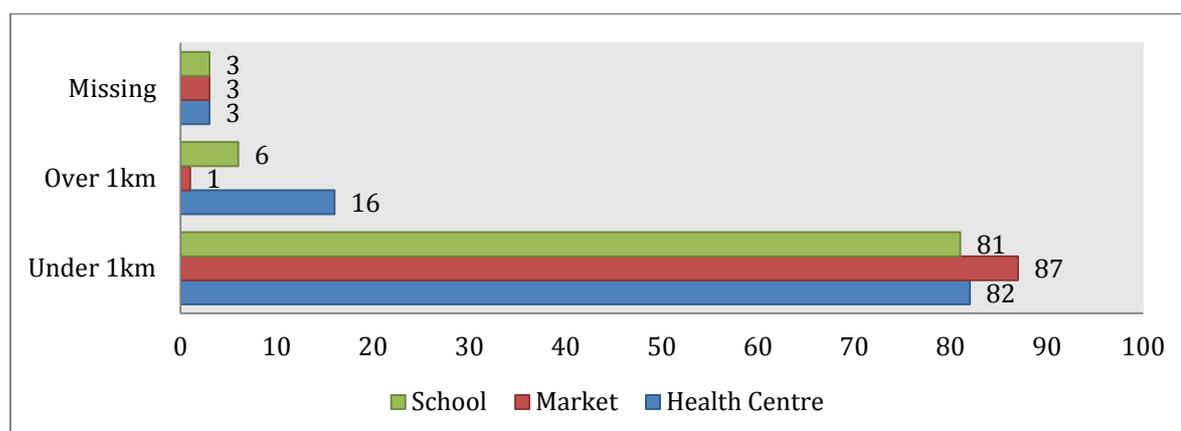
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<sup>56</sup> Details from Stockholm International Water Institute:  
<http://www.siwi.org/prizes/stockholmindustrywateraward/winners/phnom-penh-water-supply-authority/>

experienced a blackout during water festival, put down to disruptions in Vietnam the county's main supplier (Phnom Penh, 2015). Yet despite the regular blackouts, the EDC grid remains significantly cheaper than private electricity companies. In December 2012 one kWh from the EDC cost 610KHR (\$0.15). At the same time the average price charged by private electricity companies was 2,495KHR per kWh (\$0.623), an increase of over 400 per cent (Facts and Figures report, STT, 2012).

Household respondents saw the proximity to schools, markets and health centres as an enormous benefit. Figure 36 shows us that over 80 per cent of households were within 1km of schools, markets and health centres. Households that replied that they lived further than 1km were often referring to their preferred medical centre, market or school, rather than the closest. The fact that a preference of health centre was discussed may be indicative of the variation in services, healthcare quality or cost of services and goods. For example a normal clinic may not be suitable for providing antenatal care to a pregnant woman or appropriate services to a HIV/AIDS sufferer. Different markets in Phnom Penh also specialise in different products and produce. Psar Tuol Tom Pong for example, caters for mostly tourists and therefore the prices are inflated for basic goods. Psar Orrusei specialises in wholesale goods, electrical goods, new clothing and fabric. Psar Boeung Keng Kang is renowned for second hand clothing and home wares. Therefore, proximity to a 'market' does not guarantee the market will be affordable or cater for the needs of the respondent.

**Fig. 36 Percentage of households within 1km of schools, markets and health centres**



#### 4.4 Experiences of resettlement

*Tim: Uh Borei Keila. Boeung Kak. Cambodia a lot of people die under the city development. If you're poor, you need to run away. If you're talking about the law, if you want to move your people to outside, you must have a reasonable place. Not far away! I cannot agree! But the people in Cambodia they cannot refuse, they respect to the leader, they say ok, but they (the government) should pay and buy the land, depending on the price in the market, or you should have other place not far from city, hospital or school but you move from Boeung Kak to Kampong Speu - how do they live? No clean water no electricity - how can you live? The people act ok, but they should have fair, real, good compensation not far from where they lived. Abroad, if you want to move people, they have good place, not very far. The people nowadays they are not stupid. The protest is the last resort. The first - the police, he say now you leave. Here the government will build and develop the city, like lakeside (Beoung Kak Lake). He has a gun, I don't have a gun. Someone has gun? He is winning. Police in Cambodia, they hit or fire the gun, tie the two hands and two legs. They have a gun! Everyone scared of the gun.*

In 2011 more than 60,000 people were forcibly evicted from Phnom Penh alone (Open Development, 2012). The current threat of violent forced eviction and

inadequate compensation has been described as major human rights concern in Cambodia at present (Amnesty International, 2009: p. 2; LICADHO, 2009: p. 27; COHRE, 2009: p. 7). As shown in Chapter Four, many households are losing income after their resettlement. This section builds upon infrastructure and housing data from sites prior to eviction presented earlier in the chapter, to examine the changes that take place after resettlement. Changes in basic infrastructure such as roads, sanitation and electricity, proximity to healthcare facilities, schools and markets will be analysed to see if resettlement has produced positive outcomes for the urban poor. However, the presence of coercion, threat and violence in the eviction process is highlighted initially and throughout the data and discourse analysis to contextualise the infrastructure data. An investigation and discussion relating to compensation for eviction will follow. It will be argued that with large numbers of the population facing eviction and relocation as well as those already suffering in relocation sites, an increased understanding of the labour market could be used to inform and improve relocation procedures and processes.

Figure 37 shows the responses of respondents when asked about their experiences of the eviction process. The results are varied due to data collection issues raised in the methodology, particularly for the first site, CH1. Following fixed questions with yes or no answers, open-ended questions followed and revealed more detail regarding development plans, violence, intimidation and coercion. For example, when asked about the plans for development in CH1 many residents were unaware of the plans or believed them to be rumours. The site has a high turn over of residents, many often staying only for a few weeks or months and so they would not necessarily be aware of the forthcoming eviction. Second, the plans for the site development have been

repeatedly pushed back, further fuelling rumours as to their genuine existence. Other residents in CH1 recalled a site visit two years prior in 2010 and notification of eviction given.

<b>Fig. 37 Violence and intimidation answers from household survey</b>							
	<b>CH1 (39)</b>	<b>RK1 (2)</b>	<b>RK2 (5)</b>	<b>R_TK1 (39)</b>	<b>R_ME1 (4)</b>	<b>R_ME2 (1)</b>	<b>R_ME3 (32)</b>
<b>Did you experience violence or intimidation?</b>							
No	39	0	1	6	1	1	28
Yes	0	2	4	33	3	0	4
<b>Did you submit a complaint?</b>							
No	39	2	3	31	3	1	21
Yes	0	0	2	8	1	0	11
<b>Did you protest?</b>							
No	39	2	2	32	3	1	22
Yes	0	0	3	7	1	0	10

However one respondent, despite answering ‘No’ to the survey questions, afterwards recounted her three trips to Prime Minister Hun Sen’s house. She had gone to his house with the intention of speaking to him regarding the development of the site as she was worried about adequate compensation. It may seem strange to have gone directly to the Prime Minister’s house but this is due to inadequate local channels of complaint or dispute resolution.<sup>57</sup> It is common to hear of groups and individuals going straight to the Prime Minister, rather than through local government or the judicial system, because the local authority and judicial system is corrupt and but also because Hun Sen is known to hold ultimate political and economic power. The perception is that if something is to change it cannot be done through legitimate channels, only the will of Hun Sen can guarantee an outcome. Springer argues that this is not an accidental occurrence but a deliberate and calculated manoeuvre of Hun

<sup>57</sup> See section 2.2 for discussion of Cambodian governance and civil society

Sen to be seen as the source of power who brazenly plasters his portrait and the CPP logo on infrastructural projects (2011, pp. 2557).

Nevertheless, upon further discussion with respondents it arose that four of the households came from the former Koh Pich site. Koh Pich is an island next to Phnom Penh, formerly wasteland and home to thousands of urban poor residents. In 2009 a fire raged through Koh Pich destroying all the residents' homes. Despite being reported as an accident by the police, the fire was widely spoken about as being a result of an arson attack by residents, as they witnessed people starting the fires deliberately. Residents lost their ID documents and family books in the fire: the official documentation required for employment, access to bank loans, international travel and elections. Koh Pich is now known as Diamond Island and is home to 'Elite Town': luxury housing, hotels, a large convention centre and is being further developed.

R\_TK1, the railway development site, provides an interesting result. 33 of 39 respondents responded yes when asked if they had experienced intimidation or threat during the eviction notice, but only eight complained and seven protested. Complaint here represents attempts to follow formal channels of complaint through the local authorities, whereas protest involves challenging a policy through alternative means such as refusing to leave a site, staging sit ins, organising protest marches etc. This site is the responsibility of the ADB and AusAid. One might imagine that the presence of these international actors ensured that complaint and dispute resolution mechanisms existed. The following is a quote from a respondent in R\_TK1:

*The government threatened to destroy our house if we didn't move out. I was very angry, I protested but no one would listen. I sent a complaint to City Hall but received*

*no response. The previous location was much better, we had a small house in Russei Keo, but we had a good business. We had no debt and no worries. Now we are worried all the time and had to borrow \$2500 to build the house and another \$250 to buy food to sell. My two children go to our relatives in the city during the week and come back at weekends. We have to pay 5000KHR everyday, so they can go to school.*

The circumstances in this quote are not unique. Almost every respondent in R\_TK1 had a similar story. One was an HIV sufferer who was too sick to complain. This respondent is only able to survive in the resettlement site due to NGO assistance providing life saving medicine. Others wanted to complain but didn't know where to go or who to speak too. Many of those who did complain explained that the village chief at the time did not pass on the complaints, as they did not want to look bad in front of their superiors, create more work for themselves or cause trouble.

Government coordinated evictions have thus far removed communities of an estimated 33,000 persons (15 per cent of Phnom Penh's population) from their homes and there is little sign of forced evictions and the illegal tenure of land coming to an end. More than 150,000 Cambodians are currently at risk of being forcibly evicted across Cambodia (Amnesty International, 2009). The current threat of violent forced eviction and inadequate compensation has been described as major human rights concern in Cambodia at present (Amnesty International, 2009: p. 2; LICADHO, 2009: p. 27; COHRE, 2009: p. 7).

The Cambodian government is not the only government with an inexhaustible appetite for exploitation of the poor for private gain. China, Cambodia's leading development partner and one might say mentor in regard to their human rights record, routinely sweeps peasants aside razing entire traditional neighbourhoods and villages

to develop new economic zones (Cernea, 1999; Rajagopal, 2000; Dwivei, 2002; Davis, 2006: p. 91). When residents protest they are confronted with paramilitary police, arrested and sentenced for disturbing the peace. Spatial boundaries are redrawn to the advantage of landowners, foreign investors and elite homeowners (Durand-Lasserve, 2002; Davis, 2006: p. 98). A result of the evictions is an urban segregation in which the poor are marginalised over time, pushed out of the centre to the periphery.

Another example is that of the forced relocation of 150,000 residents of a *jhuggi* (squatter town) on the banks of Delhi's Yamuna River. The state transported 150,000 residents in trucks twenty-kilometres away to a peripheral slum, to make way for a riverside promenade and tourist amenities (Mitra, 1990: pp. 218-29). The *Hindustan Times* 'revealed that shifting [the] jhuggi dwellers of the Capital has decreased the average income of families by about 50 per cent'.

Myanmar can provide another example of forced displacement. 1989-1996 Myanmar was the scene of a systematic removal of an urban population, comparable to the evacuation of Phnom Penh under the KR. Whole towns disappeared as 16 per cent of the total urban population were relocated to hastily made huts twenty-kilometres outside of Rangoon. This was a deliberate, coordinated attempt to beautify the city in time for 'Visit Myanmar 1996'. The government was able to organise such an event due to the politics of fear instilled in the people by the government's use of violence and aggression (Skidmore, 2004: p. 88). As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the Cambodian government also uses 'beautification' to justify the detainment of homeless persons and forced evictions in Phnom Penh.

The Philippines provides a final example. The word 'infrastructure' was the code word used by the Filipino government to mean the unceremonious clearance of the informal houses of the poor (Seabrook, 1996: p. 267). Rather than evict residents and demolish their fragile shelters, Manila has developed a reputation for suspicious slum fires: An occurrence that is becoming increasingly common in Cambodia (Hughes, 2003: p. 33; Amnesty International, 2009: p. 30; LICADHO, 2009: pp. 24-26; COHRE, 2009: p. 33) and other countries (Seabrook, 1996; Davis, 2006; Berner, 1997; Gilbert & Ward, 1985). Acts of arson are cheap and combine eviction and demolition with ruthless ease. 'Hot demolitions', the event of a cat or a rat being set on fire and chased in to a slum, spreads fire quickly and can scarcely be traced. 'Hot demolitions' therefore allow the perpetrator to escape prosecution and save the investors going through lengthy drawn out development plans and compensation calculations (Berner, 1997: p. 144).

An informant, who shall be named Pov for confidentiality purposes, revealed that her family had been violently evicted and relocated three times. Each time her family had been given a relocation site plot and each time they had abandoned the plot because there was no hope of making a living in the site.

***Pov:** My father died when I was four. After that I lived with my mum, my sister and two brothers near the Russian Embassy, Village 14. In 2000 maybe 2001 there was a fire and over 1,000 families lost their homes. At the time I thought it happened by mistake, but now I know that someone lit the fire with gas at night time. It was an eviction. Someone important wanted the land. In the morning we were put in trucks and taken to Sen Sok, the truck was there so quickly. We were taken to an empty plot of land. No house! No money! An organisation gave my mum a tent, but it was not good. No water, no electricity and we had no money. Mum built a house out of burnt wood. My mum sent me to live with my aunt in Phnom Penh so that I could go to*

*school, but after a year she moved back to Phnom Penh too and we made a business in Sambok Chap (close to the former site).*

*In 2006 the police came to evict people again. At night they blocked the roads and brought trucks ready to take people away. They blocked people getting in and out. At the time I was helping my sister at her business and I could not get back in to see my mum. If people refused to leave, their houses were destroyed. Why the police have guns and hurt people if it is legal? This time we were taken far away from Phnom Penh to Andoung (20km away). The land we were given was small, there was no house, no utilities, no building materials, no financial compensation. This time my mum decide to stay in the site with my brothers and my sister and me rent a room in Phnom Penh so we can work. One of my brothers brother drives a motodop and goes back to Andoung everyday. My mum stayed for a short time but no work. After five years she thought my brother can get land title, but its 2012, over six years and still nothing. When my sister and me opened a coffee shop in 2006 in Dey Krahom my mum came to live with us. In 2007 a thief murdered one of my brothers in the relocation site.*

*In 2009 we were evicted from Dey Krahom. It happened at night again, at 2am the police arrived to block the roads. At 5.30am they start destroying the houses with bulldozers while people were asleep inside. This eviction was well planned. There were groups of police at all three exits. The military police this time, if you I begged the police, we had a good business there, it was our home. But nothing. Residents started a fire to try to raise the alarm, but the police used water to put it out, then turned the water against the people. My mum was knocked over but the police just laughed. Again we were taken away in trucks, 25km this time, to Domnat Drawyeurng. There were houses this time, but small metal boxes like a garage for a car. We cannot live there. Before the eviction people were offered \$20,000 compensation, but after the eviction, the money disappeared. After the eviction we went to LICADHO (local NGO) for help, and they helped find us a place to rent in Phnom Penh.*

After the interview Pov mentioned that signs had gone up in the area she lived in, announcing it had been earmarked for development by the Japanese development agency JICA. Before Pov had turned 20 years old, she had lost her father and brother and her home and businesses three times. Her life story charts the increasing sophistication of the MPP's eviction strategy starting with fires, then roadblocks and night police raids and finally full night demolitions. The disproportionality of response is alarming: armed military police against unarmed and unaware residents. Pov's experience is regrettably not uncommon. When asked if they had experienced violence or intimidation during the resettlement process, 75-83 per cent of respondents from the R\_ME1 and R\_TK1 answered yes.

#### *4.4.i Household income*

A comparison of household income before and after resettlement can be seen in Figure 38. Figure 38 breaks down income by household and by household member as well as indicating the size of households. Households from site R\_ME1 were experiencing the least aggregate household income loss (\$5.69) yet the greatest loss per household member, on average \$0.63 per person per day. Households from the R\_TK1 experienced the greatest loss after resettlement, \$21.53 per household per week on average, whereas R\_ME indicated the least income loss per household member, despite experiencing a greater household loss than R\_ME1.

Returning to the national poverty line figures of \$0.61 (2,473KHR) per person per day, it is clear that making a loss of \$5+ per week, let alone \$20+, is likely to have a significant impact on the ability to sustain a household. A loss of \$20 per month is the

equivalent of losing roughly an entire full time wage earner (UNICEF statistics, 2010).

