

HUMAN SECURITY AND DEVELOPMENT:
THE CASE OF CAMBODIA

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Declaration

Except where otherwise acknowledged in the text and footnotes,
this thesis represents the author's original research.

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PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

How I came to focus on these questions has much to do with my past experiences in the Australian Public Service in defence related departments; as a volunteer in the Highlands of Papua New Guinea and later in the United Nations Development Programme office in Laos; and as a research officer with the former Australian Council for Overseas Aid (ACFOA).¹ Entering the Australian public service in the nineteen sixties with the Vietnam war and conscription high on the agenda, I was soon aware of an uneasy personal political tension between a war effort and the humanitarian consequences. It seemed that there was a close link between the achievement of security for some states and the vulnerability of people in the Third World, or the underdeveloped countries or developing countries depending on the decade and the perspective of the commentator. Security was even then not just about military confrontation and balance of power relations between states, but also about human rights and development which were promoted by the economic and social machinery of the United Nations as its contribution to the United Nations security function.

After four successive United Nations ‘development decades’ from the 1960s, macroeconomic indicators show that economic growth has been achieved by many developing countries and that many people are better off in absolute terms with national per capita figures suggesting improvements in income, health, education and other indicators. A study of more local details, however, discloses a different story of poverty, disease, illiteracy and violence, afflicting more people now than ever before. Rather than wars between states, we find, too, that people may be at greater risk of violence from their own governments or rebel groups, and that the incidence of civil war is widespread. The incidence of failed or failing states has also increased and, in a climate of fear of international terrorism, these are seen as a threat to the security and economic wellbeing of wealthy nations.²

¹ ACFOA was then a coordinating body of about 30 NGOs engaged in overseas aid and development. It is now the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID), performs the same coordination function and has about 80 members.

² A failed state is basically one whose government ceases to exert effective control over its own population and territory. Since 2005 the organisation Fund for Peace and the magazine

It was Barry Buzan's *People, States and Fear*, which I discovered while completing a Masters degree in defence studies at the Australian Defence Force Academy, that motivated an academic interest in the issues of security and the place of the individual.³ I also discovered Ken Booth's 1991 paper "Security and Emancipation" which inspired me to further pursue the idea that security is about individuals and groups and not only about states and an international balance of power.⁴ It opened the way for a view that in addition to the state, civil society organizations and social movements could also be key actors in creating security. In this context, the political, social and economic advancement of people according to their own aspirations – what might be called indigenous development – appeared to be crucial. How the international community engaged in that development process would, it seemed, also be relevant to the basic human security of individuals and groups.

What I found to be unsatisfactory about the debate on human security that followed release of the UNDP Report in 1994, however, was that it was being undertaken at a theoretical level and largely in the context of established state-based theory. This meant that the debate had more to do with definitions and whether human security could be squeezed into existing theory and practice, rather than what human security might mean for individuals and groups themselves. It also meant that human security was envisioned mainly in terms of conflict and violence rather than in a broader sense embracing livelihood, welfare and human dignity. This thesis is, therefore, an exploration of the broad approach to human security and how it might contribute to changing the way states interact in the pursuit of their own and global security. It examines the case of Cambodia whose people have suffered many forms of insecurity through war and violence in the 1970s and into the 1990s and who continue to suffer from poverty and deprivation. My approach has been to try to focus security attention on the actual conditions experienced by individuals and groups, using Cambodia as a case study, to identify the causes and to propose solutions. The research was initiated with a very open mind as to where it might

Foreign Policy have together produced an Failed State Index. The Fund for Peace and Foreign Policy Magazine, "The Failed States Index 2007," *Foreign Policy* 161, July/August (2007). See also Susan E Rice and Stewart Patrick, "Index of State Weakness in the Developing World," (Washington: The Brookings Institution, 2008).

³ Barry Buzan, *People States and Fear: An Agenda for International Security Studies in the Post-Cold War Era*, Second Edition ed. (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991).

⁴ Ken Booth, "Security and Emancipation," *Review of International Studies* 17, no. 4 (1991): 313-26.

lead, though there were two fundamental assumptions, first, that human security must embrace both individual safety and livelihood, and secondly, that human security is an essential element in international security.

First and foremost I thank Rapin Quinn for encouraging me to take up the PhD challenge and for bearing with me over the years and in the difficult final stages. My thanks go also to Associate Professor Aat Vervoorn who took on the task of chair of my supervisory panel. His calm but firm and responsive presence has been reassuring throughout. Advisers Dr Craig Reynolds and Dr Hazel Lang offered valuable insights in the early stage of the thesis programme. Dr Bina D'Costa accepted an advisory role in mid-2006 when Hazel moved to Sydney. Bina provided great encouragement and critical comment as my work progressed.

But in a work of this nature, the best advice and guidance can flounder on a seemingly unreceptive subject. As much as I welcomed and appreciate comment and critique, and despite my best efforts, my ability to act on it has not, it seems, always been evident. My tendency to persevere, rather than stubbornness, means that in the end the thesis is definitely all mine.

There are many others who deserve my thanks. In Cambodia I was welcomed by villagers wherever I went and I owe them all a debt of gratitude. Theirs is not always a secure and easy life, in part because they are not well served by their government. They are the reason for this thesis. I would have been lost, too, without the excellent interpreting services of Chan who was by my side through all the village visits and interviews.

My thanks go also to the staff of the local Cambodian NGOs in Battambang – Krom Akphiwat Phum, Village Support Group and Aphiwat [sic.] Srey in particular – who assisted with access to villages and who provided many insights into rural conditions. In Phnom Penh, the staff of the Cambodian Development Resources Institute (CDRI) were particularly helpful and I benefited from access to the CDRI library and resources. Thanks also to Tim Conway of the World Bank in Phnom Penh who provided access to much useful material.

Finally, thanks are also due to Faculty of Asian Studies which accepted me into the programme and provided an Australian National University PhD Scholarship and

excellent facilities. The faculty staff, especially Harriette Wilson and Karina Pelling, have attended to every need graciously and efficiently.

ABSTRACT

Human security was promoted in 1994 by the UNDP as a concept embracing not only freedom from war and violence (or personal security), but also embracing individual's basic needs for (and rights to) economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, community security and political security.¹ Following this formulation, the concept has been subject to considerable scrutiny particularly in the context of state centric security studies. Extending the concept of security beyond the state to the individual appeared problematic, especially as the mechanisms designed to maintain and restore world peace are state based. However, the post-cold war environment has required a renewed interest in conflict resolution and in this context, human security as personal security has achieved political and analytical acceptance, particularly in the UN sponsored Human Security Report. What then of the second dimension of human security as freedom from want expressed by the UNDP in terms of basic needs and rights?

Debate on this aspect of the UNDP definition foundered on several fronts. As well as being outside the traditional security framework, many argued that it was too broad to be analytically useful; others that it added nothing to human rights and human development which appeared to address precisely the same issues. Thus, while the concept of human security has found acceptance by those advocating with humanitarian approaches to conflict resolution and prevention, few have addressed the actual relationship, if any, between human security and development at the local level where people are most vulnerable to insecurity and where human security or its absence is most felt.

This thesis addresses this gap through a study of human security in Cambodia, where people have experienced, at different times, the full range of human insecurities detailed by the UNDP. It shows that the human insecurity of Cambodians has been in large part a consequence of the security policies and military engagements of external powers. Human security and international relations are inextricably linked. Cambodia's post-conflict reconstruction, rehabilitation and development strategies

¹ UNDP, *Human Development Report 1994* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994).

have also been strongly influenced by international forces through development assistance programmes. Despite this aid, Cambodia's performance in health, education, justice, employment and poverty alleviation has been poor and leaves many rural people with uncertain futures and their human security threatened.

Various authors have suggested that human security might be guaranteed by the state, the rule of law, democratisation, governance, human rights or human development. Based on qualitative fieldwork, the thesis argues that governance – especially the way in which state institutions deliver services to the people at the local or 'grass roots' level – is key to assuring human security. It further argues that through development assistance policies and practices, global governance institutions have a significant influence on national and local governance processes.

The thesis concludes that, if accepted by the UN Security Council, global governance and international development assistance agencies, human security can be a bridge uniting them all in the common pursuit of individual security and wellbeing with benefit for state, regional and global security.

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EXPLANATORY NOTES

For simplicity, throughout the thesis I have referred to the political entity from the formation of the Angkorian Kingdom to the present as Cambodia. I have not referred to the country as Kampuchea other than as used in formal titles such as “Democratic Kampuchea” and “People’s Republic of Kampuchea” or in official documents of the period.

I have also chosen not to use Khmer words unless they add clarification to the English translation or have special meaning.

Footnotes reference and Bibliography have been compiled using Endnote style “Chicago 15th A”.

United Nations General Assembly and Security Council Resolutions are identified in the UN Documentation Centre system by number and topic. Since Cambodia is the topic for all Resolutions referred to in the thesis, and as there are no titles to the resolutions, they are referenced by Resolution number in footnotes (e. g. S/PV.2114, 23 February 1979; A/RES/34/22 of 14 Nov 1979) but not included in the Bibliography. UN Resolutions may be accessed at www.un.org/documents.

The acronyms “Funcinpec” and “Seila” are used in preference to their capitalised form except when they appear in the title of a referenced work in which case the original form is used.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACFOA	Australian Council for Overseas Aid
ADB	Asian Development Bank
ANU	Australian National University
APEC	Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CARERE I	Cambodia Area Resettlement and Reintegration
CARERE II	Cambodia Area Rehabilitation and Regeneration
CCP	Cambodian Communist Party
CDRI	Cambodia Development Resource Institute
CGDK	Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea
CoM	Council of Ministers
CPP	Cambodian People's Party
DFID	UK Department for International Development
ECOSOC	UN Economic and Social Council
FACT	Fisheries Action Coalition Team
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organisation
Funcinpec	Front for an Independent, Neutral, Peaceful and Cooperative Cambodia
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ICISS	International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty
ICORC	International Committee for the Reconstruction of Cambodia
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPRSP	Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
IR	International Relations
K-5	A PRK government programme for conscripting civilians to construct defensive barriers along the Thai border.
KAWP	Krom Akphiwat Phum
KNUFSK	National United Front for the Salvation of Kampuchea
KPNLF	Khmer People's National Liberation Front
KPRA	Khmer People's Revolutionary Army
KPRC (or PRC)	Khmer People's Revolutionary Council
KPRP	Kampuchean People's Revolutionary Party
KUFNCD	Kampuchean United Front for National Construction and Defence
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MOPS	Moving Out of Poverty Study
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NPRS	National Poverty Reduction Strategy
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
P-5	The Five Permanent Members of the United Nations Security Council (China, France, United Kingdom, United States, and Russia [Formerly USSR])

PDK	Party of Democratic Kampuchea
PNGC	Provisional National Government of Cambodia
PRC	People's Revolutionary Committee
PRK	People's Republic of Kampuchea
SARS	Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome
SEDP	Socio-Economic Development Plan
Seila	Programme to support decentralisation in Cambodia
SNC	Supreme National Council
SOC	State of Cambodia
SRI	System of Rice Intensification
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNAMIC	United Nations Advance Mission in Cambodia
UNBRO	United Nations Border Relief Operation
UNCDF	United Nations Capital Development Fund
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNTAC	United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
US	United States of America
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
VSG	Village Support Group
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organisation
WTO	World Trade Organisation

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION – AIMS AND ARGUMENTS

By the early 1990s in the immediate post-Cold War period, there was great optimism that a new world order of cooperation between the great powers would bring peace and prosperity to the world. A major symbol of the new order was the reunification of Germany. The UN Security Council, freed of the Cold War confrontation, had approved military intervention against Iraq to repel aggression and Operation Restore Hope to create a secure environment for the delivery of humanitarian aid in Somalia. The Security Council had also given its blessing to a peace settlement in Cambodia which included a new democratic constitution, free market economy and a promise of international cooperation for reconstruction and development. However, the early hope for a new order faded as the US led intervention in Somalia soured and ended in withdrawal, and as the UN failed to respond early to state-sponsored violence in Rwanda and the crisis in Bosnia.

A decade later, such intra-state conflict and violence had increased, particularly in Africa, where many people have been victims of their own states rather than being protected by them. Much of this violence against citizens occurred in a context of poverty and ethnic division, and in the absence of basic political and human rights. Recognising these as both security and humanitarian concerns, the international community has been increasingly engaged in conflict resolution initiatives, peacebuilding and post-conflict development activities in many countries. The post-Cold War security environment has thus seen a close and deepening association of individual and state security and an intertwining of international and state responsibilities for human security.

In 1994, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in its annual Human Development Report drew attention to the widespread conflict and violence and identified the underlying poverty and underdevelopment as a root cause of human insecurity. The Report questioned the traditional state-centric concept of security and argued that there was a need for a new approach based on a comprehensive concept of human security embracing economic and social rights (freedom from

poverty, hunger, disease, violence and environmental degradation) and political and cultural rights (freedom to exercise basic human rights and freedoms and cultural identity). Human security, it argued, corresponded to the right of individual to “freedom from want and freedom from fear.”¹

This thesis is about human security. The concept developed by the UNDP seemed to me to be straightforward enough in that individuals and groups ought to have some measure of expectation that they can in the present and continue in the future to live in peace and safety, have a reasonable standard of living and opportunity for themselves and their children, and receive protection within their given societies. Further investigation of human security, however, soon revealed that not all share my conviction. Human security has, instead, proved to be far from straightforward.

Human Security

The UNDP approach to defining human security immediately suggested a bifurcation of the concept into freedom from fear which could be interpreted as freedom from war, conflict and violence; and freedom from want which embraced a wide range of livelihood issues. Indeed, as we shall see in the next chapter, Canadian and Japanese governments soon supported separate approaches which prioritised freedom from fear and freedom from want aspects respectively. The Canadian approach has been consolidated in its support for an annual Human Security Report which adopts a narrow definition of human security as freedom from war and other forms of violence. On the other hand, the Japanese supported Commission on Human Security followed the UNDP lead by proposing a broad definition of human security. It also prioritised the development aspects of human security.

The first major issue to confront in a study of human security is how it is to be defined—is it, for example, only about exposure to war, conflict and violence, or, as I will argue in the next chapter, does it embrace other humanitarian and welfare concerns as well? Broad definitions of human security such as that of the UNDP, have been challenged by a number of authors who support only those limited to

¹ United Nations, "Universal declaration of Human Rights," (New York: United Nations, 1948).

conflict and violence. Some limit the definition for 'pragmatic' reasons based on an argument that the nature of development indicators, which might be used to measure aspects of freedom from want, cannot be defined or quantified in terms of vulnerability, level of threat, severity or other security based criteria.² A narrow, freedom from fear approach is, in this view, considered to be more practical. Proponents depend largely on econometric studies of the incidence and causes of conflict and violence to argue their case. The main problem with their method, however, is not only that the issue of quantification can be disputed, but that it also demands a more rigid definition of the concept of security in the human security context than is applied in security studies generally. Other arguments are also made against the broad definition on the grounds that it risks being so wide as to include anything as a human security issue and is thus unworkable. It is argued, too, that freedom from want is adequately dealt with by existing human rights and human development strategies making a broad concept of human security unnecessary.

It is true that many of the issues embraced by the broad definition of human security are similar to those addressed within the human rights and human development frameworks. However, while all three approaches focus attention on the welfare of the individual, human rights and human development are essentially methods which can be applied to achieving human security and, thus, also contributing to state and global security. Human rights have become a major advocacy and diplomatic tool used by states and civil society organizations to pressure other states to protect their citizens. Human development includes a range of processes promoted by international development agencies and donors to improve the capacity and welfare of individuals in a way that they believe will contribute to national development and security. To date, these methods have not achieved their desired outcomes despite massive aid and development efforts worldwide. In other words, they have failed to provide human security and a new approach is required to help understand the causes of persistent human insecurity and what can be done about it.

² See for example Andrew Mack, "Report on the Feasibility of Creating an Annual Human Security Report," (Cambridge: Program on Humanitarian Policy and Conflict Research, Harvard University, 2002), 2; Human Security Centre, *Human Security Report: War and Peace in the 21st Century* (New York: Oxford University Press for the Human Security Centre, University of British Columbia, Canada, 2005), viii.

Objective of the thesis and research question

This thesis explores the possibility of using a human security approach to identify human insecurities in a particular situation, to uncover their causes and to propose new policies and strategies for their alleviation. My main concern is to make a contribution to improving the human security of people subject to conflict, violence, poverty and other deprivations.

With Cambodia as a case study, the objective of the thesis is to demonstrate that it is important to retain the broad definition of human security and that a human security approach to the study of local conditions can provide a valuable contribution to improving international security and development policies and practices. Further, the thesis aims to show that human security is a function of society and culture as well as of government and the institutions of state which impact on people's daily lives. It thus reflects a dynamic condition which is also affected by such wider influences as globalisation and international governance processes which impact either directly, or through the state, on local human security conditions.³ The purpose is to explore the practical aspects of human insecurity and its causes, with a view to proposing new approaches to security and development problems. I will leave to others the task of reformulating or rearranging state based international relations and security theories to accommodate human security.

The research question for the thesis, therefore, is how a human security approach can contribute to human welfare through a reassessment of the impact of international security and international development practices at the grass-roots level. To answer this question, several supplementary questions need to be answered before exploring the application of the concept of human security to the situation in Cambodia from the 1970s to the present. First, is a broad definition of human security practicable? Secondly, how have international security and development processes impacted on human security? Finally, what can the findings from Cambodia contribute to giving a human security focus to what I call international security practice, which includes the way that states use balance of power strategies (economic and military);

³ I use the word governance here and in subsequent chapters in its very general sense as a process of management or governing. However, in chapter 5 the concept is discussed in detail for analytical purposes. Also, in this thesis I do not consider human insecurity arising from natural or other disasters .

collective security institutions such as the UN Security Council; UN humanitarian organizations and international development assistance, to pursue their national and global security interests?

Research methodology

Human security research has been largely concerned with its place in international relations and security theory, definitional issues and conflict situations. As we shall see in the next chapter, authors have made various assertions that human security might be guaranteed by the state, civil society, governance or development. For others, it is the rule of law or democratisation which is the key. These claims have a strong ideological content and are based on top-down analyses from a broad international perspective in which human rights, democracy, the rule of law, the role of civil society and free markets are all seized upon as universal ideals which will guarantee human security. Such ideals also underpin conflict resolution and peacebuilding activities. It is assumed more broadly, too, that globalisation of these “universal” ideals and practices will bring human security in a new form of “trickle down” as states reform their institutions and adopt public policies in accordance with the universal best practice forms promoted by development institutions. What is lacking, however, is research which investigates the actual relationship, if any, between human security and international security practice, development, civil society, rule of law and governance at the local level where people are most vulnerable to insecurity and where human security or its absence is most felt.

The research approach is therefore focused at the local level where individuals and groups live in accordance with the opportunities offered to them by their physical, social, cultural and political environment. This means that while national and regional statistical analyses might provide a broad guide to certain generalised human security issues, such as poor health, income and education, there are also other unquantifiable issues which need to be identified through qualitative field research methods. These relate to politics and power structures at the local level and state administrative arrangements which influence local conditions. Since the vast majority of Cambodians live in the countryside, I have limited my contemporary field research to the rural context. I also assume that the concept, although

formulated in the early 1990s, can be used to reassess the conditions in which people found themselves in earlier periods in Cambodia.

Thus, the research methodology is multi-disciplinary. The main body of critical literature on human security has been produced by international relations and political science scholars and is primarily concerned with the question of definition (as discussed above) and with how human security, which prioritises the individual, can be reconciled with state centric theories of security. They have also presented arguments as to how human security might be achieved by democratisation, development, civil society, the rule of law and other means. While it is not my intention to argue that state security is dependent on human security or *vice versa*, the next chapter examines issues raised in the literature to illustrate that, although such studies are often highly sceptical of human security, nevertheless it is a concept already established and slowly finding a place in international relations theory.⁴

The arguments for the achievement of human security by democratisation, development, civil society, the rule of law and other means are not well supported by econometric analyses of civil conflicts. The econometric studies set out to determine the factors which contribute to outbreaks of conflict and violence and their results have been used in particular by proponents of the narrow freedom-from-fear approach.⁵ However, these statistical analyses provide no firm conclusions as to the causes of outbreaks of civil war and violence. They also tell us nothing of the actual condition of individuals and groups who choose a path of violence. Nor do they positively conclude that increasing democracy, human rights, rule of law, governance, level of development or other factors are in themselves sufficient to prevent such outbreaks. Nevertheless, they do conclude that low-income levels, low growth and dependence on natural resources place a country at risk of falling into civil war.⁶ In other words, these factors create the situation of insecurity which

⁴ Pauline Kerr, "The Evolving Dialectic Between State-Centric and Human-Centric Security," (Department of International Relations, Australian National University: 2003).

⁵ The Human Security Report edited by Andrew Mack is a key example of this approach. See Mack, "Report on the Feasibility of Creating an Annual Human Security Report," 2.

⁶ See for example Paul Collier, "Development and Conflict," (Centre for the Study of African Economies, Department of Economics, Oxford University: 2004); Paul Collier et al., *Breaking the Conflict Trap: Civil War and Development Policy* (A Co-publication of the World Bank and Oxford University Press, 2003). Cambodia is identified as a country at risk in Monty G. Marshall and Ted Robert Gurr, "Peace and Conflict 2005: A Global Survey of Armed Conflicts, Self-Determination Movements, and Democracy," (College Park: Center for International Development & Conflict Management, University of Maryland, 2005).

precedes an actual descent into conflict. Hence, the econometric studies do not exclude the broad concept of human security but rather give it substance.

Very few studies have attempted to look at human security at the local level. It has been mainly used in political advocacy in relation to refugees and issues such as the elimination of landmines and the use of child soldiers, and the treatment of civilians in conflict, and there are networks of human security advocates. Apart from several investigations of development projects in Africa which draw attention to international governance and human security, there are a number of anthropological studies which addressed human security mainly in terms of personal identity and social and cultural association, and their relation to aspects of local governance.⁷

Overall, the main contribution from these sources has been to support a view that human security can be part of security theory and that the broad concept can be used to analyse local situations. Thus, the methodology used in this thesis does not develop from a single body of theory and analysis. Instead it takes an empirical approach to the study of the situation of people in several communes in Battambang province where fieldwork was undertaken in November—December 2004 and March—May 2005. The findings from the fieldwork have been confirmed and generalised using a range of NGO, consultant and official organization development studies on Cambodia.

Secondary documentary sources have been used for my analysis of Cambodia's past state formation, the war-time experience of its people, the country's administrative restructuring following Vietnam's intervention and, later, international development programmes. The research has drawn extensively on historical and political economy studies, as well as the few anthropological works on Cambodia, to provide an understanding of Cambodian history, society and culture and the various administrative arrangements which have been applied in Cambodia at various times. This is essential to our understanding of its contemporary governance. Since the fieldwork focused my research attention on governance and society, social science literature has been used to provide a framework for the analysis of these aspects in rural Cambodia. It has also provided the basis for my argument that not only do

⁷ See Caroline Thomas and Peter Wilkin, eds., *Globalization, Human Security, and the African Experience, Critical Security Studies* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1999). Anthropological studies are discussed in the next chapter.

states and individuals have responsibilities for human security, but that this extends also to international governance institutions (such as the World Bank and WTO) as part of a broader international security objective.

Field methodology

To hear the first hand views of the rural people on what constitute threats to human security or what conditions represent a situation of human insecurity, I organised with a Cambodian NGO working in Battambang to visit the province where I could take up this research with individuals and groups in rural communes. Many issues emerge in the formulation of a research programme and approach. Before I left Australia there was the question of an ethics clearance which was granted by the ANU ethics committee on 20 January 2005. As part of the process, it was established that an informal interview method would be used rather than a formal questionnaire. This was considered to be important so that the views of literate and non-literate villagers could be heard. It also provided an opportunity to clarify views which appeared to reflect attitudes acquired from the NGOs, consultants and officials who had been regular visitors to many of the communes and villages in the region over the past decade. They had used techniques such as rapid rural appraisal approaches, questionnaires and interviews which suggested that many people would be “questionnaire-aware.”⁸ I went to Cambodia with an expectation that human security would be primarily concerned with social movement and civil society organisations. What I found was that these were extremely undeveloped and that at the local level the emerging operation of elected Commune Councils and their interaction with villagers were central to the study of human security. These Councils had responsibilities relating to local development initiatives and for people’s general safety and welfare. The field research also pointed to the poor performance of central government departments in service delivery to rural Cambodians. Therefore, in the field my focus shifted to governance to understand how individuals and groups balance their economic, social and political relations with the communes councils and with the central government departments providing health, education, agricultural, judicial and other services. Informed by my previous public sector experience, my fieldwork raised many questions relating to local

⁸ John Holloway, Chom Sok, et. al., "Process Audit of Commune/Sangkat Fund Projects (CMB/01/272/RILG)," (Phnom Penh: For the Cambodian Seila Task Force, 2005), 4.

governance and in particular the “good governance” reforms promoted by the international development institutions.⁹ It also linked human security at the local level back to functions of international development assistance institutions.

Working in rural Cambodia presented me with several important limitations. First, I am not a fluent Khmer speaker and therefore was dependent on a translator for all work with villagers. Secondly, the language of democracy, electoral politics and development has introduced many foreign concepts into Cambodian society and the need to manufacture Khmer terminology to express their meanings. It is not necessarily the case that the new terminology conveys a universal understanding of the concepts, especially if used in a written questionnaire. Unstructured interviews therefore represented a better approach on the one hand, but on the other depended on the ability and willingness of the translator to represent exactly what was being said by an interviewee. My translator was very experienced. He was an English teacher who had worked for UNTAC personnel and for a number of research groups since then, and was well qualified to assist me. To confirm my interpretations, I cross-referenced the information and ideas presented by villagers, village and commune leaders and NGO representatives, with written material as well as discussions in English with local officials and NGO workers.

The first major rethink of my approach was when it became clear that just as with concepts like human rights and food security in the past, there was no equivalent in Khmer to that of human security. There was a mix of terms with related meanings: an informant explained that *santesok* referred to peace and being happy and would be used at the local level; *santepeap* on the other hand referred to a higher national level and meant there was no more fighting, one could travel without fear of bullets. Safety was another concept, *sawatapeap*, which was about safety from harm caused by such things as flood and fire and “by our own carelessness.” Security in terms of concern about tomorrow’s food, a poor harvest, employment and income or, at the higher level, development and the future of the nation, was more akin to worry, *bprooay*. Other terms mentioned were to be frightened or scared of the future, which

⁹ In this thesis, a reference to “good governance” is a reference to the specific programme of standard governance principles and reforms proposed by the World Bank and other development institutions. In this context it is a packaged approach to economic regulation and management, supported by processes that are accountable, transparent, participatory, consensus oriented, effective, equitable and follows the rule of law.

NGOs might refer to as “vulnerable.”¹⁰ Therefore, the approach taken was to seek people’s general comments about issues that concerned them in any of these categories. This could be justified by the fact that whether referred to as a worry, a safety concern or a breach of peace, an issue could potentially fall within the framework of the broad human security definition. In a sense I was conceding that human security could be a catch bag of everything, as had been claimed by some critics. In fact, Thakur takes a very similar view of human security as discussed in the next chapter.¹¹ The main problem then was to establish the significance of an issue, whether it was being managed locally or whether it might become a more significant human security matter for the people concerned.

The basic question for my field work was what sort of economic, social and political issues confronted villagers on a day-to-day basis and how the elected commune councils contributed to meeting the local development needs of villagers in accordance with national objectives, and to ensuring a safe and secure future for all. Findings from the fieldwork were, as far as possible, validated by reference to the many local and national development studies available in Cambodia, particularly those concerning the region visited.¹²

Why Cambodia as the case study?

Cambodia presents an important case study for human security for four main reasons. First, it was subject to war and violence for thirty years from the 1960s. During this time there was internal political factionalism and armed revolt; clandestine US bombing as a “sideshow” to the Vietnam war before becoming openly engaged in that war; a period of revolutionary abuse under the leadership of Pol Pot; and, finally, a period of internationally sustained civil war prior to an internationally brokered peace settlement. Throughout this time, human security for

¹⁰ Discussions with my interpreter and staff of Krom Akphiwat Phum (KAWP), a local Cambodian NGO.

¹¹ Ramesh Thakur, "From National to Human Security," in *Asia-Pacific Security: The Economics-Politics Nexus*, ed. Stuart Harris and Andrew Mack (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1997).

¹² Although Battambang Province has experienced periods of Thai rule and its involvement in the civil war, refugee camps and refugee repatriation has meant that it has possibly received more international assistance than other areas, the issues identified are widespread in Cambodia. On different administration in Battambang see Chheat Sreang, "The Cambodian *Khum* from 1897-1919 and its Contemporary Relevance" (M.A., Royal University of Phnom Penh, 2004), 19-22.

most Cambodians was compromised in different ways depending on their particular circumstances. Cambodia thus provides a rich and well-rounded example of the different factors, at the local, national and international level, which impinged on human security at different times and in a variety of circumstances. The experience of Cambodia demonstrates that human security is closely related to international security practice in the way in which the permanent members of the Security Council in particular used the mechanisms of power and diplomacy to sideline the Security Council and, to some extent also, UN humanitarian organizations, to pursue their national security interests in Cambodia.

Secondly, Cambodia was the subject, eventually, of a peace deal which saw the United Nations assume effective sovereignty while elections were held and a constitution agreed by the newly formed Cambodian government. This process was made possible by the end of the Cold War which meant that the ideological posturing and confrontation between the great powers, that had sustained the Cambodian conflict as a proxy war, was no longer necessary. The change also made it possible for the focus of international security practice to shift from war to peace and finally to the future stability of Cambodia and the welfare of Cambodians. As well as imposing a democratic constitution and free market economy, the international peace agreement included provisions for a ceasefire, repatriation of refugees, rehabilitation and reconstruction of the country, and for ensuring Cambodia's ongoing development. Thus, global, regional, national and human security objectives were all part of the peace agreement.

Thirdly, despite the agreement, sporadic civil war and political instability continued for a number of years and, while conditions for the people generally improved, the promise of human rights, human development and political freedom have languished. It appears that human security was not guaranteed by the peace settlement, elections and a democratic form of government.

Finally, Cambodian governments since 1993 have accepted and incorporated in their development policies the internationally promoted norms of human rights, human development and poverty reduction strategies. Cambodia has also embraced "good governance" as a centrepiece of its development strategy.¹³ Hence, Cambodia

¹³ See Royal Government of Cambodia, "Address by Samdech Hun Sen, Prime Minister of the Royal Government of Cambodia on "Rectangular Strategy for Growth, Employment, Equity

provides a unique case for analysing the outcome of development in rural areas in terms of the broad definition of human security and to demonstrate the contribution a human security approach can make to development policies and practices.

Cambodia – Today

Cambodia's population in 2006 was around 14 million, some 85 per cent of whom live in rural areas. It is estimated that between 1.5 to 2 million Cambodians died between 1975 and 1978 during the Pol Pot period due to purges, disease and starvation. A post war "baby boom" since 1979, when the population was estimated at about 6.5 million, has also produced a generation which requires a rapid expansion of education and health services and employment opportunities.¹⁴

Despite a massive influx of aid since 1993 and an average annual growth rate of 7 per cent, Cambodia ranked 129th on the UN Human Development Index in 2006. Illiteracy is above 25 per cent and 33 per cent of the population is undernourished. Life expectancy is just 56 years compared to 70 years in neighbouring Vietnam and Thailand. Only 30 per cent of births have a skilled professional present. Infant mortality is high and some 45 per cent of children under 5 years of age are underweight and under height (compared to Vietnam and Thailand at 28 per cent and 19 per cent respectively). Fifty nine percent of Cambodians do not have available clean water sources and a mere seventeen per cent have access to improved sanitation. Education achievements are also poor in terms of retention and quality of services.

National economic growth has not performed well in terms of improved standards of living and a reduction in poverty. Growing inequality is a significant factor in

and Efficiency" delivered at the First Cabinet Meeting of the Third Legislature of the National Assembly at the Office of Council of Ministers," (Phnom Penh: Royal Government of Cambodia, 2004).

¹⁴ Over 50 per cent of the population in 2004 was 19 years or younger. See Royal Government of Cambodia, "Population Pyramid, Cambodia 2004," National Institute of Statistics, Ministry of Planning, http://www.statnis/SURVEYS/cips2004/p_pyramid.htm, accessed on 7 July 2007.

explaining the weak poverty reduction achievement in Cambodia.¹⁵ Poverty is consistently high with 35 per cent of the population below the poverty line.¹⁶

The majority of the population is engaged in agriculture on household plots. Rice is the staple for most Cambodians and the country claims domestic food security at a national level. Cambodia is not naturally suited to rice production and has a basically subsistence agriculture based on poor soils, traditional methods and equipment, variable climate and flooding patterns, and low yields.¹⁷ There is only limited agricultural infrastructure development.¹⁸ Industry has also been neglected and it is estimated more than 0.5 million young people will migrate, over four years, to the cities where there are no formal jobs for them. Cambodia could then have up to one million unemployed or underemployed.¹⁹

Hun Sen and the CPP have dominated government since 1993. The government has demonstrated poor policy formulation and implementation. There is little public debate and civil society contribution is limited. Human rights, freedom of speech and of the press have been seriously curtailed during the CPP reign, and corruption in government and the public sector is rife with public institutions being hotbeds of

¹⁵ See World Bank, "World Development Report: Equity and Development," (Washington: World Bank, 2006) and World Bank, "Sharing Growth: Equity and Development in Cambodia," (East Asia and the Pacific Region, World Bank, 2007).

¹⁶ ADB, "Participatory Poverty Assessment in Cambodia," (ADB, 2001). The poverty line equivalent is calculated at less than US\$0.45 a day—80 per cent of which is to meet food needs (2,100 calories per day) and 20 per cent to meet other essential needs such as clothing, health and shelter. The ADB Assessment discusses a number of other poverty studies and the various poverty measures in use. For an explanation of the US\$1 per day poverty measure see also World Bank, "Frequently Asked Questions About Poverty in Cambodia" at <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/EASTASIAPACIFICEXT/CAMBODIAEXTN/0,,contentMDK:20720197~pagePK:141137~piPK:141127~theSitePK:293856,00.html>, accessed on 19 September 2007.

¹⁷ Jean Delvert, *Le Paysan Cambodgien* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1961; reprint, 1994). This is a comprehensive study of Cambodian agriculture. See also Don Puckridge, *The Burning of the Rice: A Cambodian Success Story* (Hartwell: Sid Harta Publishers, 2004) which tells the story of an Australia-IRRI aid project in Cambodia which was initiated in 1985.

¹⁸ The main schemes were developed during the French colonial period. The Mekong River Development Scheme sponsored by the then Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East (ECAFE) in the 1960s was abandoned due to the war with only one stage completed, irrigating 5,000 ha. The Pol Pot regime instigated irrigation schemes across the country with generally poor results. See Chann Sinath, "Investment in Land and Water in Cambodia," in *Investment in Land and Water, Proceedings of the Regional Consultations, Bangkok, 3-5 October 2001* (Bangkok: FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, RAR Publication 2002/9, 2002), 165, 71.

SIDA noted the poor status of irrigation and compared Cambodia's 7 per cent of irrigated land to Vietnam's and Thailand's 45 per cent and 31 per cent respectively. See Susanna Lundström and Per Ronnås, "Employment and Growth in Cambodia: An Integrated Economic Analysis," (Stockholm: SIDA, 2006), 29.

¹⁹ Economic Institute of Cambodia, *Cambodia: Economic Watch, April 2005* (Phnom Penh: Economic Institute of Cambodia, 2005), xi.

political patronage and rent seeking. In this authoritarian environment, influential and powerful persons are able to undertake illegal activities such as land seizures with impunity. The rule of law is severely compromised.

Overall, therefore, Cambodia provides a context for studying human security at the local level through periods of conflict, conflict resolution, peace building and development. The experience of Cambodia suggests that human security as freedom from fear and as freedom from want are basically inseparable, though one may predominate at any time and place. It demonstrates that long after the elections in 1993 and the departure of UN troops, human insecurity is a daily issue for many Cambodians. There remains a threat not only of livelihood insecurities, but also of a return to political violence. As Thailand has shown, military engagement in politics in the region is not a thing of the past. Also, conflict resolution and post-conflict development are major contemporary international security issues. Iraq, Afghanistan and East Timor, as well as Somalia, Sudan, Liberia, Rwanda and many other countries, face the difficult transition from conflict resolution to development. Studying the Cambodian experience from a human security perspective may provide useful lessons for policy makers to apply in other similar situations.

Outline of the thesis argument

There are four main arguments to the thesis. First, that human security is directly related to international security and development policies and practices; secondly, that a broad definition of human security is essential to understanding the security situation of people in times of war and peace; thirdly, that human security is best understood in the local context; and finally, that a broad definition of human security provides a sound basis for applying a human security approach to reassessing international security and development policies and practices of states and international institutions. These are expanded below.

The direct relationship between human security and international security and development policies and practices is amply illustrated in the case of Cambodia. It will be demonstrated that, in addition to domestic factors, human security in Cambodia was directly affected by the conduct of the Cold War and, in particular, by the Vietnam war in which Cambodia was a “sideshow” before being fully enveloped

in the conflict from 1970 to 1975.²⁰ The human security of Cambodians was further affected by great power and regional support for various Cambodian political factions to maintain a civil war in Cambodia following the Vietnamese intervention in 1978 until the signing of the peace agreement in 1991. At the same time, states also placed their security interests above the welfare of people by actively obstructing the efforts of UN and other humanitarian agencies to assist refugees and other victims of war. In this context the human security of Cambodians could not be separated from international security practice. International security considerations will also be shown to underpin the massive programme of international development assistance which followed the peace settlement. The first argument arising from the post-UNTAC development processes in Cambodia is that from a broad human security perspective, rural people face many insecurities which are not adequately addressed by government or international development policies and practices.

Secondly, that a broad definition of human security is necessary to understand the individual situations in times of war and peace is confirmed by the experience of Cambodians in refugee camps and inside Cambodia during the conflict, as well as by the post-conflict experience. What is demonstrated by the experience of Cambodia is that human security issues such as food security, health, environmental, social and political security exist in both war and post-war situations. Accordingly, there is a continuum of human insecurity issues ranging from the ongoing, if diminishing, conflict and violence as well as basic economic and political insecurities.

Thirdly, since human security concerns the actual living conditions of individuals and groups, it is best understood in the local context. It is in the village and commune (or refugee camp) where people are bound by custom and society, come into direct contact with government institutions and political parties, and where they derive income for themselves and their families. What the research shows is that human security conditions at the local rural level in Cambodia are influenced by a multiplicity of factors including, in particular, institutions of governance. It will be shown that Cambodian society has long tended towards an authoritarian systems of governance under various regimes (predatory states) and that the current system of commune councils does not function democratically as intended by the international

²⁰ William Shawcross, *Sideshow: Kissinger, Nixon, and the Destruction of Cambodia* (New York: Pocket Books, 1979).

donor community. Instead it reflects much of the social structures of power from earlier times—especially the tendency to hierarchy and authoritarianism. Consequently, the human security of villagers has a great deal to do with how institutions work at the local level and the power relations inherent in them. It is also influenced by power relations in the society at large which has its own system of relationships. These are not necessarily ones of individual freedom, adherence to a rule of law and an acceptance of majority representative government.

It will be shown that there are many social practices, including patron client relations, which may function to provide support and security to villagers. These relationships are not eliminated by new democratic institutions but may be used by the powerful to extend their patronage networks into the commune councils and government organisations. For the population at large this creates the dilemma of how to relate to the institutions and to those who manage them. Are the institutions legitimate? Can the officials be trusted? What benefits do they provide? At the same time international donors tend to classify patronage as corrupt and, ignoring the potential benefits, withhold support for government institutions thereby neglecting to address the more significant issues of how to achieve legitimacy, trust and effective service delivery.

Researching human security at the local level also draws attention to the role of government ministries and departments. These are responsible for delivering services, such as health care, justice, education, agricultural support and irrigation infrastructure, which make it possible for people to achieve human security as well as contributing to the growth of the national economy and national social wellbeing. In fact, it will be discovered that they are largely ineffective and that human security is thereby compromised as people's opportunities and prospects are diminished.

Governance in Cambodia is, therefore, a key factor in local human security. However, an analysis of Cambodian and international governance structures and processes illustrates that there is a tension between the institutions of existing society and the promotion of “universal” development norms and practices by international agencies. Since social change is concerned with changing values and beliefs, it requires political and social leadership that not only promotes the new ideas as matters of policy but also contributes to legitimising them through open political debate and public acceptance. Yet, in Cambodia, the political leadership has failed

dismally to show such leadership. At the same time the international community has been unable to influence the commitment of the political leadership despite its fundamental importance to human rights and human development and, ultimately, to human security. The attempt to influence change through a technical approach to “good governance” has failed because it does not facilitate social interaction and social change.

Finally, the operation of the UN Security Council and of international development institutions is considered from the perspective of human security. These institutions are essentially state-centric in their approach to global security. Although development has been variously promoted in terms of basic needs, human rights and human development, “good governance” and structural adjustment, participation and empowerment, it has also been closely aligned with donor states’ concerns for their own security. Aid has been used by donors to promote the stability of neighbouring countries and other areas of strategic interest. Despite there being an assumption that security is linked to people’s welfare, the concept of human security which makes a direct link has not been widely adopted. The thesis concludes that a human security approach, by emphasising a total security framework from human security through state security to global security, can effectively unite the UN Security Council and international development assistance institutions in a common objective.

We have heard repeatedly over the years that it is not in Australia’s national interest to have instability and the threat of failed states in its region. Human rights and human development, democratisation and “good governance” are tools in the overall security agenda of not only the developed countries but, since the end of the Cold War, the UN and so called international community generally.

Thesis structure

Chapter 2 discusses the concept of human security. It begins with the 1994 UNDP Human Development Report presentation of human security, the political reaction and the response of the academic security community. Largely, it centres around the debate over the comparative viability of narrow and broad definitions of the concept. It also considers econometric analyses of the incidence and causes of civil war and violence and post-conflict development policies. These point to a range of factors

which may, to various extents, be associated with human security (e.g. as the absence of war and violence). They include democracy, development, governance, globalisation, rule of law and economic growth, all of which are also part of international poverty reduction and human development strategies. Therefore the chosen approach to human security is one that embraces governance and the scope for the political involvement of individuals. The chapter concludes that the broader, if less manageable, concept has been largely ignored in explorations of human security. As well as identifying this significant gap in the research in regard to the local conditions which impact on people's human security at the grass-roots level, the chapter sets the context for the thesis case study.

Chapter 3 serves a dual purpose. First, by way of Appendix A, it provides a brief background to Cambodia's political and administrative history to inform the reader of the societal context in which the more recent changes have been introduced. Secondly, it details the impact on the human security of rural Cambodians caused by both domestic politics and international security practice arising from the Vietnam war, the period of Khmer Rouge rule and the following period of internationally sponsored civil war in Cambodia. It also outlines the state re-building following Vietnam's intervention in Cambodia in 1978, the role of UN Humanitarian agencies in assisting Cambodian refugees at the Thai border and, following a peace settlement, the role of international development institutions in promoting a decentralised development strategy for Cambodia.

Chapter 4 looks more closely at the human security situation in the countryside in the light of the development priorities and promises. It demonstrates that human security is threatened by a number of factors including failures of law and order, unemployment and poor public service delivery. These issues are taken into chapter 5 and discussed in relation to theories and practice of "good governance" in development. It argues that governance, interpreted as a blend of new public management and corporate governance, needs to both engage individuals and civil society at the local level and pay close attention to institutional cultures which determine the role of leadership and the commitment of officers to designated outcomes. The chapter will show that there needs to be greater attention given to politics and its role in creating social change.

The final chapter concludes that the broad definition of human security is both practical and desirable. Using such an approach has also provided a sound basis for including human security within the international security framework both in terms of specific security bodies, such as the UN Security Council, as well as the extensive international development assistance programmes which are also security-related in their operation and purpose.

CHAPTER 2

HUMAN SECURITY – CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Whereas disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind, and the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people.¹

People who are trying to survive ... do not choose between addressing 'violent threats' or 'poverty threats'. They address both. Human security should do likewise.²

This chapter outlines the projection of the idea of human security onto the international stage by the UNDP in 1994, and the debates that it engendered. First in terms of definitional problems and, secondly, in terms of human security's challenge to the mainstream academic disciplines which traditionally claim international relations and security as their specialist domains and the state as the basic unit in their theoretical formulations. The main thrust of the chapter is that it is important to adopt a broad definition of human security and that the primary concern is for the condition of people in terms of their local social and political realities.

The risk, otherwise, is that human security becomes little more than what Duffield calls an aid-related technique of global security, or Mary Kaldor represents as a particular form of military-civilian intervention in situations of civil conflict or natural disaster.³ These sorts of approach are about how human security is "done" by international aid and by international military intervention. They do not challenge the state-based security theories but rather work within them to analyse how dominant states are pursuing their own security by co-opting humanitarian concerns and development processes. This thesis therefore turns attention to the problem of how to refocus human security on the individual.

¹ Preamble to United Nations, "Universal declaration of Human Rights." Available at <http://www.unhchr.ch/udhr/index.htm>.

² Sabina Alkire, "Conceptual Framework for Human Security (Working Definition and Executive Summary)," (Working Paper prepared for the Commission on Human Security: 2002), 5.

³ See Mark Duffield, "Human Security: Linking Development and Security in an Age of Terror," in *New Interfaces between Security and Development: Changing Concepts and Approaches*, ed. Stephan Klingebiel (Bonn: German Development Institute, 2006); and Mary Kaldor, Mary Martin, and Sabine Selchow, "Human Security: A New Strategic Narrative for Europe," *International Affairs* 83, no. 2 (2007).

Although econometric analyses of the occurrence and causes of civil war and violence have formed the basis for a narrow, conflict related approach to human security (defined as the absence of civil war and other forms of physical violence) they have also emphasised the role of development in conflict resolution and prevention.⁴ In fact, the econometric analyses support the extension of the human security concept beyond conflict and physical violence to embrace security in terms of everyday existence – food, shelter, justice, income, social and political freedom and liberty – which are the aims, if not the achievements, of development. Further support for this position comes from a range of new studies on human security which extend the use of the concept into a wider context of anthropological research.⁵

Inevitably, a discussion of human security brings into play questions of its relationship with human rights and human development. The relationship is, in fact, treated in a variety of ways in the literature. On the one hand, it is said that you can not have one without the other, while on the contrary there is a view that human rights are what counts, and that these embrace human development. In this view, human security is largely irrelevant as it is considered to add little if anything to the comprehensive range of rights existing in international law and UN covenants.⁶ The position here is that a concept of human security provides a unique space in which human rights and human development may be brought together in practice to achieve their common goals of protecting individuals from their own states and from the deprivation of basic needs. Hence human security is an overarching concept that combines people's own search for security within their own cultures and societies with a process of adjustment and change to the external influences of rights and development processes. Human security concerns everyday life and politics and the outcomes of the external impositions discussed by Duffield and Kaldor referred to above may not be as intended.

⁴ See Andrew Mack, "Report on the Feasibility of Creating an Annual Human Security Report." and Human Security Centre, *Human Security Report: War and Peace in the 21st Century*. Aid and development policy is also an important aspect of their work. See in particular Paul Collier, "Aid, Policy and Growth in Post-Conflict Countries," (Conflict Prevention and Reconstruction Unit, World Bank, 2002); Collier, "Development and Conflict."; and Collier et al., *Breaking the Conflict Trap*.

⁵ See Alexandra Kent, "Reconfiguring Security: Buddhism and Moral Legitimacy in Cambodia," *Security Dialogue* 37, no. 3 (2006).

⁶ See the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights for the full framework of human rights instruments at <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/>.

The chapter will consider a range of factors, such as democratisation, decentralisation, effective security sector, civil society and social movement, which various authors have suggested are necessary for creating and maintaining human security.

Human security – the concept

During the 1970s and 1980s there was considerable public debate across the Western world around the issues of international security and development as concerns mounted over the failure of economic growth and the promised ‘trickle down’ to benefit the poor and to relieve the fragile security situation in most regions of the Third World. In this climate, a number of independent commissions were set up to report and make recommendations on development and security.⁷ The linkage between security and development is particularly clear in *Common Security: A Blueprint For Survival* which recognised that threats to security are wider than “political rivalry and armaments ...[and]... stem from failures in development, environmental degradation, excessive population growth and movement, and lack of progress towards democracy” and in *Common Responsibilities in the 1990s* which addressed attention to the “security of people and the security of the planet.”⁸

The emphasis on the individual in these reports was not new in Western concepts of the state. MacFarlane traces the long “prehistory of human security” and identifies the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as the period in which the “welfare of individual human beings, the mitigation of poverty, and the protection of the economic rights of the less privileged were growing preoccupations.”⁹ These preoccupations were also framed as international or universal norms and subsequently were incorporated in the UN Charter which, reflecting on the

⁷ For example the Club of Rome publication by Donella H Meadows, Dennis L Meadows, et al., *Limits to Growth* (New York: Universe Books, 1972); the Independent Commission on International Development Issues, *North South, a Programme for Survival: Report of the Independent Commission on International Development Issues* (London: Pan Books, 1980) known as the Brandt Report; and the Independent Commission on Disarmament and Security Issues, *Common Security: a Blueprint for Survival* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982). See also Kanti Bajpai, "Human Security: Concept and Measurement," (Kroc Institute: 2000), 5-7; and Richard Falk, "Pursuing the Quest for Human Security," in *Worlds Apart: Human Security and Global Governance*, ed. Majid Tehranian (London: I.B. Tauris, 1999), 8.

⁸ Bajpai, "Human Security: Concept and Measurement," 7.

⁹ S Neil MacFarlane and Yuen Foong Khong, *Human Security and the UN: A Critical History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 59.

experience of the inter-war years, recognised that economic and social welfare were critical for international peace and security.¹⁰

The concern for individual welfare and security is implicit in human security. Mahbub ul Haq, one of the founders of human development theory and the creator of the Human Development Index, was also influential in the development of the concept of human security in the 1994 UNDP Development Report.¹¹ He spelled out his views in a widely distributed paper commissioned by the UNDP.¹² In it he nominated as the five “pillars” of human security: sustainable human development; using a peace dividend to move from arms to human security; partnerships between North and South based on justice, not charity; new forms of global governance such as an economic security council of the UN; and a global civil society to hold leaders accountable.¹³

The UNDP Report argued that there were two main aspects of human security – “safety from such chronic threats [such] as hunger, disease and repression ... and protection from sudden and hurtful disruption in the pattern of daily life.”¹⁴ The components spelled out were economic security (discussed mainly in terms of secure and adequate income); food security (physical and economic access); health security (prevention of disease and mortality - access to services, nutrition and lifestyle); environmental security (environmental degradation, pollution of air, water and land, sanitation); personal security (physical violence and threats, accidents, trafficking); community security (cultural identity, religious freedom, indigenous rights); and

¹⁰ Ibid., 65. MacFarlane notes, too, that Roosevelt’s New Deal in the US was a mechanism to avert the risk that economic and social insecurity might carry over into political unrest.

¹¹ UNDP, *Human Development Report 1994* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994). It was said that the UNDP agenda was to use human security as the organising principle for the 1995 Copenhagen UN Conference on Social Development. See Gary King and Christopher J L Murray, "Rethinking Human Security," *Political Science Quarterly* 116, no. 4 (2002), 589.

¹² Mahbub ul Haq, "New Imperatives of Human Security," (A Policy Paper Commissioned by UNDP for the World Summit for Social Development, UNDP: 1994). This Paper was widely reproduced including by the Society for International Development (SID) and the Rajiv Gandhi Institute for Contemporary Studies (RGICS), Papers, and in U Kirdar and L Silk, eds., *From Impoverishment to Empowerment* (New York: New York University Press, 1995); and Bibek Debroy, ed., *Challenges of Globalisation* (New Delhi: Konark Publishers, 1998). Ul Haq considered human security should be “universal, global and indivisible.” See Mahbub ul Haq, "Global Governance for Human Security," in *Worlds Apart: Human Security and Global Governance*, ed. Majid Tehranian (London: I.B. Tauris Publishers, 1999), 79-94.

¹³ Mahbub ul Haq, "New Imperatives of Human Security," in *From Impoverishment to Empowerment*, 22.

¹⁴ UNDP, *Human Development Report*, 23.

political security (basic human rights and freedoms). It argued that these were universal concerns for rich and poor countries and that its components were interdependent as well as being people-centred.¹⁵ It noted that a breakdown in human security in any one place may have local, regional or global impacts, and that human security is best ensured through prevention rather than by later restoration. Thus, “when human security is at threat anywhere, it can affect people everywhere. Famines, ethnic conflicts, social disintegration, terrorism, pollution and drug trafficking can no longer be confined within national borders,” and therefore the need for the new human security approach.¹⁶

The Report barely addressed the relationship of human security with human rights and human development, noting only that human rights violations represent a threat to human security everywhere and that human development was a broader concept relating to people’s choice, while human security “means that people can exercise these choices safely and freely.”¹⁷ The relationship of human security with human rights and human development was not well developed although it is an important issue and is discussed later in this chapter.¹⁸

The essence of the concept being promoted was radical as it challenged the adequacy of the contemporary approaches to development and security. It sought to locate developing countries in a more global and more urgent security framework addressing the needs of people rather than serving the purpose of protecting and securing the rich and powerful states and the capitalist free market global economy. Its broad scope, however, contained the seeds of controversy as to the usefulness of the concept for analytical, practical or policy purposes.

¹⁵ Despite this, much of the ensuing debate has been based on either implicit or explicit assumptions that the issue of human security is about underdeveloped countries. For example Suhrke says that human security is about the South and can be addressed by the universalisation of rights and development. Astri Suhrke, "Human Security and the Interests of States," *Security Dialogue* 30, no. 3 (1999): 273-4.

¹⁶ UNDP, *Human Development Report*, 34.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 22-23.

¹⁸ The Report found it difficult to locate human security and added somewhat unhelpfully that “human security is an ingredient of participatory development.” See *ibid.*, 24.

“East – West” approaches to human security¹⁹

Following the 1994 Report, the Japanese and Canadian governments both supported human security initiatives but with different emphases. The Japanese government sought to develop the UNDP perspective mainly through freedom from want (development approach) while Canada sought to focus human security more on freedom from fear (conflict resolution and intervention).²⁰ Japan’s interest in human security was immediate and in 1995 Prime Minister Murayama Tomiichi advocated human security in an address to the United Nations General Assembly.²¹ This was endorsed by both of his successors, Hashimoto Ryutaro and Obuchi Keizo. Obuchi, in particular, was committed to the concept mainly in the context of economic development in the region (which was in the grips of the 1997 economic crisis) and incorporated it into Japan’s foreign policy, leading to Japan’s sponsorship of the Commission on Human Security in 2000 and publication of its report which is discussed below.²²

Canada, on the other hand, put its emphasis on protection from violence in its statement to the UN General Assembly in 1996 and during its presidency of the Security Council in 2000. Although the Canadian approach recognises the full scope of the UNDP Report, it was more concerned with a breakdown of government and society into violence than the need to protect individuals *per se*.²³ This is reflected in Canada’s foreign policy statement as well as its support for the Liu institute and

¹⁹ While these are contested concepts, they are used here as convenient labels for different approaches. See Amitav Acharya, "Human Security: East Versus West?," Working Paper no. 17 (Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies, Singapore: 2001).

²⁰ In addition to the Japanese and Canadian government contributions, a number of institutions established units to address human security issues. These included the Harvard Program on Humanitarian Policy and Conflict Research (PHPCR) which produces a Human Security Network Bulletin; the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO); OECD Network on Conflict, Peace and Development Co-operation; the Conflict, Security and Development Group with the Centre for Development Studies at Kings College London set up with the UK Department for International Development, and the Institute for Human Security in the Fletcher School, Tufts University. UN agencies also ran special human security projects and regional activities.

²¹ Bert Edstrom, "Japan’s foreign policy and human security," *Japan Forum* 15, no. 2 (2003): 209-25. Japan’s ongoing commitment to human security is discussed in Julie Gilson and Phillida Purvis, "Japan’s pursuit of human security: humanitarian agenda or political pragmatism?," *Japan Forum* 15, no. 2 (2003): 193-207.

²² The Commission on Human Security was co-chaired by Sadako Ogata, (former United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) and Amartya Sen (Nobel Laureate in Economics, 1998). The idea for a commission on human security arose from the United Nations Millennium Summit in 2000.

²³ Bajpai, "Human Security: Concept and Measurement," 33.

the publication of the Human Security Report which also adopts a narrow approach to human security based on freedom from fear.²⁴

Hence, the focus of human security on individual welfare was blurred by the concerns of two middle powers to pursue their particular interests and to influence the international scope and recognition of the concept. Canada, which had a long history of military commitment to UN peacekeeping, pursued its policy of protection targeting specific issues such as landmines, child soldiers and small arms availability in conflict areas.²⁵ On the other hand, Japan took a view that development diminished the threat of violence and contributed directly to human security.²⁶ Its approach also appeared to be more acceptable in the Asian region where human rights had long been an issue of contention because of their perceived prioritisation of individual over group rights.²⁷ In the wake of the 1997 economic crisis it was also clear that the ASEAN approach to human security was closely linked to safety nets and welfare for those affected by the economic downturn.²⁸

Over time, however, the concept of human security has become an international relations policy tool for military intervention as well as aid, much as argued by Kaldor and Duffield above.²⁹ It has become largely incorporated into traditional

²⁴ Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, "Freedom from Fear: Canada's Foreign Policy for Human Security," (Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, 2000); and Andrew Mack and Oliver Rohlf, "The Great Canadian Divide," *The Globe and Mail*, 23 March 2003. The Canadian government also established the Canadian Consortium on Human Security (CCHS) to research human security. The Consortium produces a quarterly online Human Security Bulletin.

²⁵ Mely Caballero-Anthony, "Human Security in the Asia-Pacific: Current Trends and Prospects," in *The Human Face of Security: Asia-Pacific Perspectives*, ed. David Dickens (Canberra: Canberra Papers on Strategy and Defence no. 144, Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, The Australian National University, 2002), 23-24.

²⁶ MacFarlane and Yuen Foong Khong, *Human Security and the UN: A Critical History*, 143.

²⁷ Edstrom, "Japan's foreign policy and human security," 220. Edstrom also argues that, by embracing development, human rights, humanitarian and refugee law under the framework of human security, the adoption of human security in domestic as well as international policy enabled Japan to satisfy the US, while at the same time as appearing to Asian countries not to promote human rights. See also Meiki Fujioka, "Japan's Human Rights Policy at Domestic and International Levels: Disconnecting Human Rights from Human Security?," *Japan Forum* 15, no. 2 (2003): 301.

²⁸ Caballero-Anthony, "Human Security in the Asia-Pacific: Current Trends and Prospects."; Shahrbanou Tadjbakhsh, "Human Security: Concepts and Implications with an Application to Post-Intervention Challenges in Afghanistan," (Centre d'études et de recherches internationales: 2005), 17-19; and Pranee Thiparat, ed., *The Quest for Human Security: The Next Phase of ASEAN?* (Bangkok: Institute of Security and International Studies (ISIS), 2001), 2.

²⁹ Steve Grunau, "The Limits of Human Security: Canada in East Timor," *Journal of Military and Strategic Studies* 6, no. 1 (2003): 17. Grunau argues that despite government policy,

international security practice and turned into a technique for military-civil interventions and for development related conflict prevention strategies to protect the security interests of intervening and donor nations. In other words, “our” peace and security depends on “their” human security. The focus on the broad individual needs is largely lost in this context despite the fact that, as Alkire makes clear in the quote at the head of this chapter, people in a conflict situation must, simultaneously, address both aspects of their human insecurity.³⁰ This is also reflected to some extent in the UN where the Security Council responsibilities are separated from the economic and social responsibilities of ECOSOC, but at the same time the Security Council urges ECOSOC to do more for conflict prevention.³¹ However, if aid and development assistance are tools for conflict prevention, they must apply especially to non-conflict but vulnerable communities as well, giving human security a broad domain. It is also important to recognise that, as will be shown by the Cambodian experience in the next chapter, international intervention may be important for alleviating human insecurities for some, but may also contribute to creating insecurities for others.

While the difference in the Canadian and Japanese approaches was largely about priorities and political perceptions, nevertheless it was a precursor to the academic debate that was to follow. The controversy played out on several fronts: defining human security; the relationship between human security and traditional security; and how to achieve human security. The main issues being whether it was compatible with international relations and strategic studies which prioritised state interests, not the welfare of individuals *per se*; and whether it was necessary at all when human rights and human development already prioritised individual and group welfare. Therefore, a key aspect of the debate focused on how human security should be defined and whether it was compatible with existing theory and practice. The following section considers this question in detail.

human security was not a key consideration on deciding Canada’s involvement in East Timor.

³⁰ The World Bank in particular brings both together in its Conflict Prevention and Reconstruction Unit.

³¹ MacFarlane and Yuen Foong Khong, *Human Security and the UN: A Critical History*, 153.

Definitions of human security

Defining human security is important because it determines how attention is to be focused on the individual and groups. The argument has been largely about whether the UNDP focus is simply too broad to have any useful analytical application and whether it risks making everything and anything a potential security issue. It has also raised questions as to whether human security is an extension of the development agenda, the security agenda or a hybrid of both.³²

After wide consultation, the Japanese funded Commission on Human Security came up with a new broad definition of human security as protection of "... the vital core of all human lives in ways that enhance human freedoms and human fulfilment. ...Human security means protecting fundamental freedoms – freedoms that are the essence of life. It means protecting people from critical (severe) and pervasive (widespread) threats and situations..."³³ The Commission also noted that individuals and societies may have different views on what is "vital" and what constitutes the "essence of life" and went on to add that creating human security meant "... using processes that build on people's strengths and aspirations. It means creating political, social, environmental, economic, military and cultural systems that together give people the building blocks of survival, livelihood and dignity."³⁴

Such a definition raised the obvious questions about what "vital core", "fundamental freedoms", "critical" and "pervasive" meant, and what threats and situations actually impacted on human security. Two studies in particular took up the Commission's definition and refined it. Sabina Alkire defined human security as the safeguarding of "the vital core of all human lives from critical pervasive threats, in a way that is consistent with long-term human fulfilment."³⁵ She also suggested that human security be restricted to areas of possible downturns in the people's situation. Taylor Owen modified Alkire's definition to read the safeguarding of "the vital core of all human lives from critical pervasive environmental, economic, food, health, personal

³² Sara Edson, "Human Security: An Extended and Annotated International Bibliography," (Centre for History and Economics, Kings College, University of Cambridge: 2001), 7.

³³ Commission on Human Security, "Human Security Now," (New York: Commission on Human Security, 2003), 4.

³⁴ Ibid., 4.

³⁵ Alkire, "Conceptual Framework." 1.

and political threats.”³⁶ Yet what was meant by “vital core”, “critical” and “pervasive” remained unanswered; though they imply the identification of specific issues and some form of designated thresholds of severity necessary to constitute a human security matter. Surprisingly, Owen sought to omit cultural security from the list of security issues arguing that factors such as education and religion would not be active elements in creating critical pervasive threats, or affect the vital core of human lives. On the contrary, as seen below, anthropological studies do identify cultural factors as important to human security. Brown and Stewart, for example, also consider educational deprivation to be a human security concern, as do Sen and Majumdar who argue that a lack of education could confine one to the margins of society and to a precarious existence as evidenced by a demonstrable link between mortality, income and education.³⁷

A much more open approach was proposed by Ramesh Thakur who argued that human security was composed of positive (freedom to) and negative (freedom from) freedoms, and that: “putting the two together, human security refers to the quality of life of the people of a society or polity. Anything which degrades their quality of life – demographic pressures, diminished access to or stock of resources, and so on – is a [human] security threat.”³⁸

Other definitions developed by international commissions include that of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS) which describes human security in terms of people living under conditions where “their physical safety, their economic and social wellbeing, respect for their dignity and worth as human beings, and the protection of their human rights and fundamental

³⁶ Taylor Owen, "Human Security - Conflict, Critique and Consensus: Colloquium Remarks and a Proposal for a Threshold-Based Definition," *Security Dialogue* 35, no. 3 (2004): 383. Owen is working on measures of human security and geographical representation of various human security indicators which will be mentioned later.

³⁷ Amartya Sen, "Basic Education and Human Security," (Background Paper for a Workshop on Basic Education and Human Security jointly organised by the Commission on Human Security, UNICEF, the Pratichi (India) Trust and Harvard University in Kolkata, 2-4 January: 2002); Manabi Majumdar, "Child Labour as a Human Security Problem: Evidence from India," *Oxford Development Studies* 29, no. 3 (2001): 279-304; and Graham K Brown and Frances Stewart, "Why Horizontal Inequalities are Important for Human Security: Two Case Studies from Southeast Asia" (paper presented at the Conference on The Anthropology of Human Security, Amsterdam, 29-30 August 2005). Brown and Stewart also propose categorising human security issues in terms of whether they are “conflictual” or “non-conflictual” which would also see them separated broadly into issues requiring long term development policy to address pervasive threats, or immediate humanitarian relief for critical threats. This approach seems speculative and has not been further pursued here.

³⁸ Thakur, "From National to Human Security," 53.

freedoms” are assured.³⁹ The more recent Commission for Africa says that people-centred “human security becomes an all-encompassing condition in which individual citizens live in freedom, peace and safety and participate fully in the process of governance. They enjoy the protection of fundamental rights, have access to resources and the basic necessities of life, including health and education, and inhabit an environment that is not injurious to their health and wellbeing.”⁴⁰

These last two definitions are important as they both clearly specify human security as a **condition** in which people ought to find themselves. The condition includes areas of protection as well as providing scope for individual and group action through rights and freedoms and, in the latter approach, participation in governance. They also both imply that human security is an international as well as a state responsibility. A point that will be taken up in following chapters.

Key aspects of the main human security definitions are identified in Table 2-1 below.⁴¹ It shows is that while most definitions follow the UNDP focus on providing safety and protection as the main aspect of the human security concept, the later emphasis has moved in the Commission for Africa and ICISS definitions to the condition of human security. Instead of protection from fairly vague notions such as “vital core”, “hurtful disruption”, and “pervasive threat”, later definitions include more concrete terms of people living in conditions of freedom, peace and safety, having access to basic necessities, and, importantly, being free to participate in the process of governance. Governance of course introduces the question of state responsibilities, but at the same time it opens the possibility of a more localised determination of human security issues which may be anything, as Thakur puts it, which degrades people’s quality of life.

³⁹ International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS), "The Responsibility to Protect: Report of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty," (ICISS, 2001).

⁴⁰ Commission for Africa, "Our Common Interest: Report of the Commission for Africa," (Commission for Africa, 2005), 392.

⁴¹ Thakur, "From National to Human Security," 16-20, also provides a comparison of some 20 definitions. However, for the purpose of the thesis, I have limited discussion to several key examples.

	The functional aim of human security	The subject of attention	Specific elements:
UNDP	Safety from		Chronic threats Hunger disease repression Threats under 7 headings to: Economic; Food; Health; Environment; Personal; Community and Political security.
Alkire	safeguarding	The vital core of human lives	From critical pervasive threats : In a way consistent with long-term human fulfilment
Owen	safeguarding	The vital core of human lives	From pervasive: threats : Threats under 6 headings: Environmental, Economic, Food, Health, Personal, and Political
UNDP	protection	Pattern of daily life	From Hurtful disruption
Commission on Human Security	protect	Vital core of all human lives Fundamental freedoms Essence of life	From Critical (Severe) and pervasive (widespread) threats and situations
Human Security Centre	protection	Of individuals and communities	From war and other forms of violence
Commission for Africa	protection	Of fundamental human rights	
ICISS	protection	of their human rights and fundamental freedoms	
Commission on Human Security	enhance	Human freedoms and human fulfilment	
Commission on Human Security	to build	On strengths and aspirations	
Commission on Human Security	to create	Political, social, environmental, economic, military and cultural systems	Give people building blocks of survival, livelihood and dignity.
ICISS	to respect	Individuals for their dignity and worth as human beings	
Caroline Thomas	achieving	Physical survival Human dignity	Personal autonomy, control over one's life, unhindered participation in the life of the community
ICISS	condition	Live in	Physical safety, their economic and social wellbeing
Commission for Africa	“	An all-encompassing condition	In which individual citizens live in freedom, peace and safety
Commission for Africa	“	Have access	To resources and basic necessities of human life - Including Health and education
Commission for Africa	“	inhabit	Environment - Not injurious to health and wellbeing
Commission for Africa	“	Participate	fully in the process of governance

Table 2-1 Comparison of approaches among selected human security definitions

Some critics complain that the broad definitions embracing both freedom from want and fear risks becoming little more than “shopping list” approaches whereby the label of human security can be attached to any “bad things that can happen” and mean anything to anyone.⁴² Such critics maintain that human security needs to be more tightly defined to be of any analytical use. Others argue that a narrow definition limited to freedom from fear can be more useful in practical terms;

⁴² For example see Keith Krause, "Is Human Security 'More than just a good idea?'" (paper presented at the BICC 10-Year Anniversary Conference "Promoting Security: But How and for Whom?", Bonn, 1-2 April 2004), 4; and King and Murray, "Rethinking Human Security," 591.

asserting basically that conflict and violence represent a breakdown in human security and are easily identified and measured in terms of deaths and incidents of violence. Some go further and claim that adopting a broad definition means that human security would be unmeasurable since, as Mack claims, it would “conflate” dependent and independent variables under a single index.⁴³ A narrow definition in this view becomes simply “the protection of individuals and communities from war and other forms of violence.”⁴⁴

There are four main reasons for rejecting these criticisms of a broad human security concept. First, as will be demonstrated in the next section, the demand for a precise definition imposes far more stringent requirements on human security as a concept than is placed on the additional state based concept which, nonetheless, contributes to national security analysis and policy formulation in many countries. A flexible concept of security also allows it to embrace new issues such as environmental and economic security, migration and terrorism. Thus, the prospect that anything might be a human security risk has strong parallels in international security practice where, for example, definitions are broad enough for baby foods to be classified as a security risk in the context of international aviation.