<b>Fig. 38 Comparison of average number of household members, average weekly household income in USD and average USD per household member per day by former location and resettlement site</b>			
	<b>Former Site</b>	<b>Resettlement Site</b>	<b>+/-</b>
<b>R_ME1</b>			
No. in HH	5	5	/
HH total income PW \$	\$30.13	\$24.44	-\$5.69
Average \$ per person per day	\$1.28	\$0.65	-\$0.63
<b>R_ME2</b>			
Average No. in HH	5	5	/
Average HH total income PW \$	\$53.75	\$41.25	-\$12.50
Average \$ per person per day	\$1.54	\$1.18	-\$0.36
<b>R_TK1</b>			
Average No. in HH	6.6	7	+0.4
Average HH total income PW \$	\$99.13	\$77.60	-\$21.53
Average \$ per person per day	\$2.01	\$1.58	-\$0.43
<b>R_ME3</b>			
Average No. in HH	6.5	5.8	-0.7
Average HH total income PW \$	\$67.60	\$89.64	+\$22.04
Average \$ per person per day	\$1.66	\$2.53	+\$0.87

The negative impact of resettlement for household income is clear for three of the sites. However, the fourth site indicates a significant improvement in average household income. Added income of \$22.04 per week is the equivalent of an extra full time wage earner in the household. What is different about this site, namely its proximity to the city and a clothing factory, will be addressed at length below.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, roughly two thirds of households from the R\_TK1 and R\_ME1 sites replied *worse* or *much worse* when asked how the resettlement had affected their wellbeing. Complaints made by respondents from both these sites were concentrated on their exposure to the labour market; that there were no jobs and no opportunities to run small businesses in the resettlement sites that rely upon proximity

to crowds, such as selling beverages, food and snacks or other small everyday items such as shampoo sachets or phone credit, or recycling of rubbish. By contrast, the R\_ME3 site represents quite the opposite, as 78 per cent replied *better* or *much better* when asked the same question.

<b>Fig. 39 Saving and borrowing before and after relocation</b>								
	<b>R_TK1 (39)</b>		<b>R_ME1 (4)</b>		<b>R_ME2 (1)</b>		<b>R_ME3 (32)</b>	
	<b>Before</b>	<b>After</b>	<b>Before</b>	<b>After</b>	<b>Before</b>	<b>After</b>	<b>Before</b>	<b>After</b>
Save	9	5	0	0	0	0	12	6
Borrow	19	39	0	4	0	1	7	28

Figure 39 illustrates how relocation changes households' saving abilities and borrowing opportunities. We can see that in the two sites where households were able to save, R\_TK1 and R\_ME3, more households were able to save before the relocation process than afterwards. In other words, households are finding it more difficult to save in relocation sites. Conversely numbers of households borrowing have also risen in each resettlement site, over double in R\_TK1 and quadruple in RME3.

Not only has borrowing increased, but *how* people borrow has also changed. Figure 40 shows that, aside from R\_ME3, all resettlement sites have experienced an increase in borrowing from private lenders.

<b>Fig. 40 Borrowing opportunities before and after relocation</b>								
	<b>R_TK1 (39)</b>		<b>R_ME1 (4)</b>		<b>R_ME2 (1)</b>		<b>R_ME3 (32)</b>	
<b>Borrowing from</b>	<b>Before</b>	<b>After</b>	<b>Before</b>	<b>After</b>	<b>Before</b>	<b>After</b>	<b>Before</b>	<b>After</b>
Bank	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	14
Family	0	10	0	1	0	0	0	2
Other	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	9
Private Lender	14	37	0	3	0	1	5	3

Other forms of supplementing income and support mechanisms to rely upon include owning livestock and growing small crops. In urban areas opportunities for owning small livestock and growing crops are limited, as indicated in Figure 41.

<b>Fig. 41 Livestock ownership and small crop farming before and after resettlement</b>								
	<b>R_TK1 (39)</b>		<b>R_ME1 (4)</b>		<b>R_ME2 (1)</b>		<b>R_ME3 (32)</b>	
	<b>Before</b>	<b>After</b>	<b>Before</b>	<b>After</b>	<b>Before</b>	<b>After</b>	<b>Before</b>	<b>After</b>
Small livestock (Chickens/Ducks)	5	28	2	4	0	1	3	2
Large livestock (Cows/Pigs)	0	1	0	0	0	0	3	1
Small crops	3	18	0	3	0	0	1	0

Crime was also indicated as a reason for not owning livestock in urban areas. One respondent spoke at length about how her chickens were stolen by local gangs in Phnom Penh and her deep frustration at the complete disregard of the police who did nothing to help. Figure 41 shows how ownership of these items appears to be higher in resettlement sites.

Slightly more households in resettlement sites also own *motos*. Although fewer own bicycles in the further away site of R\_TK1, in R\_ME3 the survey shows a higher number of bicycles. This may be due to the higher income, cheap running costs of a bicycle and relative proximity to the city.

<b>Fig. 42 Frequency of desirable income supporting items before and after relocation</b>								
	<b>R_TK1 (39)</b>		<b>R_ME1 (4)</b>		<b>R_ME2 (1)</b>		<b>R_ME3 (32)</b>	
	<b>Before</b>	<b>After</b>	<b>Before</b>	<b>After</b>	<b>Before</b>	<b>After</b>	<b>Before</b>	<b>After</b>
Moto	21	24	1	1	0	1	22	23
Bicycle	21	18	1	1	0	1	13	21
TV	29	32	1	2	0	1	27	31
Radio	14	17	1	1	0	0	5	4
Phone	27	37	0	3	0	1	17	28

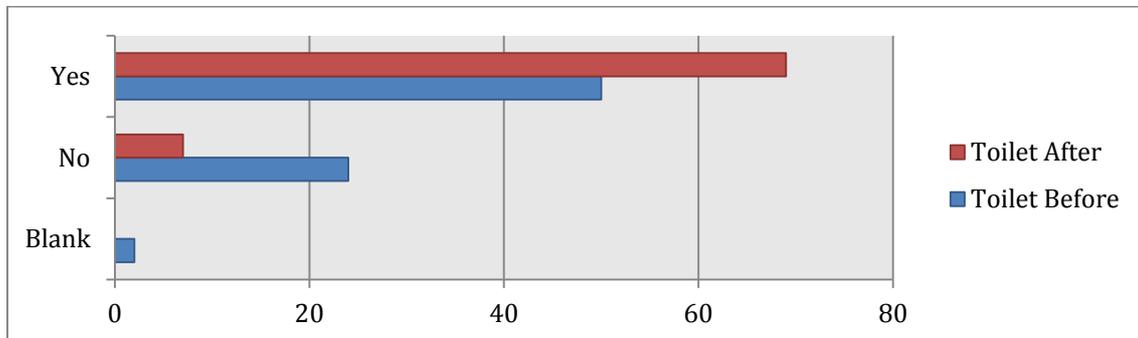
We can see in Figure 42 that small livestock ownership and crop farming has increased in resettlement sites. This is likely to be due to their more rural landscape. Having come from the provinces, many residents were familiar with farming techniques and resourceful in their use of their resettlement plot. Small gardens growing herbs and vegetables were occasionally seen in resettlement sites. However crops require water and at certain times of year this is a scarce resource.

#### *4.4.ii Sanitation, services and amenities*

Sanitation, drinking water and electricity are no longer seen as desirable but necessary to living a full and dignified life. Figure 42 shows us the number of toilets in households prior to eviction in the city and afterwards in the resettlement site. At first it appears extremely positive. Here we can see an overwhelming increase in the number of households with a toilet. However, upon speaking with residents in R\_TK1 whose resettlement was organised by the ADB and AusAid, significant problems were encountered. The presence of a toilet at the back of each plot of land has been indicated in this graph, yet a tiny minority of the toilets in R\_TK1 functioned properly. In fact not only did the majority not function, multiple respondents stated that their toilets were blocked to the extent that sewage leaked out of the cubicle and into the houses. Conditions deteriorated during the wet season when flooding and excess ground water overwhelmed septic tanks and sewage spread across the community from house to house. One respondent said the reason for the blockage was that the pipes and septic tanks were not laid properly, large enough or of a high quality. Rather than use the toilets residents had to walk into the surrounding rice fields to go to the bathroom. Therefore whilst Figure 43 indicates an increase in the

presence toilets after relocation, for residents in R\_TK1, this does not indicate whether they are fit for purpose.

**Fig. 43 Toilets in each household before and after relocation**

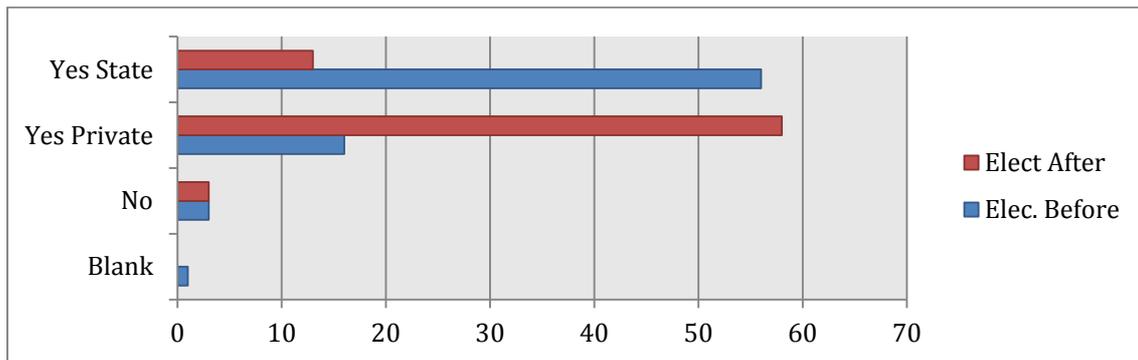


Figures 44 and 45 indicate the electricity and water supplies to the resettlement sites. Electricity and water are essential utilities however State provided utilities are much cheaper than those offered by private companies. Therefore not only is the presence of a water and electricity connection important but so is the service provider.<sup>58</sup> Figure 43 shows us that more households had access to State provided electricity before resettlement than after. As a result their bills would have increased significantly, perhaps by as much as 400% (STT Facts and Figures report, 2012). In site R\_ME1 electricity was available but only through private companies and was therefore unaffordable. In R\_TK1 four households had been waiting for months for the state to provide electricity to their homes, whilst the other 34 households had been connected to the state grid immediately. However, the 34 households who had state provisioned electricity faced their own problems as their billing had changed from a monthly bill to a quarterly bill. The ability to save for a monthly amount was achievable for households but the amount required for a quarterly bill was beyond their saving

<sup>58</sup> See section 5.2.iii outlining the benefits of state water and electricity connections over private suppliers.

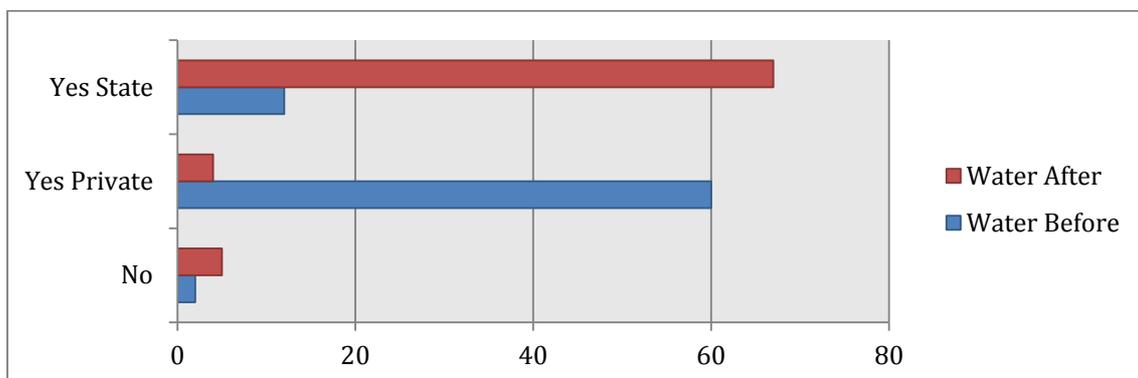
capacity.<sup>59</sup> Further, the local authority figure in the area had taken it upon himself to coordinate and collect all electricity payments. Residents complained that whilst he had collected their money, he had not paid their bills and so were facing disconnection.

**Fig. 44 Electricity access and provider before and after resettlement**



Whilst connections to the state electricity grid decreased after resettlement, Figure 44 showing the connection to state water provisions improved after resettlement. Site R\_ME1, however, had no access to electricity from any provider before and only one household was able to establish a private connection in the resettlement site. Similarly this site had no water supply of any sort. Rainwater had to be collected for household use and bottled water purchased for drinking water.

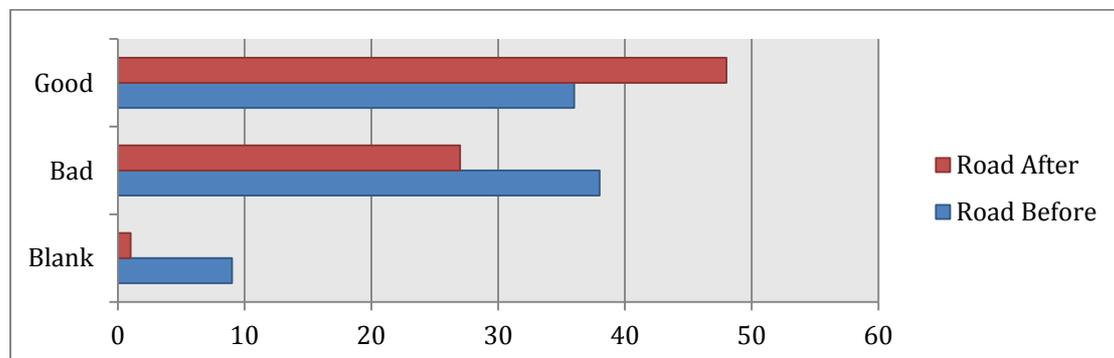
**Fig. 45 Water access and provider before and after resettlement**



<sup>59</sup> Savings and borrowing discussed in section 4.2.i

Due to resettlement sites being 8–50km away from the city centre, accessibility is an important factor for residents. Unless the household had been able to establish a business within the resettlement site, household members who contributed to household income commuted by necessity, back to central Phnom Penh. Therefore, the condition of roads was very important to respondents. If the roads were washed away or flooded, people were unable to commute entirely or in time for work. From Figure 46 one can see a slight improvement in the condition of roads in resettlement sites. In respondent’s former settlement sites in Phnom Penh, the roads were considered good and bad in almost equal numbers, with 38 stating they considered the roads to be bad and 36 considering them good. This number changes to 27 considering the roads in poor condition and 48 considering them in good condition. Yet if we break the figures down into individual sites, R\_TK1 shows only a slight increase, R\_ME1 shows a decrease, but only R\_ME3 records a sizeable increase from a 23:9 (Bad: Good) ratio to a 8:24 ratio. This is also the site that remained close to Phnom Penh and had a factory on site. The presence of a Chinese owned garment factory that took daily deliveries via lorries to and from the site required suitable roads, which is explains the good roads and appropriate maintenance.

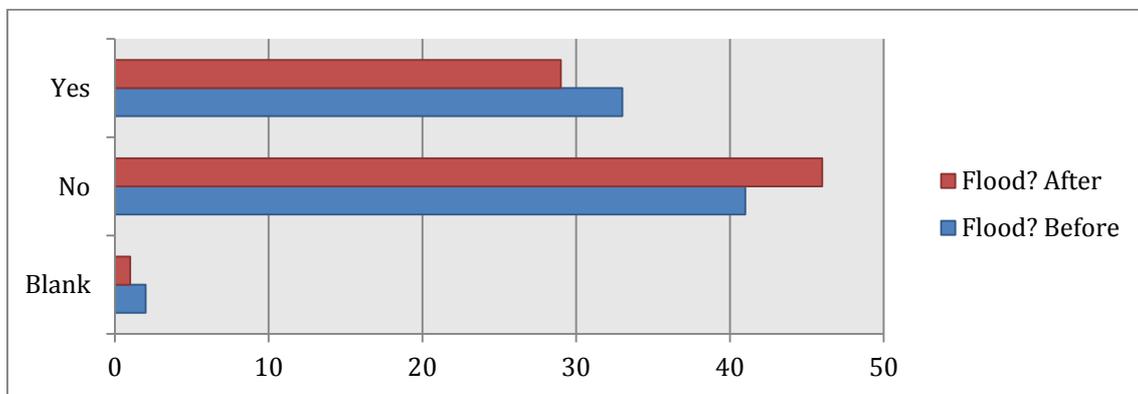
**Fig. 46 The condition of roads before and after resettlement**



Cambodia experiences two very distinct seasons, the dry and wet seasons. Houses and buildings, as well as roads, sewage systems and other infrastructure must withstand

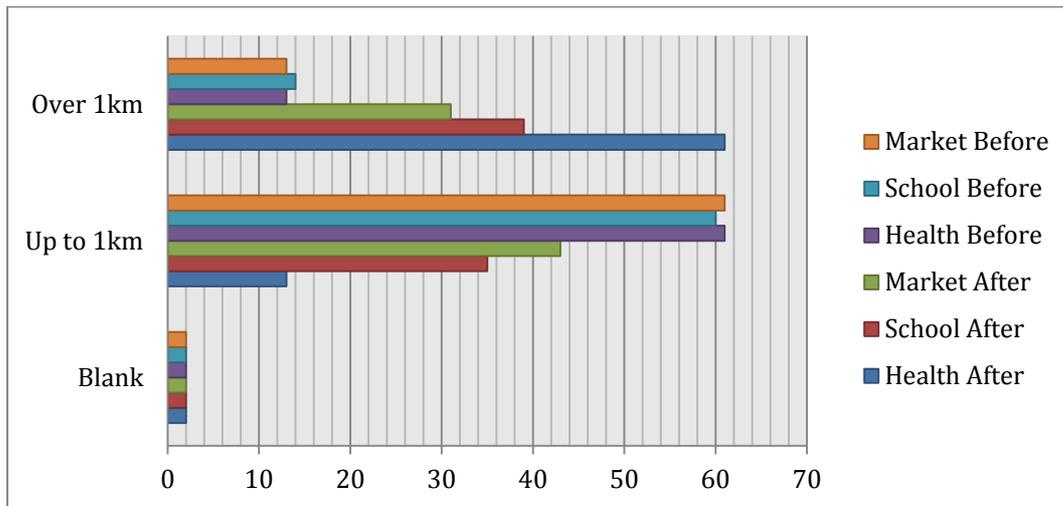
prolonged monsoon rainfall for up to six months of the year. The ability to withstand environmental factors is one of the key indicators in UN-HABITAT’s investigation into urban poor housing. Figure 47 displays the results from the household survey to reveal that whilst overall houses did not flood before or after the resettlement process, large numbers of houses did flood before and after the process as well. In the site breakdown, flooding goes down in R\_ME3 however flooding increases slightly in R\_TK1 and in R\_ME1.

**Fig. 47 Whether properties flood or not during the wet season, before and after resettlement**



Finally in terms of infrastructure, the importance of nearby markets, schools and healthcare facilities cannot be underestimated. Figure 48 displays the overwhelming response that markets, schools and healthcare centres are less accessible in resettlement sites than in the city. This is further complicated, as discussed above, as clinics and markets vary greatly in their quality, pricing and products. Similarly children require access to both primary and secondary schools, however which level of school was available was not indicated in the survey.

**Fig. 48 Proximity to markets, schools and healthcare centres, before and after resettlement**



Lastly the size of house or land plot is important. Figure 49 compares the different sites in terms of size of land plot before and after the resettlement. In all but the R\_ME2 who declined to respond, the size of plot has increased for the majority of residents. Residents commented that the increased space and rural environment had improved the health and wellbeing of many household members. Many residents in their former sites had been living above open sewage in cramped overcrowded conditions and had reported previously feeling insecure and vulnerable to crime and gangs. Yet while the increased land size was a welcome result of the resettlement process, an overwhelming number of residents stated that they would return to their smaller plots of land in central Phnom Penh because, despite the health benefits and improved wellbeing, they had no money and no jobs. The priority, they said, was to provide for their families and that could not be done in resettlement sites, regardless of the land plot size.

<b>Fig. 49 Land size before and after resettlement</b>								
<b>M<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>R_TK1</b>		<b>R_ME1</b>		<b>R_ME2</b>		<b>R_ME3</b>	
	<b>Before</b>	<b>After</b>	<b>Before</b>	<b>After</b>	<b>Before</b>	<b>After</b>	<b>Before</b>	<b>After</b>
<b>0-5</b>	2	.	.	.	.	.	1	.
<b>6-10</b>	4	.	1	.	.	.	1	.
<b>11-15</b>	11	.	1	1	.	.	1	.
<b>16-20</b>	14	.	.	.	.	.	9	.
<b>21-25</b>	.	.	.	.	.	.	3	.
<b>26-30</b>	3	.	.	1	.	.	4	.
<b>31-35</b>	1	.	.	.	.	.	6	32
<b>36-40</b>	2	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
<b>41-45</b>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
<b>46-50</b>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
<b>51-75</b>	1	1	.	.	.	.	1	.
<b>76-100</b>	1	.	.	.	.	.	2	.
<b>101-150</b>	.	38	.	.	.	.	2	.
<b>151-200</b>	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	.
<b>Blank</b>	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	.

#### *4.4.iii Compensation*

The RGC has an obligation under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), to ensure that all those who are subjected to eviction and/or resettlement are given adequate compensation for the loss of property. Article 11 of the ICESCR outlines the obligation in more detail and also expresses the importance of the individual's free consent to any proposed development-induced displacement:

*1. The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living for himself and his family, including adequate food, clothing and housing, and to the continuous improvement of living conditions. The States Parties will take appropriate steps to ensure the realization of this right, recognizing to this effect the essential importance of international cooperation based on free consent.*<sup>60</sup>

<sup>60</sup> ICESCR Article 11, p. 4. Available here: <http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/ProfessionalInterest/cescr.pdf>

Parallel to this obligation is the commitment of the ADB, to which the RGC is bound, to ensure that those evicted and/or resettled are not worse off, experience loss of income or livelihood and in such a circumstances, compensation should be full and extend to compensation of commercial structures, assets and income lost during the process. In the scenario that the inhabitant is illegally occupying land, they are still entitled to compensation for loss of assets, structures and income (ADB, 2009, Safeguard Policy Statement, Safeguard Requirements on Involuntary Resettlement section pp. 44-54).

Despite these obligations, the 2007 ADB report admitted that DIDR usually lead to impoverishment, a fact reiterated by Michael Cernea, in the introduction to his 2008 edited book ‘Can Compensation Prevent Impoverishment? Reforming Resettlement through Investments and Benefit-Sharing’:

*The outcomes of most development-caused forced displacement and resettlement leave a disgracing stain on development itself, conflicting with its poverty reduction rationale, objective and ethic (p.1)*

How exactly compensation is calculated by the RGC and the ADB is based upon the 1988 ‘Handbook on Resettlement: A Guide to Good Practice’. Recommendations from this 1988 publication formed the basis for compensation mechanisms discussed in the 2007 ADB report ‘Compensation and Valuation in Resettlement: Cambodia, People’s Republic of China, and India’. This report begins with the acknowledgement that the aim of development is to improve the lives and wellbeing of those affected by their projects, central to which is the concept of ‘replacement value’ of loss of assets. Replacement value is equal to market costs plus transaction costs (ADB, 2007, 1998). Therefore full a full survey of each property is required prior to eviction and

demolition, in order to determine tenure status, the size of the property and the construction materials as well as an investigation into income and commercial assets of each property. However many respondents did not recall such a survey being conducted, rather they were given a yellow post it with a figure or form of compensation written on it and told to thumb print it. In doing so, they were agreeing contractually to their eviction and the compensation stated. If they did not immediately agree to the compensation residents were threatened with their homes and their belongings being bulldozed. One elderly respondent explained how she was illiterate and upon asking to show the note to her son that evening when he returned home from work, before thumb printing, was refused and threatened. The issuance of compensation via handwritten yellow post it notes was recorded and photographed by Bridges Across Borders Cambodia in their 2010 report *Derailed*.<sup>61</sup> This violates the right of the individual to free consent, free of intimidation and threat (ICESCR).

The type and amount of compensation offered to households facing eviction, if offered at all, varied from site to site as well as within settlements. Figure 50 displays the different forms of compensation received by settlement sites. The households recorded as having received nothing, yet were living in resettlement sites either had arrived at resettlement sites to live with their family but were financially independent of them and therefore classified as a separate household,<sup>62</sup> had purchased land in the resettlement site or were illegally occupying land in the resettlement site. Other variables such as money, no land and money and building materials were included in

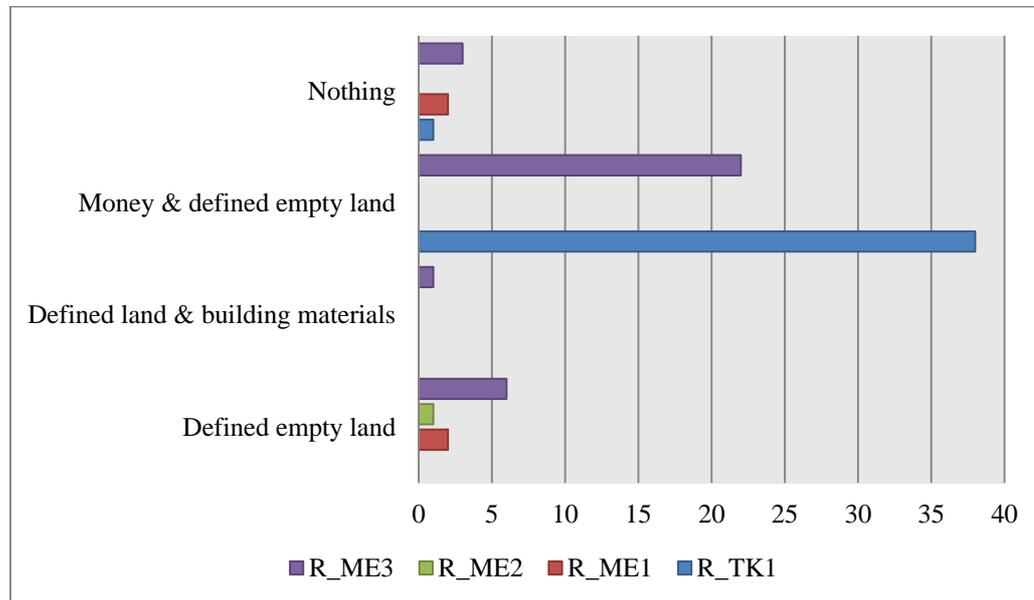
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<sup>61</sup> BABC report *Derailed* available here: [www.babcbombodia.org/derailed/derailed.pdf](http://www.babcbombodia.org/derailed/derailed.pdf)

<sup>62</sup> See different forms of household discussion in section 3.2.iv

the survey however these forms of compensation were not received by those surveyed.

**Fig. 50 Compensation type received by Households in resettlement sites**



From Figure 50 it is clear that money and a defined empty plot of land were the most common forms of compensation offered to sites R\_TK1 and R\_ME3. Defined empty land with no accompanying financial compensation was received by half of the households surveyed in R\_ME1, the single household of R\_ME2 and for six households in R\_ME3. However it is also evident that households in R\_ME1, R\_ME2 and R\_ME3 received no financial compensation, despite the obligation to compensate for structures, assets and loss of income under the ICESCR and ADB documentation.

The average monetary compensation received by households in R\_TK1 was \$609.97, ranging from \$265 to \$1,300. Whereas the average amount of monetary compensation received by R\_ME3 was \$987.80, ranging from \$100 to \$4,000. The range of this figure may be attributed to the different sizes of properties or their construction materials. For example the loss of a large concrete and brick structure would receive

more compensation than a small wood or corrugated iron structure. However the variation in compensation types, as well as the difference in amounts of monetary compensation may also be due to political connections and bribery. As mentioned in the presentation of case studies, the two residents of RK1 were able to remain in their homes despite the eviction and demolition of all surrounding businesses and homes, because they had paid money to the local authorities. If a resident has the right money and connections, such as being a member of the CPP party, they may have been awarded increased compensation. Whereas people who were not well connected or unable to afford a bribe, may have their compensation claim reduced or be dropped from the local authorities list for compensation and resettlement all together.

Whether the authority responsible for the land purchase, the RGC or City Hall in most instances, influenced the different forms of compensation was another factor considered. Land used for relocation in sites R\_TK1 and R\_ME1 was bought by the RGC whereas land for sites R\_ME2 and R\_ME3 were purchased by City Hall. However both authorities appear to have offered both defined empty plots in one location and money and defined plots in the other. Site R\_ME1, purchased by the RGC had been abandoned by many of those resettled there as it lacked basic infrastructure. Site R\_ME2, for which land was purchased by City Hall, was a site of over 500 plots and has been abandoned by all but one family. This was similarly due to the lack of infrastructure but also the distance to the capital (over 50km) and lack of work opportunities. However site R\_ME3 had been purchased by City Hall, within central Phnom Penh and the residents had largely improved their circumstances and income. The underlying causes of variation within compensation would require

further fieldwork beyond that completed for this thesis, but would make for an interesting extension of this research.

Respondents frequently discussed the cost of building a home, stating that to build a basic structure of wood with a metal roof would cost over \$1000 whereas a more desirable structure of concrete with proper flooring and a metal roof would cost closer to \$2000. With these costs in mind, despite defined land plots being offered, monetary compensation was not sufficient in most instances to cover building materials.

Therefore even those resettled households that were given monetary compensation, as well as those who weren't, were required to borrow money to build homes as well as afford food, electricity, water and other necessities.

Compensation for evictees has created controversy and split communities. The government is obliged to provide housing for both owners and renters of property, an entitlement recognised by the 2007 ADB report (p.4). Information relating to rental or ownership is documented in each residence in what is known as the 'family record book'. The family record book is a running narrative of births, deaths, marriages and migrations, used by the local authorities to identify those who are entitled for compensation amongst other things. However due to poor literacy levels, poor living conditions, multiple tenants and poor book keeping, the family record book is used to include or exclude residents from compensation in line with the commonly corrupt agenda of the local authorities (Mgbako et al., 2010). The local authorities include or exclude information contained in the book to either force an eviction or deny a land title or compensation claim to residents, which ever fits their agenda at the time (Mgbako et al., 2010).

Compensation, on the occasions that it was offered, has been virtually exclusively offered to land owners and not tenants. This is despite both landowners and renters being identified in land and housing rights documents. Compensation normally comprises of financial reparation and/or a land plot. The amount of compensation and the quality, location and size of the land plot vary from unmarked rice fields to marked plots with individual toilets and electricity supplied (see data analysis above). However financial compensation for land is frequently below market value and the land plots offered in compensation are not land titles. Instead, land receipts of residence are issued and are subject to the same five-year occupancy requirements before applications for land title can be submitted. Unsurprisingly, these receipts rarely materialise or are duplicated and sold for personal profit. In fact, a UN supported legal NGO, the Community Legal Education Centre, cannot cite a single case where a receipt was issued (Mgbako et al., 2010: pp. 47-49). In this way, poor communities are kept vulnerable and mobile by the government, for further exploitation or in case of future need for relocation.

Compensation has created internal conflict within organised communities through the award of different levels of compensation to different families or the dropping of families from compensation registers all together. Residents from RK2, a site facing eviction, were in fact residents who had been excluded from the compensation registers for reasons unknown to them. With nowhere else to go, these residents built structures on the riverbank behind site RK1, just a few metres away from their former homes. They were unable to stay in their former residences as they had been bulldozed to the ground and the land fenced off. With no reliable appeal mechanisms, residents facing eviction are advised to 'take what they can get' for fear of being

offered nothing if they protest. Respondent's recalled how authorities came to their homes issuing eviction notices and contracts for compensation, intimidating and threatening the residents, forcing them to sign documents they had not or could not read.

Communities and settlements facing multiple evictions have been reported in the media. Families living in relocation sites therefore are in precarious positions as even these sites can be sold for redevelopment (Open Development Cambodia, 27 September 2012). Life history respondent Pov recalled disabled residents who had been resettled in the run up to an election, being evicted from their new homes without notice or compensation. Individual stories have emerged showing that it is not only the lack of labour opportunities that motivate people to return to the city, as the story of a young relocated HIV sufferer illustrates, who moved back to Phnom Penh to live with relatives due to the lack of access to medication and medical services in the relocation site (*Phnom Penh Post*, 26 January 2012).