Secondly, Mack’s conflation problem is something to be worked through rather than ignored. His “pragmatic” solution, as he is aware, simply sets aside the “very conditions that gave rise to it [violent conflict] in the first place” such as poverty, weak administration, poor infrastructure or declining GDP *per capita*.⁴⁵ But, if poverty, weak administration and other factors represent threats to human security, they must in themselves be human security issues. However, as a counter to the “conflation” problem, Owen has argued it is possible to develop a framework for the measurement of human security issues based on livelihood factors.⁴⁶ In the end, of

⁴³ Human Security Centre, *Human Security Report: War and Peace in the 21st Century*; and Mack, "Report on the Feasibility of Creating an Annual Human Security Report," Appendix 2, 2. See also Sverre Lodgaard, "Human Security: Concept and Operationalisation," accessed at <http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/hpccr/events/hsworkshop/lodgaard.pdf> on 23 April 2005.

⁴⁴ University of British Columbia header to its Human Security Centre web page “News from the Wires” which focuses on conflict spots such as Sudan, Israel, Nepal, Iraq, and Chechnya.

⁴⁵ Human Security Centre, *Human Security Report: War and Peace in the 21st Century*, viii, 4.

⁴⁶ Taylor Owen, "Measuring Human Security: Overcoming the Paradox," *Human Security Bulletin* 2, no. 3 (2003); Taylor Owen, "Human Security Mapping: A New Methodology," (PRIO, 2003); Taylor Owen, "Human Insecurity: A New Map of Cambodian Vulnerability," *Cambodian Development Review* 7, no. 2 (2003): 9-11, 16; and Taylor Owen, "Measuring Human Security: A New View of Cambodian Vulnerability" (MA Thesis Submitted in

course, human security in any form cannot be definitively measured any more than human rights or human development. Various indicators may be formulated by a variety of statistical methods using selected data inevitably based on a set of assumptions peculiar to the analysts involved.

Moreover, the identification and classification of security issues, their level of seriousness and whether extraordinary measures are warranted, are political decisions—not ones of statistically pre-determined thresholds.⁴⁷ Similarly, identifying and addressing human security issues at any level is not only a matter of definition but also of political choice.

Thirdly, proponents of the narrow definition turn for support to the extensive econometric analysis designed to identify the causes of conflict. Nonetheless, while these studies highlight the decline in the number of civil wars since the end of the Cold War in particular, and suggest this is largely due to United Nations conflict resolution activities, they are far less convincing in determining the causes of conflict, and hence in advising how to prevent them.⁴⁸ However, in terms of conflict resolution and conflict prevention (which are at the heart of human security narrowly defined) important econometric analysts such as Collier seek to restore or sustain human security through human development and livelihood improvement, which thus become unavoidably integral to human security.⁴⁹ Only a broad human security approach can reconcile the interdependence between freedom from war and violence and its dependence on development and, as we shall see, human rights. This aspect of the definition in relation to the econometric analyses is considered in more detail below.

Finally, narrowing the definition (and particularly relying on statistical analysis) simply removes the opportunity for most individuals and groups to have a say in what constitutes their human security. It does this by excluding political issues such as poverty, health and education and by imposing threshold measures, such as the number of deaths per year from armed conflict, which are arbitrary and have no

Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts, B.A. Bishops University, 2000).

⁴⁷ Barry Buzan, *People States and Fear*, 115. Or as Buzan puts it, “a matter of political choice rather than objective fact.” Even if thresholds were used for administrative convenience, they would need to be politically confirmed by law or regulation to have social legitimacy.

⁴⁸ Christian Davenport, David A Armstrong, and Mark I Lichbach, "Conflict Escalation and the Origins of Civil War," (University of Maryland: n.d.).

⁴⁹ Collier, "Aid, Policy and Growth in Post-Conflict Countries."

meaning for people who may be threatened by conflict or violence and who have no access to the data in any case.⁵⁰ These are measures designed for other purposes. This thesis, through its field approach, focuses on the matters of concern identified by the people themselves, how they are able to respond to them and how a wider community might help. In this context, it is highly likely that a shopping list of human security issues is likely to emerge. It is not for governments, aid workers or security analysts alone to decide from an essentially international perspective what are, or are not, permissible human security problems. As a working approach to human security in my fieldwork, therefore, I have used Thakur's open form of definition that human security refers to the quality of life of the people of a society or polity and anything which degrades their quality of life becomes a potential human security threat. This approach enabled me to avoid predetermining the possible forms of human insecurity which might be identified. Later in the thesis, for analytical purposes, I will use the Commission for Africa definition. I will also demonstrate with my fieldwork data that the prioritisation of issues needs to be politically determined, as is the case for traditional security.⁵¹

On balance most commentators support the broad definition of human security. In 2004, *Security Dialogue* invited 21 authors who have previously written on the subject to respond to the question "What is Human Security?" Buzan and Paris were the main sceptics.⁵² Despite the academic support, however, the development of the broad concept seems to have been largely overshadowed in policy and practice by the political support and programme assistance given to conflict and violence related issues; other forms of deprivation are left to human rights and human development activities despite their close association with security. This separation is also consistent with academic debates concerning the meaning of security and the

⁵⁰ For example 25 deaths from organised violence is defined as conflict while it requires 1,000 deaths to constitute civil war. Large numbers of deaths arising indirectly from conflict are not measures and are, thus, not part of the calculus despite the obvious security threat to individuals.

⁵¹ I return to this issue below.

⁵² Roland Paris, "Still an Inscrutable Concept," *Security Dialogue* 35, no. 3 (2004): 370-72; and Barry Buzan, "A Reductionist, Idealistic Notion that Adds Little Analytical Value," *Security Dialogue* 35, no. 3 (2004): 369-70. Mack is somewhere in between considering the narrow definition to be analytically sound while the broad definition may provide a useful recognition of the consequences of underdevelopment. See Andrew Mack, "A Signifier of Shared Values," *Security Dialogue* 35, no. 3 (2004): 366-7. For a summary of positions of all 21 papers see Owen, "Human Security - Conflict, Critique and Consensus," 373-87.

acceptability of a concept of human security and the implications it would have for traditional security studies.

Human security in traditional security theory – state vs. individual

In general, the broad UNDP Report definition of human security does not easily fit with traditional disciplines of international relations, security and peace studies. Much academic discussion on the subject has focused on the contested nature of security itself (what is it? whose security? security from what? how is it achieved?) and its place in international relations where, traditionally, the state (and not the individual) is the primary unit, and where the security of the state is theorised mainly in realist terms of anarchy and balance of power relations between states. However, as discussed below, the wide-ranging and inconclusive theories and definitions of security itself, the rejection of the concept of human security as ill-defined and too broad to be an effective analytical tool seems somewhat ironic.

There are many approaches to security theories.⁵³ Booth and Buzan also draw attention to the variety of meanings of security, which suggests that the concept is not well consolidated.⁵⁴ Buzan goes so far as to say security “is so weakly developed as to be inadequate for the task” of understanding national security.⁵⁵ Wolfers produced what has been called the standard definition that “security, in an objective sense, measures the absence of threat to acquired values, in a subjective sense, the absence of fear that such values will be attacked” while other key security scholars such as Morgenthau “hardly bothered to define security.”⁵⁶ Booth summarises “standard” definitions as having “to do with feeling safe from threats

⁵³ Steve Smith, "The Contested Concept of Security," (Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies, Singapore: 2002). See also Steve Smith, "The Contested Concept of Security," in *Critical Security Studies and World Politics*, ed. Ken Booth (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers Inc., 2005), 27-62; Muthiah Alagappa, "Introduction," in *Asian Security Order: Instrumental and Normative Features*, ed. Muthiah Alagappa (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), 19. These refer to various theoretical approaches such as the Copenhagen School; Constructivists; Feminist; Post-Structuralist Security Studies; Critical Security Studies; Neo-realism; and Neoliberalism.

⁵⁴ Ken Booth, ed., *Critical Security Studies and World Politics* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2005); Buzan, *People States and Fear*.

⁵⁵ Buzan, *People States and Fear*, 1.

⁵⁶ Bjorn Möller, "National, Societal and Human Security: General Discussion with a Case Study from the Balkans" (paper presented at the Conference: What Agenda for the Human Security in the 21st Century?, 2001), 41-60.

and danger.”⁵⁷ Based on Wolfer’s interpretation, Baldwin argues that acquired values could be such things as physical safety, economic welfare, political independence, peace of mind or absence of fear, but not (referring back to the UNDP meaning of human security) such things as “core values” and “vital interests.”⁵⁸ Following this approach, “economic security, environmental security, identity security, social security, and military security, are different forms of security and not fundamentally different concepts;” thus the need for a conceptual breakthrough.⁵⁹ Similarly, while discussions of comprehensive security and cooperative security theories give some recognition to the management of economic, environmental, health, refugee migration and other issues within the state and regional security framework, they also need a conceptual breakthrough since the human dimension inherent in these matters are still considered to be security concerns for the state rather than the individuals affected.⁶⁰

Also, it has been argued that security has “not been an important analytical concept for most security studies scholars” who instead have been interested in military statecraft and power while “security has been a banner to be flown, a label to be applied, but not a concept to be used by most security studies specialists.”⁶¹ And yet, despite the apparent neglect and looseness of definition, there are many powerful and varied analyses of security which inform national security policies and strategies. While much can be done (and some would say needs to be done) to develop the concept of security in all its dimensions—national, environmental, economic, military and human—this does not necessarily devalue the usefulness of security analyses to policy formulation in practice. Nor should human security be devalued for want of a tight definition.

Indeed, the politics and practices of international security provide a warning against tight definitions of human security, and they provide evidence that in certain contexts practically anything may well become a security (or human security) risk. Thus events, resources or capabilities may take on security dimensions depending on

⁵⁷ Ken Booth, "Critical Explorations," in *Critical Security Studies and World Politics*, ed. Ken Booth (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2005), 13.

⁵⁸ David A. Baldwin, "The Concept of Security," *Review of International Studies* 23, no. 1 (1997): 13.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*: 23.

⁶⁰ Buzan, *People States and Fear*, 16-17.

⁶¹ Baldwin, "The Concept of Security," 9. See also Alagappa, "Introduction," 11.

the nature of the states where they occur, the region concerned or even those involved. There have, for example, been long standing bans on the export of commercial equipment, computing devices, chemicals and biological agents and other materials to certain organizations, countries and regions where they may be put to military, internal security or terrorist application.⁶² Simple cosmetics, baby foods, and fluids have become high-level security risks in the context of international air travel. Security is, by its nature, wide ranging and human security warrants the same flexibility. Just as the strength of the traditional security approach lies to some extent in its flexibility and openness to the changing nature of threats and vulnerabilities at all levels, the strength of the human security concept can similarly lie in a flexible, even “shopping list” approach to identifying and responding to human security issues.

Despite the absence of a common definition of security, however, academic security approaches are consistent in being predominantly state centric. It is not my task here to attempt to reconcile state centric and individual centric approaches in international relations theory. However, it is important to note that this issue is being addressed even if it still has a long way to go since Booth suggested the need for a “civil society” approach to security as a balance to traditional realist analyses. Booth, like the later econometric analysts such as Gurr, Marshall and Collier, noted that the decline in interstate conflict was not matched by a reduction of conflicts within states. Booth’s response was to address the social and political rather than economic causes. Security, he suggested, depended on at least minimum levels of political and social justice. In other words, it related to individual security and this he described as “emancipation.” He further identified emancipation with freedom and with the activities of an “embryonic” global civil society.⁶³ On the other hand, while Barry Buzan’s *People, States and Fear* is a key work in terms of the relationship between

⁶² The Wassenaar Arrangement is an export control regime for commercial dual use goods and technologies. Membership is necessary for legal access to controlled items. See <http://www.wassenaar.org/introduction/index.html> for the Wassenaar Arrangement and control list. Participating countries are Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom and United States.

⁶³ Ken Booth, "Security and Emancipation," *Review of International Studies* 17, no. 4 (1991): 313-26. Booth’s approach pre-dated the UNDP human security approach but was similar in its focus on the individual and freedoms.

state security and the individual whom he sees as an element in societal security, it always maintains the state as the basic referent of security.⁶⁴

The debate on the theoretical status of human security is well summarised in Pauline Kerr's comprehensive review, from an international relations perspective, of the issues under debate and the potential for reconciling human security with the traditional state-centric concepts and theories of security.⁶⁵ In brief, she concludes that the human security concept is in fact finding a place in theory through the various realist and critical debates. She argues that the various approaches are coming to recognise a) both people and state are referent objects; b) there are internal and external threats of violence; c) violence may be related to underdevelopment; d) there may be a range of methods needed to address the threats; and e) that these issues may be inter-related. She claims that a "*via media*" or middle ground might emerge between the different traditions.

The difficulty in reconciling state and individual security priorities is evident in Thomas and Tow's contention that emphasis needs to be placed on understanding the interstate or regional impact of domestic human security situations and their potential to reach across borders.⁶⁶ However, the result of this, despite their objections, is to narrow the concept of human security and to try to squeeze it into the traditional security framework rather than to search for a broader approach which truly prioritises the individual.⁶⁷ Thomas and Tow's own case studies of Haiti and Timor Leste and the international interventions in these countries is indicative of the problem that state security may well be established in the short term but bring limited long-term human security for their populations because of the failure to address broad livelihood issues.

If security is indeed about feeling safe, and can relate to family, tribe and nation, there is a need to deepen and broaden the concept to embrace such notions. Yet there is little apparent effort by security academics to step outside the Western intellectual framework and social context and to enter other social and cultural

⁶⁴ Buzan, *People States and Fear*.

⁶⁵ Kerr, "The Evolving Dialectic."

⁶⁶ Nicholas Thomas and William T Tow, "The Utility of Human Security: Sovereignty and Humanitarian Intervention," *Security Dialogue* 33, no. 2 (2002): 177-92.

⁶⁷ See Alex J Bellamy and Matt McDonald, "'The Utility of Human Security': Which Humans? What Security? A Reply to Thomas and Tow," *Security Dialogue* 33, no. 3 (2002): 373-77 and the rejoinder Nicholas Thomas and William T Tow, "Gaining Security by Trashing the State? A Reply to Bellamy and McDonald," *Security Dialogue* 33, no. 3 (2002): 379-82.

contexts in order to ask whether other societies really do have concepts and theories of security, and how these may relate to individual security in those contexts.⁶⁸ What appears as corruption to some may appear as a security mechanism for others – and be accepted as such within certain societies.

This is important since so much of the international human security effort in conflict resolution and prevention takes place in non-Western societies and cultures. Security in these environments may find different forms of expression. Papers presented at a conference on the "Anthropology of Human Security" illustrated, for instance, that religious and ethnic associations among immigrant groups are significant security mechanisms. Kinship was identified as providing security in Vietnam, while in other contexts, security (whether health, economic or other) was sought in ritual, which could paradoxically involved considerable risk taking. Hence, human security is not some sort of universal state but needs to be "contextualised, culturally and historically."⁶⁹ Political instability and protest In Bolivia was not consistent with a view that people were driven by a quest for security, but rather reflected a perception that "the incumbent political and economic arrangements in their country [were] ... a greater risk to their livelihoods and futures than the chancy business of resisting these arrangements on the streets."⁷⁰ The insecurity, being produced by "an endemic lack of trust" in the state system itself, requires that human security be considered in that context.⁷¹ Yet another study showed how physical and existential security strategies may be adopted by different cultural groups within the same urban residential area.⁷² In relation to Cambodia, anthropologist Alexandra Kent has used her studies of the revival of Buddhism in Cambodia and its relation to power and moral legitimacy "to begin challenging the

⁶⁸ Ken Booth, "Critical Explorations," 1-20.

⁶⁹ Oscar Salemink, "Seeking Spiritual Security in Contemporary Vietnam" (paper presented at the Conference on The Anthropology of Human Security, Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, 29-30 August 2005); Tuan Anh Nguyen, "Kinship Relations: A Dimension of Human Security in the Vietnamese Village" (paper presented at the Conference on The Anthropology of Human Security, Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, 29-30 August 2005).

⁷⁰ Ton Salman, "The Risky Endeavour of Rejecting the Risk of Being Put at Your Own Risk: Bolivians Resisting their State and its Economic Policies" (paper presented at the Conference on The Anthropology of Human Security, Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, 29-30 August 2005).

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Marion den Uyl, "Building and Rebuilding the Bijlmer: Constructing Safety and Security in a Multicultural Area" (paper presented at the Conference on The Anthropology of Human Security, 29-30 August 2005, Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, 29-30 August 2005).

inherent ethnocentricity of much security theory.”⁷³ Indeed, anthropologists have long recognised that security has been an important aspect of social formation.⁷⁴

Beyond the few anthropological studies, there is little focus on the predicaments of individuals and communities and how they may relate to state, regional and global security. As referred to elsewhere in this chapter, econometric studies into the causes of civil war, conflict and violence also neglect individual and group security. They are, however, of particular importance for three reasons. First, they provide the theoretical framework for the Human Security Report and its narrow definition of human security; second, they are influential in the formulation of post-conflict development policies and strategies; and third, they propose a range of conflict prevention mechanisms which, I argue, imply human insecurity in situations of low income and lack of human rights and human development. The econometric approach is therefore discussed in the following section.

Human security and the econometric analyses of conflict

Econometric analyses of the causes of civil war and violence seek to identify indicators which might predict the risk of individual states becoming victims of violent conflict, and to identify those areas where international effort may help to reduce and eliminate conflict and prevent its recurrence.⁷⁵ The studies are undertaken by a mix of economists and political scientists and use a number of data sets.⁷⁶ The Human Security Report referred to above draws heavily on these econometric studies.

The worldwide surveys of violent conflicts since the end of World War II, undertaken by Gurr, Marshall and Khosla, indicate that there has been a significant

⁷³ Kent, "Reconfiguring Security: Buddhism and Moral Legitimacy in Cambodia," 343-61.

⁷⁴ Karl Gustav Izikowitz, *Lamet: Hill Peasants in French Indochina*, New Edition ed. (New York: AMS Press, 1979). Izikowitz concluded in his study that "Naturally it is not only the economic, physical and political factors which draw people together in villages and larger communities. We must take other human factors into consideration, such as the need of mutual help, common protection, exchange through marriage, and above all co-existence in general." 49.

⁷⁵ Nicholas Sambanis, "Preventing Violent Civil Conflict: The Scope and Limits of Government Action: Background Paper for the World Bank's WDR," (Department of Political Science, Yale University: 2002).

⁷⁶ Economists include Collier and Hoeffler (Oxford University), and the political scientists include Sambanis (Yale University), Fearon and Laiton (Stanford University). The main dataset being the Armed Conflict Dataset (PRIO).

downturn in their number since the end of the Cold War.⁷⁷ However, while they show that the reduction in conflicts overall corresponds with increasing democratisation, the studies also reflect the fact that new democracies are fragile and at risk of instability, especially in the short term. Thus, from 2001 to 2005 they reported the number of countries at risk of falling back into conflict increased from 46 to 51. Other econometric analyses attempt to probe more deeply into the social, political and economic causes of conflict using sophisticated statistical modelling and regression analysis methods. These studies produce important findings in the human security context because there is a close link between them, the World Bank and its conflict related development assistance.⁷⁸ Their findings are thus influential in the formulation of international policies and strategies which directly impinge on the lives and hence on the human security of people during conflict resolution processes and beyond.

In a landmark econometric study, Collier and Hoeffler concluded that grievances (such as inequality, political or economic exclusion, ethnic and religious difference, and poverty) were not strong indicators of the risk of conflict within states; but that economic opportunity factors, which he lumped under the term “greed”, were far more significant.⁷⁹ The key aspect of greed was that it provided better economic prospects for the “rebels” than were otherwise available. Thus, they claimed conflict depended upon the prospects for rebel finance (e.g. natural resources, diasporas, external government assistance); low opportunity cost (availability of cheap recruits – value of rebellion outweighs the loss of education, jobs and so on); and possibilities afforded by military advantage (terrain, sympathetic population). They also suggested that there was a close correlation between violent conflict and a country’s dependence on the export of single primary commodities (eg oil, diamonds, and timber).⁸⁰ Other statistical analyses supported the conclusion that

⁷⁷ Marshall and Gurr, "Peace and Conflict 2005: A Global Survey of Armed Conflicts, Self-Determination Movements, and Democracy,"; Ted Robert Gurr, Monty G. Marshall, and Deepa Khosla, "Peace and Conflict 2001: A Global Survey of Armed Conflicts, Self-Determination Movements, and Democracy," (College Park: Centre for International Development and Conflict Management, University of Maryland, 2001).

⁷⁸ Collier in particular being closely associated with the World Bank. See for example Collier et al., *Breaking the Conflict Trap*.

⁷⁹ Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler, "Greed and Grievance in Civil War," (2000).

⁸⁰ Economic benefit may accrue to certain actors (or groups) from conflict, which creates its own economy, and may outweigh the benefit accruing from the normal economy. In some cases the greed may be criminal.

grievance factors, such as ethnic and religious diversity, inequality, lack of democracy and freedom, or state oppression against minority religions or language groups, which are all highlighted in qualitative research, were not strong predictors of violent conflict.⁸¹ However, contrary to those which downplayed grievance as an explanation for conflict, Kocher's study concluded that human rights abuses were a "strong predictor of civil war."⁸²

Later studies by Collier and Hoeffler expanded their original findings.⁸³ The new research, they claim, confirms their previous conclusions that economic factors were the primary indicators of civil war and "unambiguously support the proposition that feasibility rather than motivation is decisive for risk of rebellion."⁸⁴ They conclude that the main causes are "the level, growth and structure of income" while, for the African experience, being under the French security umbrella, the proportion of youths between 15-29 years of age and the extent of mountainous terrain are also key variables.⁸⁵

Yet, not all studies come to the same conclusions. Fearon and Laitin, for example, despite similar views on grievance, find that it is the weakness of states, in particular their limited military capabilities and their inability to control their peripheries which are the main causes of civil war. They emphasize police and military roles in containing civil wars and recommend that appropriate training for these groups is necessary to help prevent practices which aid recruitment to rebel causes. Kocher, however, is sceptical of military responses in large part because military solutions risk association with human rights abuses which, as noted above, he found to be closely related to outbreaks of civil war. Rather, his analysis suggests that urbanisation is associated with reduced risk of civil war.⁸⁶

Other issues have been tested for their significance in causing or preventing violence. Sambanis explores decentralisation and redistribution as solutions to violence, only to find that they may have positive or negative effects depending on

⁸¹ James D Fearon and David D Laitin, "Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War," (Department of Political Science, Stanford University: 2002).

⁸² Matthew Kocher, "Is Immunity from Insurgent Challenges Bought or Found?," (Department of Political Science, University of Chicago: 2002), 21.

⁸³ Paul Collier, Anke Hoeffler, and Dominic Rohner, "Beyond Greed and Grievance: Feasibility and Civil War," (Centre for the Study of African Economies: 2006).

⁸⁴ Ibid., 19.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 19-20.

⁸⁶ Kocher, "Is Immunity from Insurgent Challenges Bought or Found?."

the circumstances of a particular country.⁸⁷ He argues that violence may bring a tendency towards democracy if states make concessions and achieve negotiated solutions with rebels, but at the same time democratisation may also bring repression and insecurity to other groups, at least in the short term. Partition also emerges as a doubtful solution to conflict, but in the end he concedes, "...we know little about the full range of determinants of democratisation processes and simple tests of the relationship between conflict escalation and democratisation do not seem to reveal any significant pattern."⁸⁸ Nevertheless, he suggests a possible indirect link between decentralization and reduced conflict, possibly as a result of increased democracy.⁸⁹

However, these studies are essentially statistical analyses of risk. The methodology is one which, rather than analysing conflicts *per se*, purports to identify those social, economic and political factors which are significant in previous conflict situations, and whose presence in a given situation would be expected to increase the risk of civil war (or violent conflict), based on previous experience. It is not identifying causes in particular cases, nor is it identifying a relationship between causes and particular policy responses. The problem faced by the statistical methods is that while they are able to identify, find proxies for and correlate a range of factors, such as income, GDP, primary production, population and terrain, they are unable to represent the different underlying mechanisms or social relations which may influence the way factors are activated in particular cases. For example, the association of primary commodities with conflict may be demonstrated, but whether the association with commodities which fuel a conflict is related to greed, or is a means of financing a conflict which is itself based on grievances (resulting for example from collapsed world prices, the expropriation of commodities by a government, or other relationship) is not determined nor analysed.⁹⁰

Davenport also finds limitations in the greed-grievance models and claims that research based on three models – inflammation of conflict through repression; state incapacity to apply sufficient repression to prevent conflict; and ineffectiveness when rebels outlast or outfight the repression – has been inconclusive, and that it has

⁸⁷ Sambanis, "Preventing Violent Civil Conflict," 8-20.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 36.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ Macartan Humphreys, "Economics and Violent Conflict," (Harvard University: 2002), 4-5.

also “hindered our understanding of civil war onset.”⁹¹ He argues that econometric analyses need to look more specifically at low-level conflict and, in particular, to consider cultural and normative factors as well as political opportunity in relation to conflict. He also suggests that human rights abuses, protest and social movements as well as state repression are possible issues to be studied in relation to low-level conflict and its escalation.⁹² Such an approach would begin to address the local problems which may make individuals and groups vulnerable to conflict and which are, in themselves, human security issues.

Finally, as Kocher notes, economic development may also be a factor in the emergence of violent conflict, as it brings with it “a basket of highly associated empirical factors ranging from personal incomes to more powerful militaries to better infrastructure, each of which is plausibly related to the likelihood of civil war.”⁹³ While these may be related to civil war or violent conflict, only local socio-political analysis will help to understand the underlying mechanisms of how they may create civil war and violence. In part this is recognised by the World Bank, which, although sponsoring macro-level econometric studies, redirects attention back to local sociological and political analysis in the search for solutions to conflict.⁹⁴ The human factor in a given situation will always be the key to conflict avoidance and resolution—and to human security.

While the econometric analyses are important in their contribution to conflict management, they are strongly rooted in the assumptions inherent in the modelling of the data, the identification of proxies and the allocation of values to political and social factors. The analyses are open to subjectivity and interpretation and are far from definitive in their findings. It is also a concern that, although they note that neighbours and unfavourable local regions may influence civil war, the studies still project the view that civil conflict and its causes are essentially internal – a view which we shall see in the case of Cambodia cannot be supported.⁹⁵ Policy proposals

⁹¹ Davenport, Armstrong, and Lichbach, "Conflict Escalation," 4, 11.

⁹² Ibid., 15-16, 35-36.

⁹³ Kocher, "Is Immunity from Insurgent Challenges Bought or Found?."

⁹⁴ Shonali Sardesai and Per Wam, "The Conflict Analysis Framework (CAF): Identifying Conflict-Related Obstacles to Development," (Conflict Prevention and Reconstruction Unit, World Bank: 2002).

⁹⁵ There is a complex relationship between internal and external as shown by the so called “conflict diamond” trade which supported internal conflict, while the subsequent regulation of the international trade was a critical factor in reducing conflict.

by all the econometric analysts also place democracy as a central requirement in the long term, even though it has been shown that in some cases, authoritarian rule is more likely to reduce the risk of civil war at least in the short term.⁹⁶ This suggests that, whatever the political system, political leadership is a key factor in the management of conflict. However, the econometric analyses provide little if any scrutiny of the role of political leadership – state or rebel – and any external support it may have.

The practical application of the econometric analyses is found particularly in conflict related development policy. In his work for the World Bank, Collier focuses on post-conflict situations to ascertain the appropriate policies to maintain peace and reduce the risk of subsequent relapse into violence.⁹⁷ In assessing four aspects of development assistance policy (in order of importance in non-conflict situations) – macro economic policy, structural development, social policy and governance, his models indicate that in a post-conflict country, “... it would be desirable if social policy could improve at a faster rate than structural policy, which in turn should improve at a faster rate than macro policy.”⁹⁸ This recognises the underlying importance of local socio-political conditions and mechanisms in achieving peace and in preventing a return to violence and is a theme continued in other internal World Bank papers, which redirect attention back to sociological and political analysis, thereby hinting that grievance is a more telling factor than greed.⁹⁹

Yet despite the recognition of social issues, the claim that conflict represents the failure of development, and the conclusion that development assistance has been a “most disappointing” instrument for its prevention, the econometric studies still persist in prioritising macro-economic approaches in the post conflict period.¹⁰⁰ What is important from a human security perspective, however, is that the priorities indicated by the econometric models of conflict and post-conflict situations might not adequately identify factors in the pre-conflict stage which led to violence in the

⁹⁶ This raises the question whether there is not value in supporting certain authoritarian regimes for human security reasons (as well as economic development) just as authoritarian regimes are supported for other security reasons such as US support for Pakistan’s military leadership arising from the so called war on terror.

⁹⁷ Collier, "Aid, Policy and Growth in Post-Conflict Countries."

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Sardesai and Wam, "The Conflict Analysis Framework (CAF): Identifying Conflict-Related Obstacles to Development."

¹⁰⁰ Collier, "Development and Conflict."; and Collier et al., *Breaking the Conflict Trap*.

first place. As noted above, understanding the circumstances of conflict does not fully account for how it arose initially, the particular mechanisms which may underpin the rebel control of resources, leadership and public policy failures, or the basis of state weakness.¹⁰¹ A better understanding of pre-conflict circumstances leading to civil unrest may suggest a shift in the priority of development assistance in countries at risk towards addressing social policies and institutions rather than assuming that macro-economic policies will bring growth and in turn alleviate social conditions. This reminds us of Booth's insight that security, and hence the avoidance of violent conflict, depends on an appropriate level of political and social justice.

In broad terms, the econometric studies of conflict and the policy proposals emerging from them are a form of "globalisation", breaking down barriers to external influences, promoting democratisation and the integration of states into the international market economy. Clearly, more work needs to be done to bring together the quantitative and qualitative analyses of the causes of conflict and the appropriate policy directions to inform practical solutions. In particular, issues of leadership and the involvement of various movements, civil society and political actors are all relevant in determining how communities, societies and even countries achieve, or fail to achieve, a peaceful path to development without the emergence of civil war. These actors are not well represented in the econometric studies and limit their prescriptions for a human security approach. Instead, there is appeal to the long-term development solutions that have been in vogue for several decades and which have failed to prevent the emergence of violent conflict.

How is human security achieved?

There are a number of studies which propose ways in which human security can be realised. For example, Pierre Lizée, sees the achievement of human security essentially in the achievement of "democratisation and social justice", in the "opening up of politico-economic decision-making which is central to human security" and "to the construction of the rule of law and representative democracy,

¹⁰¹ Macartan Humphreys, "Natural Resources, Conflicts, and Conflict Resolution: Uncovering the Mechanisms," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 49, no. 4 (2005); and Humphreys, "Economics and Violent Conflict."

which is at the heart of human security.”¹⁰² Lizée also argues a central role for civil society in challenging governments and paving the way for improving state adherence to the rule of law and principles of democracy.¹⁰³ However, he also sees human security primarily as a “rallying cry” for civil society and does not seek to analyse the concept, its measures or impact at the level of the individual or group. He is more concerned about state politics and how it can be influenced by civil society, as well as by state-to-state relations, to comply with international norms. Nevertheless, Lizée captures the major themes widely advocated as the means for attaining human security, including democratisation, social justice, politico-economic decision making, rule of law and human rights. These are the approaches tested by my field-based study in chapter 4.

Since the end of the Cold War, the promotion of democracy has become a relatively uncontested activity of developed countries and the major multilateral institutions. There is, however, a risk of democracy appearing as a panacea for all social ills and for its Western form to be seen as a universal given. The Human Security Report correlates a reduction in interstate conflict with the spread of democracy, but is aware, too, that the econometric analyses have also warned that democracy may itself be destabilising, and hence give rise to human insecurities, at least in the short term. Human rights and the rule of law are also significant factors, but they in turn raise important questions about state responsibilities, even as there is a tendency to internationalise those responsibilities especially through internationally sponsored human rights approaches to development and an emphasis on democratic governance.¹⁰⁴

There is strong argument for a law-based approach to achieving human security. However, this tends to emphasise the role of international civil society in achievements such as the formation of the international court, the ban on land mines

¹⁰² Pierre Lizée, "Human Security in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia," *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 24, no. 3 (2002): 509-27.

¹⁰³ Examples of the sort of process envisaged can be seen in the experience of indigenous Thai NGOs from the 1970s to the present, as they have campaigned for democracy, gone to the countryside to promote development and challenge large scale projects, and more recently taken extended activities into regional and global action on issues such as the environment and AIDS.

¹⁰⁴ Sergio Vieira de Mello, Opening Statement at the Regional Cooperation for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in the Asia Pacific Region Conference 25-27 February 2003.

and international outlawing of child soldiers.¹⁰⁵ Less attention is given to the role of law at the local level, and how this can provide human security for local individuals and groups. Instead, the focus tends to be more on law enforcement by the military and police – so-called security sector reform – and the promotion of international efforts to improve the professional behaviour of state militaries, police and other security sector institutions, and their subjection to civilian control and acceptance of the rule of law and human rights, which it is argued will encourage “good governance” and development.¹⁰⁶ It is argued, too, that by promoting civilian control over security forces, increased professionalism and decommissioning of excess service personnel, as well as confining the use of the security sector to roles consistent with Western norms and behaviour, human security will also be served.¹⁰⁷ There are of course risks in such approaches as they may appear to represent yet more Western imposition and provide a more effective security sector to support narrow political and economic interests within countries and militate against democratic reforms. It may also result in more serious oppression against the local populations.

Such strategies assume that despite the individual focus of human rights and the rule of law, human security objectives will be achieved by state and regional security outcomes. Nevertheless, others have argued that human security can be achieved through social welfare and domestic development programmes which reduce the risk of domestic issues spilling over and becoming security issues between states.¹⁰⁸ Something similar emerges in studies which point to civil society approaches to

¹⁰⁵ Claude Bruderlein, "The Role of Non-state Actors in Building Human Security - The case of Armed Groups in Intra-state Wars," (Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue. Paper prepared for the Ministerial Meeting of the Human Security Network in Lucerne: 2000); and Claude Bruderlein, "People's Security as a New Measure of Global Stability," *International Review of the Red Cross*, no. 842 (2001).

¹⁰⁶ Alex J Bellamy, "Security Sector Reform: Prospects and Problems," *Global Change, Peace & Security* 15, no. 2 (2003): 102; and Bruderlein, "The Role of Non-state Actors."