The ADB in cooperation with the Australian Aid programme (AusAID) have held up their rehabilitation of the railways as a model from which other stakeholders, including the RCG can learn. Local urban NGO, STT conducted a detailed survey and published a report in 2011 into the resettlement of residents affected under the rehabilitation of the railway, titled *Rehabilitation of the Railways: A Comparison of Field Data*. This report was the first to directly challenge the government's compensation calculations through technical surveying and the accumulation of data relating to structures, materials and costs. In their report STT provided evidence to suggest systematic downgrading of housing structures in 90 per cent of structures

surveyed, thus lowering compensation calculations. Compensation was calculated by floor space m<sup>2</sup> yet STT found in all multi-floor buildings, only one floor had been used in compensation calculations. Were multiple families occupied a building, 12 per cent of residences had received only a single compensation entitlement. Not only were miscalculations and omission of floors in compensation calculations, but STT identified 36 per cent more households than had been identified by the Inter-Ministerial Resettlement Committee (IRC): 60 households affected by the rehabilitation of the railway in one particular area, as opposed to the 28 identified by the IRC (STT, 2011).<sup>63</sup>

#### **4.5 Conclusion**

This chapter has responded to the first research question of who the urban poor are and upon what resources, mechanisms and networks they rely upon. The chapter began with an introductory investigation into urban poverty and the urban poor, outlining preliminary findings from the household survey. Following this introduction, a deeper, more nuanced understanding of urban poverty and urban poor livelihoods was revealed through academic debate and evidence from the household survey. This chapter has argued for an increased recognition of the importance of livelihood generating practices (and alternative supporting practices) specific to the urban context. This necessitated a distinct and separate terminology to that of the informal economy, to which this thesis offered the term ‘urban poor economy’. To further support the term urban poor economy, the author drew attention to the process

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<sup>63</sup> As discussed in section... Following the publication of the 2011 report STT were suspended from operations, their staff intimidated and threatened.

of peer-to-peer regulation undertaken by many operating within the urban poor economy, identified by the author as horizontal regulation.

With a more nuanced understanding of the urban poor economy, evidenced through the household survey and interviews with *tuktuk* drivers, the author turned to the housing conditions and needs of the urban poor. This research argues that housing and livelihood are inseparable in terms of understanding urban poverty and urban poor lives. The author supported the argument presented by Payne and Khmero for an increased understanding of tenure status, rather than a focus on the homogenous and misrepresentative term, 'slum', for understanding urban poor housing. Data relating to housing, size and structure as well as location, flooding, water and electricity was presented.

Following this discussion, debates within DIDR were considered and the work of Hammar highlighted as offering a potential way forward in re-conceptualising DIDR as forward facing rather than backwards and therefore focusing attention not on what has been destroyed but on what can be constructively formed and forged for the future. Experiences of resettlement were offered in the last section in which the largely negative impact of resettlement, the loss of household income, inadequate compensation and abandonment of resettlement sites was examined.

It was shown that the RGC had failed to meet its obligations of providing adequate compensation and adequate housing, nor respected the principle of free consent in relation to DIDR. However evidence from site R\_ME3 suggested that this does not have to be the case. Site R\_ME3 was resettled from a near by area along the Boeung

Tra Bek sewage canal to land within the main urban sprawl of Phnom Penh, purchased by City Hall. What is distinctive about R\_ME3 when compared to the other three relocation sites is the proximity to the city. Their homes are connected to state water and electricity supplies, which keeps their household bills manageable. Due to their location residents were able to keep their jobs or find work at the garment factory that was built less than 100m away. Residents received housing plots and monetary compensation, and had a new access road built. Whereas their compensation ranged from \$100 to \$4,000, the vast majority were living in brick houses with concrete floors. This resettlement experience throws into stark relief the experience of residents in sites R\_ME1 and R\_ME2 who have been resettled 25-50km away from the city, to converted rice paddies with no roads, water or electricity.

The following chapter takes forward the lived experiences of the urban poor to examine if and how development policy has been used to address their needs. An initial theoretical discussion relating to development and urban development will take place before specific development policies of the RGC and the Municipality of Phnom Penh are addressed.

## **5. Does existing development policy respond appropriately to urban poor issues?**

**If not, why not and how can this be addressed?**

***Chhet:** Phnom Penh is developing fast, which is good for rich people. The poor people do not receive benefit much. There are more buildings, more roads, but the quality of those buildings and roads are not so good. There is new technology but the development is low quality, without good standards.*

***Tim:** You know. Don't show my face... but I can tell you about Cambodia. I am happy to have the building, but it depends where you build. Like the riverbank, it destroy the riverbank. All the pollution, all the sewage from the bathroom destroy the river. But its good for tourist looking! But not good for Cambodians. Good for tourist looking. But got to find the right place. Factory along the Mekong river, is not good, a lot of pollution, kill the fish. Advantage and disadvantage go together.*

Above are two quotes taken from interviews with *tuktuk* drivers, Chhet and Tim, in response to the question, what do you think about the development of Phnom Penh? Their responses reveal an awareness that the city is developing not to address the needs of the poor or even for the residents of the capital, but for tourism purposes and industry. Chhet suggests that despite new development and construction technology, the quality of the new buildings and roads are poor. Tim refers to the detrimental effects of development has had for the environment. From these interviews and the household survey, it was evident that residents see the need for development in the capital, but that it was not being conducted in an appropriate or equitable way. This speaks to the process of 'beautification' discussed in Chapter Two and will be examined again in the following chapter.

This chapter will begin to answer the question of whether existing development policy responds appropriately to urban poor issues by unpicking debate about development: neoliberal development in Cambodia, the relationship between violence, security and development, and a more focused section on urban development. Existing Cambodian development policy, despite being little more than donor consumption material, will be outlined with particular attention paid to urban poor issues of livelihoods and housing. To extend this examination into issues facing the urban poor, jurisdiction relating to land and labour will be scrutinised. The chapter will identify where policy and law have been misguided, make inappropriate assumptions and therefore inappropriate recommendations, and how development as a whole has fallen short of offering meaningful, realistic development objectives aimed at alleviating urban poverty.

## **5.1 Development**

Development is fundamentally about change, which is categorised by Beall and Fox (2009) as two things, progress and differentiation: why some places experience change and increased wealth (progress) whereas others have not (differentiation) (2009, p. 4). How a country that has not experienced increased progress and wealth can be encouraged to do so is the object of international development policy and ideology. The hegemonic development ideology established during the 1980s and 1990s is known as the Washington Consensus (Weeks and Stein, 2006, p. 676). The Washington Consensus arose amidst fears of the international community and multilateral financial institutions that low-income countries would default on debt payments. As a result a 'package' of economic reforms, measures and conditions

were drawn up for low-income countries or those requiring assistance, upon which further loans and assistance would depend. These conditions were based around three 'big ideas': macroeconomic discipline, a market economy and openness to the world (Weeks and Stein, p. 677). These conditions were expanded by the World Bank and IMF to include exposure to the international free market, the removal of government intervention in domestic markets, the elimination of export taxes and import tariffs, promotion of competitive economic self-sufficiency, the sale of public assets and the reduction of public expenditure. However the correlation between GDP and development is an inaccurate one (Kumar and Ny, 2014; McGillivray & White, 2006) and the Washing Consensus was generally recognised as having failed to manage the debt and debt repayments through structural reform by the mid 1990s. Despite this the economic ideology underpinning the reforms known as neoliberalism, continues today. After the Copenhagen School Summit in 1995 conditional reforms orchestrated externally by the World Bank and IMF were replaced by 'country led' and 'nationally owned' development partnerships between states (Weeks and Stein, p. 679).

David Harvey's article, 'The New Imperialism: Accumulation by Dispossession' (2004) describes how neoliberalism is promoted by the international community and normatively accepted as a progressive development process. However it does not produce a harmonious, equitable society but deep social inequality and instability (2004, pp. 11-12). He shifts the focus from the established theory of primitive accumulation, historically rooted in the privatisation of land and the creation of a landless proletariat in medieval England, to reconceptualise the process of accumulation since the 1970s as accumulation by dispossession. This may involve the privatisation of previously communal or public goods or land such as rivers or forests,

financialization and the dispossession of assets, creation and management of crises and state redistribution (Harvey, 2004). Harvey's examples of accumulation by dispossession range from intellectual property rights, to the depletion of water supplies, to the exploitation of subcultures by the music and entertainment industries (2004, pp. 12-13). Harvey describes accumulation by dispossession as 'the new imperialism' whereby hegemonic countries such as the USA and the UK use international influence and market orientated pressure to extract profit from low-income countries by exploiting their cheap labour and untapped resources. Accumulation by dispossession can also be used to understand the domestic state-society relationships. In the case of Cambodia the government has claimed large portions of national forest and waterways as state owned. Therefore limiting the access of local Cambodian communities to previously public resources that were used by communities for foraging, hunting and fishing (Springer, 2010, pp. 2-3; (CDRI, 2015, Management of Economic Land Concession, Policy Brief No. 1). The RGC has since claimed these lands and leased large territories out as economic land concessions thereby either destroying the landscapes through deforestation in favour of rubber tree and cashew nut plantations (CDRI, 2015).<sup>64</sup> Accumulation by dispossession is particularly relevant for this research and fieldwork as the RGC uses compulsory purchase and reclassification of tenure to remove residents from lucrative parts of the city through development induced displacement.

To further examine neoliberalism in Cambodia, Simon Springer argues for a more nuanced understanding of economic ideology, arguing for the recognition of both the

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<sup>64</sup> See Open Development Cambodia for up to date maps, policies and critiques of economic land concessions in Cambodia:  
<http://www.opendevdevelopmentcambodia.net/briefing/economic-land-concessions-elcs/>

internal and external dimensions of neoliberalism, but more so that neoliberalism is not a singular ‘end-state’ but takes the line of Brenner and Theodore to argue for ‘actually existing neoliberalisms’ (Springer, 2010, p. 2). These ‘actually existing neoliberalisms’ are fluid processes that are influenced by policy, practices, political struggle, market forces, regulatory practices and socio-spatial transformations. In arguing for a lived experience of context specific outplaying of neoliberal ideology, Springer removes the term from the abstract international development vocabulary and embeds these processes in the local, national and regional processes which define its existence.

However, whereas the pursuit of neoliberalism in Cambodia may have externally been seen as a remedy to years of isolationism under the KR and civil conflict thereafter, the reality of such early exposure of a fledgling economy to international market forces and privatisation, has been the castration of democracy, the exploitation of the poor as a cheap, mobile work force and the purging of Cambodia’s forests, plains, rivers and coastline (Springer, 2010). Springer sums up the ‘actually existing neoliberalisms’ in Cambodia in his 2011 article ‘Articulated neoliberalism: the specificity of patronage, kleptocracy, and violence in Cambodia’s neoliberalisation’:

*What constitutes ‘actually existing neoliberalisms’ in Cambodia as distinctly Cambodian is the ways in which the patronage system has allowed local elites to co-opt, transform, and (re)articulate neoliberal reforms through a framework which asset strips public resources, thereby increasing people’s exposure to corruption, coercion, and violence. (p. 2554)*

The presence of violence, corruption and coercion is neither new to Cambodia nor limited to neoliberalism. Recent work by North, Wallis and Weingast (2009) conceptualising human history offers a framework for understanding why and how

different societies have changed, emphasising the utility of violence throughout history. North et al. integrate theories of economic and political development to analyse and account for how violence is used, shaped and contained by institutions. Created by societies, institutions and their functions are identified as *social orders*, which in turn attribute positions of control to groups and individuals, thus limiting and shaping the use of violence and incentives. North et al. identify three types of social order. The first is a *foraging order*, which is hunter-gatherer in character. The second, *limited-access order (natural state)*, takes the form of elite personal relationships governing and limiting access to organisations, privileges, resources and activities to the external population. Finally, *open-access orders* are associated with political and economic development, a set of impersonal characteristics and the ability to form impersonal organisations within a larger society, where the state does not limit access to resources, privileges and activities. Summarily, the authors consider poorer developing countries as *limited-access orders*, and wealthier developed countries as *open-access orders*.

Whereas violence is viewed as an institution that regulates relations, violence may also been conceptualised as a commodity. Violence may be a commodity when one can purchase protection or direct violence toward an individual or group, therefore elevating and empowering those with the ability to manipulate and purchase violence within a society. As personal relationships of the elite dominate *limited access orders*, violence is a relational between elites, used in the pursuit of power and mobilised for protection, rent collection and enforcing the law (North et. al, 2009: p. 35). Whereas in an *open access orders* goals are achieved through collective actions via organisations, democratic avenues and respect for the rule of law (North et. al, 2009:

pp. 112-117). Understanding the role of power and violence in society and how it is managed is an essential feature of the *limited* and *open access orders* conceptual framework. The authors provide a conceptual framework to explain why poor countries stay poor, detailing long-term fluctuations between negative and positive growth rates, essentially linking the experience of poor states' longer, more rapid periods of negative growth, with being *limited-access orders* and their management of violence. Democracy, the rule of law, free press, free markets and freedom of movement are products of the transition from *limited* to *open-access orders*, which can be brought about only with suitable conditions for the *limited-access order* elites to create impersonal relationships, thus turning away from the personal obligations and contracts used to manipulate violence and rent collection.

However an assumption of the *open-access order* is that violence as an institution or commodity is redundant as democracy replaces violence as a conflict resolution mechanism. However many believe that violence is a central component to society and will never be eradicated. Hobbes' leviathan contract details the relationship between state and society and the necessity for a legitimate central authority. Weber builds upon this in his essay *Politics as a Vocation* (1919) to describe how any government over a territory must hold the legitimate monopoly of violence within the given space to rule effectively. The state's ability to exert a monopoly on the legitimate use of violence has a consolidating and unifying effect on the citizens of the state (Parkin, 2002: p. 71). It is through the legitimate exercise of violence that a state is able to control and direct society toward achieving a desired aim (Whimster, 2004: p.119). Weber emphasizes the territorial interests of the state, which for the Cambodian state have been the root of conflict between Cambodia and its neighbours

for decades. However, despite the RGC holding office and power, their legitimacy has been questioned, as elections are criticised as mere theatre, stages for bribery, corruption, fraud and violence towards the opposition and their supporters. An essential feature of Weber's theory of power is the positive choice of the subordinate to obey the authority (Parkin, 2004: p. 74), which brings into question the legitimacy of the present RGC.

North et al.'s framework is useful for understanding Cambodian society whereby one's ability to buy or sell violence permits financial gain at the cost of the poor. However this commodification of violence alone is not sufficient to understand the contemporary Cambodian state-society relationship. This research draws upon literature traditionally associated with the resource dependent states that the author argues is relevant in the case of Cambodia: the rentier state. The rentier state is a state reliant upon unearned income (Moore, 2007; Di John, 2002). Unearned income traditionally comes from minerals, oil and natural resources rents.<sup>65</sup> Through a monopolisation of the market and state revenue, states are relieved of their usual financial base: taxation (Di John, 2002). Without governmental dependence on tax revenues and therefore a need to maintain good state-societal relationships, the bond between state and society is broken. In the case of Cambodia, due to its recent history, this relationship was never established as the state was funded not through taxation or dependence on natural resource exports, but by international assistance (Ear, 2012). Cambodia relies heavily upon aid and foreign assistance, which accounted for 60-70 per cent of public expenditure in the 1990s (Smoke & Taliercio, 2007). Without the

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<sup>65</sup> Rents 'are incomes that are higher than the next best income that an individual or group could earn given their assets' (Khan, 2006, p. 511).

relationship established between the state and society, there is little motivation for the state to be perceived as legitimate holder of violence in the eyes of the electorate. Instead, the state was financed by foreign investment and international aid, and experiences no repercussions when violence is used to coerce the population into compliance.

The presence of violence and rent seeking as a form of governance in a developing state runs contrary to the security development nexus. Security was traditionally the concern of the state and the military relating to conflict, or the potential for conflict, between states (Christie, 2010; Duffield, 2007; King & Murray, 2002; Human Development Report, 1994). With the end of the Cold War, the scope of what security entailed changed (Christie, 2010; Duffield, 2007). The 1990s saw a shift in focus away from national security to individual human security (Christie, 2010; Duffield, 2007; King & Murray, 2002; Human Development Report, 1994), human security being loosely defined as a life of dignity, free from fear and want (Human Development Report, 1994). Seven dimensions of human security were outlined: economic security, health security, personal security, political security, food security, environment security and community security (Human Development Report, 1994, pp. 24-25). The security development nexus emerged alongside the human security discourse claiming that security was required to achieve development, whilst without development, security could not be achieved (Hettne, 2010; Duffield, 2007).

Security and development are both contested, general terms widening and expanding in scope depending on the context (Hettne, 2010, p.33). The security development nexus however has become a factoid as a result of the proliferation of the nexus

amongst policy makers and development practitioners including the UN and DFID (Duffield, 2007). For example DFID argue that insecurity, lawlessness, crime and violence are obstacles to development and breeding grounds for international crime and terrorism (DFID report, 'Fighting poverty to build a safe world', 2004). Poverty in a foreign country therefore, constitutes is a security threat to the UK. However the pursuit of security through development and development through security is not a clear-cut path. Cambodian development, contrary to the security development nexus, has not been fostered in an environment of increased security, national or human. This research argues that insecurity, rather than security, is the 'golden thread' (Cameron, 2012; Overseas Development Institute, 2012; United Nations Post 2015 High Level Panel, 2012) that has stitched together Cambodian development, through the use of violence to scare and coerce a population, whilst the elite benefit from the continued influx of development assistance and international aid.