¹⁰⁷ Bellamy, "Security Sector Reform: Prospects and Problems," 112-4. He also summarises a range of potential pitfalls in security sector reform. See also Anthony Burke, "Caught between National and Human Security: Knowledge and Power in Post-crisis Asia," *Pacifica Review* 13, no. 3 (2001): 216-39, who notes a positive role for militaries in modernisation in Asia at the same time as perpetrating human rights abuses. See also Nicole Ball, "Reforming Security Sector Governance," *Conflict, Security and Development* 4, no. 4 (2004). The linkages being through enforcing the rule of law, enhancing respect for human rights, finding ways to solve conflict and creating political stability, thereby encouraging people to invest in development. This would be operationalised through governance, security sector reform, peacebuilding, partnerships with civil society and local capacity building.

¹⁰⁸ P H Liotta, "Boomerang Effect: The Convergence of National and Human Security," *Security Dialogue* 33, no. 4 (2002): 473-88.

human security. Thomas and Tow, for example, support a significant role for international civil society organizations in providing international interventions, based on case studies from Haiti and East Timor. These are, however, hardly convincing examples as the day-to-day livelihoods of populations and the engagement of local civil society in these countries is problematic. Major international interventions in a number of countries have failed in the longer term to develop an effective civil society and have provided only short-term reprieve from violence, much as predicted by the econometric analyses above.¹⁰⁹ The emphasis needs to shift more to the role of local civil society (which may be very limited in some societies) in human security.

It seems that there is thus very little convincing evidence of how human security is to be achieved at the local level, especially if we insist, as Thakur does, that “human security puts the individual at the centre of debate, analysis and policy. He or she is paramount; the state is but a collective instrument to protect human life and enhance human welfare.”¹¹⁰ At the same time, the achievement of human security must co-exist with attention to state, regional and global security interests. In practical terms it is recognised that rich countries need to address both traditional and human security issues in balancing their foreign policy approaches to ensure their own security. This can be seen in Australia’s relations with East Timor, Papua New Guinea and other countries in the Pacific, and in the Solomon Islands in particular. There the security threat of a failed state on Australia’s doorstep is being addressed both by conflict resolution and the very kinds of welfare and development approaches suggested by Liotta.¹¹¹ Australia’s military, for example, has been asked to play the role of peace keeper and to uphold human security in a number of countries such as Cambodia, East Timor, Afghanistan, Iraq and the Solomon Islands. However, these interventions are still suggestive of “doing” human security.

Overall, there are a variety of factors which are proposed as being fundamental to the achievement of human security. All are relevant, but as will be evident in the case of Cambodia, the prioritisation of one over the other in a general or theoretical context will have very limited value—the need is for a much more holistic approach to

¹⁰⁹ Thomas and Tow, "The Utility of Human Security: Sovereignty and Humanitarian Intervention."

¹¹⁰ Ramesh Thakur, "A Political Worldview," *Security Dialogue* 35, no. 3 (2004): 347.

¹¹¹ Liotta, "Boomerang Effect: The Convergence of National and Human Security," 473-88.

human security in the prioritisation and application of strategies in response to specific local and national circumstances. To do this, human security in developing countries, as elsewhere, needs to be considered at the local and state level and not bound by an international security framework which depoliticises it locally.¹¹² The international approach of external states, international organisations and international civil society organisations not only risks divorcing the state from its domestic responsibilities for human security, but also reduces it to what is necessary for the wider international security interest. As a result, it may be seen to be achieved simply by an absence of conflict and reduced poverty levels.

The need for civil society in the re-politicisation of national and human security issues within the domestic context as well as internationally is significant. But civil society movements must respond to actual conditions and remain politically active. The risk for them is that if they become institutionalised after achieving their initial aims, they also become de-politicised.¹¹³

Although Tan See Seng, like Booth, sees social movements as important in the process of achieving human security, his emphasis is on the international dimension of social movement and, while that will be important to the achievement of human security, there must also be a similar emphasis on politicising issues through local social movements. This idea of social movements is significant because, if human security is to be politicised, then it must be in response to people's perception of a threat to themselves or others. Hence, there needs to be some way of expressing the security concern in a political process in the appropriate context – local government, state, regional or global depending on the political dimensions and importance.

In the absence of local studies of human security it is not surprising that its achievement has been largely assumed to depend on international activities, especially the promotion of human rights and human development norms. The record to date has not been convincing. Despite that, however, as noted above, it has been argued in support of the narrow definition of human security that the broader concept adds nothing to what is already offered by human rights and human development. The next section will explore the relationship between human

¹¹² Tan See Seng, "Human Security: Discourse, Statecraft, Emancipation," in *The Human Face of Security: Asia-Pacific Perspectives*, ed. David Dickens (Canberra: Canberra Papers on Strategy and Defence No. 144, ANU, 2002).

¹¹³ Ibid.

security, human rights and human development in more detail to show that human rights and human development approaches can benefit from being incorporated into a broad human security approach.

Human security, human rights and human development - the relationship

A discussion of human security inevitably brings into play questions of its relationship with human rights and human development. The international human rights regime is based upon the Universal Declaration of Human Rights sponsored by the US and accepted by the General Assembly of the UN in 1948. Human development has emerged, and continues to be reformulated, over many decades of development since the 1950s. It has grown from the disenchantment with Rostow's "trickle down" theory of economic growth through the failure of structural adjustment and a realisation that greater attention to the basic needs of people and to their participation and empowerment in the processes of development was warranted.¹¹⁴

Definitions of human security in terms of people's physical safety, their economic and social wellbeing, respect for their dignity and worth as human beings, and the protection of their rights and fundamental freedoms are expressed in terms little different from those which are to be found in human rights and human development literature. The relationship is in fact treated in a variety of ways, but the distinction is not always clear. They are, for example, described in pairs as two sides of the same coin, and it is said you can't have one without the other.¹¹⁵ More specifically, human rights have been described as a "bridge between human security and human development."¹¹⁶ It is argued here that human security, like freedom, represents a goal that can be achieved by application of the principles of human rights and the mechanisms of human development. A human security approach has the advantage that it is directly associated with state and global security, and captures the purpose

¹¹⁴ The basic needs approach was formulated by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) in 1976. See International Labour Organisation (ILO), *Employment, Growth and Basic Needs: A One World Problem* (Geneva: ILO, 1976).

¹¹⁵ Commission on Human Security, "Human Security Now," 8-9.

¹¹⁶ Nicole Ball, "Report of a Conference Organised by the Programme for Strategic and International Studies, Graduate Institute of International Studies, Geneva," (Geneva: 2001); and Nicole Ball, "Enhancing Security Sector Governance: A Conceptual Framework for UNDP," (2002).

of human rights and human development to achieve not only individual, but also global, security goals.

Nevertheless, human security is downplayed even by the UNDP in subsequent Human Development Reports which, from 1995, emphasise freedoms as the goal of human rights and human development. For example, the 2000 Report says that:

“Human rights and human development share a common vision and a common purpose – to secure the freedom, wellbeing and dignity of all people everywhere”

and that:

“Human development shares a common vision with human rights. The goal is human freedom. And in pursuing capabilities and realizing rights, this freedom is vital. Human development and human rights are mutually reinforcing, helping to secure the well-being and dignity of all people, building self-respect and the respect of others.”¹¹⁷

This goal-oriented view of human rights and human development and its association with freedom owes much to the influence of Amartya Sen as an adviser to the UNDP.¹¹⁸ It is also represented in conflict management studies. But it is significant that the goal of human rights is thus not only the protection of the individual from the state but includes also the responsibility of the state to provide a framework of opportunity for its citizens. This latter responsibility of states is spelled out in the Declaration of the Right to Development which was adopted by the General Assembly in 1986 and reconfirmed in the Vienna Declaration and subsequently by the General Assembly in 1993. Human development works towards the same goal by providing the techniques and processes which, in association with other national development strategies, enhance the capability of individuals and the opportunities necessary for people to achieve human security. Sen’s goal of freedom is somewhat similar to that of human security, but the latter draws the issues of individual welfare directly into the international security framework. It is not necessary in this thesis to attempt to argue for or against the primacy of human rights. However, it is important to note that there remains considerable debate on issues relating to the universality of rights, whether they concern natural or only legal rights, and the major issue of cultural relativity. It is adequate here to take the view that, pursuant to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the universality is accepted in principle by member states of the UN whether or not they are adopted into their law

¹¹⁷ UNDP, "Human Development Report 2000: Human Rights and Human Development," (United Nations Development Programme, 2000), 1, 28.

¹¹⁸ Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 211-12.

or constitutions.¹¹⁹ Moreover, human rights—economic, social, civil, and political—are in the end open to political debate or legislated depending on the approach in particular countries and guaranteed only to the extent that societies respect them and individual states and their institutions support and implement them. My human security approach and its focus at the local level helps to re-consider the contribution of human rights and human development in local practice, suggesting that together they may be the bridges to human security.

In summary, there is an awareness that human rights must be protected or enforced, and that societies must either struggle or be ever vigilant to ensure their rights are not ignored or taken away. To be meaningful, rights require positive and conscious actions—by civil society, by state institutions, by the international community or other “protectors.” Human development is one tool that can enhance awareness of individual and group rights and the opportunities to exercise them. It requires training in human rights; an improvement in the education and capacity of people to participate in their societies and in the economy; and an understanding of the benefits, in a democratic situation at least, of insisting on their own rights as well as respecting those of others. This presupposes the effective operation of certain government institutions, and in particular the justice system. The concept of human security enables a new perspective on how these elements come together to achieve their common objectives.

Human security in practice

The chapter has traced a path of comment and criticism of the concept of human security presented in the 1994 UNDP Human development Report. The tendency since then has been for the UNDP itself to rather downplay the concept in its future reports, while isolated UNDP country offices have given it initial support—the most

¹¹⁹ The Universal Declaration has its sceptics even within the US where even at the highest levels economic and social rights may be rejected as “myths” by a US deputy secretary of state for human rights and humanitarian affairs, or as “a letter to Santa Claus ...” by a US ambassador to the UN (Jeane Kirkpatrick). The US also derided the notion of a right to development. See Noam Chomsky, “What We Know: On the Universals of Language and Rights,” *Boston Review*, Summer 2005, viewed at <http://bostonreview.net/BR30.3/Chomsky> on 17 January 2007.

significant being UNDP Human Development Report for Afghanistan in 2005.¹²⁰ Other UN organizations and the OECD promote human security but primarily in a top-down security-related approach.¹²¹ The African Human Security Initiative supported by the UK Department for International Development (DFID) is set up within a security framework to monitor commitments to democracy, good governance and civil society participation.¹²² ASEAN has also included a human security agenda. A number of states have joined the Human Security Network and organise conferences on specific topics from a policy perspective. Canada has continued to support the Human Security Centre, which disseminates related research and information. While Canada, Thailand and several other countries in the Network have included human security in their foreign policies, others such as Australia and the US have lent little, if any, endorsement of the concept. The UN, through the Secretary General, has given its support though it has tended to highlighted the narrow definition, especially by its engagement with the Human Security Report. The UN Security Council, however, has not as yet embraced human security.¹²³

The more visible outcome of human security efforts has been the support for political initiatives aimed at conflict resolution as well as for international campaigns within the UN and by international NGOs to restrict violence through treaties which would ban the production and use of land mines; prevent the spread of small arms (which are used in conflicts and violence in many parts of the world); outlaw the use of child soldiers, and encourage anti-drug efforts. In this context, human security has emerged as a very effective rallying cry and diplomatic tool for civil society groups, the UN and sympathetic governments. In Cambodia there have been a range

¹²⁰ UNDP, "Afghanistan's first National Human Development Report: Security With a Human Face," (Kabul: UNDP, 2005). Subsequent Afghanistan Human Development Reports have not continued the human security approach.

In 2007 the Executive Board of the UNDP in response to an evaluation of UNDP's assistance to conflict-affected countries, expressed reservation about a recommendation that it "formulate a strategic vision based upon the concept of human security." See Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme and of the United Nations Population Fund, "Management Response to the Evaluation of UNDP Assistance to Conflict-affected Countries," (UN: DP/2007/4/Rev-1, 12 April 2007: 2007).

¹²¹ The OECD sponsors the Sahel and West Africa Club which promotes human security among a network of West African organisations working on security issues. See the Lomé workshop at www.oecd.org.

¹²² See www.africanreview.org for details of the Initiative.

¹²³ The UN Security Council has been briefed on human security, for example, by the Canadian Ambassador in 2005 on behalf of the Human Security Network. The concept of human security was also the subject of a thematic debate in the General Assembly on 22 May 2008.

of programmes relating to land mine victims, recovery from conflict and violence as well as specific human rights issues, largely driven by external agencies such as the UN and international NGOs.

As a concept with “Asian roots”, human security has also achieved a level of recognition in regional security dialogue and includes expressions of policy commitment to human security principles.¹²⁴ Both ASEAN and APEC have included human security within their policy frameworks. The 1997 economic crisis resulted in many social problems in the affected Asian countries. These included ethnic tensions and widespread urban to rural migration following the extensive loss of businesses, markets and jobs. Attention became focused on people’s security and the problems emerging were recognised as human security issues which required the establishment of welfare and safety nets to protect people from the consequences of this and any possible future economic downturn.¹²⁵ Both agencies have addressed the subject cautiously to avoid implications of interference in domestic affairs. They see human security as being served by such things as trade and health security, which can be addressed through consultation and cooperation between states in the region.¹²⁶ Thailand has been foremost in promoting human security, in part due to the influence of former Foreign Minister, Surin Pitsuwan, who was a member of the Human Security Commission. Thailand has been chair of the Human Security Network where it has sought to balance freedom from fear and freedom from want approaches and has promoted people-centred development and empowerment. However, it appears that, at this level of policy discussion, there is some caution in

¹²⁴ Amitav Acharya, "Human Security: What Kind for the Asia-Pacific?," in *The Human Face of Security: Asia-Pacific Perspectives*, ed. David Dickens (Canberra, ANU: Canberra Papers on Strategy and Defence No. 144, 2002), 6. See also Acharya, "Human Security: East Versus West?," where he discusses the Asian input to the development of the concept. Note also that that Amartya Sen and Surin Pitsuwan, former Minister for Foreign Affairs, Thailand, are members of the Commission of Human Security which is sponsored by Japan.

¹²⁵ See Caballero-Anthony, "Human Security in the Asia-Pacific: Current Trends and Prospects," 26-29; and Burke, "Caught between National and Human Security: Knowledge and Power in Post-crisis Asia," 216-39. See also Thomas and Wilkin, eds., *Globalization, Human Security, and the African Experience*, 173, who refer to the response of the international financial institutions as the “greatest global asset swindle of all time.”

¹²⁶ See Jamil D Ahsan, "Major Challenges Facing the Promotion of Human Security in Asia," in *What Agenda for Human Security in the Twenty-First Century?*, ed. UNESCO (UNESCO, 2005 Second Edition), 203-14.

relation to the possibility that human security could become a basis for external interference in much the same way as human rights was perceived in the past.¹²⁷

Thailand's policy interest in human security was enhanced by the financial crisis of 1997 which severely undermined the livelihoods of many Thais, especially in the absence of social security for workers and professionals who lost their jobs, and for their families.¹²⁸ Many would argue that the harsh demands of the IMF on Thailand and the forced privatisation and sale of business and financial institutions to overseas investors in accordance with economic globalisation expectations, aggravated the extent of the social impact.¹²⁹ More recent health scares related to Avian Flu Virus and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) outbreaks demonstrate how a basic human health security issue can be scaled up and indeed become lost in international security practices.

For example, when confronted by threats associated with the potentially devastating Avian Flu and SARS viruses, there was rapid international action headed largely by the WHO to prevent the spread of the viruses beyond the location of isolated outbreaks. The main form of attack on Avian Flu was the slaughter of large numbers of poultry in affected areas with a consequent loss of both food and income for businesses and villagers affected. Curley and Tow detail the background of the SARS outbreak and its spread to Vietnam, Thailand, Singapore and elsewhere.¹³⁰ Effectively dealing with SARS, they found, depended on the state's capacity to coordinate all relevant agencies and stakeholders and to plan and manage the necessary response. Their study demonstrated a close "intersection between politics, economic development and public health."¹³¹ The key human security issue was the threat of the outbreak spreading among the population. The risk of its spreading across borders and globally through transport systems was also a significant international security matter with implication for human security in other countries which might be affected. McInnes and Lee, after observing a number of

¹²⁷ Acharya, "Human Security: What Kind for the Asia-Pacific?," 6; and Acharya, "Human Security: East Versus West?," 9.

¹²⁸ Thailand created a Ministry of Social Welfare and Human Security.

¹²⁹ Rapin Quinn, "Social Impact of Economic Crisis in Thailand," *Development Bulletin*, no. 46 (1998).

¹³⁰ Melissa Curley and Nicholas Thomas, "Human Security and Public Health in Southeast Asia: the SARS Outbreak," *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 58, no. 1 (2004). 17-32.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 28.

international conferences and meetings on the issue, concluded that the agendas were “dominated by the concerns of foreign and security policy, not of global health”, and they mainly reflected the interests of the West in infectious diseases and bio-terror. Despite the known links between internal stability and health, they argued that WHO lacked the conceptual clarity as to what global health security meant and had no clear answer to the question of whose health, whose security risk and what issues should be part of the global health security agenda.¹³² Chen claims that the infectious diseases unit of the WHO even suggested that “global surveillance and control against infectious diseases, including bio-terrorism, should work with and be financed by national departments of defence.”¹³³

Through such processes, rather than operationalising human security at the local level, the international security interests shifted the focus from the immediately vulnerable individuals and groups to states and to a global security perspective. While there were legitimate global security concerns, they came to override the significant human security issue in the frontline countries concerned, much as argued by Kaldor and Duffield. While rich countries can organise and test comprehensive response plans and procedures designed to reduce risk and ensure the human security of their populations, the poor countries are unequipped to do the same and their populations are relegated to the source of risk. Even though a human security approach was attempted by the UNDP in Afghanistan in consultation with the people, the approach has not been maintained.¹³⁴ Rather, human security has been operationalised at the international policy level in an attempt to bring it to people as

¹³² Colin McInnes and Kelly Lee, "Health, Security and Foreign Policy," *Review of International Studies* 32, no. 1 (2006): 22. See also Steven Lanjouw, Joanna Macrae, and Anthony B Zwi, "Rehabilitating Health Services in Cambodia: The Challenge of Coordination in Chronic Political Emergencies," *Health Policy and Planning* 14, no. 3 (1999): 229-42.

¹³³ Lincoln C Chen and Vasant Narasimhan, "Health and Human Security: Pointing a Way Forward," (2002), at www.fas.harvard.edu/acgei/Publications/Chen/LCC_Health_and_HS_way_forward.pdf, accessed on 17 March 2007.

¹³⁴ UNDP, "Afghanistan's first National Human Development Report: Security With a Human Face." "This Report", says its editor, Shahrbanou Tadjbakhsh, "is about accountability to the Afghan people. It is a reminder, voiced by the hundreds involved, that the responsibility of the government and the international community in Afghanistan is to provide human security public goods for all Afghans, regardless of gender, ethnicity or geographic location. But it also calls on people themselves to become actively involved in the process of creating those goods. A first step was to be involved directly in identifying common desired goals and threats to these. This Report and its process are ultimately an expression of hope for a life of dignity."

part of a broader global security strategy. Individuals and local groups have little input to these policies and processes.

Conclusion

There is considerable debate as to the meaning and utility of the concept of human security and there are varying approaches to its study. At the same time, despite scepticism among international relations and traditional security academics as to the validity and utility of the concept of human security, it has, with the adoption of the narrow definition, found extensive support in the fields of critical security studies and research on conflict and conflict resolution. It has also gained a high profile among policy makers and international activists in pursuit of peace and human rights agendas. Many academics in international relations and security areas have found it difficult to reconcile security with individuals and groups and therefore continue to adhere to existing theories of state-centric security. There are chinks in the armour and the broad concept of human security is making inroads into the international relations and security disciplines. There is a certain pressure coming from other disciplines such as anthropology where a range of social conditions is being studied in terms of security. There is little to support a view that human security must be only about critical issues and determined by some form of measurable threshold. Indeed, such a demand exceeds the security practice of states, which identify and address all forms of perceived threats and vulnerabilities, not only critical ones. Security practice by states, in peacetime in particular, is mainly about preventing issues from attaining a critical status – be it diplomatically or through military posture.

There is still much research to be done to locate human security within the wider security framework. A start has been made through critical theory studies and through the attempts to formulate development programmes from a human security perspective in Afghanistan. These approaches reveal that human security must be about the actual circumstances of individuals and groups, and about state and international influences on that condition. Human security is either part of a continuum of security from the individual to state to the international, or it may be considered an area of security alongside international security, national security,

environmental security, economic security and so on. I argue that the former is more realistic (as the SARS and Avian Flu examples above demonstrate) and so the next chapter explores how the dominant security policies and practices of other states, as well as domestic events, created decades of human insecurity in Cambodia through war and other forms of violence. The international, national and individual cannot be de-linked in the security context.

I have shown, too, that there is a close link between the human security condition associated with war and violence, and development. Failures in development are shown to be part of the causes of war and violence and, at the same time, development is a critical element in the long-term security of post-conflict states. Studies have variously suggested that human security is guaranteed by such things as the state, civil society, governance, adherence to the rule of law, democratisation or development. I consider all of these are relevant and have also embraced human rights and human development as important contributors to human security—though some would see these as adequate to achieving humanitarian outcomes making the concept of human security redundant. What I have concluded to be critical, however, is how people at the local level identify problems and issues which threaten their basic livelihoods and dignity and what opportunities they have to address these individually, as a group or in association with state and independent institutions.

This chapter concludes that human security must be defined in the broad sense. However, rather than try to produce yet another definition, I have adopted the very open approach of Thakur for the purpose of fieldwork that "... human security refers to the quality of life of the people of a society or polity. Anything which degrades their quality of life – demographic pressures, diminished access to or stock of resources, and so on – is a [human] security threat."¹³⁵ As noted above, I also use the definition proposed by the Commission for Africa which incorporates the important provisions of the role of governance, for analytical purposes.

What has also been concluded is that security studies have not focused attention on the predicament of individuals and communities and how they may relate to state, regional and global security. In the next two chapters, therefore, I will demonstrate

¹³⁵ Thakur, "From National to Human Security." 53.

how individual and community security have been caught up in international security practice in Cambodia, and how human insecurities persist long into the post-conflict period despite the high level of international development assistance.

CHAPTER 3

HUMAN SECURITY AND INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT - THE CASE OF CAMBODIA

I think Cambodia has an importance beyond itself, because there in its fragile heart paraded, throughout the 1970s, many of the most frightful beasts that now stalked the world. Brutal civil war, superpower intervention carelessly conducted from afar, nationalism exaggerated into paranoid racism, fanatical and vengeful revolution, invasion, starvation and back to unobserved civil war without end.¹

The fundamental components of human security – the security of *people* against threats to personal safety and life expectancy – can be put at risk by external aggression, but also by factors within a country, including ‘security’ forces.²

As Shawcross points out, Cambodians in the 1970s faced some of the worst conditions imaginable and human security was denied to the majority of the population through war and state violence against its own citizens. However, the insecurity of Cambodians was not always a result of domestic factors and the international politics of the cold war played a significant role in the people’s ongoing distress. With the decline of the cold war, the international community played a belated role in bringing a peace settlement to what had become Cambodia’s civil war. It also brought the hope that democracy and development would bring a significant improvement to the human security situation.

The purpose of this chapter is twofold. First, to show that in addition to domestic issues, international security practice and the way in which external states use both military and political power in their own interests, contributed directly to creating and maintaining human insecurity in Cambodia in the 1970s and 1980s. Secondly, to outline the processes of state rebuilding by the Vietnamese installed government of Heng Samrin following the destruction of the Pol Pot years, and the later rebuilding under the auspices of an internationally sponsored post-conflict development assistance programme.

¹ Shawcross, *Sideshow: Kissinger, Nixon, and the Destruction of Cambodia*, 14.
² Thakur, "A Political Worldview," 347.

Cambodians through their long history have been subject to the violence of war as a result of tensions with neighbours, rebel activities, banditry and in colonial times in particular, military responses to rural instability. They have also been subject to the harsh demands of a predatory state and the social disruption produced by economic and political change. While it is possible only to hint at the human insecurities present in Cambodia's early periods, it is important to outline the process of Cambodian state formation and the major forces that have shaped it, because it brings its own social, political and administrative legacy and has a bearing on later events and on human security in Cambodia in more recent times. I have therefore provided, at Appendix A, a short historical background to state formation in Cambodia and to events leading to the 1970 coup which sent Cambodia into the spiral of war and human insecurity.

Cambodia's descent into war and related violence is outlined from a human rather than state security perspective. The following two sections provide an overview of the different situations of human insecurity endured by Cambodians, in war and as refugees, as a result in part of domestic politics and in part, also, of the security politics of external states. A section is then devoted to the reconstruction of the communist state in Cambodia following the demise of the Pol Pot regime and describes the revival of patrimonial government systems which form the basis for a new state rebuilding exercise taken up by the international development community. The final section outlines the new international engagement with Cambodia through extensive democratisation and development assistance programmes. International assistance in Cambodia is a continuation of international security practice in the belief that democracy and development will bring economic benefit, stability and security to Cambodia and to the region.

The chapter argues that although human security is an essentially local condition, it is not only a domestic issue of state governance but is also strongly influenced by the security interests and practices of other states and of international governance organisations. It will demonstrate how international humanitarian efforts and peace negotiations themselves were at times hampered by the separate security interests of the states involved in the Cambodian conflict. There is evidence of such influence in many aspects of the human insecurities suffered by Cambodians in different situations since the 1970s. Even after the negotiation of the peace agreement, the

international community continued to have an influence on the human security of Cambodians through the development policies and programmes proposed by Western development theories and development organisations such as the World Bank and UNDP.

Cambodia – conflict, devastation and reconstruction 1960-2004

Figure 3-1 below depicts rice production in Cambodia from 1961 to 2004. It is not presented to analyse food security as such, but as a useful way of illustrating the impact of key political events and periods on a basic human security condition. Each period identified in this section will be further analysed to identify the various forms of insecurity co-existing at different times in Cambodia’s recent past. Features of initial interest are the unusual peaks and troughs in production from 1967 to 1970 followed by a radical collapse in production by 1975. What was happening in the countryside in these and the following years?

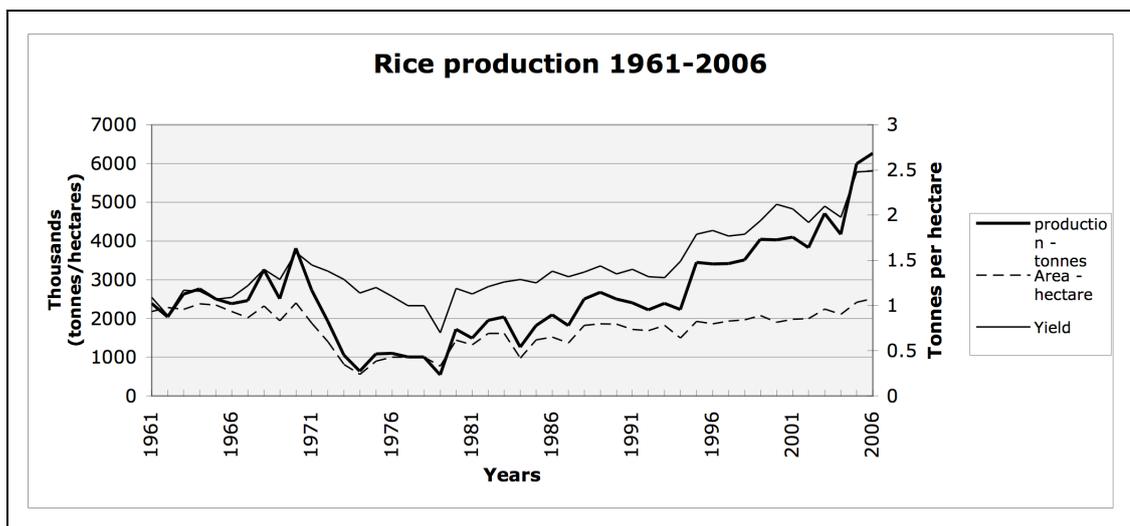


Figure 3-1 Rice production in Cambodia 1961-2006³

War and the Khmer Rouge victory – 1970 to 1975

During the 1960s there was increasing unrest in the countryside where trends in some parts towards larger landholdings and landlordism, and poor prices meant that

³ Compiled from FAO, Statistics Division, Commodities by Country and IRRI database at <http://www.irri.org/science/ricestat> Tables 1 & 2, accessed 20 September 2005. A similar table appears in Puckridge, *The Burning of the Rice: A Cambodian Success Story*.

there were growing numbers of peasants, either landless or with smallholdings, who were desperate and prepared to support revolutionary activities.⁴ At the same time, there was growing discontent among the urban, educated class. Entry to the civil service became difficult, alternative employment was not available, political corruption was rife and left-wing opposition politicians and intellectuals were increasingly suppressed by Sihanouk, forcing many to flee to the “maquis”, or Khmer Rouges as Sihanouk dubbed them, in fear for their lives.⁵ Across the countryside, leftist rebel groups and younger revolutionaries from the towns conducted political activities among the peasants.⁶

A new right wing government elected in 1966 sought to reverse Sihanouk’s politics of neutrality in relation to the Vietnam War, to restore relations with the US and to subdue the rebels in the countryside. Increased military activity against rebels and widespread peasant discontent led, in April 1967, to a rebellion in the Samlaut region of Battambang province, which spread quickly to other provinces.⁷ The Samlaut rebellion was put down on Sihanouk’s instruction by General Lon Nol who, in 1970, led a successful coup against Sihanouk and declared himself President of the new Republic.

A drastic collapse in rice production in Cambodia followed the coup which also saw Cambodia embroiled in the Vietnam war, and brought renewed US bombing and a ground war which spilled over into Cambodia.⁸ Cambodia’s direct involvement as a

⁴ Ben Kiernan and Chanthou Boua, eds., *Peasants and Politics in Kampuchea 1942-1981* (London: Zed Press, 1982), 6 and 13.

⁵ Michael Vickery, *Cambodia: 1975-1982* (Boston: South End Press, 1984), 18-25; Justin Corfield, "Khmers Stand Up! A History of the Cambodian Government 1970-1975," (Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University: 1994), 33; and Milton E Osborne, *Politics and Power in Cambodia*, Studies in Contemporary Southeast Asia (Camberwell: Longman, 1973), 61 and 88-9.

⁶ Kiernan and Chanthou Boua, eds., *Peasants and Politics*, 167.

⁷ Ibid., 177; and Jean-Claude Pomonti and Serge Thion, *Des Courtisanes aux Partisans: La Crise Cambodgienne* (Paris: Gallimard, 1971), 112-45. Samlaut was also at the centre of anti-French rebellions in the early 1950s. Corfield, "Khmers Stand Up!", 16. The peaks in rice production in 1968 and 1970 seasons may be simply due to the collection of rice by the military reducing the amount smuggled into Vietnam. The 1969 crop being reduced by the rural unrest.

⁸ For example Shawcross interviewed a governor of Kompong Cham who argued that support for the Khmer Rouge grew due to the bombing, the destruction of homes and killing of animals. William Shawcross, *The Quality of Mercy: Cambodia, Holocaust and Modern Conscience* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1984), 35. Secret bombing was understood to have begun in 1969, however, it has been more recently revealed the bombing began in 1965 and was more extensive than formerly believed. See Shawcross, *Sideshow: Kissinger, Nixon, and the Destruction of Cambodia*; and Taylor Owen and Ben Kiernan, "Bombs over Cambodia," *The Walrus (Canada)*, October (2006): 62-9.

US ally in the Vietnam War, however, provided the impetus for an eventual surge of support for the Khmer Rouge, mainly from the rural population but also from sections of the educated urban class. Strong opposition to Lon Nol's erratic leadership and Sihanouk backing the rebels from his exile in China, meant that support for the Khmer Rouge was far greater than what they had been able to muster in their own right.⁹ Lon Nol's seizure of power and the ousting of Sihanouk had contributed to a rapid decline in the political, economic and military situation and to the ultimate victory of the Khmer Rouge in April 1975.¹⁰ The rise of the Khmer Rouge occurred in a complex environment not only of domestic factionalism and corrupt government but also in a world of revolutionary movements and independence struggles fuelled by cold war antagonisms.¹¹ As Shawcross noted, the careless application of superpower military action facilitated the rise of the Khmer Rouge which proceeded to decimate the country and its people.¹² By 1975, Phnom Penh and other towns were swollen with refugees dependent on US food supplies.

The Pol Pot regime 1975-9

The Khmer Rouge regime instigated a return to "year zero." This involved draconian policies including the evacuation of cities; massacres and purges of perceived class enemies; rapid and harsh communalisation of production; destruction of the family and village society; elimination of religion; forced migrations, enslavement and militarisation of a whole population.¹³ Under Pol Pot's leadership, the Khmer Rouge exhibited a ruthless political and military disregard for human life as over one and a half million Cambodians died in purges and of overwork, disease and starvation. Cambodians in this period were thus deprived of any semblance of

⁹ After 1975, Sihanouk returned to Phnom Penh as head of state but was held as a virtual prisoner by the Khmer Rouge and retired in mid-1976.

¹⁰ The advent of the new regime in Phnom Penh signalled the end of one Indochina war and the start of another among the "Red Brotherhood." See Grant Evans and Kevin Rowley, *Red Brotherhood at War: Indochina since the Fall of Saigon* (London: Verso, 1984). The 1st Indochina War was with the French; the 2nd was with the US; and the 3rd was between Cambodia and Vietnam. The latter two involved the superpowers, ASEAN and other and regional players.

¹¹ Osborne makes the point, too, that it is important to understand the domestic causes of dissent in Cambodia in the 1960s as well as the international influences which contributed to Cambodia's collapse into war. See his discussion in Osborne, *Politics and Power*, 4-11.

¹² Shawcross, *Sideshow: Kissinger, Nixon, and the Destruction of Cambodia*; and Shawcross, *The Quality of Mercy*.

¹³ Meas Nee, "Social Reconstruction in the Post-Conflict Situation" (PhD Thesis, La Trobe University, 2000). Nee discusses the destructive effect of militarisation on Cambodian society and its deep ongoing effect long after the end of the Pol Pot regime.

human security.¹⁴ The chart illustrates that under the Pol Pot regime and its draconian agricultural practices, rice production languished way below pre-war levels.¹⁵

Vietnamese intervention and civil war – 1979-1991

A sharp improvement in rice production began in 1979 after Vietnam, partly in response to persistent incursions by the Khmer Rouge army and attacks on Vietnamese villages, invaded Cambodia and installed a new Cambodian government.¹⁶ The new government - the People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK) – was made up largely of former Khmer Rouge cadres who had fled to Vietnam to escape the purges. While the continued Vietnamese military presence brought widespread international condemnation, the PRK also confronted two other major problems. First, it had to engage in an ongoing armed conflict with the Khmer Rouge and other opposition factions operating from bases near the Thai border; and secondly, it had to immediately set about improving agricultural production and restoring government services inside Cambodia.

The demands for rebuilding Cambodia presented a different set of problems, but also established the basis of governance in Cambodia upon which a post-peace agreement state would in turn be rebuilt. The major reconstruction effort inside Cambodia from 1979, which was largely hampered by international opposition and ongoing civil war as well as poor governance, is considered in detail in the next section.

¹⁴ On the rise of Pol Pot see for example: Ben Kiernan, *The Pol Pot Regime: Race, Power, and Genocide in Cambodia under the Khmer Rouge, 1975-79* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996); Ben Kiernan, *How Pol Pot Came to Power: Colonialism, Nationalism, and Communism in Cambodia, 1930-1975*, Second Edition ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004); Vickery, *Cambodia: 1975-1982*; and David Chandler, *Brother Number One: A Political Biography of Pol Pot* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1992). Personal accounts of conditions under Pol Pot include Loung Ung, *First They Killed My Father: A Daughter of Cambodia Remembers* (Sydney: HarperCollins, 2000); and Molyda Szymusiak, *The Stones Cry Out: A Cambodian Childhood 1975-80* (London: Sphere Books, 1986).

¹⁵ Though some Cambodians I spoke to suggested that under slave conditions more rice was produced and exported to China leaving little or nothing for the people.

¹⁶ The invasion began in December 1978 and was seen as an “aggression” by some while others considered it to be an “humanitarian” intervention. The issues are discussed in Gary Klintworth, *Vietnam's Intervention in Cambodia in International Law* (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1989).

International intervention from 1992

Finally, a significant improvement in rice production is shown on the chart following the implementation of the peace agreement and United Nations sponsored elections in Cambodia in 1993 and the influx of major international development assistance. It is the period since 1993 that has offered the greatest potential for achieving an acceptable level of human security in Cambodia as international aid and development assistance poured into the country. The international contribution as it impacted on rural Cambodia will be examined in greater depth below.

Human insecurity - civil war, refugees and the international role 1970-1991

Civil conflict produced a range of human security situations discussed below. First, there was international support for the Cambodian opposition factions, including the Khmer Rouges, and for the Vietnamese installed government. This prolonged the conflict and stalled peace efforts until the end of the cold war. Secondly, refugees fled to the border where they were taken into camps. There, UN humanitarian agencies were hampered by governments which withheld the necessary agreements to allow the organisation to freely provide protection and assistance to refugees in accordance with their international mandates. Thirdly, some refugee camps become resistance bases for the opposition parties and were subject to military actions. Fourthly, insecurity inside Cambodia arose from the ongoing war and state rebuilding and finally, during the peace settlement process, the international community continued to propose a role for the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia's political future.

Internationally sponsored civil war

Despite its appalling record of abuse, the Pol Pot regime retained its seat in the UN by vote of the General Assembly in September 1979 as international geopolitics focused its wrath firmly on the Vietnamese, supported by China which launched an attack on northern Vietnam to "teach Vietnam a lesson."

The Vietnamese intervention in Cambodia was referred to the UN Security Council by the government of Democratic Kampuchea in January 1979.¹⁷ It sought the condemnation of Vietnam's action and an immediate withdrawal. China's punitive attack on Vietnam broadened the international debate to include wider issues of security and stability in Southeast Asia.¹⁸

Security Council debates placed more emphasis on political rather than on legal argument. The main issues addressed revolved around the principles in the UN Charter concerning fundamental human rights; that states not use force against each other; that states not interfere in the internal affairs of another; and that disputes within and between states be resolved peaceably. Generally, the position of the Western nations in the debates was that no matter how reprehensible or detestable a government might be, this could not justify a military attack on it by another state.¹⁹ This theme carried over into General Assembly credentials debates, and the confirmation of Pol Pot's regime as the legitimate government of Cambodia resulted, despite its record of abuse and the gross human insecurity it had created.²⁰ While the Vietnamese sought the expulsion of the regime on the grounds of genocide, the word was carefully avoided by China and the US. Only in 1988 would the US Congress change US foreign policy to acknowledge the "genocidal Khmer Rouge."²¹

With the permanent members locked into cold war opposition, the Security Council was unable to agree on any resolution, and was simply sidelined as a global governance institution in relation to the human and state security concerns of Cambodia and the immediate region. It was not until 1990 that the Security Council made resolutions on Cambodia and then only to acknowledge and approve a peace process and the agreement made outside the framework of the UN, and to commit the UN to the pivotal UNTAC process.²²

¹⁷ S/13089, 16 February 1979.

¹⁸ S/PV.2109 to 2112, 12-15 January 1979; S/PV.2114, 23 February 1979; S/PV.2117, 27 February 1979.

¹⁹ S/PV.2111, 15 January 1979, (3); S/PV.2109, 12 January 1979, (17).

²⁰ For issues and voting patterns see Ramses Amer, "The Resolution of the Cambodian Conflict: Assessing the Explanatory Value of Zartman's 'Ripeness Theory'," *Journal of Peace Research* 44, no. 6 (2007).

²¹ Tom Fawthrop and Helen Jarvis, *Getting Away with Genocide? Elusive Justice and the Khmer Rouge Tribunal* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2005), 85-86.

²² UNSC Resolution 668 in September 1990 was followed by a further 13 resolutions over the next three years concerned with approval of the peace process.

In the UN General Assembly, countries such as the UK, which had brought evidence of Pol Pot's human rights abuses to the Commission on Human Rights, effectively set these concerns aside to uphold the continued occupation of the seat by Democratic Kampuchea and supported the annual General Assembly resolutions condemning Vietnam's actions and demanding immediate withdrawal.²³ The General Assembly justified its continued recognition of Pol Pot on the fallacious grounds that to seat the new government, or to leave Cambodia's seat vacant as proposed by India, would be to condone Vietnam's invasion and presence in Cambodia.²⁴ Two years later the regime was 'de-recognised' and Cambodia's seat left vacant until it passed to a coalition government in exile in 1992.

From 1979, border camps in Thailand and across the frontier became politico-military bases under the effective control of opposition political factions including the Party of Democratic Kampuchea (PDK) under the leadership of Pol Pot (Khmer Rouge); the Khmer People's National Liberation Front (KPNLF) under the leadership of president Lon Nol's former prime minister, Son Sann (created late 1979); and the National Union Front for an Independent, Neutral, Peaceful and Cooperative Cambodia (Funcinpec) formed in 1982 under the leadership of Sihanouk and later his son, Prince Rannarith. To appear united in their resistance against the Vietnamese, the three factions formed the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea (CGDK) under Sihanouk in 1982. However, each continued to receive independent support from their particular patron states.

The camps were used by the opposition factions to support their military operations, by international humanitarian agencies to channel humanitarian assistance to refugees and by states—such as US, China, and Thailand—to provide military support to them. This latter support for the various factions effectively ensured the continuation of the civil war in Cambodia until the late 1980s when relations between the three key states changed due to the collapse of the cold war. As the

²³ The United Kingdom brought the issue of human rights abuses in Cambodia to the attention of the UN Human Rights Commission in 1978. An investigation report was issued early in 1979 after the Vietnamese intervention. See Colin Warbrick, "Kampuchea: Representation and Recognition," *International and Comparative Law Quarterly* 30, no. 1 (1981): 234.

²⁴ Ibid; and Ramses Amer, "The United Nations and Kampuchea: The Issue of Representation and its Implications," *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars* 22, no. 3 (1990): 55. It was also the case that the General Assembly accepted changes of government under very similar circumstances in Uganda (by Tanzanian forces in 1978); in Central African Empire (by France in 1979) and in Grenada (by the US in 1983).

three were permanent members of the UN Security Council, the more cooperative climate made peace in Cambodia possible.²⁵

Until then the power of veto and cold war posturing rendered the UN Security Council powerless to protect the Cambodian people and powerless to condemn or act on the atrocities of the Pol Pot regime. For their own security reasons, the US and China had been prepared to countenance the return of the Khmer Rouge regime and thereby to abandon the Cambodian people to further abuse. Their overriding objective was to see Vietnam out of Cambodia. The security of states and international security practice again overshadowed concern for individual human security. States were able to pursue security strategies shielded, as it were, from human security concerns by the efforts of international humanitarian agencies and their programmes of assistance as discussed below.

Despite inflicting major defeats on the Khmer Rouge with their numerical and military superiority, the Vietnamese forces were unable to silence the resistance or, in particular, to wipe out the Khmer Rouge.²⁶ Major offensives in 1984-5 by the PRK forces, which were taking responsibility for fighting the war, severely weakened the Khmer Rouge but did not prevent it from mounting further guerrilla attacks in the east (Pre Veng and Svay Rieng) and on Battambang suburbs.²⁷ However, the civil war was at a "stalemate" by 1987 and the three resistance armies, though barely cooperating, were still able to mount occasional guerrilla attacks across the country.²⁸ The PRK army remained weak and unable to fully counter or defeat the opposition forces.

There was political stalemate, too, as Coalition faction leaders bickered and, in Phnom Penh, a cabinet reshuffle in late 1986 signalled that all was not well within

²⁵ The five permanent members are China, France, The United Kingdom, United States of America and (then) the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) - now Russia.

²⁶ They had, Becker argued, been seriously underestimated by the Vietnamese who had originally scoffed at their leaders and believed they had no political support within the country. Elizabeth Becker, "Stalemate in Cambodia," *Current History* 86, no. 519 (1987): 156-59, 86.

²⁷ Nayan Chanda, "Cambodia in 1986: Beginning to Tire," *Asian Survey* 27, no. 1 (1986): 116; and Becker, "Stalemate," 158.

²⁸ There was also considerable bickering between the resistance parties and one arm of the Khmer Rouge refused to cooperate and even attacked KPNLF troops. Chanda, "Cambodia in 1986," 117. Chanda also reports that there were desertions of soldiers in both directions.

the government.²⁹ Humanitarian programmes were in a sense also at a stalemate, with little change at the border and a limited programme continuing in Phnom Penh.³⁰ The stalemate meant the continued human insecurity of countless Cambodians either in the camps at the border, or inside Cambodia under government control. Various peace initiatives had been attempted since the early 1980s but, without the serious commitment of the major powers, there would be no relief for Cambodians.³¹ Only with the end of the cold war in 1989 was the proxy war in Cambodia no longer perceived as critical to the international interests of the key sponsors.

In this new strategic environment the war quickly became little more than an international nuisance. By then, China was more interested in improving relations with the Soviet Union and Vietnam than in supporting the Khmer Rouge which, it conceded, had made mistakes. Vietnam, with the loss of Soviet aid, could no longer afford the war and was keen to improve relations with the US, but insisted that the Khmer Rouge not be allowed back into Phnom Penh through an international peace agreement. Thailand in 1988 began to imagine turning the “battleground into a market place” while the US, reluctantly it seems, was prepared to give peace a chance if the Vietnamese left Cambodia and democratic elections were held.³² In the meantime, international relations and security analysts could pore over the intricate

²⁹ Indeed, the Vietnamese were again concerned, as they had been in 1983, that the resistance was making inroads in the PRK government. Becker, "Stalemate," 159. Becker also refers to Vietnamese treaties which suggested they were in Cambodia to stay or at least to see it as a sphere of influence.

³⁰ Western official aid was restricted as the regime was not recognised by the UN and sanctions were in force. However, a significant amount of official aid was disbursed through national NGOs such as Oxfam, Caritas, World Vision and Save the Children Fund which operated as a consortium set up in Phnom Penh.

³¹ The UN General Assembly proposed a peace conference in 1980 which was boycotted by the USSR and Vietnam. For brief outline of initiatives in the 1980s see Trevor Findlay, *Cambodia: The Legacy and Lessons of UNTAC*, SIPRI Research Report no. 9 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 1-5. Australian Foreign Minister Bill Hayden was active from 1983 in trying to bring the parties together to negotiate a peace deal. See Philip G O'Brien, "The Making of Australia's Indochina Policies under the Labor Government (1983-1986): the Politics of Circumspection?," (Centre for the Study of Australian-Asian Relations, Australia-Asia Papers No. 39: 1987). David P Chandler, "Cambodia in 1984: Historical Patterns Re-asserted," *Southeast Asian Affairs* 12 (1985): 184, refers to attempts by the Vietnamese to “woo Sihanouk back to Phnom Penh ...” in 1984.

³² Though changing its position later, the US had imagined the Khmer Rouge as part of a new government in Phnom Penh. See Ben Kiernan, "Conflict in Cambodia, 1945-2002," *Critical Asian Studies* 34, no. 4 (2002): 489. The US was later “berated” by ASEAN for reducing support for the opposition Coalition Government in exile and seeming to back the State of Cambodia. See Justus M van der Kroef, "Cambodia in 1990: The Elusive Peace," *Asian Survey* 31, no. 1 (1991): 94-102.

details of the perceived interests and positions of the various players—Vietnam, China, ASEAN, the US and USSR—with little or no reference to Cambodia, the Cambodian factions or, more importantly, to the Cambodian people.³³

During the civil war from 1979, the wellbeing and security of the Cambodian people, was not the immediate concern of the states involved. This responsibility had been delegated by the very structure of the United Nations to its specialist economic and social agencies, in particular the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), and other international agencies such as the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the many private NGOs. However, in the absence of a common objective for the people, the efforts of humanitarian agencies were not necessarily united nor were they always perceived to be consistent with the interests of states. How this affected the human security of the people in camps and inside Cambodia is outlined in the following sections before returning to the peace process.

Refugees, international humanitarian response and human insecurity

As the Vietnamese advanced into Cambodia in 1978-9, the Khmer Rouge forces were pushed back to bases at the Thai border where they took refuge and even herded civilians under their control across the border to established camps from which they could launch attacks against the Vietnamese and PRK forces. Refugees fleeing to Thailand were considered by Thailand to be “illegal immigrants” or “displaced persons” and in some cases driven back into Cambodia.³⁴ Thailand already had camps with refugees from the 1975 “liberation” of Laos and Cambodia, and did not want more. Nor did it want a *de facto* frontier with the Vietnamese army and therefore preferred to support resistance groups from the border rather than, as they saw it, to provide a haven which would allow the Cambodians to abandon their territory to the Vietnamese. Hence, Thailand, which was not a signatory to the Refugee Convention or Protocol, simply refused to countenance the establishment of refugee camps under UNHCR control. State security took precedence over the human security of individuals caught up in fighting or seeking refuge.

³³ Simon, for example, gives a very useful summary of the issues as perceived from the various Capitals in realist terms but neglects the people involved. See Sheldon W Simon, "Cambodia and Regional Diplomacy," *Southeast Asian Affairs* 9 (1982): 196-207.

³⁴ Shawcross, *The Quality of Mercy*, 84-92. The worst case being some 45,000 people bussed north to Preah Vihear and forced down the escarpment through minefields back into Cambodia without adequate food or shelter.

The main surge of refugees from Cambodia came in the second half of 1979, under threats of famine and starvation. While UNHCR, UNICEF and ICRC had been trying to negotiate a presence at the border in Thailand, UNICEF and ICRC, whose mandates allow more flexibility of action, were also trying to get access to Phnom Penh. Many diplomatic ‘niceties’ hampered these efforts, not least of which was the continued occupation of the UN seat by the Pol Pot regime which made the Vietnamese reluctant to cooperate with western agencies, in particular those also engaged in providing assistance to opposition factions at the border. For the multilateral humanitarian agencies and many NGOs, therefore, there was a serious problem of ‘neutrality’ and being able to provide humanitarian relief within Cambodia by agreement with the Phnom Penh regime, as well as at the border in opposition controlled areas. Humanitarian agencies were thus pressured to bow to state security concerns which overshadowed the needs of individuals. This was a key issue and the source of dispute between aid officials.³⁵ The Government in Phnom Penh was adamant that it would not allow humanitarian operations in Phnom Penh if international assistance also went to the Khmer Rouge at the border. It was also afraid that Western aid would compromise its socialist objectives. The international agencies sought to stand by a principle that aid should be neutral and provided as needed to civilians anywhere. At the same time, the Thai military and officials bickered over the border relief effort, eventually agreeing to the establishment of the United Nations Border Relief Operation (UNBRO), but not refugee camps under UNHCR control.³⁶

In July 1979, however, the focus of attention was to shift, with reports from ICRC, UNICEF, Oxfam and other aid representatives given access to Phnom Penh, as well as a number of journalists, that the situation inside Cambodia was dire and that both Phnom Penh and the Khmer Rouge were requesting international food aid.³⁷ Threats

³⁵ Ibid. Shawcross provides a detailed account of the manoeuvring of the various governments, international agencies and commentators in the face of the desperate plight of hundreds of thousands of Cambodians.

³⁶ Only Khoa I Dang camp was under the control of the UNHCR and provided full refugee rights. Other camps were under UNBRO authority with aid initially managed by UNICEF and later by UNDP, while the Thai government retained responsibility for the disposition and security of camps.

³⁷ News report by Pilger and Howard received world-wide attention. See John Pilger, "Please Help Us," *The Age*, 14 September 1979; John Pilger, "Country of the Dead," *The Age*, 13 September 1979; Jim Howard, "Kampuchea: a Dairy of Death," (Oxfam, 1979). See also Shawcross, *The Quality of Mercy*, 362-84.

of famine and starvation later proved to be exaggerated. However, descriptions of the pitiful state of the people and their accounts of Khmer Rouge atrocities, sparked widespread international attention and appeals for immediate humanitarian aid.³⁸ Relief was provided to the border camps, but unable to agree upon a comprehensive programme inside Cambodia, the international agencies and Phnom Penh settled for a “land bridge” whereby truckloads of food and other goods were delivered to the border to be distributed to vast lines of bullock carts and taken back into Cambodia.³⁹ Much of this aid filtered through the Cambodian countryside, to Phnom Penh and beyond in the hands of traders. Some villagers went to the border and returned to their villages with food and other goods.⁴⁰ Monitoring of the dispersal of goods overall was almost impossible and considerable amounts were siphoned off to militaries to support their troops or for private gain.⁴¹

The immediate and urgent humanitarian response benefited the people but it also contributed to sustaining the troops and the fighting capacity of the various

³⁸ The sensational reports of Pilger and Howard led to public outcry around the world. This soon degenerated into ideological debate as to the veracity of refugee accounts as a basis for knowing the truth. See for example: François Ponchaud, "Le Kampuchea Democratique: une Revolution Radicale," (Paris: Echange France-Asie, Dossier, 1977) and his later book François Ponchaud, *Cambodia: Year Zero*, trans. Nancy Amphoux (London: Allen Lane, 1978). See also John Barron and Anthony Paul, *Murder of a Gentle Land: The Untold Story of a Communist Genocide in Cambodia* (New York: Readers Digest Press, 1977); Noam Chomsky and E S Herman, "Human Rights in Kampuchea: Distortions at Fourth Hand," *Southeast Asia Chronicle* (1977): 17-24; A Langer, "Kampuchea: The Problem of Facing the Facts," *Arena* (1980): 81-112; R A Connell, "Letter to Editor," *Quadrant* (1980): 112-13; Gavan McCormack, "Letter to Editor," *Quadrant* (1980); Robert Manne, "Letter to Editor," *Quadrant* (1980): 118-20; and T Retboll, "Kampuchea and the Reader's Digest," *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars* (1979): 22-27.

³⁹ Approximately 50,000 tonnes food aid and 35,000 tonnes of seed was directed across the land bridge. Smuggled goods also crossed the border to be distributed on the other side. The border was the market place providing goods for the whole country and not only helped the forces at the border, but also the Vietnamese backed government. Shawcross, *The Quality of Mercy*, 376-77.

⁴⁰ Evan Gottesman, *Cambodia after the Khmer Rouge: Inside the Politics of Nation Building* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 89. Michael Vickery, *Kampuchea: Politics, Economics and Society* (London: Frances Pinter Publishers, 1986), 58. Shawcross also notes the range of “scarce consumer goods—cloth, soap, cigarettes, pins, sugar, nails, bicycles, fishhooks—acquired on the black market at the Thai border”—arriving in Phnom Penh in late 1980 by train from Battambang. Shawcross, *The Quality of Mercy*, 23, 35.

⁴¹ Shawcross, *The Quality of Mercy*, 331 and 342. Heder argues the border trade impact was felt mostly in Battambang, while other provinces - including Siem Reap and Pursat - benefited more from the internal relief activities. Overall he put the proportion of internal aid getting to the villages at 1/5th to 1/3rd while that from the border was 1/4th to 1/2. See Steven Heder, "Kampuchea: From Pol Pot to Pen Sovan to the Villages," in *Indochina and Problems of Security and Stability in Southeast Asia*, ed. Khien Theeravit and MacAlister Brown (Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University Press, 1981), 47-52.

factions.⁴² It helped to reconstitute trade and commercial links across the Thai border and within Cambodia. While institutionally there was a separation between the practices of state security and humanitarian activities, they were in fact shown to be inseparable in practice. State security priorities were instrumental in restricting humanitarian efforts and hence in exacerbating the human insecurity of many Cambodians. This occurred in refugee camps as well as inside Cambodia where a state and economic rebuilding exercise was in progress.

Human insecurity in the camps.

There were reportedly up to 600,000 people in various camps at the border by the end of 1979.⁴³ This had fallen to 200,000 in 1983.⁴⁴ Up to 500,000 refugees were processed through Khao I Dang to the US and other countries.⁴⁵ Some camps remained functional until 1999 when the final groups were repatriated.

Many Cambodians spent years in these places and, even if life in terms of regular food and services was better than in Cambodia itself, camp residents were subject to military control and the constant fear of shelling, forced movement and violence—including banditry and rape.⁴⁶ The population profiles of the camps were distorted with a large number of children under five years of age, who aid workers feared might be permanently affected by the poverty of the environment and their lack of opportunity. There was also the possibility of lasting psychological damage which could come from the constant fear, the life of dependency and the absence of

⁴² Shawcross says 30% of food in some camps went directly to the Khmer Rouge. Shawcross, *The Quality of Mercy*, 340-61.

⁴³ The first refugees fled the Khmer Rouge; a second flood followed the Vietnamese invasion in 1979 and subsequent food shortages inside Cambodia. For details of subsequent refugee movements and camp numbers see Chandler, "Cambodia in 1984," 184; Michael Eiland, "Cambodia in 1985: From Stalemate to Ambiguity," *Asian Survey* 26, no. 1 (1985): 125; and Becker, "Stalemate," 156. See also the web site "Thai /Cambodia Border Refugee Camps 1975-1999; Information and Documentation Website" at www.websitesrcg.com/border/index.html accessed on 16 June 2005.

⁴⁴ Shawcross, *The Quality of Mercy*, 227, 252 and 393. The average population over the 1979-81 period was 300,000. It was also claimed that over the period, up to a million Cambodians were drawn to the border and were encouraged to do so by politically motivated Voice of America broadcasts. Eva Mysliwicz, *Punishing the Poor: The International Isolation of Kampuchea* (Oxford: Oxfam, 1988), 96-97.

⁴⁵ Khao I Dang was the only UNHCR refugee camp able to arrange resettlements. In Khao I Dang included mainly people from the former middle class. They had originally welcomed the Vietnamese invasion but worried about their future prospects under an ongoing communist system. Shawcross, *The Quality of Mercy*, 305.

⁴⁶ Chanda, "Cambodia in 1986," 121; Nayan Chanda, "Cambodia in 1987: Sihanouk on Centre Stage," *Asian Survey* 28, no. 1 (1988): 111; and Mysliwicz, *Punishing the Poor*, 96-97.

opportunity for people to secure their future.⁴⁷ Meas Nee, having experienced life under Pol Pot and other factions, emphasises the loss of trust and dignity in a militarised society, and the “numbness of trying to stay alive, never to think,” and yet he complains, too, of the loss of dignity and on occasion of being “degraded by foreign aid workers.”⁴⁸ Knowledge and experience of traditional life and skills, in agriculture for example, were lost to the young, and forgotten by the parents after years of inaction. Any dispute between camp residents could flare into violence. These were factors which had significant impact later when refugees and internally displaced people were resettled inside Cambodia and were expected to return to normal life. For many from the camps, not only war and violence but also the very abnormality of refugee life over a long period constituted a persistent threat to individual human security. The camps, thus, did not provide for the human security of all who sought asylum within them.

On the other hand, there were those who were able to benefit from the opportunities within some camps to learn English, work with relief agencies and to learn new skills. Some were able to engage in commercial activities or trade through the land bridge. Many returnees were later employed by UNTAC and international NGOs ahead of resident Cambodians because of their better education and the training they had received in the camps.⁴⁹

Human insecurity inside Cambodia

While we have considered the basic human insecurity of refugees, it is important to recognise that there was also widespread war-induced human insecurity within Cambodia. As a result of war and the Pol Pot regime the population profile was distorted by the loss of men and boys to military service, as well as the general toll of hardship, disease and purges. Few families were untouched and many, including

⁴⁷ Mysliwicz, *Punishing the Poor*, 96-97; and Josephine Reynell, "Political Pawns: Refugees on the Thai-Kampuchean Border," (Oxford: Refugee Studies Programme, Occasional Paper: 1987).

⁴⁸ Meas Nee, *Towards Restoring Life: Cambodian Villages* (Melbourne: Overseas Service Bureau, 1996; Third Edition), 25 and 28.

⁴⁹ Um says that in anticipation of repatriation there were "...stepped up efforts to generate skills-training programmes in the camps. The UN has attempted to superimpose a Western-style judicial system, aimed not so much at reducing the rising crime rate, especially prevalent in the two non-communist camps, as to 're-inculcate' a sense of rule of law that the repatriates can carry back with them to their home areas." Khatharya Um, "Cambodia in 1988: The Curved Road to Settlement," *Asian Survey* 29, no. 1 (1989): 104.

female headed households, were deprived of the normal household labour necessary for survival. People who moved across the country in 1979 to return to their former villages found infrastructure damaged, houses in disrepair or gone. There was little farm equipment, few animals, and rice fields had, in some places, been damaged by the irrigation works and collectivisation approach of the Khmer Rouge.

As the new regime set about restoring agriculture and village administration as detailed in the following section, it also confronted the ongoing insecurity by setting up local village and commune-based militia for the protection of villagers. “Operational teams” (later called armed “propaganda teams”) were also established by the Vietnamese to protect local authorities. These teams were later formed into district and provincial “command committees” before being finally structured into the Khmer People’s Revolutionary Army (KPRA). Problems of recruitment, as well as high attrition rates from death, disease and desertions, led the Council of Ministers to decide on the conscription of young men aged 17-25 for 5 years.⁵⁰ By 1985 the military numbered 80,000, which matched the resistance numbers and which the Vietnamese hoped would allow them to leave.⁵¹ Most Cambodians tried to avoid conscription, as they were not interested in ideologies and revolution, and simply wanted to lead normal lives. Some leaders were concerned by the negative impact of conscription and in particular the opposition to the state that grew from it.

The largest direct impact on the peasants came from the so called K-5 programme which was set up to recruit men (supposedly for 6 months) to construct defensive barriers along the Thai border. In 1984, about 50,000 workers were conscripted and 150,000 in 1986. However, “oversight of K-5 funds, equipment, and provisions coincided with widespread confusion, inefficiency, theft, and corruption.”⁵² Vietnamese advisors, annoyed by central government failures, urged greater provincial contributions. As the provincial authorities took over K-5 infrastructure projects, they also used logging and gem mining to raise their own revenue and, as a

⁵⁰ Gottesman, *Cambodia after the Khmer Rouge*, 225-26.

⁵¹ Ibid., 227. Other estimates were 40,000 Khmer Rouges, 14,000 KPNLF and 10, 000 ANS. Chanda refers to a “weak” force of only 30,000. He also estimates the Khmer Rouge at 28,000 “but some claim only 15-20,000;” the KPNLF at about 20,000 men under arms and 8,000 combatants; and the ANS at 12-15,000 troops. Huxley gives different figures respectively of 30-35,000; 10-15,000; and 7-10,000. Chanda, “Cambodia in 1987,” 108-07; and Tim Huxley, “Cambodia in 1987: The PRK’s Eight Year,” *Southeast Asian Affairs* 14 (1987): 171.

⁵² Gottesman, *Cambodia after the Khmer Rouge*, 233.

result, “K-5 evolved into an enormous network of self-supporting economic ventures involving provincial authorities and branches of the Ministries of Defence, Communications, and Commerce.”⁵³ For the workers it was a disaster. In the first year food for only 33,000 was delivered for the 50,000 recruits. Living supplies (clothing, mosquito nets, and so on.) never arrived or were inadequate, and there was often no shelter. Disease, lack of medicines, and landmines which claimed up to 60 amputees per month, made conditions even worse. There was so much malaria among returnees that rice-growing in some areas was being affected by labour shortages, and provinces were asking to be relieved of the requirement to provide workers for K-5.⁵⁴

Human insecurity was inflicted on individuals and families alike by the civil war, supported as it was by major powers and their allies. In addition to the continual threat of conflict and violence and the demands of military and K-5 service, the people faced food insecurity and a lack of basic needs. Confronted by an urgent need to restore agriculture and the functions of state, the government established “solidarity groups” to restart agriculture and began the restoration of bureaucratic institutions. These, as is further discussed below, were major tasks hampered by the lack of human and material resources, but also by ineffective governance and the rapid emergence within newly formed state institutions of nepotism, rent taking activities and other abuses of power. Within Cambodia, therefore, human insecurity was created by both international and, increasingly, domestic factors which were most evident in corrupt and incompetent governance.

Despite the wide ranging and drawn out human insecurity of the Cambodian people, the preoccupation of states with their own national security interests prevented the negotiation of a peace settlement prior to the collapse of the Cold War. When it did come about, negotiation of an international peace agreement for Cambodia was completed in only a few years and would see the international involvement in Cambodia shift from support for civil war and the prolongation of human insecurity to a new involvement in Cambodia’s democratisation, reconstruction and development.

⁵³ Ibid., 233. See also Eiland, "Cambodia in 1985: From Stalemate to Ambiguity," 122-23.

⁵⁴ Gottesman, *Cambodia after the Khmer Rouge*, 233-37; and Huxley, "Cambodia in 1987," 171-72. Malaria, affecting up to 80% of recruits. Huxley also refers to the creation of “strategic hamlets.”

Peace process

In the absence of UN Security Council action, the General Assembly's annual resolutions on Cambodia "regretted the armed intervention of outside forces in the internal affairs of Kampuchea," called for the withdrawal of all foreign troops and urged a political settlement to enable Cambodians "... to decide their own future and destiny free from outside interference, subversion or coercion, and to respect scrupulously the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of Kampuchea."⁵⁵ They also called for international assistance to be provided "for the reconstruction of its economy and for the economic development of all [s]tates in the region."⁵⁶

The General Assembly proposed an International Conference on Kampuchea and established an *ad hoc* Committee to pursue peace, but these were boycotted by Vietnam and the USSR. This reflected the ASEAN position on a peace settlement which was supported especially by China. However, within ASEAN, Thailand and Singapore were staunchly anti-Vietnam while Malaysia and Indonesia in particular took a more conciliatory position.⁵⁷

There were other tentative peace proposals between 1980 and 1986 such as that by the Australian Foreign Minister who, concerned by the humanitarian as well as the political situation, met with Hun Sen and Vietnamese officials in 1983. However, these initiatives were blocked by China and the US.⁵⁸ It was not until 1988 that the UN resolutions began to reflect other peace initiatives emerging since 1986, including the informal Jakarta talks. These produced concrete proposals for: international oversight of troop withdrawals; the creation of an interim administering authority; the leadership role of Sihanouk; (and most important of all in response to repeated calls from the Heng Samrin and Hun Sen governments) condemnation of Khmer Rouge genocide; and "the non-return to the universally condemned policies

⁵⁵ A/RES/34/22 of 14 Nov 1979.

⁵⁶ A/RES/35/6, 22 October 1980; A/RES/36/5, 21 October 1981.

⁵⁷ Amitav Acharya, Pierre Lizée, and Sorpong Peou, "Introduction," in *Cambodia -The 1989 Paris Peace Conference: Background Analysis and Documents*, ed. Amitav Acharya, Pierre Lizée, and Sorpong Peou (New York: Kraus International Publications, 1991), xxiii-xlvi. This book provides a summary of the peace process leading to the Paris Conference.

⁵⁸ Fawthrop and Jarvis, *Getting Away with Genocide*, 77 and 82.

and practices of a recent past...”⁵⁹ The following year the General Assembly encouraged the work of the Paris Conference on Cambodia.⁶⁰

Yet the peace process advanced more through independent diplomatic efforts rather than through UN intervention. In 1986, the Chinese hosted the leaders of the three resistance factions, following which the coalition issued a “new peace proposal calling for Vietnamese troop withdrawal in two stages and an intermediary quadripartite coalition government with the PRK” and, in early 1987, the Soviet Union also indicated its openness to a four-party solution.⁶¹ The French, too, were active and organised meetings between Sihanouk and Hun Sen in December 1987, which resulted in a communiqué, agreeing to the need for a political settlement to achieve a peaceful and neutral Cambodia, and for Cambodians themselves to work out a settlement for international agreement.⁶² Informal meetings were held between the parties in July 1988 and February 1989 in Indonesia. At subsequent working group meetings, there was broad agreement to a framework of Vietnamese withdrawal, a ceasefire, coalition government, peacekeepers, elections, disarmament, neutrality and international organisation of the peacekeeping.⁶³ There was also an ASEAN proposal for a Supreme National Council (SNC) under Sihanouk’s leadership comprising members of each group as an interim government.

Key issues in the negotiations included the demand from the US and coalition for full Vietnamese withdrawal. However, Phnom Penh, fearing that a Vietnamese withdrawal would leave a vacuum to be filled by the Khmer Rouge, stood firm in insisting that the Khmer Rouge not be given an opportunity to reclaim government.

⁵⁹ A/RES/43/9 of 3 November 1988. Thus US Congress had only the previous month approved a Bill referring to the “genocidal Khmer Rouge.” Fawthrop and Jarvis, *Getting Away with Genocide*, 85. The Jakarta Informal Meetings (JIM I and JIM II) were particularly important in leading to an agreed peace proposal. See Acharya, Lizée, and Peou, “Introduction.” xl-xlv.

⁶⁰ A/RES/44/22 of 16 November 1989.

⁶¹ Becker, “Stalemate,” 186. Becker notes, too, Gorbachev’s statement that he wanted improved relations with China and Thailand, which would mean prompting Vietnamese withdrawal as well. Chanda refers in addition to a CGDK 8-point proposal rejected by the Vietnamese. He also reports that Pol Pot had gone to China for cancer treatment “for good”! Chanda, “Cambodia in 1986,” 121-24.

⁶² Elizabeth Becker, “The Progress of Peace in Cambodia,” *Current History* 88, no. 537 (1989): 170. Sihanouk, looking to be a key player in the emerging diplomatic rounds, took leave from his Funcinpec role and as leader of the coalition to weave his own erratic path to peace and back to the throne as King. Findlay indicates a brokering role of India and Indonesia as well. Findlay, *Cambodia*, 4.