To evidence and reinforce this argument, the theme of insecurity emerges in Chapter Four through discussion of labour, particularly in relation to the informal economy, of which insecurity is a defining feature. Insecurity emerges again in Chapter Four through the discussion of tenure, which renders millions of urban residents vulnerable to eviction and undermines the value of their shelter as an asset. (Beall & Fox, 2009, p. 104). An understanding of the rentier state, the perpetuation of insecurity and the 'actually existing neoliberalisms' argued for by Springer may offer an approach for understanding exactly how and why Cambodian development policy has been so ineffective in achieving its goals.

## **5.2 Does existing Cambodian development policy address urban poor issues?**

This section examines Cambodian Development policies since the 1990s to present to determine if and how urban poor issues have been recognised and addressed by state led development initiatives. The effectiveness of policy and the Cambodian judiciary will be addressed in reference to the issues of urban poor livelihoods and housing.

### *5.2.i Cambodia's National Strategic Development Plan*

In 1993 the Paris Peace Accords were signed and Cambodia embarked upon the neoliberal pursuit of good governance, democracy, rule of law and free market capitalism. The National Programme to Rehabilitate and Develop Cambodia (NPRD) was established in 1994 with the assistance of the international community and published the first Socio-Economic Development Plan (SEDP), 1996-2000, and Public Investment Programme (PIP), 1996-98. The 1996 SEDP set out five-year medium-term goals based around two principles and six objectives. The first principle was that the government was responsible for the strategy and management of Cambodian development. The second was that the government was a partner of the Cambodian private sector, in line with the shift from the Washington Consensus, to a neoliberal partnership approach to development. The six objectives based on these two principles were:

- i). To establish Cambodia as a "State of Law" in which the rule of law prevails*
- ii). To achieve economic stability and structural adjustment with the goal of doubling GDP by 2004*
- iii). To improve education and healthcare in order to build up human resources and to improve people's living standards.*
- iv) To rehabilitate and develop the physical infrastructure and public facilities*
- v) To reintegrate the Cambodian economy into regional and international economies*

*vi). To give priority to rural development and to manage the environment and natural resources in a sustainable manner. (SEDP, 1996)*

Cambodia has been lauded as a success in returning to peace and stability, however as highlighted in the historical background and raised through this thesis, a full transition to a functioning free market, law abiding democracy had not been achieved in Cambodia. During the period of the first SEDP Cambodia witnessed assassinations of political leaders, judicial impunity, land grabbing and forced evictions, deforestation, and a political coup.

Whilst improvements were made in terms of ending conflict, increasing life expectancy and primary school education levels and attracting investment, these have been attributed to the fact that little data existed on Cambodia post 1975 and after the Khmer Rouge fell in 1979, Cambodia's statistics started at zero. This is not to say that Cambodian development started from scratch, far from it, but that baseline data for comparison does not exist for many of the development objectives outlined. However whereas labour issues and jobs are excluded from development efforts, there are calls to improve education, healthcare and improve people's living standards. Despite the statements being made, little detail as to how the state might go about improving living standards emerges. Land issues are included in Cambodia's national development policies from a rural perspective relating to natural resources and the environment. Objective six of the SEDP 1996-2000, states:

*vi). To give priority to rural development and to manage the environment and natural resources in a sustainable manner.*

This prioritisation of the rural perspective fails to acknowledge or remedy the land and housing issues facing those in urban areas. In recognising only rural areas as requiring sustainable development, space for sustainable, equitable urban development is denied from the very conception.

The prioritisation of rural land issues and neglect of urban matters extended into the SEDP II 2001-2005, in which developing agriculture was identified as the most important poverty alleviation method. Growth of urban areas is predicted in SEDP II however this is used as an argument against supporting urban development as it assumes urban residents are more well off and that the rural population are more disadvantaged (SEPD II, 2001, p.15). This bias towards the rural sector in development policy continues in contemporary development plans.

SEDP II focused on a 'Triangle Strategy' focusing on building peace and security for the people, re-integrating Cambodia into the region after the period of Khmer Rouge orchestrated isolation, and promoting economic and social development. Successive PIPs, a National Poverty Reduction Strategy adopted in 2002 and the UN Millennium Development Goals followed the SEDP II. This uncoordinated development effort was addressed by the RGC in 2004 after the CPP's electoral win, bringing all development efforts under one comprehensive programme, the National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP), 2006-2010. At the core of the NSDP was the Rectangular Strategy, which outlined priorities for addressing governance and socio-economic development issues and efforts (Figure 50).

The NSDP 2006-10 outlines what it calls *Major Highlights* from 1996-2006 including the restoration of, and vast improvements in, internal peace and security. These include democracy taking root across the country, increased personal freedoms and freedom of expression, major advancements in law, ‘spectacular’ macro-economic growth and a sharp reduction in poverty. From Figure 51, the NSDP’s Rectangular Strategy, we can see that agriculture and the private sector were major areas of concern for the NSDP 2006-10. Urban development and the informal economy do not feature.

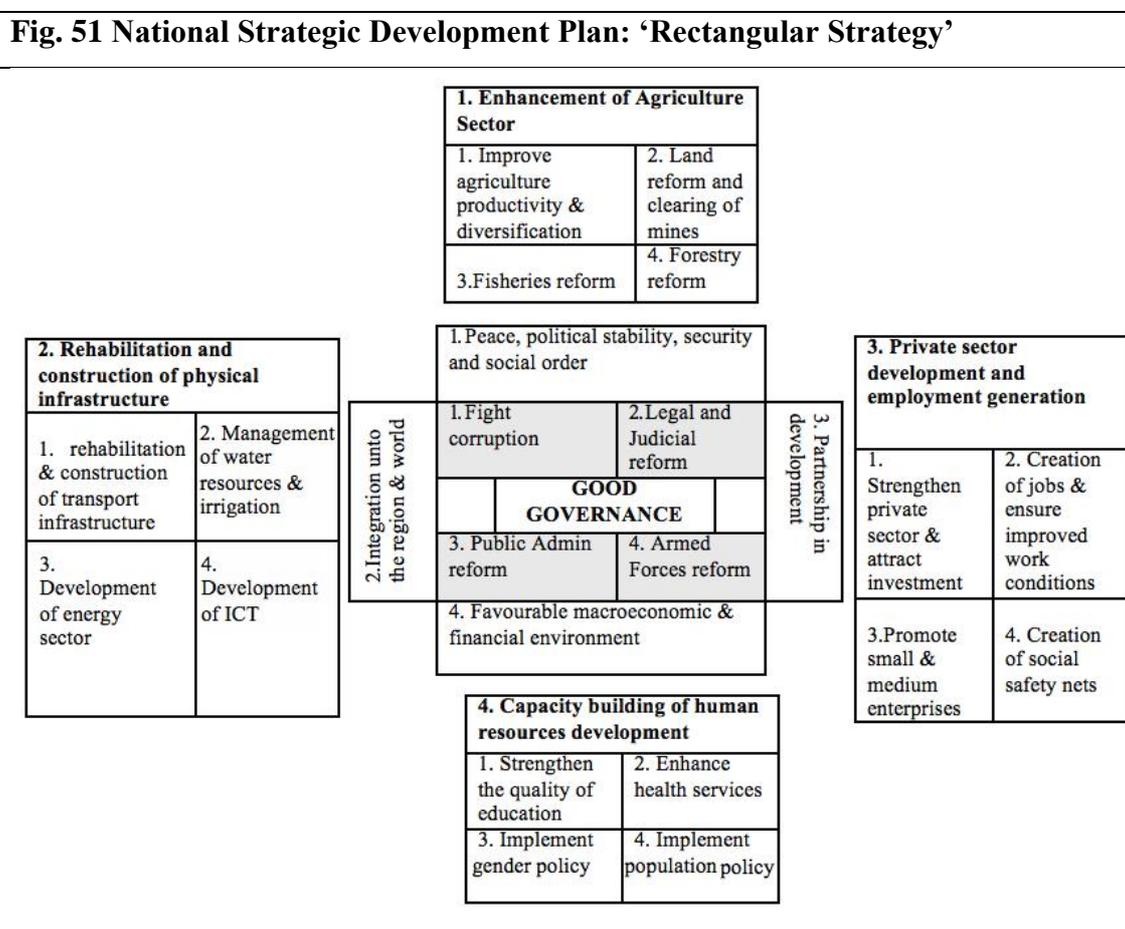
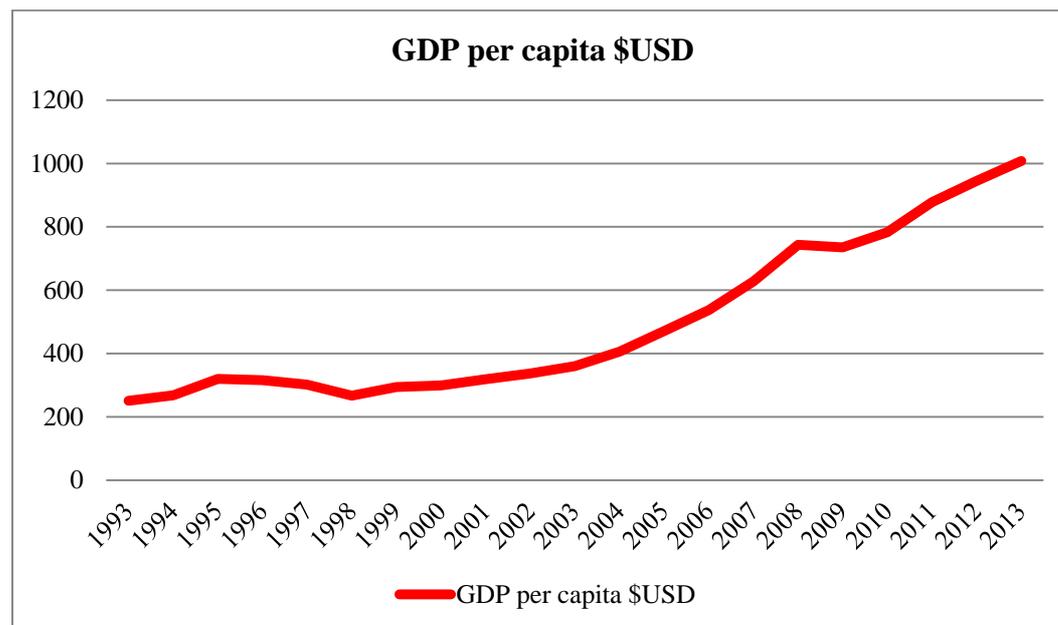


Figure 52 shows the increase in Cambodian GDP per capita, which has more than tripled. Yet NSDP 2006-10 concedes poverty is still prevalent at 24 per cent nationally and while economic growth looks ‘spectacular’, it cannot be attributed to an increased focus of the government, but rather the country’s investment portfolio

having begun at virtually zero. The rise in GDP tells us nothing about the wealth distribution of the country and the NSDP 2006-10 discloses that governance reform had not progressed at the pace required.

**Fig. 52 Cambodian GDP per capita \$USD, 1993-2013**



However a background paper for the 2014 Cambodia Human Development Report raises the point that increasing economic growth does not represent equitable growth and can actually foster inequalities (Kumar and Ny, 2014). Factors identified by Kumar and Ny that contribute to inequality include the under-provision of basic public social and economic services and a dominant elite who overtly and covertly manipulate, reinforce and expand their economic and political influences (2014, pp. 1-2). Kumar and Ny acknowledge inequality is decreasing in Cambodia, a fact celebrated in the 2013 World Bank Country Study ‘Where Have All the Poor Gone? Cambodia Poverty Assessment’, yet the extent of inequality remains high and a challenge to Cambodian policymakers. Therefore the RGC cannot assume that

promoting economic growth will consequentially lead to a reduction in inequality and regional disparity (Kumar and Ny, 2014).

The updated NSDP 2009-13 begins by outlining major achievements in the previous period. These included improved respect for human rights, judicial capacity, good governance and the creation of a peaceful, stable social order. For anyone who follows Cambodian current affairs, these claims may come as a shock as Cambodia in this period saw an unparalleled increase in fierce oppression of peaceful protest, the imprisonment of activists, the selling off of national forests for development and brutally violent forced evictions (Amnesty, 2008, 2009, 2012; COHRE, 2009; STT 2011, 2012). In regards to judicial capacity building, the United Nations Assistance to the Khmer Rouge Trials has faced unprecedented criticism for the level of government interference and corruption within the hybrid tribunal, the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia. Set up to try those responsible for the most serious of crimes committed under the Khmer Rouge, the tribunal has faced condemnation from the international community and the Cambodian population for the length of time and cost of the tribunal.

The NSDP 2009-13 identified important issues with the implementation of development reform in Cambodia, namely who is responsible for what, what the action points are for specific priorities and how much they will cost. Yet in not modifying the Rectangular Strategy, the RGC have continued to neglect the urban specific issues facing Cambodians living in cities. For example, whilst numbers are calculated for rural access to sanitation and improved drinking water, no figures are offered for an urban equivalent, as it is taken for granted that urban residents have

access to these facilities. The only mention of urban labour markets comes in brackets on page 101 stating that efforts will be made to integrate small and medium sized enterprises into the formal economy, which, as discussed above, is not necessarily a priority of informal economy workers who actively chose to be a part of the informal economy.

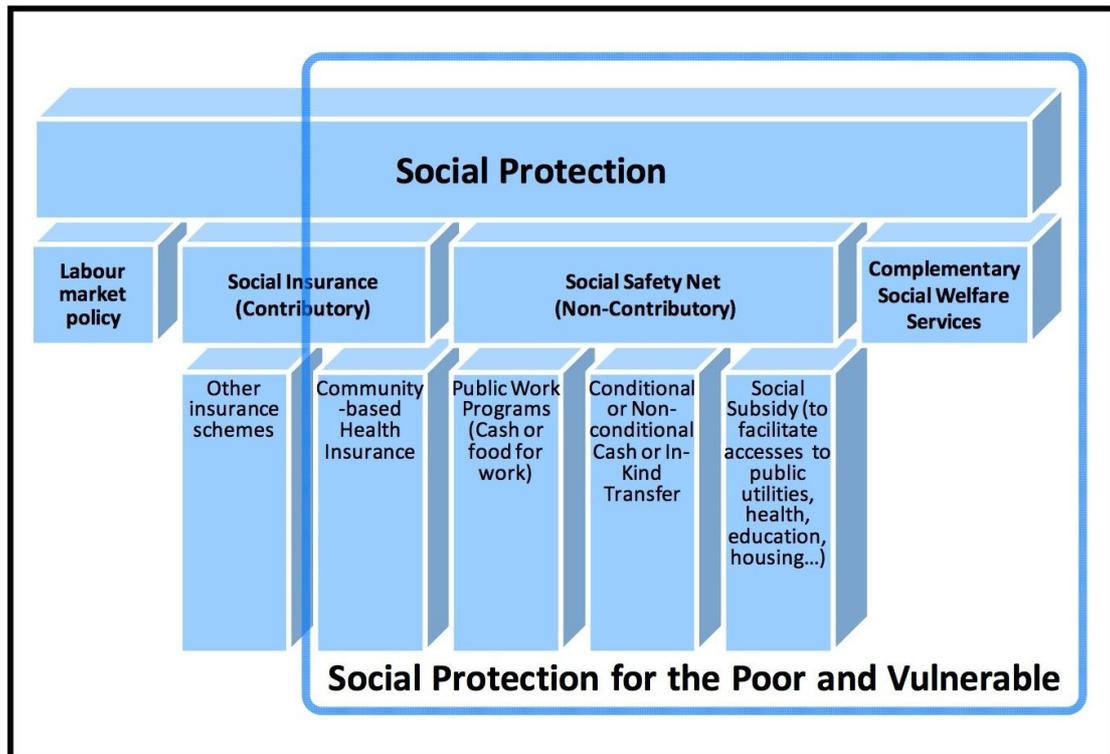
The Rectangular Strategy places land reform in connection with mine clearance and comes under the broader title of agricultural reform. The 2002 Strategy of Land Policy Framework published by the RGC also focuses exclusively on agriculture and rural land management. In 1999 UN-HABITAT with the MPP recognised the problem of applying rural land policy to urban areas and developed an Urban Poverty Reduction Strategy (UPRS). The UPRS was designed to improve access of the urban poor to basic social and physical infrastructure, therefore enhancing economic opportunities and strengthening participatory governance mechanisms. In 2002, as a result of the UPRS, a pledge was made by Hun Sen to upgrade 100 slums per year over 5 years. This strategy however lacked guidelines and guidance for implementation. The slum upgrade promised by Hun Sen never materialised (STT, 2012).

In 2011 a new national development strategy aimed at reducing poverty was announced, the National Social Protection Strategy for the Poor and Vulnerable (NSPS). The NSPS defined the poor and vulnerable as:

*People living below the national poverty line; and People who cannot cope with shocks and/or have a high level of exposure to shocks (of these, people living under or near the poverty line tend to be most vulnerable) (p. 19, NSPS, 2011)*

The NSPS identifies women and children, the elderly, ethnic minorities and the chronically ill and disabled as particularly vulnerable groups. The main scope of the NSPS relates to the provision of social protection for the poorest Cambodians through three channels: Social insurance, social safety nets and social welfare services. The social insurance mechanism is for the working poor who would contribute to a social security scheme in partnership with the government. In doing so they would have access to unemployment support, health insurance, maternity cover, sick leave etc. As Duffield might say, they become ‘insured’ rather than ‘uninsured’ (Duffield, 2007). The social safety net includes conditional or non-conditional cash or in-kind transfers, public work programmes in exchange for cash or food and social subsidies to facilitate access to public utilities, health care and education.

**Fig. 53 Scope of the National Social Protection Strategy**



Finally the complementary social welfare services comprise of basic provisions for basic needs and services such as food, sanitation, water and shelter given to those who

need them most. The mechanisms for identifying who needs what most is vague in the report, relying upon the 2008 census and a new programme, IDPoor, used to target households and areas known to be suffering from poverty.

Labour opportunities, formal and informal, as a mechanism for poverty reduction does not come under the scope of the NSPS despite its acknowledgement of the role labour markets can play in their social protection diagram (see Figure 53). The provision of social security is restricted to formal economy workers. In fact the only mention of the informal economy is in a chart related to occupational health. Further the NSPS only acknowledge that land insecurity may indirectly contribute to poverty and food insecurity. However the NSPS follows the same format as much of Cambodian policy by being openly biased towards the rural landscape, thus failing to identify land management and land rights as a key factor in addressing poverty for both the rural and urban population.

From these National Development policies dating back to 1994 we can see that development for urban Cambodians has not been identified on a national level as a key priority. One might have expected that urban poverty would be highlighted in the NSPS for poor and vulnerable people along with other minority groups, but it was not.

Despite the presence of multiple development initiatives and their regular revision, these plans poorly reflect what is actually happening on the ground across Cambodia and serve little more than to ‘paper over’ obstacles to development by the government who favour short term windfalls for rich tycoons through exploitation of natural

resources and forests, at the cost of the communities both rural and urban. Instead these policies are used to justify accumulation by dispossession thereby increasing the wealth of powerful individuals and strengthening the existing government and power structures (Louth, 2015). These consumption-only policies facilitate the influx of donor funding to Cambodia, detaching the government from society and from their responsibility to address deepening poverty and inequality.

#### *5.2.ii Phnom Penh Development Strategy 2005-2015*

We now turn to Phnom Penh specific development policy in the form of the 2005-2015 Development Strategy (PPDS). Written in 2004 at a time when Phnom Penh had an estimated population of 1million, a landmass of 375km<sup>2</sup>, 4 urban *khans* and 3 rural *khans* (PPDS, 2004). The population is now estimated to be more than 2million and the number of *Khans* has risen to 12 in 2016 The PPDS indicates three main aims:

- 1. Improve good governance.*
- 2. Promote local economic development.*
- 3. Strengthen the system of urban poverty reduction program in a sustainable way.*

These aims are supported by five vision statements and supporting strategies:

*Vision 1. Land use and housing*

*Vision 2. Environment and natural resources.*

*Vision 3. Infrastructure and transportation*

*Vision 4. Social service*

*Vision 5. Economic development*

All the visions are crucial for understanding the direction of development in Phnom Penh. The language used to describe the city illustrates the desire for Phnom Penh to be known as the Charming City; an epithet already displayed around the city's

Independence Monument and boulevards. Its ‘splendid beauty’, modern yet unequivocally Khmer style, represents the spiritual, economic and political heart of the country.

Vision one on land and vision five on economic development relate specifically to the themes of livelihoods and housing addressed in this thesis. Interestingly the strategy for vision 1 focuses on advocacy to increase the awareness of land law, to promote private investment for housing developments and to upgrade 100 poor communities per year. In fact causes of land conflict can be identified in this vision as two of the most controversial forced evictions, Boeung Kak and Borei Keila, were at the hands of private corporations who did not respect contracts, law or human rights in relation to their developments. In these instances, the increased awareness of land law did little to ease the conflict, as the law was bypassed in favour of investment. Continued lack of awareness of land law and channels of dispute resolution, the threats and obstacles put in the way of judicial process and the absence of the 100 poor community upgrades per year support the argument that there was little intention of this or the other visions being realised. Therefore advocacy alone is futile if the processes being advocated for are toothless.

The third aim, *Strengthen the system of urban poverty reduction program in a sustainable way* is supported by vision five on Economic development, recognises Phnom Penh as the tourism, industrial, political and economic hub of the country. The strategy offered to tackle urban poverty reduction is an increased promotion and organisation of handicrafts. Whilst the production of handicrafts is one of many labour market choices for the urban poor, they are by no means the most popular,

accessible, profitable or feasible. This response cannot be taken seriously as a strategy for urban poverty reduction. It is more useful as an insight into the MPP's misunderstanding of urban poverty and urban poor livelihoods and the actual utility of the PPDS, which is a document for circulation amongst donors and supporters but never meant for meaningful implementation.

Hughes (2003) and Springer (2011) have argued that Phnom Penh's development agenda is in reality non-existent regardless of the production of reports and agendas, routinely updated in time for funding deadlines. The reality of development in Phnom Penh is that of a chaotic changeable agenda set by a secretive political and economic network of the RGC, the MPP, the military, FDI and property developers. Springer details how the Cambodian conglomerate Sokimex, described as the financial pillar of the CPP by opposition leader Sam Rainsy who claimed there was little to distinguish between the CPP, Sokimex and the State, is a vehicle of CPP influence, corruption and exploitation. The business portfolio of Sokimex includes garment factories, service stations, an airline, property development, construction, rubber tree plantations, hotels and until recently, the management of ticket sales to Angkor Wat<sup>66</sup> (2011, p. 2558). Tim Winter (2010) expands on neoliberalism within the tourism industry in his work 'Heritage Tourism: A dawn of a new era'. Winter describes how foreign investment into tourism infrastructure, particularly surrounding the UNESCO

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<sup>66</sup> Phnom Penh Post reported on the 5<sup>th</sup> January that Sokimex who have controlled ticket sales since 1999 ceased to do so from 1st January 2016 after which the RGC's Ministry of Economy and Finance took over. Speculation as to Sokimex losing this lucrative contract suggests it may be due to irregularities in ticket revenue or recent low-ticket sales. Article available here: [http://www.phnompenhpost.com/business/government-takes-over-reins-angkor-ticket-sales?utm\\_content=buffer39073&utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_source=facebook.com&utm\\_campaign=buffer](http://www.phnompenhpost.com/business/government-takes-over-reins-angkor-ticket-sales?utm_content=buffer39073&utm_medium=social&utm_source=facebook.com&utm_campaign=buffer)

World Heritage sites of Angkor and Preah Vihear in Cambodia, has opened alternative channels for Chinese, Taiwanese and Korean influence in Cambodia. These channels of influence undermine agreements, conventions and the relationship between the RCG and the UN, World Bank and the IMF as money is readily available from alternative sources without the same equitable development-centric strings attached.

A policy agenda perused more openly, although no less coherently, in Phnom Penh is that of beautification. Introduced in Chapter Two, the process of beautification emerged in 1996, the strategy of Chea Sophara Mayor of Phnom Penh at the time. The plan aimed to present a façade of calm and tranquillity in Phnom Penh by thinly veiling over poverty, homelessness and inequality. During times of particular international attention such as when Phnom Penh hosts an ASEAN conference or international delegates, streets are quite literally swept of the homeless who are incarcerated for an indeterminate amount of time, street sellers and other individuals who do not fit the aesthetic vision are removed, fined and told to leave the area, fresh trees and flowers are planted, grass trimmed and all number of other measures taken to ensure a clean, tranquil and ultimately skewed vision of beauty be presented for the desired audience (Next City, 2014; Phnom Penh Post, 2012, 2002; Straingo, 2010; Cambodia Daily, 2009; Hughes, IIAS, 2003). Hughes pairs the 1996 Beautification Plan with corruption to reflect the two faces of Phnom Penh (2003, IIAS). In her short article, Hughes illustrates how the process of beautification is facilitated and perpetuated by corruption and violence, itself contributing to the plight of the urban poor through displacement, exclusion and denial of space, both in physical terms and in terms of political negotiation (IIAS, 2003). This contradictory process of

beautification and displacement is played out in Phnom Penh in more real terms than any of the donor-orientated 'visions' of the PPDS.

### *5.2.iii Cambodian Labour Law*

The urban poor economy covers the different aspects of urban poor livelihood generating practices, some of which fall under the ILO definition of working in the informal sector or informal employment. Other work covered by the term are more formalised such as the employment of soldiers, hotel workers, factory workers etc. Therefore taking into account the formal and informal components of the urban poor economy, an understanding of Cambodian labour law is important to see if, how and in what ways labour law accommodates income-generating practices of the urban poor economy.

Like Cambodia's SEPD I, Cambodia's first labour law was written in 1992 with the assistance of the international community. The 1992 legislation incorporated elements from historic Cambodian labour law and French labour law. In fact much of Cambodia's judicial system reflects the French system and law students (economics and medical students) study in French for French university accredited degrees. This relationship can be identified as a legacy from former French Indochina where Cambodia was a French Protectorate.

Alongside setting rules for contracting and terminating employment, the most prevailing provision in the 1992 law was the prohibition of forced labour. Despite the involvement of the international community in the drafting process, the 1992 labour law was inherently flawed as it failed to specify procedures for administering the law,

resolving disputes, penalties for breaking the law or the establishment of trade unions (CLEC, 2005).

To address these serious deficits the law was revised in 1997, again based on a French draft. The new 1997 labour law addressed the aforementioned deficits and expanded definitions of contracted worker to include industrial workers, domestic or household servants, artisans, service employees, agricultural workers and transportation workers.

Artisans are clarified in art. 7 as:

*...persons who practice a manual trade personally on their own account, working at home or outside... either alone or with the help of their spouse or family members who work without pay, or with the help of workers or apprentices...The number of non-family workers, who work regularly for an artisan cannot exceed seven. If this number is exceeded, the employer loses the status of artisan (Article 7, 1997 Labour Law).*

This definition would encapsulate many of the different labour practices indicated by the household survey, were it not for the necessary contractual nature. Verbal contracts are not provided for under the 1997 law, all contracts must be signed (Article 3, 1997 Labour Law).

The law addresses what it calls the ‘stability’ of employment by dividing the workforce into two groups, regular workers and casual workers (article 9, 1997 Labour Law). Regular workers are permanently contracted whereas casual workers are contracted to perform a specific task usually completed in a short period of time, to work seasonally or to work intermittently.

The Arbitration Council (AC) was established under the 1997 law, but only came into practice in 2003 with the assistance of the ILO. An independent institution, the AC is responsible for the resolution of collective labour disputes. A tripartite structure, the 30 arbitrators of the AC are nominated in equal numbers by the Ministry of Labour, employers' associations and unions. However the AC's mandate is limited to hearing labour disputes of ten or more employees. The vast majority of disputes brought before the AC are from garment factory workers but recently there has been an increase in disputes raised from the tourism industry and the NGO sector (interview with AC Manager, 2012). The AC is held as an example of a working, independent dispute resolution mechanism. However its limited mandate prevents the AC from being useful to small enterprise workers or workers in the informal economy faced with a labour dispute.

Cambodia has ratified the key international treaties and recognised the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and United Nations Charter in its constitution.

However, it remains unclear if this is merely in principle or has direct implications for Cambodian law. For example, provisions of the ILO's conventions are incorporated into Article 31 of the 1997 law while technical provisions are not (CLEC, 2005).

The 2010 Labour and Social Trends report from the ILO states, in line with the luxury of unemployment hypothesis raised in the introduction and section 4.2.iv, that unemployment is a luxury that the majority of Cambodians cannot afford and therefore states the unemployment figures at an estimated 1.6 per cent or 1.1 per cent in adults and 3.3 per cent among youth (p. 23, ILO, 2010). Another ILO reports estimates the informal economy at 85 per cent of the Cambodian workforce (p.3 ILO,

2006). We can then deduce that the 1997 labour law therefore applies to only 15 per cent of the Cambodian workforce. This fact reinforces the importance of understanding the informal economy, the largest economy in Cambodia.

#### *5.2.iv Cambodian Land Law*

Land disputes in urban areas have distinct characteristics to those in rural areas (Adler, 2008). In rural areas land conflicts concern farming areas, private and communal, access to resources such as forests, rivers and lakes. Land in urban areas such as Phnom Penh has a higher value; space is a premium and location is of vital importance. The concentration of powerful individuals coming into dispute with each other and the poor had led to power imbalances and power struggles, played out in part in public, in part behind closed doors.

During the KR private property rights were scrapped, replaced by communal ownership and farming practices. Following their displacement from power in 1979, the Vietnamese ideology executed through the People's Republic of Kampuchea reshaped Cambodian collectives and communes, continuing practices of communal ownership and farming. However the communal policies of the People's Republic of Kampuchea in the 1980s failed to be implemented appropriately as power was commonly delegated to regional authorities who were often less stringently communist, and who began to informally divide up and allocate land and property (Khemro & Payne, 2004; Williams, 2008). By the mid 1980s, the agricultural sector was de facto privatised and urban real estate was allocated on a basis whereby authorities took the best quality housing and buildings, leaving the poor to squat and share housing wherever it remained (Khemro & Payne, 2004; Williams, 2008; Frings,

1994). Competition for property in the capital Phnom Penh and other urban centres was chaotic with the prospect of peace, business, and international investment on the horizon and has been described as ‘a war of houses and a war of land’ (Williams, 2008: p.39). Corrupt officials sold houses and properties to multiple buyers and the military seized land. Land grabbing also plagued rural Cambodia, as multiple people laid multiple claims to disputed land, further complicated by false documentation, false names, and nepotism. The lack of legal clarity in the 1989 land reform had become a major factor in fuelling the criminalised peace economy through reinvigorating corruption and reinforcing a structure of state aggression. Whilst the rich and influential minority were able to consolidate their status with land titles, the majority peasant population continued to rely on informal economic practices to survive in both urban and rural areas, occupying whatever land was available to them (Frings, 1994; Williams, 2008: p.38).

Since the 1989 reform there have been two significant changes in Cambodian land law: the first in 1992 a consequence of the presence of UNTAC and a third land reform in 2001. Hundreds of thousands of internally displaced people, including estimates of over 350,000 refugees returning from the Thai border, found themselves homeless, without food and unemployed throughout the 1980s and 1990s (Peou, 2000, p. 239). Cambodia’s urban population swelled as people flooded into to the market towns and cities in search of loved ones, food and employment. In conjunction with the Paris Peace Agreements, a land law aimed to alleviate peasant grievances through the privatisation of land, by awarding land titles to those who had peacefully occupied land for five years, was created in 1992. During the 1990s there was a dramatic increase in squatter communities in Phnom Penh, which had begun to form

after the collapse of the KR as Cambodians returned to their hometowns in search of missing family members, and employment. The 1992 land law attempted to address the grievances of the peasant population by giving land titles to peaceful occupations of land after five years. However lack of awareness and procedures put in place to provision these titles meant that the Land Law failed to make an impact (Williams, 2008; Hughes, 2003; Frings, 1994). The 2001 land law was an attempt to reform and improve the implementation of the 1992 land law. The 2001 law recognised land possession and occupation prior to its passage, protected public property such as lakes, rivers and forests, recognised the rights of indigenous groups to their traditional residential and agricultural lands and encouraged a more organised approach to land titling rather than the ‘free for all’ that had been taking place (Williams, 2008: pp. 47-48; World Bank, 2009). However, despite many promises made by the international community and the RGC, there was meagre progression in land titling in parts of rural Cambodia, whilst the issuance of titles in urban areas has been, and continues to be, inadequate due to political and economic interests of the government (LICADHO, 2009; Williams, 2008; Hughes, 2003; Mgbako et al., 2010; Frings, 1994; Bretton Woods, 2011).

The ineffectiveness of the 2001 Land Law has resulted in land grabbing and exploitation as the demand for land and housing has grown dramatically due to international interest and foreign investment in Phnom Penh and Cambodia’s natural resources (World Bank, 2009; Williams, 2008; Hughes, 2003; Mgbako et al., 2010). The Cambodian government has actively prevented the issuing of land titles to residents in areas marked for development due to what has been described as ‘rampant corruption at every stage of the development process’ (Mgbako et al., 2010:

p.64). The government has been benefitting from high land prices in Phnom Penh by unlawfully granting title to private developers in exchange for private compensation (Transparency International, 2014; Williams, 2008; Mgbako et al., 2010). Once the titles have been granted, eviction orders are set for forcing the existing residents off the land. This happens frequently without following the appropriate procedures such as giving notice or allowing for appeal. Moreover, evictions have been violent and often take place at night or in the early hours of the morning, catching the residents off guard while they sleep. Those who are notified in advance and oppose the eviction are frequently arrested or beaten (Williams, 2008; Mgbako et al., 2010; Amnesty International, 2009; LICADHO, 2009; COHRE, 2009). Cambodia has been described as ‘up for sale’ in the media (BBC News, 13 January 2011).