⁶³ Khatharya Um, “Cambodia in 1988: The Curved Road to Settlement,” 74; and Acharya, Lizée, and Peou, “Introduction.” xl-xlv.

In 1988, under Soviet and Chinese pressure, Vietnam eventually agreed to the need for withdrawal from Cambodia while also accepting an assurance, finally supported by the US, that the Khmer Rouge would never be allowed to become the government in Cambodia. A subsequent announcement of withdrawal by Vietnam led the way for all external parties to halt their material support for the Khmer Rouge, which would, nevertheless, be included in the political process.⁶⁴ Even as the peace process was unfolding, and after the Vietnamese withdrawal in 1989, the Khmer Rouge, still seeking a military solution, was able to consolidate control over significant areas of western Cambodia and to launch intensive attacks on Battambang, destroy rail links and conduct widespread raids in Banteay Meanchey and Pursat Provinces. Nevertheless, the international impetus for resolution of the situation in Cambodia remained firm, and the UN Security Council, which was finally engaged in the issue of Cambodia, approved a peace plan based on a comprehensive Framework Document in late 1990.⁶⁵ The Framework Document called for the formation of a Supreme National Council (SNC) including two members from each of the three resistance factions and six members from the State of Cambodia (SOC). This body, under Sihanouk's leadership, was able to progress the peace plan despite early divisions over a number of issues including the membership of the SNC, its relation with a proposed interim UN transition authority which would oversee elections, the disarmament process and how to deal with past Khmer Rouge crimes against humanity.⁶⁶ In June 1991, the Cambodian parties finally agreed the outstanding issues and, following acceptance by the Security Council, a final agreement was eventually reached and the Paris Peace Agreement signed in October 1991 and adopted by the UN.⁶⁷

⁶⁴ Becker, "The Progress of Peace," 171-72 and 200-1. A/RES/43/9 of 3 November 1988.

⁶⁵ Security Council Resolution 668 (1990). For the framework, see Commonwealth of Australia, "Cambodia: An Australian Peace Proposal," (Canberra: Department of Foreign Affairs, 1990).

⁶⁶ The issue of genocide and crimes against humanity have persisted and a joint international/Cambodia tribunal for the trial of former leader for crimes against humanity only recently commenced. See Fawthrop and Jarvis, *Getting Away with Genocide?* Pol Pot and Ieng Sary had been convicted *in absentia* of genocide and other crimes by a court in Phnom Penh in August 1979. See also Gottesman, *Cambodia after the Khmer Rouge*, 60-66.

⁶⁷ Findlay, *Cambodia*; and Gottesman, *Cambodia after the Khmer Rouge*, 337. It seems that pressures were brought to bear to get a Khmer Rouge signature despite their consistent opposition to the plan and subsequent renegeing on its conditions. About 80,000 refugees were relocated inside Cambodia to establish a Khmer Rouge 'liberated zone.' See van der Kroef, "Cambodia in 1990: The Elusive Peace," 97-8; and Frederick Z Brown, "Cambodia in 1991: An Uncertain Peace," *Asian Survey* 32, no. 1 (1992): 93.

All four Cambodian factions were signatories to the Agreement along with the eighteen countries which had participated in the Paris Conference.⁶⁸ Although they had reached a consensus, the Cambodian parties to the agreement were not jubilant, but rather resigned to the withdrawal of patronage by members of the P-5 and Vietnam which had, in the end, forced the agreement on them.⁶⁹ The preamble to the Agreement called for elections, acknowledged the prior formation of the Supreme National Council (SNC) and recognised the need for a United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) to administer the country until a new government and constitution were in place.⁷⁰ In typical diplomatic speak, it also recognised Cambodia's "tragic recent history" and the need for "special measures to assure protection of human rights, and the non-return to the policies and practices of the past." In other words, the Khmer Rouge had been relieved of more serious charges of genocide and war crimes. Nevertheless, the Khmer Rouge saw its grip on what power it had slipping away and engaged in fierce fighting in early 1991. Soon, the factions began to manoeuvre for political advantage. Hun Sen's government in Phnom Penh had begun early with the introduction in 1989 of economic reforms – including the privatisation of government enterprises – in anticipation of a peace agreement. However, despite the accords, fighting continued along the border with occasional incursions deep into Cambodia from mainly Khmer Rouge strongholds. Khmer Rouge strikes would continue, albeit diminishing, until the death of Pol Pot and demise of the Khmer Rouge in 1999.

Thus, from a human security perspective, the peace agreement did not immediately lift the spectre of war and related violence but did promise hope for the people of

⁶⁸ Signatories included the permanent member of the Security Council – USA, Great Britain, France, China and the Soviet Union; members of ASEAN – Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Philippines; India, Lao PDR, Vietnam, Brunei Darusalam, Australia, Canada and a representative of the Non-Aligned Movement.

⁶⁹ Findlay, *Cambodia*, 3, 16-17. It was suggested that without the international community there may have been no Pol Pot and no war and in the first place! Sihanouk is quoted by Vickery as saying that "To save Cambodia ... all you had to do [in 1979] was to let Pol Pot die. Pol Pot was dying and you brought him back to life." Michael Vickery, "Cambodia after the Peace," *Thai-Yunan Project Newsletter*, no. 17 (1992): 12. Quoted in David Roberts, *Political Transition in Cambodia 1991-99* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2001), 30, Ott argued that the agreement was "not about Cambodia itself – Paris provided a useful opportunity to jettison some embarrassing baggage. For many in the US, the agreements were a means to artfully disengage from a nasty little problem" and central to this nasty little problem had been the issue of KR genocide.

⁷⁰ The final Agreement (Part I) specified that while the sovereignty and source of authority was enshrined in the SNC, it would delegate all necessary powers to UNTAC to enable it to complete its mandate (effectively reducing the SNC to an advisory role only). This was to overcome legal issues of the UN appearing to assume sovereignty of Cambodia.

Cambodia. In addition to free and fair elections, it committed the parties to the withdrawal of all foreign forces, a ceasefire and a cessation of outside military assistance to the parties, voluntary repatriation of refugees, and a new constitution which would incorporate respect for human rights and Cambodian neutrality and be approved by the elected Assembly (leaving little to chance, a full set of principles for a constitution were included at Annex 5 to the Agreement). It also included principles for future economic development and a promise of international support.

From an international perspective, the agreement transformed the thrust of international security practice in relation to Cambodia. An anti-communist national security and balance of power politics, backed by military and strategic might, was replaced by a new security practice based on an assumption that democracy and economic development would bring long-term peace and stability, as well as human rights and human development. The international community would be firmly engaged in the development process through global institutions. In other words, international relations and the security of states would continue to assert a powerful and direct influence over human security in Cambodia.

Summary – human insecurity as the failure of international security practice

The peace agreement initiated the ending of war and violence which had denied human security to Cambodians for nearly three decades. It remained to be seen whether it would bring human security in the broader sense as defined by the UNDP in 1994. This chapter has so far demonstrated that human security was compromised in a variety of ways by the militarisation of society, international and state security policies and practice, and by the very conditions experienced in refugee and other camps. Using a human security approach has shown that human security is not automatically provided by humanitarian organisations establishing refugee and other camps in conflict situations, nor by the provision of humanitarian aid more generally. Nor can it be assumed that human security is achieved by a negotiated peace and democratic electoral processes.

What has also been highlighted in this section is the failure of the UN Security Council to engage with the global and human security concerns presented by the situation in Cambodia. Key to the Security Council's inability to act were the power

of veto held by the permanent members; its inability to define its responsibilities in the face of gross human rights abuses by Pol Pot; and its overriding state focus which concentrated its attention on the Vietnamese intervention. These are fundamental problems which have present-day parallels in deliberations of situations such as Dafur, Burma and Zimbabwe and in discussions on Security Council reform.

Inclusion of the veto was controversial and opposed by many delegates at the time of the negotiation of the Charter but it was non-negotiable for the five permanent members whose agreement to the Charter was fundamental.⁷¹ It meant that the realist perspective, which prioritises state security over the rights of individuals, is built into the Security Council charter. It also protected the permanent members' right to unilateral military action to protect their own security interests – a right exercised by the US in relation to Vietnam and Cambodia. Proposals for increasing the number of permanent members have also received little support from the current five.

Nevertheless, the UN has been a major forum for the development of normative positions on human rights and the protection of the individual from abuse through its comprehensive covenants and conventions on human rights, refugees, the use of land mines, and other issues.⁷² However, while these are agreed by world leaders on the international stage, they often remain un-ratified and little respected by governments in practice.⁷³ Thus, Cambodians crossing the Thai border for protection were not considered to be refugees but illegal immigrants. Consequently, the humanitarian organisations such as ICRC, UNHCR and UNICEF were hampered by UN member states in the exercise of their duties towards these people. They were also hampered in bringing humanitarian assistance within Cambodia. Despite the clear concern for human security in its Charter and many conventions addressing the protection of

⁷¹ United Nations, "Charter of the United Nations," (United Nations, New York) Article 24. Early on in its life the Security Council had shown its limitations in the case of Korea which had led the US to pursue its objective of UN sanctioned war against North Korea through the General Assembly. See United Nations, "Uniting for Peace Resolution," (United Nations General Assembly: 1950).

⁷² MacFarlane and Yuen Foong Khong, *Human Security and the UN: A Critical History*, 61-106. There is an extensive list of human rights instruments including declarations, covenants, protocols, conventions, principles and guidelines available on the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights web site at www2.ohchr.org/english/law/index.htm#instruments.

⁷³ The US, China and Russia have, for example, refused to sign or ratify the treaty banning land mines on national security grounds. The UK, France and nearly all other developed countries have ratified the treaty.

individuals and groups, membership of the UN imposes few if any obligations on its members.

What is evident is that the normative regimes do not protect people unless they are implemented by states, and enforcement by the international community is extremely difficult, even if there is the will. The ICISS report has made a series of recommendations, and the Secretary General's High Level Panel, and the Secretary General himself have also addressed the issue, and proposed guidelines for the Security Council in considering intervention in humanitarian crises.⁷⁴

From the perspective of its narrow definition, conflict resolution and an end to war and related violence should see an end to human security concerns as responsibility for the welfare of individuals transfers to the international domain of human rights and human development. I have argued, however, for a broad human security approach which harnesses human rights and human development to achieve a common human security objective. This sets the stage for my case study in the next chapter which explores the application of the broad approach to human security in contemporary rural Cambodia. Thus, it is necessary here not only to summarise the implementation of the peace agreement, but also to understand the institutional framework and culture existing in Cambodia on the arrival of UNTAC.

In the following section, therefore, I digress briefly and return to the devastated country inherited from Pol Pot in 1979 to describe the reconstitution and operation of the institutions of state under the Heng Samrin regime. The reconstruction of the institutions also illustrates how former patterns of administrative behaviour re-emerge and persist in the subsequent process of internationally sponsored democratic state building from 1991, and, as will be shown in the next chapter, with a strong impact on human security. Therefore, the following section discusses state rebuilding and its effect on human security from 1979 to 1991 before returning to the implementation of the peace agreement and development approaches established under international donor influence.

⁷⁴ See United Nations, "A More Secure World: Our Shared Responsibility," (Report of the Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, United Nations, 2004), 67; and ICISS, "The Responsibility to Protect."

State building – Communist government and administration – 1979-1991

The newly installed Heng Samrin regime in Cambodia in 1979 confronted many immediate problems. There was the Vietnamese overlordship, and the need to wage war against the opposition factions and to restructure the state while sorting out its own internal political differences. These differences were often ideological and reflected the history of the Communist Party in Cambodia, its links with the Vietnamese communists, and the backgrounds of the leadership, some of whom had fled Cambodia in the early 1970s and resided in Hanoi during the Pol Pot period, while others had been part of the Khmer Rouge until 1977 when they deserted to Vietnam.⁷⁵ These groups were not destined to remain comfortable partners in the rebuilding of a revolutionary Cambodia. There were also vexed questions of how to separate the image of the Communist Party from the Pol Pot regime and whether former Khmer Rouge cadres should be recruited to the Party and to positions within the administration; or how to manage intellectuals whose skills were needed but whose sympathies for the non-communist resistance might be anticipated.⁷⁶ Over time, the leadership of the party shifted from the Hanoi “old guard” to the former Khmer Rouge defectors and to Hun Sen in particular.⁷⁷

The new communist state structure

As head of the National United Front for the Salvation of Kampuchea (KNUFSK) declaring the birth of a new regime for Cambodia in December 1978, Heng Samrin promised tolerance and the rallying of all patriotic forces regardless of political and religious tendencies, and announced that Cambodians were free to move to “native lands, and to build their family life in happiness.”⁷⁸

⁷⁵ Hun Sen was one key figure who deserted from Khmer Rouge ranks.

⁷⁶ Party membership stayed low and the new regime’s dependence on former Khmer Rouge cadres and their acceptability was strongly debated within the Party Central Committee. See Gottesman, *Cambodia after the Khmer Rouge*, 49 and 65-69; and Chandler, “Cambodia in 1984,” 179-81. On engaging intellectuals see Gottesman, *Cambodia after the Khmer Rouge*, 73-74.

⁷⁷ Chanda, “Cambodia in 1986,” 119; Heder, “Kampuchea,” 17-29; Khatharya Um, “Cambodia in 1989: Still Talking but no Settlement,” *Asian Survey* 30, no. 1 (1990): 102; and Huxley, “Cambodia in 1987,” 161-73.

⁷⁸ Gottesman, *Cambodia after the Khmer Rouge*, 7-8.

People took the new regime at its word despite some apprehension that the regime was still communist and revolutionary.⁷⁹ Nagging doubts remained that there could be a return to former ways or, at least, that those who had been officials or in the military during Sihanouk or Lon Nol times, those who had been part of the Khmer Rouge regime, or those who were educated, would be disadvantaged. Some people set out to search for food, others headed for the border and still others sought their former villages. People also flocked to the edge of towns but were barred entry. They settled in camps waiting to be admitted, since the authorities needed staff and labour to revive the towns and to establish some form of civil administration. Others sneaked in to collect goods from their former residences or to leave messages on walls in the hope of contacting other family members, or simply to loot. Some bribed their way in. However, preventing people from entering the towns was reminiscent of the Khmer Rouges and, along with revolutionary slogans, suggested that the risk of a return to old times was not completely removed.⁸⁰ The educated, in particular, who were sorely needed, tired of war and oppression, simply decided to leave the country all together.

Interim and often *ad hoc* arrangements were put in place in the first months of the new regime. The Front had been given the task of holding the revolution together and, with the Vietnamese, had decided to create village committees; village militia and “solidarity groups” (*krom samakki*). People were also urged to rise against the Khmer Rouge and to elect “people’s self-management committees” particularly from those who had suffered at the hands of the Khmer Rouge and those who had supported their overthrow, as well as patriarchs trusted by the villagers. Former village heads and civil servants from the Sihanouk and Lon Nol periods were favoured by this approach which was, in the end, necessary due to the dearth of experience and ability. While it gave some confidence to the people that the Khmer Rouge period was really over, it also meant that the middle level and poor villagers of the past gave way to the better-off and experienced.⁸¹

The solidarity groups were important and basically successful in meeting the immediate and urgent need in early 1979 to share whatever resources existed to

⁷⁹ The following discussion is from *ibid.*, 38-41.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 76. Phnom Penh had a population of around 300,000 by end of 1979. This had risen to 700,000 in 1986. See Huxley, "Cambodia in 1987," 166.

⁸¹ Gottesman, *Cambodia after the Khmer Rouge*, 55-56; Heder, "Kampuchea," 31-32.

restore agricultural production and provide for a rural population not only disrupted by the war, but left with few animals and little production equipment.⁸² To some extent, as small groups of ten to fifteen families, they would appear to have roughly replicated traditional agricultural practices whereby families shared resources and labour. However, these groups were also designed to become part of functioning socialist communes in due course but, to maintain political support, there was considerable caution in the official approach due to innate fears among the people of a return to Khmer Rouge communalism. The government therefore adopted an approach under which land would be communal but the means of production would remain private.⁸³ In the longer term, however, the solidarity groups failed for a variety of reasons including lack of economic incentive and lack of interest in communalism by group members, shortage of cadres and a government more concerned to improve production than to impose socialist objectives.⁸⁴ They also failed because state and local officials, at village and commune level, began to misappropriate land for their own purposes, social differentiation emerged, land was rented out for sharecropping, and usury returned. There was thus a return to the past as solidarity groups ended up with the worst land and those who had been poor before the Khmer Rouge, and privileged under that regime, were mistrusted, marginalised and returned to poverty.

While the reluctance of peasants to cooperate in the formation of communal production has been discussed in terms of peasant resistance and everyday politics by Scott and Kerkvliet, it would seem that in the Cambodian countryside everyday politics took several forms. While the majority of people simply clung to private plots to secure their own household needs, others, mainly officials, deliberately abused or obstructed government policies to accumulate personal wealth and status. They did so with the knowledge and connivance of more senior officials. Everyday local politics was confronted on the one hand by official policy and, on the other, by the corrupt 'everyday' politics of a hierarchy of officials.⁸⁵ A similar problem

⁸² Viviane Frings, "The Failure of Agricultural Collectivisation in the People's Republic of Kampuchea (1979-1989)," (Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University: 1993). The solidarity groups which seemed initially to fall under the direct oversight of the Front, were later moved to the control of the Party and Council of Ministers.

⁸³ Heder, "Kampuchea," 32-33; and Frings, "The Failure of Agricultural Collectivisation."

⁸⁴ Ibid.: 54-67.

⁸⁵ See James Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 396-418; and Benedict J. Tria Kerkvliet, "Village-State

confronted the Commune Revolutionary Committees which were later set up as part of the government administrative system.

Committee elections were organised in 1981 but a half-hearted response meant that only about 400 of 1,300 communes completed their elections.⁸⁶ A democratic process was considered necessary to encourage the people to enhance production, to increase security and to improve their lifestyle and happiness under the new regime. The Committees had broad responsibilities, ranging from security to oversight of solidarity groups and production, health and welfare, education and party propaganda. Their responsibilities had a strong resonance with those of today's commune councils. Committees were expected to be instruments of hierarchical government, functioning, in theory at least, side by side with Party organisations and Front "mass movements."⁸⁷ The actual involvement of government ministries in the work of the Committees is unclear though many of the decisions and circulars quoted by Slocomb and Frings were prepared by ministries (such as agriculture and education) and addressed directly to local officials. There is little to explain whether provincial authorities had a direct role in overseeing the implementation of policies by local Committees. However, their poor performance was the subject of a 1988 Decision of the Council of Ministers which tightened instructions requiring them to prepare development plans and to properly manage their budgets. It also placed them under direct Party oversight.⁸⁸ Members of these committees remained in office into the 1990s and some were elected to the new commune councils in 2002.

National governance arrangements

As well as addressing urgent local problems of production and security, a state organisation had also to be established. This comprised three organisations – the

Relations in Vietnam: The Effect of Everyday Politics on Decollectivisation," *Journal of Asian Studies* 54, no. 2 (1995). Scott argued that peasants adopted certain passive or non-conforming strategies to resist government programmes. Kerkvliet, however, opens the concept to everyday politics which has the advantage that it reflects peasants picking and choosing their responses and as politics rather than simple resistance. Thus governments may respond by altering policies to accept the reality on the ground much as the Cambodian government and Party bowed to private property and the unwillingness of the people to upgrade their communal production.

⁸⁶ Margaret Slocomb, "Commune Elections in Cambodia: 1981 Foundations and 2002 Reformulations," *Modern Asian Studies* 38, no. 2 (2004): 455-57.

⁸⁷ Ibid.: 448 and 453.

⁸⁸ Ibid.: 462.

Front, the Kampuchean People’s Revolutionary Party (KPRP) and a National Assembly.

Front	Party	State Authority
National United Front for the Salvation of Kampuchea (KNUFSK) Later becomes the Kampuchean United Front for National Construction and Defence (KUFNCD) 14 Central Committee members’	Kampuchean People’s Revolutionary Party (KPRP) Only named and public in 1981	National Assembly
Mass organisations	Political Bureau 7 members	Council of State Judiciary and Court system Chairman = Head of State 7 members from CoM
	Central Committee - 21 members - elects Politburo - elects General Secretary - has range of ‘sub-committees’	Council of Ministers (CoM) formerly the People’s Revolutionary Committee (PRC) or Khmer People’s Revolutionary Council (KPRC) Administrative centre of government
	Party Congress - 162 delegates ,at the 4 th congress 1981 - elects Central Committee	Ministries of State under ‘control’ of Central Committee sub-committees
	Party Provincial Secretary	Provincial/municipal Revolutionary Committee (PRC)
	Party Committees Province; District; and Commune	District/ward Revolutionary Committee (PRC)
Solidarity groups	Party branches, circles and cells in government agencies, armed forces, internal security organs, mass organisations, enterprises, factories, and farms	Commune/sangkat Revolutionary Committee (PRC) People’s self-management committees

Table 3-1 Cambodian governance structure 1981⁸⁹

Table 3-1 outlines the parallel bureaucratic structures of the Party and the state institutions under the National Assembly.⁹⁰ It shows that the various Party committees established Party oversight and control of the state Ministries at central, provincial and local levels. There were three main streams of administration—the Front, the Party and a government structure, formalised in the 1981 Constitution,

⁸⁹ The table is compiled from data in various sources including Gottesman, *Cambodia after the Khmer Rouge*; Frings, "Rewriting Cambodian History to 'Adapt' it to a New Political Context: The Kampuchean People's Revolutionary Party's Historiography (1979-1991)"; Vickery, "The Cambodian People's Party" and the US Library of Congress Country Profile: Cambodia at http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/cambodia/kh04_03a.pdf accessed June 2006.

⁹⁰ Gottesman, *Cambodia after the Khmer Rouge*, 45-49. The name given in 1981 at 4th Congress when in Vickery’s words, the Party “emerged from its closet.” Until then the Party was “hardly mentioned.” Michael Vickery, "The Cambodian People's Party: Where has it Come From, Where is it Going?," *Southeast Asian Affairs* 21 (1994), 103. See also Viviane Frings, "Rewriting Cambodian History to 'Adapt' it to a New Political Context: The Kampuchean People's Revolutionary Party's Historiography (1979-1991)," *Modern Asian Studies* 31, no. 4 (1997): 808. Chandler notes that the Khmer Rouge was part of the ongoing history of the Cambodian communist parties. Chandler, "Cambodia in 1984," 179-80.

comprising a National Assembly, Council of State and Council of Ministers overseeing a range of ministries. A judicial system was also created under the Council of State.

Between Front, Party and government there was considerable overlap in terms of rural administration. The Front was responsible for ‘mass organisations’, while the Party, extremely limited in membership initially, appointed Party Provincial Secretaries and sought to set up branches at each level according to the broad administrative structure, as well as branches and cells within organisations such as the Ministries, Armed Forces, and factories.⁹¹ Commune Revolutionary Committees were in theory subject to policy ‘guidance’ from the parallel Commune Party Committees while at the same time they fell under the joint authority of the National Assembly, Council of State and relevant ministries through the Provincial Governor.⁹² A clumsy arrangement that, without the formal Party involvement, is little changed today.

Governance institutions

The establishment of ministries was not without its difficulties. Once appointed, the minister and his staff had to search for suitable premises and clear this with the Vietnamese, hire staff to clean up and repair the premises, and hunt down chairs, tables and other office requisites such as pens, paper and typewriters. They, then, had to find staff who had some technical knowledge and experience of how a department worked. Some educated people were recruited – especially into Hun Sen’s foreign relations department and the justice department.⁹³ However, it was also evident from the start that with a totally shattered economy, ministers and their appointees placed great priority on appointing family and friends to positions in the civil service. The government became concerned and put a freeze on employment in June 1979 and the Party suggested that unqualified persons, and those who came to the ministries just to eat, should be given food and sent back to their villages; they also saw nepotism as a serious security risk. Party instructions on vetting staff and removing unqualified staff were simply ignored. These matters were continually

⁹¹ Gottesman, *Cambodia after the Khmer Rouge*, 48-49.

⁹² Vickery, "The Cambodian People's Party," 114.

⁹³ Gottesman, *Cambodia after the Khmer Rouge*, 208. The following discussion is also based on Gottesman.

discussed at Party level and, to some extent, reflected the insecurity of the new regime and the difficult position in which it found itself as promoter of revolution while at the same time trying to eliminate the vestiges of a failed revolution. Party leaders were also fearful of the return within their ranks and into the bureaucracy of non-communist and, worse, anti-communist, personnel.⁹⁴ Civil service salaries were deliberately kept low to prevent the emergence of too wide a social and economic division.⁹⁵ It is perhaps this policy which reinforced a need for rent taking and also provided opportunities for wealth accumulation through patronage, an issue which persists in present day Cambodia.

By 1982, the Council of Ministers was also aware that ministries were not functioning effectively.⁹⁶ It knew of the widespread patronage and bribery in the civil service which had turned into a sprawling and fragmented administrative network at central, provincial and local levels.⁹⁷ There is little doubt that the patronage started at the highest levels of government.

Provincial Governors and their officials seem traditionally to have been very independent of the central bureaucracy, and this emerges again as the new systems consolidated in this period. Provincial governors and provincial Party secretaries were chosen by the leaders in Phnom Penh, often on the basis of personal allegiances, thereby providing a power base, other than ministries, for government and Party members in Phnom Penh.⁹⁸ A key aspect was the integration of the Cambodian and Vietnamese economies through the establishment of "sister province" arrangement between the countries. Through them, a *de facto* economic decentralisation occurred in Cambodia as sister provinces dealt directly with each other leading, in early 1981, to the Council of Ministers concluding that the Ministry of Commerce could no longer control trade at a national level. Therefore it decided, in January 1985, to authorise direct trade between the provinces.⁹⁹

⁹⁴ Ibid., 51-2 and 77. Many former educated did return to places in the bureaucracy where they were desperately needed, however, the demotion of some in 1981 prompted an exodus of intellectuals from the services and Cambodia. Gottesman, *Cambodia after the Khmer Rouge*, 121; and Chanda, "Cambodia in 1987," 106-7.

⁹⁵ Vickery, *Kampuchea*, 55-6.

⁹⁶ Gottesman, *Cambodia after the Khmer Rouge*, 139.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 211-2.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 54.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 148-9; and Huxley, "Cambodia in 1987," 166.

Decentralised provincial control of resources, also meant that the Cambodian central government lost control of rice acquisition and could not provide rations to its own officials.¹⁰⁰ It failed also to control fishing, rubber or timber production and exports. Provincial and local authorities simply raised money for their own administrative and private purposes by imposing various taxes, informal roadside rent collection and seizure of goods.¹⁰¹ The Council of Ministers records consistently reflect an awareness of corruption right through the system in the ministries, the provincial organisations and the communes, and in the way businessmen paid off soldiers and commerce officials for political influence.

Economic reforms and the state of the nation

Hun Sen was aware that the peace process would bring political competition from the resistance parties and pressures for a free market economy. Therefore, in February 1989, he advocated opening the economy and freeing up state enterprises and announced that, like other communist states, it was necessary to move from the left to the right. The privatisation of state industries proceeded apace, not only to provide income but also to ensure that they remained out of the clutches of the returning political groups in the event of a political settlement. However, the management of the privatised factories did not change as “the old state and Party apparatus simply took over the newly privatised enterprises, administrators and accountants.”¹⁰² The privatisation of land was more relevant to ordinary Cambodians but the programme for granting titles “... was plagued by corruption, military land grabs, distribution to local officials, the use of false names, nepotism, and incompetence”, and peasants lost money and sometimes their land. Heng Samrin in 1990 complained, “There are some institutions, organisations, and individuals who have taken land, funds, and buildings that are supposed to be state

¹⁰⁰ Gottesman, *Cambodia after the Khmer Rouge*, 152 and 155-56. See also Huxley, "Cambodia in 1987," 164. Huxley details efforts by the government to capture a greater share of rice production by raising prices. But people were still reluctant to sell at the price, some sold to the Khmer Rouges who paid in gold, others simply chose to store more because of the war. The Vietnamese and Cambodian military were directly involve in cutting timber and exporting it to Vietnam.

¹⁰¹ Gottesman, *Cambodia after the Khmer Rouge*.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 319.

property to distribute to their factions or their families to sell for their own benefit.”¹⁰³

The problem was that there was already an entrenched private economy in Cambodia and, since 1979, state cadres and their families had been permitted, unofficially, to supplement their wages through private business activities. Also, in the context of pitifully low salaries, “state doctors gave private consultations, teachers taught privately, and government workers and cadres of all kinds, as well as their families, made their living as barbers, tailors, and merchants in the free market.”¹⁰⁴ At the same time, private incomes earned by these state workers also filtered up to their patrons and helped maintain loyalties.¹⁰⁵ Economic reforms also extended to the recruitment of foreign economic experts and the opening of trade with Thailand.

These reforms basically legitimised the seizure of public assets and their use for private gain and were calculated to consolidate popularity and power in the event of Sihanouk’s return and popular elections.¹⁰⁶ Others saw it as a move to a “pseudo-capitalist country where the gap between rich and poor gets wider every day” and where corruption and instability increase.¹⁰⁷

Corruption in 1990 was, indeed, rampant and was a topic recorded in Council of Ministers deliberations:

“Smuggling by car, train, or boat; evasion of customs, failures at checkpoints, ferry docks, and licensing [agencies]; gambling and prostitution; the problem of videos; [corruption in the] hospitals; pornography; negligence and anarchy in the areas of electricity, water and construction; and traffic that effects the beauty of Phnom Penh”

and:

“complications in the social order and in port warehouses, failure to implement decisions and court verdicts, problems related to travel documents and people’s land, the unauthorised taking of weapons from people, illegal imports, food companies importing radios and televisions, and so on.”¹⁰⁸

¹⁰³ Ibid., 320. The Constitution was amended in 1989 to give citizens full rights to “hold” and “use” land. It also gave rights of inheritance but a prohibition on the sale or renting of land remained. Gottesman, *Cambodia after the Khmer Rouge*, 275-76.

¹⁰⁴ Gottesman, *Cambodia after the Khmer Rouge*, 280-81. Chanda, too, notes that the government was encouraging civil servants to ‘moonlight’ in other jobs to subsidise their meagre income of less than \$2 per month. Chanda, “Cambodia in 1987,” 109.

¹⁰⁵ Gottesman, *Cambodia after the Khmer Rouge*, 282.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 300.

¹⁰⁷ Chanthou Boua, “Development Aid and Democracy in Cambodia,” *Viet Nam Generation Journal and Newsletter* 3, no. 4 (1992).

¹⁰⁸ Gottesman, *Cambodia after the Khmer Rouge*, 321.

The Minister of Justice announced “... there is no justice at all, and it is better to go back to working in the fields ...”¹⁰⁹

It was this formal administrative structure, with all its flaws and strong Party links and political posturing, which greeted UNTAC. The bureaucracy was inefficient, bloated, and rent taking was the norm. Patronage rather than merit dominated the internal workings of the departments. There was extensive high-level corruption at central and provincial levels. Most of all, though, the Party, newly renamed the Cambodian Peoples’ Party (CPP) for electoral purposes, retained strong links within the bureaucracy and with the communes together with the beneficiaries of the economic reforms and privatisations.

State building – democracy and international development assistance from 1992

UNTAC process and human security

The terms of reference for UNTAC, which was responsible for implementation and oversight of the agreement, were contained in Annex 1 to the Paris Agreement.¹¹⁰ These covered general procedures; civil administration; military functions; elections; human rights; and repatriation of refugees. UNTAC was required to oversee the cessation of hostilities and in particular the cantonment, demobilisation and disarmament of factional forces and to ensure a climate conducive to free and fair elections.¹¹¹ UNHCR was given the lead role for the voluntary repatriation and re-integration of refugees.¹¹²

UNTAC was not charged with undertaking rehabilitation and reconstruction tasks. Instead, a separate Declaration on Rehabilitation and Reconstruction specified that “the main responsibility for deciding Cambodia’s reconstruction needs should rest *with the Cambodian people and the government.*”¹¹³ In the meantime, the UN Secretary General was requested to address immediate rehabilitation requirements

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 238. The Council of Ministers was well aware of the situation which had been documented in a 1985 report to the Council.

¹¹⁰ *Agreements on a Comprehensive Political Settlement of the Cambodian Conflict; Paris, 23 October 1991.*

¹¹¹ Ibid., Detailed military provisions were contained in Annex 2 to the Agreements.

¹¹² Ibid., Detailed provisions were contained in Annex 4.

¹¹³ Ibid., Declaration on the Rehabilitation and Reconstruction of Cambodia, Paragraph 2. (emphasis added).

with particular attention given to “food security, health, housing, training, education, the transport network and the restoration of Cambodia’s existing basic infrastructure and public utilities.”¹¹⁴ The Declaration also noted the need for detailed assessment of Cambodia’s assets and reconstruction needs prior to decisions being made by a new government. It also specified that a consultative body of donors, the International Committee on the Reconstruction of Cambodia (ICORC), be set up to “harmonise and monitor” donor contributions.¹¹⁵

UNTAC faced major difficulties in completing its tasks. First, it had not been established before the peace accords were signed. The UN, therefore, hastily put in place a United Nations Advance Mission in Cambodia (UNAMIC) to initiate oversight of the cease-fire.¹¹⁶ However, the delay was accompanied by ceasefire violations, lawlessness in the cities and banditry in the countryside. The factional armies did not comply with ceasefire and demilitarisation obligations, and the UNTAC military contingent was basically redeployed to protect and promote the electoral process.¹¹⁷ Despite Khmer Rouge attacks on villages, sporadic violence, murders and intimidation, including attacks on UN personnel, 4.6 million voters were enrolled and the election went ahead peacefully on 23-8 May 1993.¹¹⁸

The election was followed by charges and counter charges of electoral fraud, rumours of succession and military coup. Although Funcinpec had achieved a majority (45 per cent versus 38 per cent for CPP), Hun Sen refused to relinquish power. Cambodia’s newfound democracy stumbled at the first obstacle as Sihanouk, negotiated a Provisional National Government of Cambodia (PNGC) which included

¹¹⁴ Ibid., Declaration on the Rehabilitation and Reconstruction of Cambodia, Paragraph 10.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ UNAMIC was set up in Phnom Penh on 9 November 1991. The Special Representative of the Secretary General arrived in Phnom Penh on 15 March 1992. UNTAC would not be at full force until mid-July 1992.

¹¹⁷ United Nations, “Cambodia – United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC), Background,” www.un.org/Depts/dpko/dpko/co_mission/untac.htm, accessed on 25 October 2006, provides detail of ceasefire and cantonment difficulties and eventual abandonment of this aspect of the peace process. Findlay put much of the blame for UNTAC’s failure on the delays in setting up UNTAC’s operations while Smith considers the shortcomings in civil administration and policing (rule of law not achieved) had much to do with the CPP maintaining both administration and police under their political control. Findlay, *Cambodia*, 94-100; Hugh Smith, ed., *International Peacekeeping: Building on the Cambodian Experience* (Canberra: Australian Defence Studies Centre, Australian Defence Force Academy, 1994).