In an attempt to address the inadequate law and policy relating to urban land management, the government in 2010 released ‘Circular 3: Resolution on temporary settlements on state land illegally occupied in the capital, municipal and urban areas’. The title of this report expresses the homogeneous perspective of urban poverty that this thesis has been challenging. Data so far has shown that the houses and settlements that are facing eviction or have been evicted are not necessarily temporary structures, but homes that in some cases have stood since before the KR in the 1970s (HRTF, 2011). The statement that these settlements are illegally occupying land labels all the urban poor as criminal, when in fact this is hardly the case as demonstrated through the tenure typology offered by Khmero and Payne.<sup>67</sup> As a result of the failed land titling process mandated under the 1992 and 2001 land laws, residents who have peacefully occupied their homes for more than five years have not been offered the

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<sup>67</sup> For the Khmero and Payne more nuanced tenure security typology see section 4.3

land titles they are entitled to. In fact that the absence of land titles is desirable to the government as this enables them to claim land as state own, or lowers the level of compensation required following an eviction. Circular 3 was largely discredited by NGOs working with residents facing eviction as being nothing other than the formalisation of corruption and land grabbing that has plagued the city's residents since the 1980s.

However to avoid lumping together the RGC, MPP and local government structures, investigations into local authorities and the different levels of governance in Cambodia have revealed that whilst there are certain conflicts and demonstrations of power and influence at the highest levels of Cambodian society, the relationships between local authorities and community members can also be influential in the issuance of land titles and receipts. Hughes' (2003) IIAS article gives an example of nepotism in compensation allocation from the infamous 2001 Tonle Bassac fire:

*One squatter family commented: 'A group of villagers whose houses were burned... haven't got a house yet because they don't know anyone working in the government. So they've got no land yet... But those who have relatives working in the government have no difficulty getting land.' Another villager went further: 'Those who have relatives working in the government got two or three plots of land, so they could sell some and make money.'*

Hughes' interview later reveals similarities with the household respondents contacted for this research as respondents were too scared to challenge the authorities or complain about unfair treatment, for fear of being labelled trouble makers and being denied any meagre compensation all together. Adler in his 2008 working paper identified these three main factors contributing to urban land conflict:

- *Land disputes are caused in major part by a history of weak land management*
- *Dealings with state land depend largely on the concrete interests of higher-level officials and those with power.*
- *All parties continue to rely upon traditional practices to some extent, for land acquisition, negotiation and dispute resolution (2008, p.5)*

In relation to Adler's second and third bullet points, an insightful investigation into local authority state operations is offered in a chapter from the CDRI Annual Review 2013-14 authored by Somatra and Navy titled 'Democracy from a Political Geographer's Perspective: A Case Study of the Tonle Sap Demarcation Project'. Here Somatra and Navy examine the democratic (or otherwise) processes used by local authorities regarding the demarcation of flooded forests surrounding the Tonle Sap Lake. Whilst their study relates to the land issues within a rural context, the processes of responsibility, decision making and accountability within the local authority shed light on similar processes concerning land issues in the urban landscape. Their case study concerns the call for demarcation made by Prime Minister Hun Sen regarding the Tonle Sap Lake, as no clear boundary existed between the lake and surrounding farms and forests. As a result of frequent floods, farmers were increasingly clearing flooded forests for planting rice, which was threatening the sustainability of the Lake. Somatra and Navy's study revealed that local people for whom the lake, farms and forests are of the utmost importance were excluded from the creation of the new boundary. As a result their knowledge, lived-experience of the lake and its seasonal change, which would have been crucial in creating the lake boundary, were left out. Not only this but the locals who were to be affected by this boundary creation were not notified at all of what was occurring and were unaware of the presence of state agents. Nor did locally elected representatives have any contribution to the data

collection or production of the boundary, and many were unaware of the changes in the governance policy regarding the Tonle Sap (Somatra and Navy, 2014, p.148). As a result of the absence of local knowledge and customary practices which had hitherto been used to establish property rights, in one commune an estimated 80 per cent of the floating rice farmed area was registered as protected forest (Somatra and Navy, 2014, p.148).

It emerged that an upward line of accountability existed between cartographers and the minister responsible, who had pre-set the size of the area to be designated as protected forest at 645,000 hectares. Pre-setting the size of the area and excluding local representatives and locals from involvement in the creation of the map undermined any legitimate attempts to determine the actual size of the forest and denied the locals any space within which to challenge the demarcation process.

Somatra and Navy conclude that the agenda of higher state apparatus served to sideline local authorities, suggesting that central state agents were not required to engage with local authorities, inform or them of their actions or decisions, or justify them. However, that the local authorities were complicit in this as well as despite being aware of their presence, they did not enquire as to why the central state officials were present, did not make efforts to keep up to date with policy changes relevant to their community and did not make efforts to contribute to the project. The relationship between locally elected authorities and central state agents was summarised as:

*Local authorities ...are expected to follow the central agents, provide logistics support and do as they are told. This working arrangement inhibits local accountability, and means that local authorities have no meaningful roles or responsibilities in the demarcation process (2014, p. 151).*

Central state agents are upwardly accountable to their ministers but not downwardly as they are not elected and have no obligation to respond to local people. However the upward accountability of central state agents is neither purely linear nor firm. The agents, in this instance the cartographers on the ground, were most accountable to their immediate superiors and not directly Hun Sen as demonstrated by the fact that they follow the first part of their orders, to demarcate the pre-set boundary, but not the second part ordered by Hun Sen which was to respect existing farmland. Somatra and Navy also draw attention to the fact that the central state agents used approximation of sites for the boundary when floodwaters prevented their access to the given GPS coordinates, actively navigated the land of important government officials and upon the opportunities to reevaluate the boundaries to respect farmland, used this as an opportunity to extract rents from farmers. Therefore central agents were not purely implementing their orders mechanically, but had the agency to influence and be influenced. Somatra and Navy identify the tension between reforms aimed at structurally decentralising governance to local authorities and the overlap and seniority of centralized neo-patrimonial power (2014, p. 155).

Examination of the relationships between local people, their representatives and the central authority is important for this research as these relationships are the actual means by which the law is implemented in Cambodia. In the case of urban development, livelihood and housing, an individuals familial relations, the political connections of their commune and district representatives and the overarching higher central powers all have varying consequences for each household facing eviction.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

This chapter began with a theoretical debate regarding development, violence and neoliberalism to inform the following discussion of national and Phnom Penh specific development policy. To speak to urban poor issues raised in Chapter Four, Cambodian labour law and land law were also examined to see how they accommodate or respond to urban poverty. It was determined that the urban context was unilaterally left out of development policy through an explicit bias towards the rural environment. This has further repercussions as any meaningful attempts at addressing urban poverty were rooted in inappropriate rural poverty models that do not speak to the specific challenges of poverty in the urban context. Beautification was argued to be one the few policies that was actually implemented, at the cost of the poor and most vulnerable. It has demonstrated how not only has development policy not been effective in addressing urban poverty, but was never intended to, as the policies were scarcely made for implementation but for donor consumption. In doing so policies that expressed a desire to assist the poor and remedy the countries entrenched poverty and inequality instead became vehicles of corruption, perpetuating exploitation and abuse of the most vulnerable. Finally the last section returned to the theme of governance raised earlier in Chapter Two and Chapter Four by scrutinising governance structures. The disconnect between locally elected representatives and the central government, the overarching neo-patrimonial power structure and the localised influence of familial relationships and rent seeking serve to undermine local governance and development implementation by reinforcing and reproducing the ‘actually existing neoliberalisms’ discussed at the beginning of this chapter.

What can be done to stop violent forced evictions? Cambodian civil society and challenges to their the ability organise were raised in Chapter Two section 2.2. These challenges included the use of violence, threat and underhanded tactics by the local authorities, the individualisation of dispute and variation in compensation, and the personal networks of an effective or ineffective local authority. Discussion of how Cambodians might increase their tenure security from Chapter Four section 4.3 is also relevant to this section. Tenure security is deconstructed to offer a more nuanced typology that better reflects the range of tenure statuses of the urban poor. An example is given of a pilot project where the MPP, NGOs and communities worked together to upgrade three urban poor settlement sites, however for reasons unclear, the authorities refuse to implement the lessons learned from this pilot scheme instead shelving the initiative. Recommendations for how tenure security might be improved acknowledge that political change is required albeit unlikely and instead advocates for international support from donors, countries, agencies and developers. The 2007 UN-Habitat *Enhancing Urban Safety and Security: Global Report on Human Settlements* calls on the government to adhere to its international human rights obligations to provide adequate housing and suggests raising awareness, information collection and sharing and the coordination of efforts by residents and NGOs as steps towards mitigating the effects of forced eviction (2007, p. 313).

Drawing on challenges facing the urban poor and in the context of development, the following three recommendations for urban development researchers, policy makers and practitioners are presented:

*1. A thorough investigation into the main sources of income for residents prior to eviction. This would establish what labour opportunities are engaged with and therefore can be used inform future resettlement plans.*

*2. Conduct a forum to discuss desirable future labour opportunities. Perhaps there are skilled workers within the settlement who are not exposed to opportunities to use those skills. On the other hand, perhaps there are labour opportunities that require a willing or skilled work force that may be able to employ and/or train residents.*

*3. More diverse compensation options. It is not enough to offer land compensation if land is not required and if this land is far from income earning and labour market opportunities. Money in the form of lump sums or instalments*

Rather than demand actions from the RGC or MPP that will likely never take place, these recommendations are informed by actions currently undertaken during the DIDR process and therefore may be more easily adopted. The first two points emphasises the importance of livelihoods and their sustainability. The reason many residents abandon resettlement sites is because there is simply no work there. If the MPP is able to match a skilled workforce (or a workforce willing to be trained) with a relocate site close to employment opportunities, it would be of mutual benefit and create a desirable resettlement site less likely to be abandoned. The third point responds to compensation. Respondents stated that rather than receiving a land plot, they would have preferred a lump sum of money. This money could be used to pay off debt, invest in a *moto* or be used to rent or buy a property close to an existing or alternative labour opportunity. It is prescriptive and naively ideological to assume that land is the primary concern for those being evicted, as land titles in resettlement sites are not issued and subject to the same five-year occupation principle, regardless of the previous time spent in former sites.

## 6. Conclusion

This thesis has made a contribution to academic scholarship by responding to the challenge of understanding urban poverty and the participation of poor urban dwellers in labour markets through a multifaceted approach. In joining together labour and land literature from a political economy perspective and using quantitative and qualitative research methods, the author has sought to provide space for the ‘voice’ of urban poor people to express what is important to their lives and livelihoods in their city. Their voices have been historically, politically and economically contextualised to question the pursuit and costs, material and otherwise, of development in Phnom Penh. This final chapter offers a research summary outlining the findings of this thesis in response to the research questions. To conclude, policy recommendations will be presented and areas for further research indicated.

### 6.1 Summary of findings

Research questions:

1. *Who are the urban poor and what resources, networks and mechanisms do they rely upon?*
2. *Does existing development policy respond appropriately to urban poor issues? If not, why not and how can this be improved?*

1. Who are the urban poor and what resources, networks and mechanisms do they rely upon?

In 2013 it was announced that Cambodia was approaching ‘lower middle income status’ (UNDP, 2013; Cambodia Daily, 2013; Open Development Cambodia, 2013).

Indicators of development relying chiefly on GDP estimates may, therefore, have been used to argue that Cambodia has successfully raised itself out of poverty. However, the evidence presented in this thesis suggests that this is far from the case. Chapter Two, reviewing the historical background, demonstrates the failure of Cambodia to bring about a clear shift from conflict to peace, the failure of its supposed transition to a democracy and the failure of equitable distribution of wealth. Since 1979 until recently, Cambodia was a one party state. Only in the last 12 months, since the 2013 general election, has there been a viable opposition to the CPP for control of government with the return of Sam Rainsy and the formation of the Cambodia National Rescue Party (CNRP), a merger of the Sam Rainsy Party and the Human Rights Party. But this has had fatal consequences for many CNRP supporters as many have been beaten, abused and shot (Cambodia Daily, 2013). The recorded inaccuracies at the 2013 polling stations compound accusations of electoral fraud and of a government unwilling to yield power after more than three decades. The second part Chapter Two tracked the history of Phnom Penh and its continuing expansion into the surrounding provinces. The gentrification of Phnom Penh through the process of street sweeping and 'beautification' policy were outlined and the ability of civil society to organise discussed.

Cambodia may be approaching middle-income status in terms of aggregate GDP figures, but its development has been neither equitable nor democratic. Instead of benefitting the poor, urban development projects have reinforced lower incomes and poor housing by instilling insecurity into almost every aspect of urban poor lives. The absence of due process, lack of respect for the law and use of violence by law enforcement agents, including local authorities, the police, and private security firms,

has resulted in the poor being condemned for being poor. When it is beneficial for the government to label them illegal, such as in regard to land occupation, it does so.

When the government wants the city to appear clean and beautiful, such as when the ASEAN conference came to Phnom Penh, the poor and homeless are collected and moved to an infamous and highly secretive 'rehabilitation unit', Prey Sor, for unspecified periods of time. When the government requires cheap labour, they are able to create a cheap workforce without contracts and therefore without job security or contractual benefits.

The household survey indicated that the majority of respondents - 85 per cent - were migrants. Whilst this cannot be used to argue that the majority of all urban poor are migrants, it does support labour and migration literature emphasising the movement of workers from rural areas to urban centres. Urban poor households rely upon a variety of income generating opportunities and mechanisms. Unlike other urban areas in developing countries, household members usually had only one main income-generating job each. These jobs were performed everyday whenever possible, for as long as possible, and so left little time for other employment opportunities. However residents were innovative and opportunistic in taking advantage of alternative income generating opportunities such as renting out their mobile phones, bicycles or motorbikes, growing small crops or keeping small livestock.

This research has proposed a more context-specific definition for urban poor income generating opportunities, coping mechanisms and networks: *the urban poor economy*. *The urban poor economy* was formulated to challenge the traditional characterisation of the informal economy, in particular relating emphasise the different challenges an

urban context presents as well as to acknowledge the essential non-monetary contributions of household members. The *urban poor economy* can be defined as: *The livelihood generating and coping practices of individual residents and households in urban areas, living close to a city-specific poverty line.* Whilst this definition is not yet perfected, it is hoped that this is a step forward in seeing urban poor livelihoods for the diverse and wide-ranging practices that contribute to household incomes. The urban poor category is important as issues faced by those living in poverty differ greatly across rural and urban landscapes. This definition shifts focus from state regulation to emphasize the innovative plurality of different livelihood generating practices, both monetary and non-monetary and therefore is more reflective of the variety of means of supporting a household in Phnom Penh. For example, non-monetary duties are essential for understanding urban poor livelihoods. Household income is regularly supported by household networks, usually family elders or eldest children, who look after children, clean, cook and complete domestic duties, look after small crops and care for animals. In doing so these people free up other household members to capitalise on increased labour opportunities. Occasionally these members would also help support household members increase productivity by, for example, peeling pineapples before they were cut and packaged for sale, or using their spare time to cut loose threads off garments.

The concept of *horizontal regulation*, the regulation of commodity and service prices and selling locations by those in a particular part of the urban poor economy or the same physical space, was offered to accompany the urban poor economy definition. *Horizontal regulation* is created and reinforced by people of the same economic or social level, as opposed to vertical regulation or ‘top down regulation’ which is taken

to characterise the contractual relationship between an employer and employee or state regulated industry. For example, a group of snail sellers buy their product collectively and agree upon a price for sale. If one seller undersells another, this person is then excluded from the collective purchasing power and will pay higher individual purchase costs. Another example is that *tuktuk* drivers have defined plots and spaces in which they pick up customers. These plots are typically outside hotels, offices or along the riverside. Another driver cannot simply park their *tuktuk* and collect a customer from someone else's plot. The other drivers must agree upon the presence of each *tuktuk*. Whilst not formal in a strict contractual sense, there are punishments for breaking horizontal regulations, such as exclusion or even the destruction of property.

Opportunities for household borrowing and saving were examined. As many urban poor were denied access to banks and formal borrowing and lending schemes, alternative means of borrowing and saving emerged. Purchasing gold, saving money at home, and community saving schemes were common, as was borrowing from private moneylenders at extremely high interest rates. However, respondents who were capable of managing their money and debt when living in Phnom Penh struggled to manage their debts in the resettlement sites due to the increased amounts borrowed and extortionate interest rates.