¹¹⁸ United Nations, “Cambodia – UNTAC Background,” provides detail of difficulties with Sihanouk and the SNC over preparations for the elections, continuing violations of the ceasefire, and violence associated with the election campaign. See also Findlay, *Cambodia*, 55 and 75-79.

members of all parties that had won seats in the election. With Sihanouk as head of state (and soon to be recrowned King), Rannarith and Hun Sen were proclaimed first and second “co-Presidents” respectively, while “co-Ministers” were appointed to the various Ministries.¹¹⁹ A new constitution was signed into law on 24 September 1993 and Rannarith and Hun Sen became First and Second Prime Ministers respectively.¹²⁰

Cambodia’s political leaders were simply not prepared to see their positions of power determined electorally and neither the society nor the institutions of state were able to insist on the outcome of the election being respected. There was no concept of ‘loyal opposition’ in Cambodian political tradition.¹²¹ Those involved in the electoral process had been factional opponents for years and to some extent the post-election negotiations represented the continuation of war by other means.¹²² It also meant the sharing of wealth and power. Sihanouk’s deal defused the confrontation between the CPP and Funcinpec for the moment.¹²³ It flared again into military conflict between forces loyal to the two parties in 1997 when Hun Sen seized total control of government in a coup. Hun Sen the “strongman” has, since then, engineered the demise of Funcinpec as a viable opposition party.¹²⁴

Other aspects of the UNTAC operations had mixed success. Repatriation of some 360,000 people from the border was a complex task, but completed to schedule before the election.¹²⁵ Control of the SOC administration by the Civil Component

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 91. The US in particular was unhappy about this, demanding that the election results be recognised fully. Their approach exacerbated the conflict and failed to recognise local political realities. The US eventually accepted the solution. Funcinpec took the lead position over the Finance, Economy and Foreign Affairs portfolios, while the CPP took Justice and Information while Defence remained with Sihanouk.

¹²⁰ The same practice of sharing portfolios was retained, at least in principle and has extended to sharing of portfolios, provincial governor appointments and senior positions in the bureaucracy.

¹²¹ Roberts, *Political Transition in Cambodia 1991-99*, 32-34

¹²² Ibid. Roberts argues that the inability to accept a electoral outcome arises in part from the patron client structure of society and the fact that a loss of power at the top could destroy not only the patron but also feed down through the whole network with consequences for many. Therefore, he concludes, those at the top will do anything to prevent democratisation of power.

¹²³ David Roberts, "Finishing what UNTAC Started: The Political Economy of Peace in Cambodia," *Peacekeeping and International Relations* 28, no. 1 (1999): 14-17. He argues that a culture of authoritarianism and the tradition of patron clientism prevent the acceptance of democracy, and that the élite politics is removed from the population at large.

¹²⁴ On Hun Sen’s aspiration to “strongman” status see Harish C Mehta and Julie B Mehta, *Hun Sen: Strongman of Cambodia* (Singapore: Graham Brash, 1999).

¹²⁵ United Nations, “Cambodia – UNTAC Background.” Land shortage meant that plans had to be changed to give returnees several options including a mix of cash, food, household plots

“failed completely” while the Human Rights Component, which conducted widespread training, faltered in large part because the biased, poorly staffed and corrupt SOC administration remained intact.¹²⁶

International development agencies and NGOs flooded into Cambodia to provide rural development assistance. Much of their work was based on the early studies by UN and other organisations of Cambodia’s development needs. These provide the policy and institutional framework, outlined below, and set the context for the human security case study in the next chapter.

International identification of development needs.

In anticipation of the peace settlement, the UNDP had already undertaken a needs assessment study in 1989.¹²⁷ As with a later World Bank study, the UNDP study gives a fairly positive assessment of what had been achieved by the PRK in terms of agriculture and the restoration of basic services and infrastructure under the circumstances of war and limited external assistance.¹²⁸ However, it also emphasised the difficulties that would arise in this new stage of state building in Cambodia and its integration into the capitalist global economy. In particular, the UNDP report concluded that there was an immediate need for “training-cum-observation tours for senior professionals both from Phnom Penh and the border camps” to familiarise them with modern development assistance practices, including the management of what would become a massive aid programme, and the ability to “negotiate, appraise, coordinate and monitor foreign aid proposals.”¹²⁹ Training in

and house kits as well as employment. Most opted for the cash option of US\$50 per adult and \$25 per child.

¹²⁶ Findlay, *Cambodia*, 63-6. Many local and international organizations protested to UNTAC about the human rights situation. There was some discussion of bringing in foreign judges but no action. Findlay, *Cambodia*, 67-8.

¹²⁷ Kenneth Watts et al., "Report of the Kampuchea Needs Assessment Study (For UNDP)," (UNDP, 1989). There were many different missions and surveys by official agencies, country donors and NGOs. UN studies included: FAO, "Kampuchea: report of the FAO/WFP/UN mission – assessment of the food and agriculture situation," (Rome: FAO Office for Special Relief Operations, 1988); FAO, "Cambodia Agricultural Development Options Review: Volumes 1-3," (Rome: FAO Centre for Investment, 1994); UNTAC, "Rehabilitation and Development in Cambodia: Achievements and Strategies/Report," (Phnom Penh: UNTAC with the collaboration of UNDP and UN specialized agencies.); UNTAC, "Donors Review Meeting," (Phnom Penh: UNTAC with UNDP, 1993); and UNDP, "Comprehensive Paper on Cambodia," (Phnom Penh: UNDP, 1992).

¹²⁸ World Bank, "Cambodia: Agenda for Rehabilitation and Reconstruction," (The World Bank, East Asia and Pacific Region, Country Department, 1992).

¹²⁹ Watts et al., "Kampuchea Needs Assessment," iv-v.

health and education as well as upgrading research capabilities for development officials were also identified along with a list of potential sectoral projects in agriculture, water supply, transport, communications, power generation and industry rehabilitation.

Various missions noted, as had been the case in 1979 for the Heng Samrin government, the dearth of qualified and experienced personnel available to manage the new challenges ahead.¹³⁰ It was inevitable, therefore, that the international donor community would wield considerable influence in the formulation and implementation of development plans and strategies, not only through ICORC (later reformed as the Consultation Group of donors), but also through the large number of NGOs which descended on the country to undertake local small scale development work and which formed their own representative groups to work with and critique official aid and government policies.¹³¹

The World Bank considered the civil service to be “excessively developed” and in need of downsizing. It noted, too, that the civil service was remote from the population and provided few beneficial services outside provincial centres, it offered poor pay and conditions and limited career prospects making it “... not conducive to dedication.”¹³² In addition, the World Bank warned that public service improvement would be needed to manage aid “without the proliferation of *ad hoc* project units, which typically weaken public administration ...”¹³³ These issues remain unresolved today despite nearly a decade of technical assistance and a major focus on “good governance” and public sector reform. As will be argued in the following chapters, the implementation of these concepts and policies has contributed to the many human insecurities which persist in rural Cambodia.

¹³⁰ In early 1990, Mya Than noted that “... there were only 3,000 individuals with education beyond secondary school, and not a single person capable of highly sophisticated macro-economic planning” ...and only 360 persons with managerial skills. Mya Than, “Rehabilitation and Economic Reconstruction in Cambodia,” *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 14, no. 3 (1992): 281.

¹³¹ Such as the Coordination Committee for Cambodia (CCC) set up in 1991 by international NGOs and the NGO Forum on Cambodia which had its roots in the 1980s. Local NGOs were also set up under international NGO auspices.

¹³² World Bank, “Cambodia: Agenda for Rehabilitation and Reconstruction.” vi.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, vi. Despite the warning, this is exactly what happened. To engage staff in the ad hoc projects, a system of salary subsidy was implemented which helped draw the better officers away from the normal administration. The Department of Health today included twelve separate health sector projects.

Part of the problem was that from 1992, the international donor community was in a position of relative power and able to insist on the Cambodian government's adoption of the standard "Washington consensus" development approach in its national policies (at least in words), with little regard for the uniqueness of Cambodian society, the legitimacy of the institutions within it, or in political consultation with the population.

National policies to rehabilitate and develop Cambodia

The strength of donor influence on Cambodian development policies can be seen in the various national plans. With the assistance of UNDP, the government produced its *National Programme to Rehabilitate and Develop Cambodia* in 1994.¹³⁴ The National Programme was presented to Donors at the ICORC meeting in March of that year. It was a carefully prepared statement of general principles and contained little in the way of concrete plans. Its objective was to encourage support from international donors.¹³⁵ The Programme was, according to the Office of the Council of Ministers, based on the principle that the government was the "strategist" and "manager" of development, providing the direction and leadership.¹³⁶ Further proclaiming its neo-liberal governance credentials (presumably to meet donor expectations) the National Programme "encourages, coordinates, facilitates and monitors through such indirect means as legislation, regulations and rules, and important instruments of macroeconomic management such as fiscal policy, credit policy, monetary policy etc."¹³⁷ It also promised to foster a strong and stable private sector which was critical to the new form of governance. "All this requires massive and extensive reform of the State's structure and administration and a change in the

¹³⁴ Followed in 1995, again with UNDP assistance, by the government's *Implementing the National Programme to Rehabilitate and Develop Cambodia*. This maintained the commitment to sustainable development, equity and social justice, while attempting to move on from the sense of rehabilitation and reconstruction to one of development. Grant Curtis, *Cambodia Reborn? The Transition to Democracy and Development* (Washington: Brookings Institution Press, 1998), 65.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 60-1; and R B St John, "The Political Economy of the Royal Government of Cambodia," *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 17, no. 3 (1995): 265.

¹³⁶ Royal Government of Cambodia, "Concepts Underlying Cambodian Development," Office of the Council of Ministers, http://ocm.gov.kh/c_med3.htm accessed on 10 September 2006. The OCM paper also emphasises the breadth of consultation in its preparation which included "110 Ministers and high ranking officials of the Royal Government and national institutions, with the participation of Cambodians from overseas and international technical assistance."

¹³⁷ Ibid.

motivation behaviour of the entire population. The main objective is to make Cambodia a state respecting the rule of law.”¹³⁸ It also identified the need for “personal security, political stability and social cohesion” and “the need to motivate and change the behaviour patterns, attitudes and mentalities of the people, including those of government officials and civil servants.”¹³⁹

There is little evidence that the Cambodian government had a serious commitment to these changes, however, as the confrontational and often threatening and violent behaviour of political leaders had shown little concern to set an example for such change or to demonstrate a serious commitment to the rule of law. Nevertheless, further policy and planning documents followed. They were prepared in consultation with government and donors and there was little if any political debate and no public input. Following the international trend, poverty reduction became a more prominent theme in the country’s First Socio-Economic Development Plan 1996-2000 (SEDP I), “crafted by Cambodia’s donors, to put that unfortunate country back on the road to reconstruction and sustainable development.”¹⁴⁰ The Second Socio-economic Development Plan, 2001-2005, (SEDP II), following a similar process and aimed to halve poverty in 15 years.¹⁴¹ As the international development focus on poverty deepened, the World Bank introduced and demanded that developing countries prepare Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) and Cambodia, after much prodding by the World Bank, complied.¹⁴² A Governance

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Ozay Mehmet, "Development in a War-torn Society: What Next in Cambodia?," *Third World Quarterly* 18, no. 4 (1997): 637-86.

¹⁴¹ Kingdom of Cambodia, "Socio-Economic Development Priorities and the Official Development Assistance Needs," (Royal Government of Cambodia, Prepared for the 2002 Consultative Group Meeting for Cambodia, June 2002, Phnom Penh, Cambodia, 2002), iv. Referred to as SEDP II, the submission aimed to address poverty through growth and reforms to achieve the government’s long-term vision of “... a socially cohesive, educationally advanced, and culturally vibrant Cambodia without poverty, illiteracy, and disease, which will allow each person to be the best that it is in them to be” and to be achieved by “... continued adherence to the principles of the market economy, the values of democracy and social justice, human rights and welfare, and the formulation and implementation of policies to reduce poverty by promoting sustainable economic growth and social development.” Kingdom of Cambodia, "SEDP II," ii.

¹⁴² The Interim and final National Poverty Reduction Strategy (NPRS) and later versions were prepared under the tutelage of the World Bank and agreed with the Bank. Kingdom of Cambodia, "Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper," (Phnom Penh: Royal Government of Cambodia, 2000). It was also supported by poverty studies undertaken by the ADB for which see ADB, "Participatory Poverty Assessment in Cambodia." Craig and Porter see PRSPs as replacing “discredited instruments” such as the 5-year development plans. David

Action Plan (GAP) and a Financial Sector Development Vision and Plan for 2001-2010 were to follow and appeared to complete the framework of the Government's development strategies and policies. Then, in 2003, as part of a UN initiative for developing countries generally, Cambodia's Millennium Development Goals (MDG) were also added to the list of development policy documentation demanded by the international development community. Finally, in a break with the pattern in 2004, Prime Minister Hun Sen produced his own, supposedly homegrown development policy, the "*Rectangular Strategy: for Growth, Employment, Equity and Efficiency*" which will be discussed below.¹⁴³

The internationally sponsored documents were, however, primarily strategic policy documents with few concrete proposals for eliminating poverty. Nevertheless, they provided insight into a wide range of human security issues. The NPRS policy in particular detailed what it saw as the key poverty issues: namely the lack of opportunity for the poor and their lack of capabilities.¹⁴⁴ Lack of opportunities was described basically as having inadequate productive land or alternative employment options, while lack of capability was reflected in the country's dismal record in education, health, mortality and nutrition. The NPRS identified problems such as social exclusion of the poor and lack of "good governance", as well as insecurity as a result of food insecurity, HIV/AIDS, landmines and natural disasters. The plight of street children and gender disparities were also noted. Thus, "good governance" was considered to be essential for poverty reduction as well as for sustainable socio-economic development and social justice.¹⁴⁵ It is also the central element in Hun Sen's Rectangular Strategy.

Government Rectangular Strategy

The Rectangular Strategy is not only important as a government initiative, but also because it embraces the international neo-liberal approach to government and adopts it as its own strategy. Thus, the Government's goal, in accord with the international

Craig and Doug Porter, *Development Beyond Neoliberalism? Governance, Poverty Reduction and Political Economy* (London: Routledge, 2006), 16-17.

¹⁴³ Which superseded his 1999 "Triangle Strategy."

¹⁴⁴ Kingdom of Cambodia, "National Poverty Reduction Strategy: 2003-2005," (Phnom Penh: Kingdom of Cambodia, Council for Social Development, 2002).

¹⁴⁵ Royal Government of Cambodia, "Governance Action Plan," (Royal Government of Cambodia, 2001), 1.

development themes, is “to build Cambodian society by strengthening peace, stability and social order, entrenching democracy, ensuring sustainable and equitable development, and strengthening Cambodia’s social fabric to ensure that the Cambodian people are well educated, culturally advanced, engaged in dignified livelihood and living in harmony in family and society.”¹⁴⁶

Echoing the international calls for “good governance”, Hun Sen’s Rectangular Strategy makes it central to his policy which includes anti-corruption measures, legal and judicial reform and, importantly, public administration reform which extends to decentralisation and deconcentration.¹⁴⁷ As shown in Figure 3.3 below, the environment for implementation is also in four parts: peace, political stability and social order; partnership with stakeholders; favourable macroeconomic and financial environment; and integration of Cambodia into the region and the world.¹⁴⁸ The priority areas for development and growth are identified as the foursome: agriculture, private sector development, infrastructure, and human resources.

The ‘strategy’ is at best hopeful. Its core element – “good governance” – is promoted as technical reform rather than in terms of political leadership and social change. There are no concrete proposals which would suggest a genuine commitment to reform. As depicted, the plan is complex and confusing and while it addresses donor concerns, has little chance of being understood and embraced by the majority of Cambodians, or of contributing in a practical way to human security. However, the policy commitment to decentralisation is important because it has been a critical area of international attention since 1991 and has a significant role to play in human security at the local level.

¹⁴⁶ Royal Government of Cambodia, "Address by Samdech Hun Sen, Prime Minister of the Royal Government of Cambodia on "Rectangular Strategy for Growth, Employment, Equity and Efficiency" delivered at the First Cabinet Meeting of the Third Legislature of the National Assembly at the Office of Council of Ministers," 3.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 8. There are presently three aspects of decentralization which are discussed in development literature – deconcentration, which is the transfer of some central or line ministry functions to local units; devolution, which is the creation of lower levels of government; and delegation, the transfer of functions to semi-autonomous entities. The approaches adopted in Cambodia are devolution to local government in the form of commune councils, which is referred to as decentralisation, and deconcentration the transfer of central government department responsibilities to provincial units. Deconcentration reforms are yet to be finalised by the government. See UK Department for International Development (DIFID), "Decentralisation and Political Accountability," Policy Planning and Implementation, Keysheet 12, http://www.keysheets.org/red_12_decentral_pol.htm accessed on 7 March 2007.

¹⁴⁸ Royal Government of Cambodia, "Address by Samdech Hun Sen," 8.

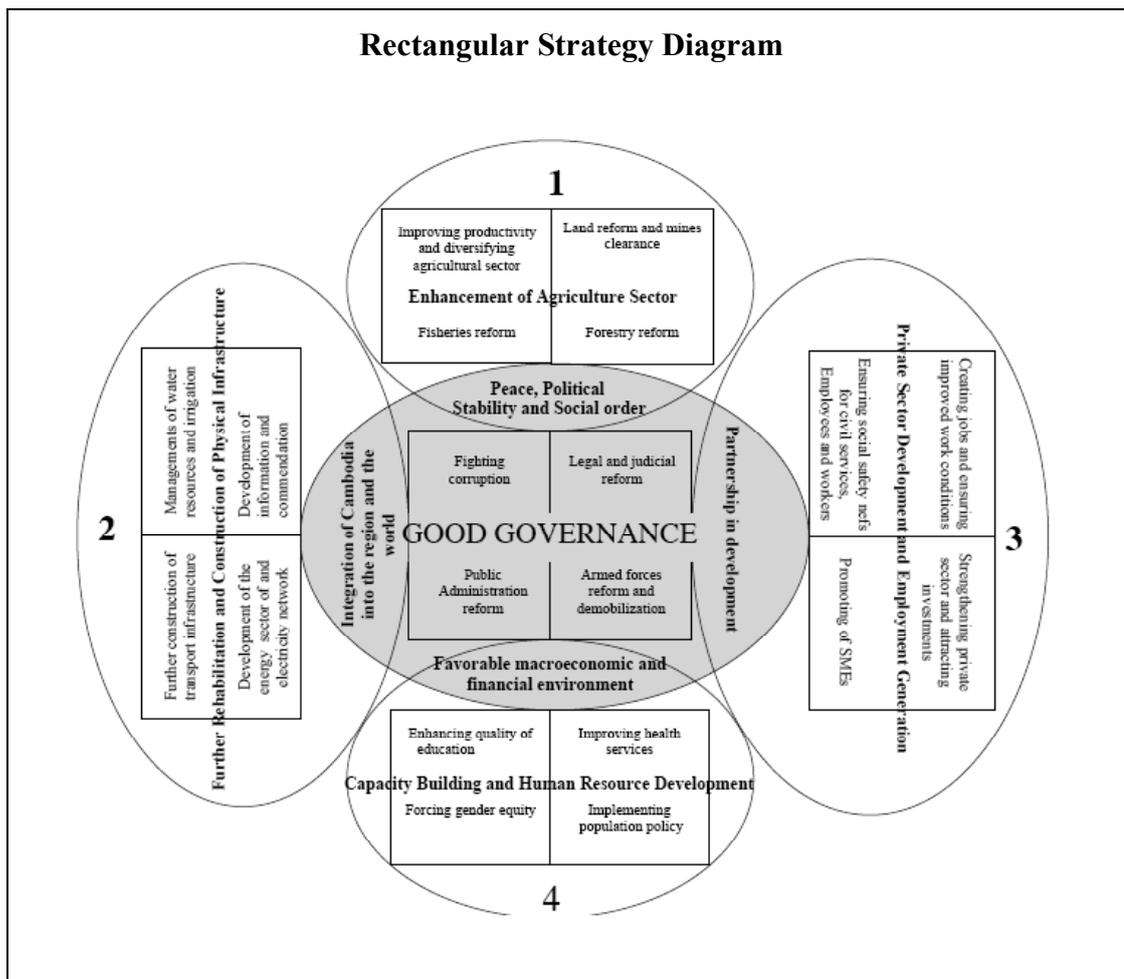


Table 3-2 Rectangular Strategy Diagram¹⁴⁹

Decentralisation

Donors have promoted decentralisation in Cambodia since the earliest UNTAC interventions, including the UNDP Cambodia Area Resettlement and Reintegration Project (CARERE I) (1992-5) to repatriate people from the border areas and to help them settle back into working rural communities.¹⁵⁰ Its follow-up programme, the Cambodia Area Rehabilitation and Regeneration Project (CARERE II) (1996-2000), was designed “to promote peace and alleviate poverty” and to “strengthen the links and increase the mutual understanding between the state and civil society.” It

¹⁴⁹ Reproduced from Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Robin Biddulph and Chor Vanna, "Independent Monitoring and Evaluation of the Local Planning Process: Final Report," (Phnom Penh: 1997). Some of this work was subcontracted to NGOs.

supported “the decentralisation of development activities to provincial and local levels, and encourage[d] people to actively participate in making decisions and implementing local projects.”¹⁵¹ At the heart of its activities was the introduction and development of a village based participatory Local Planning Process (LPP) and the allocation of funds direct to the local level activities. This international initiative was later developed into a pilot decentralisation project – the Seila Programme – which was established under a Task Force in the government’s Council of Agricultural and Rural Development to distinguish it from the donor run CAREERE. This was done also because the government was concerned to maintain its hold on activities in the countryside. The Seila Programme was included in the government’s 1996-2000 First Socio-Economic Development Plan (SEDP).¹⁵² Nevertheless, the Seila “experiment,” as it was also called, in participatory development planning and administration through local communities was driven by the UNDP and cooperating donors. The model for the approach was provided by the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) which believed that “sustained peace in Cambodia can come only through equitable development to raise the standard of living for all citizens by strengthening the bonds between civil society and the State and by empowering rural Cambodians to participate fully in the development process.”¹⁵³ Themes which are consistent with a broad concept of human security.

Commune Council laws passed by the government in 2001 were based on the Seila experience and defined the roles and responsibilities of elected commune councils, and mandated certain budget and planning techniques and defined processes to be followed.¹⁵⁴ Councils were given wide-ranging governance responsibilities in relation to preparing and approving village and commune development plans;

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 7.

¹⁵² Seila Program, "The Seila Programme and the CAREERE Project within the Context of the Royal Government of Cambodia's First Socio-economic Development Plan, 1996-2000," (1996), 3-4.

¹⁵³ UNCDF, "Cambodia," UNCDF, www.uncdf.org/english/countries/cambodia/index.php accessed on 19 July 2005. The UNCDF Local Development Fund (LDF) was used (through Seila) to transfer resources to these local governments and communities; provides the necessary development planning tools to help them to prioritise their needs, implement projects and then monitor and evaluate results.

¹⁵⁴ Royal Government of Cambodia, "The Law on Khum/Sangkat Administrative Management," (National Assembly, Royal Kram No. 0301/05, 2001). Please note that I have omitted reference to municipal elements and *sangkat* as I am dealing with rural administration only.

preparing council budgets; establishing commune rules and regulations; and imposing local taxes and service charges.¹⁵⁵ They also have responsibilities for security and public order, the well-being of villagers and their improved living standards, environmental and general social cohesion.¹⁵⁶ In other words, it aims to enhance people's human security.

Significantly, donors considered the Seila programme to be not only an exercise in restructuring local government institutions, but also an experiment in social engineering which assumed that participation in planning and local activities would expand civil society and promote democracy.¹⁵⁷ Donors were also keen to try to bypass and replace the system of local government inherited from the SOC.

However, the first Commune Council elections held in 2002 were a major victory for the Cambodia People's Party which received over 60 per cent of the vote. Thus, the elections effectively re-confirmed existing commune leadership, which means that in most parts the same personnel have exercised local authority since the 1980s, initially as members of the Cambodian People's Revolutionary Party. It also means that the Cambodia People's Party retains its well organised and controlled political power and influence throughout the countryside. The second round of elections held in 2007 produced the same dominant CPP result, the main change being the fall in support for Funcinpec which has been largely discredited at the national level.¹⁵⁸ The Table below provides the detailed electoral outcomes for the major parties.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁵ Royal Government of Cambodia, "Inter-Ministerial Prakas on Commune/Sangkat Development Planning," (Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Planning, No. 098, 2002); UNDP, "Cambodia Area Rehabilitation and Regeneration Project (CARERE)," (UNDP Cambodia: nd). Seila conducted extensive training in planning for the development committees, including training in Participatory Rural Appraisal methods to provide socio-economic information for villager to consider in discussing future needs and plans.

¹⁵⁶ Royal Government of Cambodia, "The Law on Khum/Sangkat Administrative Management."

¹⁵⁷ UNCDF, "Cambodia."

¹⁵⁸ Rannarith had split from Funcinpec and formed his own party the Norodom Rannarith Party (NRP)

¹⁵⁹ UNDP, "Report on the Elections of the Commune Councils," (Phnom Penh: UNDP, 2002), 18-19. Other parties which contested the elections in 2002 were the Khmer Democratic, Vongkot Khmera, Khmer Angkor, Khmer Progress, and Cambodian Women parties. These were all unsuccessful apart from the Khmer Democrats which won a single seat.

Year	Commune Council Chief		1 st Deputy		2 nd Deputy		Member		Totals	
	2002	2007	2002	2007	2002	2007	2002	2007	2002	2007
CPP	1,598	1,591	789	1,125	154	185	5,162	5,092	7,703	7,993
Funcinpec	10	2	547	47	852	155	802	70	2,211	274
SRP	13	28	285	403	615	963	433	1,266	1,346	2,660
NRP				46		317		62	0	425
Total	1,621	1,621	1,621	1,621	1,621	1,620*	6,397	6,490	11,260	11,352

* One other 2nd deputy seat went to the Hang Dara Democratic Movement Party in 2007.

Table 3-3 Commune Council election results 2002 and 2007¹⁶⁰

The government's claim that the Seila experiment provided "... *concrete evidence* [emphasis added] that this process enhances the participation of the people, increases local ownership and strengthens the bonds between the State and civil society" appears to have been premature.¹⁶¹ Similarly, its expectation that decentralisation would encourage political debate and make governments accountable has yet to be realised; while its claim that the success of decentralisation in achieving development objectives would depend on the performance of other governance institutions, such as the ministries of health and education, has proved to have substance.¹⁶² Thus, the government recognised the combined importance of local governance and of central ministry and line-departmental governance not only in creating development, but also in enhancing democracy and the role of civil society. These matters are taken up in the next chapter.

Conclusion

The first part of this chapter has shown that human security in Cambodia was seriously compromised, not only by domestic politics but also by the practices of states during the cold war confrontation. It has shown how the actions of states in protecting their own perceived security interests had a devastating impact on the human security of Cambodians, in terms of the physical violence of war, and in terms of people's human development, their dignity and their future prospects. It shows, too, that powerful states were able, through their power of veto in the United Nations Security Council, to thwart the objectives of the United Nations Charter to

¹⁶⁰ Data from www.silaka.org/resource/communcouncil-election-results-2002-2007.pdf accessed on 27 September 2007 for the year 2002; and National Election Committee for 2007.

¹⁶¹ Kingdom of Cambodia, "SEDP II," v-vi.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, xi-xii.

protect people from war and violence.¹⁶³ It also shows how, in the absence of serious attention to human security by the United Nations General Assembly and the Security Council, powerful states were able to prolong the civil war and violence in Cambodia and exacerbate conditions in the border camps. Thus, there are serious shortcomings arising from the way in which the Security Council itself is bound by the concerns of its permanent members with their own state security, which may be at the expense of human security elsewhere.

The chapter also makes it clear that the security concerns of powerful states can have a direct impact on the ability of humanitarian organisations to properly carry out their internationally designated functions to protect individuals and groups. This is particularly the case in reference to protecting refugees at the Cambodian border where humanitarian aid, despite its benefits, did not prevent the agencies from becoming involved in the civil war crisis. Recognition of a human security approach would have ensured that these and similar issues were brought directly into the security framework of the UN rather than left largely isolated within its humanitarian and development organisation.

Being able to act only with the agreement of the permanent members makes the Security Council ineffective in many cases of international security or humanitarian concern. It also means that the UN humanitarian agencies cannot always perform their global governance roles and responsibilities, especially if the countries concerned are not signatories to conventions or are not otherwise bound by Security Council resolutions in support of humanitarian interventions. The potential for the United Nations to bridge the gap between its security and humanitarian arms is discussed in chapter 5.

The latter part of this chapter concerns the complex and difficult rebuilding of Cambodia following the removal of Pol Pot. Despite the civil war, the economy was restored to where it had been under Sihanouk. It was also the case that despite the different ideological basis and form of government and administration under the communist regime, the culture of governance which emerged was little different

¹⁶³ The veto was in effect a mechanism to institutionalise the reality of balance of power even among allies and victors of WWII and without it there would have been no agreement on the establishment of the UN. “We the people ...” was an artifice of states and maybe only now with the growth of international civil society are the people becoming more relevant to international security.

from earlier times. (This included patronage and rent taking, and high-level corruption.) State building in Cambodia has, over time, carried with it the hierarchical social structure and patronage networks which were integral, it seems, to earlier Cambodian society and culture. The peace Agreement introduced yet a new approach to state building based on democracy, respect for human rights and participation in the free market economy, and mapped out a comprehensive plan for Cambodia's future development.

International development as we have seen is the province of a number of very powerful global governance institutions such as the World Bank, UNDP, FAO, WFP, IMF and WTO. They are supported in their development work by a large number of civil society NGOs.¹⁶⁴ Together, particularly as donors, they present the imposing face of standard development concepts, norms and plans which must be adopted, in principle at least, by recipient countries such as Cambodia. The international community, through them, continued to have a significant impact on human security in Cambodia. Decentralisation was a part of the strategy in the belief that local government was crucial to social, economic and ideological reform. This was not new, however, and also had resonance in the past introduction of commune councils by the French and their later re-establishment by the Heng Samrin regime as commune committees.

The promise of human security arising from the international commitment to assisting in Cambodia's development appeared to be strong. However, the economic, political, and social performance of Cambodia in the fifteen years since the UNTAC intervention has been mediocre with persistent poverty, high level corruption and human rights abuses which leaves open the question of whether human security has been realised in practice. It is this question which will be pursued in the next chapter based on field research in rural Cambodia.

¹⁶⁴ Although referred to as civil society NGOs, many of the international NGOs have become entrenched corporate organizations with close association with formal agencies and donors which begins to question their civil society credentials and whether they continue to be social movements.

CHAPTER 4

HUMAN INSECURITIES IN RURAL CAMBODIA

Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realisation, through national effort and international co-operation and in accordance with the organisation and resources of each [s]tate, of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality.¹

... human security becomes an all-encompassing condition in which individual citizens live in freedom, peace and safety and participate fully in the process of governance. They enjoy the protection of fundamental rights, have access to resources and the basic necessities of life, including health and education, and inhabit an environment that is not injurious to their health and wellbeing.²

The UNDP, with the support of key donors and NGOs, was a strong proponent of decentralised development in Cambodia and contributed significantly to the reform of the local government system inherited from the State of Cambodia. The Seila project played an important role in re-designing local government processes, funding infrastructure and other village projects, and organising training for officials and villagers on administration techniques, health, agriculture, conflict resolution and other matters. It also included training on the ideas of democracy, human rights and human development, rule of law, participation and empowerment. These have become familiar, though not necessarily embedded, concepts in rural Cambodia. They were promoted with a view to consolidating peace and improving the standards of living for all Cambodians by expanding access to justice, health care and education, as well as improved economic opportunity and poverty reduction. They were also intended to develop local democracy and to enhance the development of national democracy.

This chapter aims to explore the situation of ordinary Cambodians to show that, despite the many positive developments since 1993, there are persistent threats to human security in rural Cambodia. The fieldwork will emphasise the sort of concerns which the people consider constitute problems for their future wellbeing. It

¹ United Nations, "Universal declaration of Human Rights," 7, 240. Article 22.

² Commission for Africa, "Our Common Interest: Report of the Commission for Africa," 392.

adopts the approach of Thakur that anything that reduces quality of life is a human security issue.

Exploration of conditions in rural Cambodia reveals that there is a range of vulnerabilities and that these owe much to the failure of state governance institutions to adequately deliver the services they were set up to deliver – a failure not only of decentralised local government, but also of ministries and their line departments.³ The chapter shows that the nature of domestic politics and social and cultural factors may also be important factors bearing on human security.

To achieve its aims, the chapter begins with a description of general conditions in the research area of Battambang in 2005. It then identifies more detailed current issues on the ground in rural Cambodia, to expose the reality of everyday existence of the people and to analyse their situation in terms of human security. It integrates findings from field visits to several communes near the provincial township of Battambang, with secondary source material covering other parts of the country. The basic objective of the field visit was to identify the economic, social and political issues which confronted villagers on a day-to-day basis and whether these conditions might constitute threats or vulnerabilities to their human security. I therefore discussed general concerns with the villagers, individually and in groups, and sought to understand the kinds of problems which confronted them, and how these would be interpreted in a human security approach.

While using the widest possible approach to identifying potential human security issues, the findings of the research are analysed using the broad approach of the Commission for Africa. Its definition required that people experience, 1) freedom, peace and safety; 2) participation in governance; 3) protection of rights; and 4) access to resources to fulfil basic needs (including education, health, and suitable environment). However, these four conditions are interrelated and in considering access to resources, for example, other issues of rights, governance and freedom may emerge as inherent human security problems. Since I wish to preserve the holistic nature of human security and not to separate it into sectoral issues, I have decided to

³ Ministries such as the Ministry of Agriculture, Forests and Fisheries are structured into departments whose provincial offices may be referred to as respective provincial departments. These departments are subject to central policy, budgetary and bureaucratic oversight, though they interact with provincial authorities in relation to provincial policies and plans. They are also referred to as line departments.

combine the categories 3 and 4 under one section heading. I will also consider governance last as it leads in to the next chapter.

The chapter concludes that while local governance shows significant opportunities for advancing human security, and despite important gains to the present, local government is hampered by the failure of line departments to meet adequate standards of service delivery.

General situation in Battambang in 2005

There have been significant improvements in the lives of Cambodians since the early 1990s. Most significant has been the end of military confrontation and the risk to villagers of military raids and intimidation by Khmer Rouge groups, following the death of Pol Pot in 1998. While at least civil conflict is over, other physical and livelihood security issues remain to be addressed.