2. Does existing development policy respond appropriately to urban poor issues? If not, why not and how can this be improved?

Cambodian development policy beginning with objectives set out by UNTAC and moving through the various national policies including SEDP I and II, PIP, NSDP 2006-10, NSDP 2009-13 and the NSPS as well as Phnom Penh specific plans laid out by the MPP were consulted. It was identified that all national strategic development plans neglected the context specific nature of development, namely the different requirements of urban and rural labour markets. In doing so, development policy continued to treat the ‘informal economy’ as a homogeneous block of self-employed workers. This research however has demonstrated that Cambodian policy lags being scholarship and practice that has moved on from this false dichotomy.

Cambodia’s unique history of extreme communist rule under the KR and collective land ownership under the Vietnamese meant that land reform in the country, adapting back to private property, was a monumental task. Despite international assistance, however, land grabbing and exploitation ensued and continue today. It has been presupposed that the poor require private property rights, in particular land rights, to enable them to lift themselves out of poverty, enabling the urban poor to access credit. However, evidence from this research indicates that land rights are not the one stop solution to urban poverty for the following eight reasons.

- 1. The provision and allocation of private property rights necessitate an accountable and transparent government with a functioning civil administration. However this is precisely what is lacking in many developing countries.*

2. *Evidence for private property rights increasing rents and property costs has been offered, having the opposite effect of pushing the poor deeper into poverty rather than lifting them out of poverty (Gilbert & Varley, 1991; Gilbert & Ward, 1985; Davis, 2006).*
3. *The provision and allocation of private property rights has served to individualize struggle and split communities by invoking economic competition amongst communities.*
4. *The argument that private property rights will alleviate poverty fails to recognize a situation in which a property is undesirable and does not sell (Gilbert, 2002)*
5. *The land titling process undertaken in Cambodia has served to be a vehicle for corruption and exploitation as it has legitimized land grabbing and led to the violation of human rights across the country.*
6. *People live in and move to the city to earn money. Proximity to livelihood opportunities and large crowds are essential to their presence and survival and arguably as important as, perhaps more important than, private property rights.*
7. *Many of the urban poor are migrants and do not see themselves staying long term in Phnom Penh. Their objective is to earn money or learn skills to enable them to send remittances and eventually return back to their home province.*
8. *Despite being offered land in resettlement sites, plots are abandoned and rejected. Even when the plots are more than double the size of their homes in the city, cleaner and safer, they are still abandoned. This is because there are no labour opportunities in resettlement sites. To offer land without due attention paid to livelihoods fails to see the fundamental reality of urban poverty.*

Private property rights are not unimportant. But the interview evidence presented in this thesis shows that money is what matters most. The thesis calls for a deeper and more versatile understanding of urban livelihoods, coping mechanisms, networks and relationships than has been pursued in most of the existing literature on Cambodia. An increased understanding of the distinct nature of the *urban poor economy*, alongside private property rights, would be an effective method of identifying the reality of urban poor development issues, which is the first step towards remedying them.

National development plans in Cambodia since the early 1990s have stated an explicit bias towards rural areas. This is compounded by national land titling and reform initiatives repeatedly falling under the remit of agricultural reform. This classification therefore continues to result in national strategic development plans failing to acknowledge the different conditions and challenges that urban areas present to development. This failure to identify context specific challenges in the urban environment coupled with mismanaged land policy has resulted in development policy having adverse affects for urban poor residents. Household income has been shown to fall dramatically in some cases. However, it has also been shown that this is not an inherent or inevitable outcome of DIDR (see section 4.3). One resettlement site surveyed displayed a significant improvement in household income and resident wellbeing. This site was located within an easily commutable distance to the city of 8km, within 100m of a garment factory, had good roads, access to healthcare, schools and markets with state provided electricity and water.

Based on these findings the following recommendations were made to urban development researchers, policy makers and practitioners:

1. *A thorough investigation into the main sources of income for residents prior to eviction. This would establish what labour opportunities are engaged with and therefore can be used inform future resettlement plans.*
  
2. *Conduct a forum to discuss desirable future labour opportunities. Perhaps there are skilled workers within the settlement who are not exposed to opportunities to use those skills. On the other hand, perhaps there are labour opportunities that require a willing or skilled work force that may be able to employ and/or train residents.*
  
3. *More diverse compensation options. It is not enough to offer land compensation if land is not required and if this land is far from income earning and labour market opportunities. Money in the form of lump sums or instalments*

## **6.2 Insecurity, ‘The Golden Thread’**

The theme of insecurity has emerged throughout this thesis in the forms of job insecurity and tenure insecurity. Whilst this was not originally part of the research methodology or analytical framework, its importance became evident whilst conducting fieldwork. International relations, military theorists and strategists have traditionally dominated the field of security. Security as a public policy and development concern advanced alongside the expansion of security into human security after the cold war. The security-development nexus can be seen as an example of this expansion. The notion that development and security go hand in hand is now taken as fact. Security has been described as the ‘Golden Thread’ (Cameron, 2012) tying together conditions that lead to peace and prosperity: the rule of law, robust institutions, the absence of conflict and corruption and respect for private property rights.

This research proposes, however, that the golden thread tying together the pursuit of development objectives in Phnom Penh is not one of security, but of insecurity. Development has come at the cost of security for the poor. However this insecurity is not an inherent bi-product development but a manipulation of the urban poor by the government and elites. The benefits of a cheap, mobile work force outweigh the cost of poverty alleviation and fulfilling obligations made to international bodies and conventions. It is not the poor who benefit from development but the elite who benefit from the poor's insecurity. This is evident from the FDI and aid fuelled rentier state, which characterises Cambodian government. The elite attract aid and investment due to the mass poverty in the country, only to redirect the money into their own enterprises and bank accounts. In the mean time the poor are marginalised and expelled from the centre of Phnom Penh, as a result of a policy of beautification and accumulation by dispossession. The poor are therefore pushed deeper into poverty, vulnerability and insecurity. The poor are kept perpetually mobile through a corrupt land titling process, facilitated by the international community. The poor therefore are free to be used as a cheap, movable work force, that enables the state and industry to benefit from their insecurity, by keeping labour costs low and attracting investment.

### **6.3 Future research**

This thesis has focused on the urban poor. As discussed in Chapter Four, identification of the urban poor indicates an urban middle class and urban elite. Whilst this research has not been able to pursue these suggested categories, identifying the different characteristics of urban and rural middle classes and elite would be an interesting extension of this research. Particularly as the urban

environment continues to expand and challenge pre-existing assumption of poverty, what it means to be part of the middle class or an elite. Development research must continue to investigate how urbanisation is affecting the lives of people in both rural and urban areas, so as to tackle challenges as and when they emerge. With the explosion of urbanisation being felt across the globe, regional comparative studies into urban life, urban poverty and urban labour markets as well as cross continental studies, could produce interesting results and reveal unforeseen trends in urban development.

Along these lines, an extension of this research in scope and duration could be conducted to create a more robust and statistically significant data set. Urban poor settlements are appearing and disappearing week by week in Phnom Penh, some perhaps without a trace. This research is in a unique position of having surveyed sites prior to their eviction. This research could be extended to accompany respondents through the entire process of eviction and resettlement, following the progress of how their lives, livelihoods and opportunities change through the their experiences of DIDR. This research could also be expanded in scope to incorporate new squatter sites in Phnom Penh. Of particular interest to the author are the emergences of roof top urban poor dwellings that have been created in response to the increasing difficulty of finding vacant land in Phnom Penh. A more in depth study to determine the causes of variation within compensation would also be relevant. This might perhaps investigate whether what was being developed on the site was of importance, a resident's political association, bribery or other factors were influential in determining what compensation was received.

Further work to define the term *urban poor economy* is required, to see if this term can be useful outside of Phnom Penh and Cambodia. This would require a significantly larger theoretical assessment than a doctoral thesis, require further analysis as well as detailed knowledge of urban poor labour markets across the world. Hopefully the *urban poor economy* is a step in the right direction, acknowledging the crucial non-monetary contributions of household members and the specific challenges facing the urban poor.

Finally, work begun by Hammar (2014) in her edited edition addressing the paradoxes of displacement and the deficit in theoretical frameworks for understanding displacement economies, opens up exciting new avenues for possible research. Her re-characterisation of displacement as a process of production speaks to Cernea's (1999) call for a focus on the aftermath of displacement and resettlement. However whereas Cernea envisions this as an opportunity for a positive process of recovery, Hammar's work allows space for both the negative and positive products of displacement to emerge. This may be combined with the more nuanced tenure status typology offered by Khmero and Payne to provide a truly progressive attitude towards the urban poor that could be adopted by NGOs and policy makers so that the real needs of the urban poor are incorporated into development and DIDR in particular.

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## Appendix 1. The Household Survey

1.1 Name:								Date:	
1.2 Age:								Number:	
1.3 Marital Status:	Married	Single	Divorce	Widow					
1.4 Position in Household?									
1.5 From which Province?						1.8 Relocation Site Name:			
1.7 Education level:	illiterate	primary School				High School		University	
RELOCATION SITE									
CURRENT EMPLOYMENT									
Job Type:	1. Driver: Motodop	2. Driver: Tuktuk	3. Driver: Cyclo	4. Driver: Taxi / car	5. Business owner	6. Restaurant owner	7. Shop owner	8. Shop worker	9. Collector [recycables]
	10. Construct.	11. Skilled trade: plumber	12. Skilled trade: electric	13. Skilled trade: carp.	14. Crafts e.g. tailor	15. Farmer	16. Fish	17. Agricultural worker	18. Security guard
	17. Waitress	18. Hotel worker	19. Cleaner	20. Laundry	21. Nanny	22. teacher	23. Hair dresser	24. barber	25. factory worker
	26. Secretary / Admin Assistant	27. Street seller: food	28. Street seller: drink	29. Street seller: cake	30. Street seller: toy	31. Street seller: fuel	32. Street seller: Other	33. Market seller: food	34. Market seller: drink
	35. Market seller: cake	36. Market seller: toy	37. Market seller:	38. Market seller:	39. Stay at home	40. Other [please describe]:			

			fuel	other				
	2.1 Job Type No.	2.2 Hours worked per day	2.3 No. Days worked per week?	2.4 Months per year?	2.5 Distance to work? km	2.6 Mode of transport?	2.7 Income	
1st Job:								
2nd Job:								
2.8 Are you a member of a Trade Union?			Yes / No			2.9 Name of Trade Union:		
CURRENT HOUSEHOLD INFORMATION								
3.1 No. of people living in in House Hold?								
3.2 Name	3.3 Age	3.4 Relationship to person filling in survey	3.5 Primary Education	3.6 High School Education	3.7 University Education	3.8 Married	3.9 Job no.	3.10 Income per week:
			Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No		
			Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No		
			Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No		
			Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No		
			Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No		
			Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No		
			Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No		
			Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No		
Number of other people contributing money to the House Hold income								
3.11 Name	3.12 Age	3.13 Rel.to Respond.	3.14 Primary	3.15 High School	3.16 University	3.17 Married	3.18 Job no.	3.19 Income given to HH per week:
			Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No		
			Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No		
			Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No		

4.1 TOTAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME PER WEEK:							
Amount of money spent per week on:							
	4.2 Food:		4.5 Rent:		4.7 Transport:		4.9 Alcohol:
	4.3 Water:		4.6 Education		4.8 Phone:		4.10 Medicine:
	4.4 Electricity:						4.11 Other:
4.12 Do you save money?			Yes / No				
4.13 If yes, where do you save money?			1. Bank			4. Play Dong Tin	
			2. At home			5. Community Saving Scheme	
			3. Buy gold.			6. Other	
4.14 Do you borrow money?			Yes / No			4.15 How much money do you borrow?	
4.16 What did / do you use the borrowed money for?					4.17 Where do you borrow money from?	1. Individual money lender	3. Family
						2. Bank	4. Other
4.18 Do you have:	1. Car		2. Moto		3. Bike		4. TV
	5. Radio		6. Chickens		7. Ducks		8. Pigs
	9. Cows		10. Mobile Phone		11. Grow crops		12. Toilet
4.19 Do you ever experience violence or intimidation at work?					yes / No	4.20 If yes, please give detail:	

RELOCATION SITE INFORMATION									
5.1 Water	Yes / No	State / Private			5.4 Health	Yes / No	under 1 km	over 1 km	
5.2 Electricity	Yes / No	State / Private			5.5 School	Yes / No	under 1 km	over 1 km	
5.3 Road	Yes / No	Good / Bad			5.6 Market	Yes / No	under 1 km	over 1 km	
5.7 Flood in Rainy Season?		Yes / No							
5.8 Land size?									
5.9 House structure?	Wood	Plastic	Metal	Brick	Concrete	Bamboo		Palm	
FORMER LOCATION SITE									
6.1 Date of Eviction:		6.2 Former site name and location:							
FORMER EMPLOYMENT & HOUSEHOLD INFORMATION									
	6.3 Job Type No.	6.4 Hours worked per day	6.5 No. Days worked per week?	6.6 Months per year?	6.7 Distance to work? km	6.8 Mode of transport?	6.9 Income		
1st Job:									
2nd Job:									
6.10 No. of people living in in House Hold?									
6.11 Name	6.12 Age	6.13 Relationship to person filling in survey	6.14 Married	6.15 Job no.	6.16 Income per week:				
			Yes / No						
			Yes / No						
			Yes / No						
			Yes / No						
			Yes / No						
			Yes / No						

			Yes / No					
			Yes / No					
			Yes / No					
<b>6.17 TOTAL FORMER HOUSEHOLD INCOME PER WEEK:</b>								
<b>7.1 Did you rent or own your former house?</b>						<b>Rent / Own</b>		
<b>7.2 Did you save money?</b>		<b>Yes / No</b>						
<b>7.3 If yes, where did you save money?</b>		<b>1. Bank</b>		<b>4. Play Dong Tin</b>				
		<b>2. At home</b>		<b>5. Community Saving Scheme</b>				
		<b>3. Buy gold.</b>		<b>6. Other</b>				
<b>7.4 Did you borrow money?</b>		<b>Yes / No</b>				<b>7.5 How much money did you borrow?</b>		
<b>7.6 What did / do you use the borrowed money for?</b>					<b>7.7 Where did you borrow money from?</b>		<b>1. Individual money lender</b>	<b>3. Family</b>
						<b>2. Bank</b>	<b>4. Other</b>	
<b>7.8 Did you have:</b>		<b>1. Car</b>	<b>2. Moto</b>		<b>3. Bike</b>	<b>4. TV</b>		
	<b>5. Radio</b>		<b>6. Chickens</b>		<b>7. Ducks</b>	<b>8. Pigs</b>		
	<b>9. Cows</b>		<b>10. Mobile Phone</b>		<b>11. Grow crops</b>	<b>12. Toilet</b>		
<b>7.9 Did you ever experience violence or intimidation at work?</b>					<b>yes / No</b>	<b>7.10 If yes, please give detail:</b>		
<b>FORMER SITE INFORMATION</b>								
<b>7.11 Water</b>	<b>Yes / No</b>	<b>State / Private</b>		<b>7.14 Health</b>	<b>Yes / No</b>	<b>under 1 km</b>	<b>over 1 km</b>	
<b>7.12 Electricity</b>	<b>Yes / No</b>	<b>State / Private</b>		<b>7.15 School</b>	<b>Yes / No</b>	<b>under 1 km</b>	<b>over 1 km</b>	
<b>7.13 Road</b>	<b>Yes / No</b>	<b>Good / Bad</b>		<b>7.16 Market</b>	<b>Yes / No</b>	<b>under 1 km</b>	<b>over 1 km</b>	
<b>7.17 Flood in Rainy</b>		<b>Yes / No</b>						

Season?									
7.18 Land size?									
7.19 House structure?		Wood	Plastic	Metal	Brick	Concrete	Bamboo	Palm	
<b>THE EVICTION PROCESS</b>									
Do you have:		8.1 Family book	8.2 ID card	8.3 Voting card					
		8.5 Land title	8.4 Birth certificate						
8.6 Did you receive official notification of eviction?							Yes / No		
8.7 Compensation offered:		1. Money:							
		2. Land:	Undefined empty land	Defined Empty land	Defined land & building materials		Defined land & house		
		3. NOTHING							
8.8 Compensation Accepted:		1. Money:							
		2. Land:	Undefined empty plot	Defined Empty Plot	Defined Plot & building materials		Defined Plot & house		
		3. NOTHING							
8.9 Did you submit a complaint to the government?							Yes / No		
8.10 Did you protest before you were relocated?							Yes / No		
8.11 Did you experience intimidation or violence at any time?							Yes / No		
8.12 Please write any details of the relocation process here:									
8.13 How do you feel your living conditions have changed since your relocation?									
Much worse	Worse	The same	Better	Much Better					
8.14 Please explain your answer:									