The outward impression passing through Battambang town, and out along the 'suburban' roads to the countryside and villages is mixed. The overall drab streetscapes of un-maintained houses or business premises are dotted with the occasional brightly coloured restored or rebuilt building. Out of the town centre, in some areas, the housing is poor and cramped. In other places there are picturesque tree-lined lanes along canals and river banks which reveal varied forms of housing from basic thatched houses to smart tiled concrete and wooden structures, often in compounds. Everywhere in Battambang there is the impression of activity – traffic is on the move, shops abound, street hawkers, traders, motor repairers, chemists, dentists, restaurants and all sorts of services (laundry, printing, photocopy, and mobile phones). In the evenings, many food stalls are set up on street corners. One is also struck by the number of establishments promoting private English language education and management courses. There are a number of universities and institutions (both government and private) of varying credibility delivering English, management, economics and accounting courses.⁴ Internet cafés, appear to draw a reasonable clientele among the young. The central market is a hive of activity and shops nearby stock the latest hi-fi, TV and electronic equipment. In the lead up to

⁴ The EIC has raised doubts as to the credibility of some of these in the absence of adequate accreditation. Economic Institute of Cambodia, *Cambodia: Economic Watch, April 2005*, 37.

the Buddhist New Year (mid-April), there was a flurry of wedding and other ceremonies which suggested tradition was alive and well – at least for those who could afford it. This same energy and commercial activity can be found in other regional centres and along major thoroughfares across Cambodia. Despite the industrious bustle, however, there is poverty and many people struggle to make ends meet and to endure the substandard working conditions that exist in many enterprises and especially on building sites and small industrial sites.

As one moves out of the urban area, there are small shops and markets, petrol sellers, food stalls and simple household mini-stores. Country roads are busy and many people travel on the intercity buses and in long-distance taxis.⁵ Remorques (motorcycle carts) and small trucks, motorcycles and bullock carts are on the move with produce and household goods. School children abound, dressed in white shirts and blue skirts or trousers going to and from school in long lines along the dusty roads – on foot, on bicycles, and a surprising number on motorcycles (many flash new models) – which suggests an enormous energy and, on the surface at least, a positive future for the country.

Villages are often linked to the main roads with laterite roads or simple dirt tracks. In the dry season, dust covers the homes and gardens lining the routes, creating a health hazard.⁶ In the rainy season, many roads and paths become quagmires as the dust turns to mud and potholes are enlarged by the slowed and churning traffic. The hazards are considerable as people are delayed and often find sections impassable. In times of medical emergency, for example, there is no assurance that the short journey to district or provincial health services can be undertaken easily. Bad roads can also affect villagers' access to markets, children's school attendance, and general mobility for employment, social and cultural purposes. There is no rural electrification service, though some homes have basic lighting provided by car batteries and there are generator-based battery charging services available in some locations.⁷

⁵ Toyota pick-up with 20 or more people and luggage crammed aboard—on the cabin roof and even on the bonnet. Once I even saw a vehicle, with a motorbike tied upright on the cabin roof, travelling on the highway with a passenger seated comfortably on the motorbike.

⁶ Interview 21-2/3/05.

⁷ The ADB recently approved a project for electricity supply from Thailand to Siem Reap, Battambang and Banteay Meanchey, which is expected to also provide some rural electrification along the transmission line. See ADB News and Events at

Village structures, agricultural systems and land use have changed little since described by Jean Delvert in his major study of agriculture in Cambodia in the late 1950s.⁸ The villages vary significantly in size and layout and may be dispersed, clustered or, more commonly, spread out along a river bank or road much as described by Delvert.⁹ They comprise a mix of unpainted wooden houses on stilts with elegant stairs and verandas, and poorer plain structures with thatched roofs – some barely more than shelters. There is the occasional ‘rich’ house on a concrete base and painted bright blue – often a sign that the “rich” owner receives help from relatives overseas.¹⁰ Indeed, classifications of rich, medium and poor peasants have long been made in terms of the roof type of family dwellings.¹¹ The approach is carried over into the Seila Commune Council Databases, organised by Province, which provide basic village statistics on such matters as population, education and literacy, as well as housing, water supply and sanitation. In Cambodia in 2004, some 40 per cent of rural dwellings are thatched, which is slightly more than the 35 per cent national poverty line.¹² Figure 4-1 provides figures for thatch in several communes in Battambang. While there is a trend towards the replacement of thatch since 2002, the association of thatch with poverty suggests a widespread variation in wealth at the local level across the country.

<http://www.adb.org/media/articles/2008/12387-cambodian-electricities-project/> accessed 10 February 2008.

⁸ Delvert, *Le Paysan Cambodgien*. This is a comprehensive and unique study and in the absence of other similar work, stands as the point of comparison for present studies.

⁹ Ibid., 198-220. In the eastern parts of Cambodia, Delvert notes that there had been considerable ‘regroupment’ of villages for security reasons in the period 1948–1954 in the lead up to Cambodian independence and the 1954 Geneva Convention.

¹⁰ In the villages, one occasionally meets these overseas relatives on visit to their families and friends. Some expatriate Cambodians collect money in the US or elsewhere and fund the building of local *wats* and occasionally other infrastructure in their former home villages. Local relatives of the donors are often contracted ahead of others to complete these works.

¹¹ Kim Sedara, "Reciprocity: Informal Patterns of Social Interactions in a Cambodian Village Near Angkor Park" (MA, Northern Illinois University, 2001), 38-39. *neak krour* – poor villager (thatch roof); *neak kour som* – middle-level villager (tiled roof, wooden house); *neak mean* – rich villager (tiled roof, concrete house). Zinc roofs are now the more prevalent for the better off villagers.

¹² Figures compiled from the Seila Commune Council Database 2004 available from http://www.seila.gov.kh/downloads/cdb_briefing/, accessed on 15 October 2006. Battambang has 44 per cent thatch, Takeo and Kandal are at or below 25 per cent while several poorer provinces, Mondul Kiri, Ottdar Meanchey and Rattanakiri have over 60 per cent thatch. These figures are broadly consistent with other poverty data.

Commune	Commune % thatch	Lowest Village level % thatch	Highest Village level % thatch
Prek Norin	13%	3%	26%
Bansay Treng	34%	10%	49%
Bay Damran	51%	25%	80%
Phnom Sampeou	40%	13%	70%

Table 4-1 Proportion of thatch houses in four Battambang communes¹³

However, there needs to be caution in association human security with poverty measures which, although being important drivers of development policy and planning, are an inadequate measure of human security. CDRI's Moving Out of Poverty Study (MOPS), for example, found that of the 26 per cent of households in their study villages that moved out of poverty in recent years, some 22 per cent fell back into poverty.¹⁴ It also classified seven so called mobility groups identified by villagers and detailed in Table 4-2 below.¹⁵

Comfortably rich	Climbing into wealth	Escaping poverty	Static middle	Falling into poverty	Deepening poverty	Chronically poor
24%	12%	13%	14%	15%	7%	14%

Table 4-2 Mobility across all villages in MOPS study – 2004/5¹⁶

Assuming that the national poverty index falls somewhere between “static middle” and “falling into poverty,” it is evident that “escaping poverty” requires an additional leap beyond simply crossing a national poverty threshold or being part of a “static middle.” In other words, the higher level represents a level beyond which vulnerability to relapsing into poverty is minimised. It is, thus, the higher level of income and basic needs and not the poverty level which helps attain human security. Therefore, if human security is to be achieved, there is a need for more differentiated

¹³ Figures compiled from the Seila Commune Council Database 2004 available at www.seila.gov.kh/downloads/cdb_2004 accessed on 15 October 2006. There are also significant variations within villages in a given commune.

¹⁴ Cambodia Development Resource Institute (CDRI), "Moving Out of Poverty," (Phnom Penh: Cambodia Development Resource Institute, 2007), 40.

¹⁵ Ibid., 16-17.

¹⁶ Ibid., 34. Percentages represent the number of households which moved into the particular category over the period 2004/5.

targeting of development assistance to households from the static middle as well as those falling into poverty and the chronically poor.

Problems of access to resources, services and rights.

The most important resource for the vast majority of rural Cambodians is land. Much as described by Delvert, villagers tended to have small garden plots near the place of residence while rice fields are located beyond the village perimeter. Villages along the lower reaches of the Sangke River had narrow strips of land for gardens (*chamcar*) running perpendicular to and immediately adjacent to the river banks while their rice fields were established beyond the garden land on flood plains. Further upstream, where river banks permitted, dry season gardens were established on the sandy banks exposed by the falling river level, residences were along the river bank and rice fields beyond that. These patterns of agriculture are determined by the local geography and the nature of flooding in the wet season.¹⁷ However, many Cambodian farmers are unable to meet their family needs from agriculture alone and, as in the past, they depend also on access to commons for fishing, forest goods and other opportunities to meet their annual subsistence needs.

National figures indicate that while rice consumption per capita is increasing, the availability of rice land, and rice production per capita, are tending to decrease due to rapid population growth. Increased national consumption is thus sustained largely by improved yields. Figures 4-1 and 4-2 illustrate these trends. However, as with house types, Figure 4.3 below shows that there is a considerable variation at district level in rice yields and production per family. A divergence that is reproduced also at commune and village levels, emphasizing the importance of local conditions to a human security approach. Indeed, in some areas nutrition levels are so poor that the WFP continues to run food for work and other nutrition programmes assisting up to 1.5 million Cambodians.¹⁸

¹⁷ Delvert details the various geographical systems, the relationship between rivers and flood plains, the location of villages, gardens and ricefields. Delvert, *Le Paysan Cambodgien*. See also Puckridge, *The Burning of the Rice: A Cambodian Success Story*. Village structures and the agriculture practiced today appear little different from the late 1950s as described by Delvert despite the disruption of the Pol Pot years and subsequent civil war.

¹⁸ See the WFP website at <http://www.wfp.org/English/?ModuleID=137&Key=2347>.

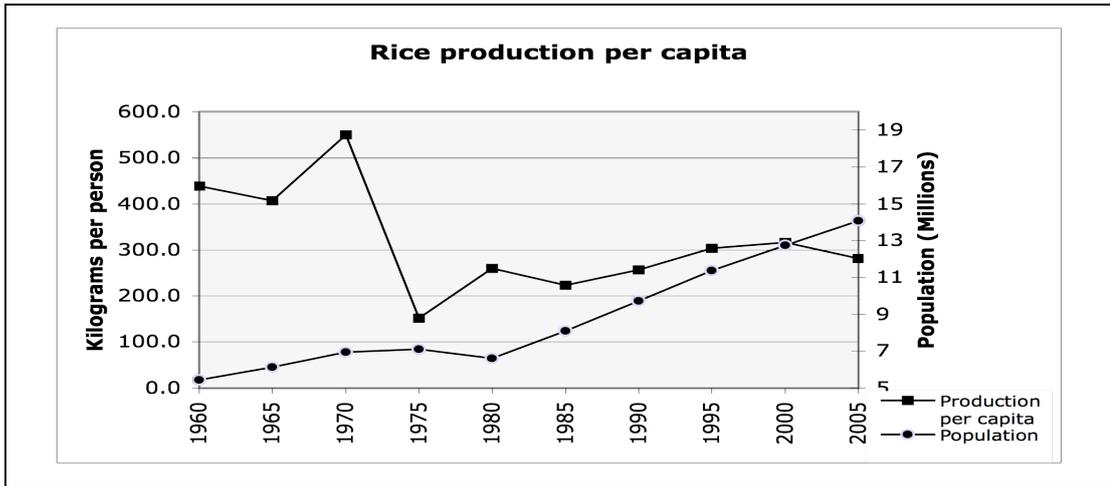


Figure 4-1 Cambodia – rice production per capita¹⁹

The pressure on land is significant since, in addition to population increase, in many parts of Cambodia agricultural land has been lost to landmines laid during decades of war and civil strife. There is also a significant loss of agricultural land to speculators and to urban expansion.

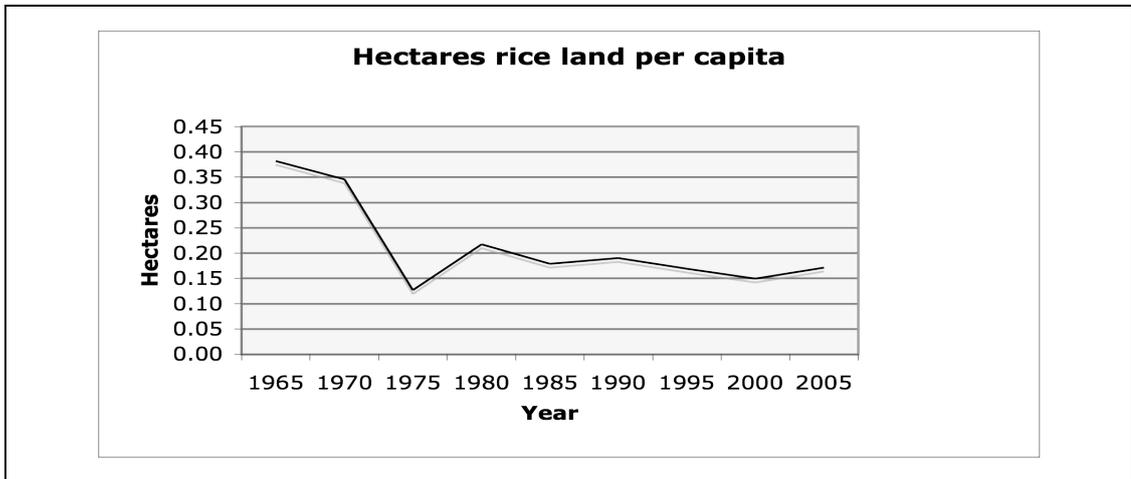


Figure 4-2 Cambodia – hectares of rice land per capita

Access to the commons is also becoming more difficult with population growth and compounded by dwindling resources and over exploitation, including by commercial operations. The evidence, suggests that as population grows, access to land becomes more difficult and with cost of living increases, agriculture is providing a less secure base for achieving basic needs. Agricultural land, nevertheless, remains a critical

¹⁹ Compiled from "FAO, Statistical Division, Commodities by country" at www.fao.org accessed 16 Sept 2005 and updated for 2005 on 10 May 2008 using IRRI data as FOA database is under reconstruction.

resource for most Cambodians. Its contribution to family food and income security is, as shown above, highly variable.

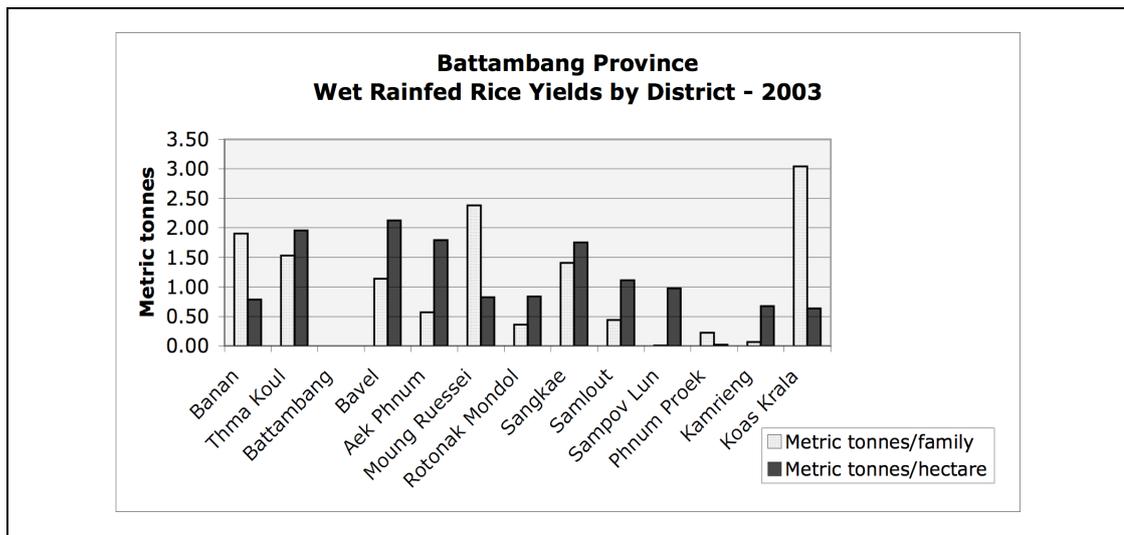


Figure 4-3 Rice yield in Battambang province – 2003²⁰

Land distribution and landlessness

In the previous chapter, the failure of solidarity groups and the misappropriation and mismanagement of land by officials after 1979 was noted. Conditions were extremely difficult for the villagers and once a harvest was completed there was the inevitable shortfall in the annual needs of a household so that people left their villages in search of work in district and provincial centres and in Phnom Penh. Dry season planting was out of the question due to lack of working irrigation systems.²¹ The 1989 land reforms, which included a land redistribution of 1 hectare per family, were popular, but the actual allocation of land was often skewed in favour of officials and their associates.

The land situation is nicely captured by the villagers of Kanh Chraong, who recorded that in the period immediately after Pol Pot people had nothing, but that a ‘middle class’ quickly emerged from the former rich who revived the practice of lending with interest, where before there had been sharing of resources.²² After 1979, they recalled, many people returned to their birthplace, but those who came first “claimed

²⁰ Compiled from 2003 Web CDB 1.0 available at <http://203.189.130.76:8080/database/webcdb>, accessed on 10 May 2006.

²¹ Heder, "Kampuchea," 37-8 and 42.

²² Krom Akphiwat Phum, "Changes in the Villages: An Examination of the Development Process at Village Level, Battambang Province, Cambodia," (Battambang: Krom Akphiwat Phum, 1996), 42.

a lot of land and those returning later got small amounts of land.” Later, they said, there was a mix of co-operative farming and private ownership and “one hand worked with the solidarity group and the other hand worked their own rice land. ... When community land was distributed at the end of the solidarity group time the local authorities and solidarity group leaders had the opportunity to take a larger share” so that land ownership at the time ranged from one to fourteen hectares.²³ Further disruption to land distribution was experienced with UNTAC, due to the resettlement of returnees from the border camps, and of internally displaced people.

Many studies since the mid-1990s have noted the importance of land to household survival in Cambodia and linked small land holdings and landlessness directly with high levels of rural poverty, especially where landlessness has been as a result of distress sales and seizures by the military and other officials.²⁴ Distress sales arose when illness struck a household requiring immediate access to money for medical costs or, in times of food shortage, where a household had limited access to family or other villager support.²⁵ Sales of land were also likely where a household did not have the capital or assets necessary to work their land (e.g. cow, plough, cash for seed, food for helpers or for themselves to survive until harvest). Micro-finance was also lacking with NGOs being virtually the sole providers of financial services, but reaching only about 11 per cent of rural households.²⁶ Often too, those lacking farming skills fell into poverty and lost their land. This was not uncommon in Cambodia where many men had spent a large portion of their adult life in armies

²³ Ibid., 42.

²⁴ Robin Biddulph, "Landlessness: A Growing Problem," *Cambodia Development Review* 4, no. 3 (2000): 1-2. Kato also refers to the distress sale of land in Elisabeth Kato, "Landlessness in Kompong Reap," *Cambodia Development Review* 3, no. 3 (1999): 7-11. Quoting an OXFAM study, which found that 13 percent of the 30,000 families sample were landless. While the expanding rural population appears to be the largest single cause of landlessness, of the 43.6 percent of landless families who previously had land, but subsequently lost it, the vast majority (86.9 percent) were distress sales. The largest single cause being illness. Many reported also that their land was taken from them without compensation by the military or provincial authorities.

²⁵ Elisabeth Kato, "'We have Rights, they have the Power': A Case Study of Land Expropriation in Northwest Cambodia," (Phnom Penh: Oxfam, Cambodia Land Study Project, 1998); and John McAndrew, "Interdependence in Household Livelihood Strategies in Two Cambodian Villages," (Phnom Penh: Cambodia Development Resource Institute, 1998).

²⁶ Manet Hun, "Is Market-Assisted Land Reform an Appropriate Choice for Cambodia at the Present Time?" (MA, New York University, 2001), 5. NGOs were providing financial support services to the poor in the villages I visited. ACLEDA was mentioned, but unfavourably due to interest rates and confiscation of assets, often land, on failure to meet repayments.

before resettling into village life, or in female-headed households which lacked basic labour resources.²⁷ Population increase was also a significant factor, especially as many families had no land to allocate to young married couples.²⁸ The impact of population can be shown by comparing the population in villages at present and as reported by Delvert who in the late 1950s surveyed the land holding of 54 per cent of families (434 families) in Kauk Khmum commune.²⁹ By extrapolation the total number of families in the commune would have been 803 and the total land occupied 3720 hectares. Official figures (Seila 2003) for Kauk Khmum indicate that there were then 2398 families and the number of hectares of rain fed wet rice was 4169 hectares. Although a rough comparison, it does indicate a significant increase in population for little increase in land.³⁰

While some villagers are at risk of land loss through economic conditions, others are at risk of land expropriation at the hands of local government officials (village, commune, district), often acting on behalf of military officers or businessmen with government contacts.³¹ Such expropriations demonstrate the power and authority of officials who are able to treat public and even private land as their own to dispose of as they choose. Courts are largely inaccessible to the poor as they are costly, there is a risk of retaliation and, in any case, judgements are likely to be influenced by the powerful. Access to land is closely tied to people's rights which are denied not only by the powerful, but also by the legal system itself.³² Departments such as the Land Titles Department are too weak to assert the validity of titles and choose to avoid involvement in challenges to expropriations as they are "hobbled by the network of

²⁷ One Seila official indicated to me that it was too readily assumed that all Cambodians were capable farmers if given the land.

²⁸ Cambodia Development Resource Institute (CDRI), "Moving Out of Poverty."; Elisabeth Kato, "'Poor People Can't do Rice': A Case Study of Poverty and Landlessness in Kompong Reap Village, Takeo Province," (Phnom Penh: Oxfam, Cambodia Land Study Project, 1999); and McAndrew, "Interdependence." 1-9.

²⁹ Delvert, *Le Paysan Cambodgien*, 457-62.

³⁰ Delvert also surveyed Chamcar Samrong commune where a similar calculation shows that where 546 families previously occupied 1,420 hectares of rice land, in 2003 there were 3,081 families in Chamcar Samrong which is now urban and has no rice land.

³¹ Kato, "We have Rights."; and Cambodia Development Resource Institute (CDRI), "Moving Out of Poverty." Hun also notes the likelihood that even where there were willing sales in an open land market context, the rural poor were likely to be exploited due to their lack of information, knowledge of the market and skills in relation to sales processes. Hun, "Market-Assisted Land Reform." Land seizures remains a major political issue in Cambodia.

³² World Bank, "Justice for the Poor: An Exploratory Study of Collective Grievances over Land and Local Governance in Cambodia," (Phnom Penh: Center for Advanced Study (CAS), World Bank, 2006).

corruption and influence that pervades the civil service.”³³ Knowledge of new government legislation enables those wishing to acquire land for commercial use to exploit those who are ignorant of the new legal procedures for land registration and use.³⁴ Confronted by such issues, Kato noted the importance of NGOs in supporting villager claims and quotes a villager’s summing up that: “If we have to depend on local government, we will die ... We have the rights... They have the power... They respect power.”³⁵ Thus, human insecurity arises not only from landlessness but also from the failure of the legal systems to provide just services and to uphold the people’s rights.

There are also significant economic security issues associated with access to land. The landless, and those having less than half a hectare of land, were considered in 2001 to be particularly vulnerable to economic downturn.³⁶ Yet, even though the viability of such small holdings is questioned, agriculture is still promoted by many development agencies as the basis for reducing poverty. The problem, however, is that access to rural land is becoming increasingly competitive as the population grows and, since production is also limited, such access may not represent a viable means of achieving food or economic security. Nor can land provide an increasing opportunity for employment. A 2006 survey of agriculture emphasised that “... the ability of the *current agricultural system* to serve as a generator of additional employment has apparently come to an end” since, between 1999 and 2004, “a mere 2.6 per cent of the increment of the labour force was absorbed in agriculture.”³⁷

Closely related to whether agriculture can provide food and economic security for rural Cambodians is the fact that the more productive dry season rice is limited by a lack of irrigation infrastructure. Cambodia has a mere 7 per cent of irrigated land compared with 45 per cent in Vietnam and an average 20 per cent in the region. Irrigation has received only 8 per cent of international development assistance and is unlikely to show any improvement in the near future without significant

³³ Kato, "We have Rights," 13.

³⁴ See for example Ruth Bottomley, "Contested Forests: An Analysis of the Highlander Response to Logging, Ratanakiri Province, Northeast Cambodia," *Critical Asian Studies* 34, no. 4 (2002); John McAndrew, "Tampuan Villagers Adapt to a Rapidly Changing Economy," *Cambodia Development Review* 5, no. 3 (2001): 5-8.

³⁵ Kato, "We have Rights," 12.

³⁶ Bhargavi Ramamurthy, Sik Boreak, and Per Ronnås, "Cambodia 1999-2000: Land, Labour and Rural Livelihood in Focus," (Stockholm: SIDA, 2001), 57-58.

³⁷ Lundström and Ronnås, "Employment and Growth in Cambodia: An Integrated Economic Analysis." 46.

investment.³⁸ Thus, it is not just access to land that is critical to food and economic security but also the development of the agricultural infrastructure to increase the productive potential of the land and with it the prospects for improvements in human security.

Landlessness has been shown to be associated with low incomes in some villages, in others where alternative income sources are available, it has been associated with higher levels of income growth.³⁹ This was observed by Delvert in the late 1950s. Although he identified poverty as an issue and put the figure at about 10 per cent in Kauk Khmum commune and 23 per cent in the “urban” commune Chamcar Samrong, he further reported that 43 landless families in Kauk Khmum rented houses and were well off as they were employed on the railways and in the public service. Similarly, in Chamcar Samrong, over one half of those with less than 0.5 hectares (65 families) were employed in Battambang.⁴⁰ The MOPS study again points to the fact that poverty need not be directly related to landlessness.⁴¹

While consideration of access to resources has tended to be concentrated on land and denial of rights to secure tenure in this and other agrarian societies, a human security approach requires a broader understanding of the sources of threats and vulnerabilities. Too close a focus on the consequences of issues, such as landlessness and distress sales and a search for solutions in agricultural expansion, risks overlooking other causes of human insecurity in the village. The next section, therefore, provides a broader understanding of human security concerns arrived at through discussions with villagers. It identifies resources and related concerns raised by the people during interviews and discussions in the villages, in association meetings with sponsoring NGO representatives, and in a two day forum between villagers and provincial authorities, where I was an observer. Since the matters were widely raised I have referred only to the main sources of information by date which, in association with the schedule at Annex A, identifies the commune visited on the particular day. If its inclusion might serve to identify a particular interviewee, the date has been omitted to comply with ethics requirements.

³⁸ Cambodia Development Resource Institute (CDRI), "Moving Out of Poverty," 8 and 10.

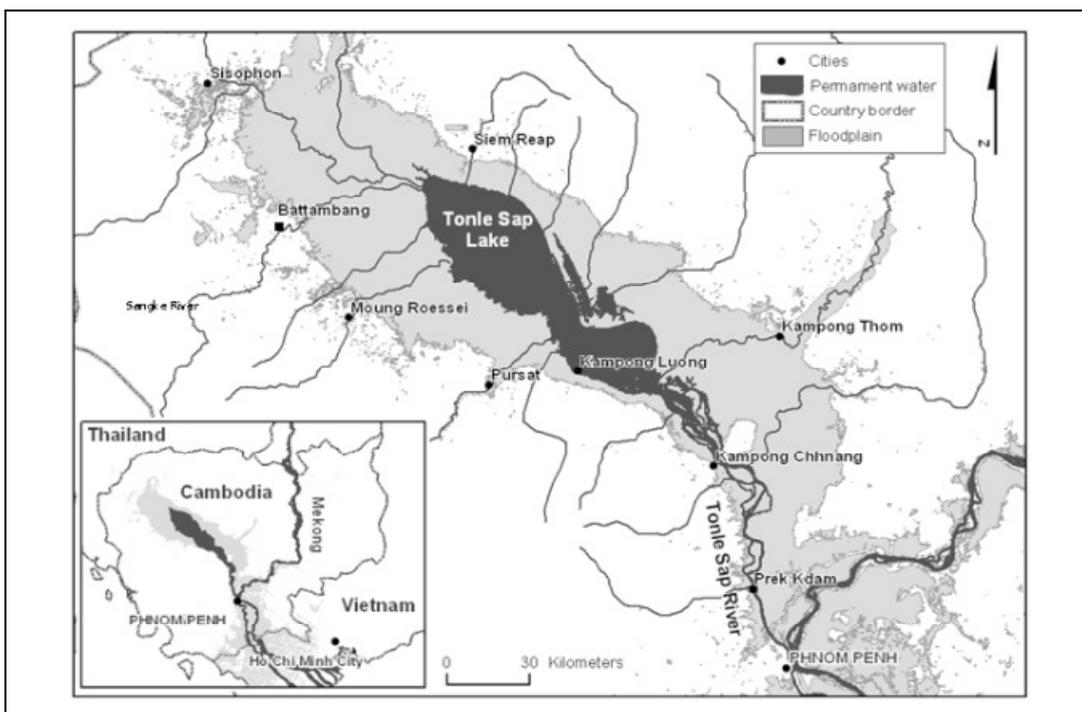
³⁹ Ibid., 100.

⁴⁰ Delvert identifies “une masse de pauvres gens à peu près sans terre dont l’importance (23 per cent) est due au voisinage de la ville,…” Delvert, *Le Paysan Cambodgien*, 460.

⁴¹ Cambodia Development Resource Institute (CDRI), "Moving Out of Poverty," 99-100.

Contested fish resources

Fish form an important part of the Cambodian subsistence food intake; it is caught by villagers in the rivers, rice fields and flooded areas (including flooded forest) mainly during the wet season. In the many villages influenced by the floodwaters from the Tonle Sap, or in floating villages on the lake itself, fishing takes on a more significant commercial role in the lives of the people. Maps 4.1 and 4-2 below show the extent of the Tonle Sap flood and the location of fishing lots near Battambang.



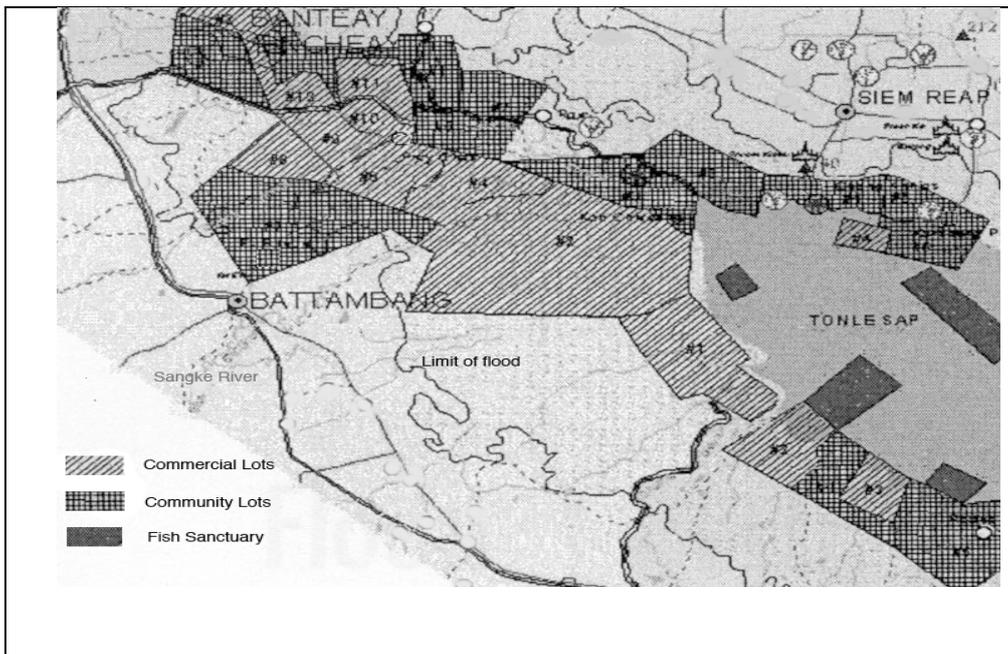
Map 4- 1 Tonle Sap Lake: Showing extent of annual flood and location of Battambang and Sangke River⁴²

In the villages of Prek Norin and Prek Loung communes, downstream from Battambang, people were concerned about climate change, illegal fishing activities, and poor economic returns from fishing and from vegetable growing. As I stood with local men looking across the barren land, which would be transformed by seasonal rains and floods into a vast green plain of rice, smoke rising from forests on the horizon indicated illegal logging and perhaps hunting activity. The men told me

⁴² Adapted from maps at: <http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/0/00/Cambodia-map-wiki.png> accessed 12 May 2008.

that illegal fishing was widespread and that it was not uncommon for water to be pumped out of storage ponds to get the very last of the available fish.⁴³

Traditionally in this area, fishing in the floodwaters and rivers could contribute up to one third of household annual income. However, in Battambang Province over 99 per cent of fishing households have reported decreasing availability of 'products and benefits' from inundated forests, big rivers and lakes, and from flooded rice fields.⁴⁴ The villagers also complained to me that this contribution to their annual needs was now being jeopardised by overall dwindling fishing resources, which they put down to a number of factors – the main one being over-exploitation.⁴⁵



Map 4-2 Fishing lots near Battambang⁴⁶

More generally, there was a view that the nature of the seasonal flooding was changing as a result of bigger and more irregular river floods, which they blamed on

⁴³ Village interviews 15/3/05. These ponds which are dug by villagers to provide crucial dry season water storage are dotted throughout the countryside. They may be on household land or large communal ponds.

⁴⁴ Mak Sithirith, "Fishing for Lives: Conflicts and Struggles between Communities and Fishing Lots in Kompong Chhnang Province," (Phnom Penh: NGO Forum on Cambodia, 2000).

⁴⁵ Village interviews 15/3/05; This was reiterated in other village interviews 27/3/05 and 21/4/05. One survey found that of respondents claiming decreased availability of resources over the past 10 years, 77 per cent put this down to over-exploitation while only 7 per cent suggested population growth. Ramamurthy, Boreak, and Ronnås, "Cambodia 1999-2000: Land, Labour and Rural Livelihood in Focus," 48-50.

⁴⁶ Adapted from: Evans, Patrick T, Melisa Marschke, and Kiran Paudyal. "Flood Forests, Fish and Fishing Villages: Tonle Sap, Cambodia." Tagbilaran City: Asia Forest Network, 2004.

logging in the mountain forests where the Sangke River rises. They also explained the loss of some fish species and lower quantities of others as due to the environmental changes and their impacts on spawning, including the changing river flows and the clearing of forests within the Tonle Sap flood zone. Fish populations, they said, were depleted by illegal fishing, the use of indiscriminate methods and out of season fishing which reduced breeding stocks. Modern fishing gear was also considered to be too efficient and to be “catching everything”, leading also to decreased stocks. A village head complained that the people felt they were left out of deliberations about the future of fishing. He was concerned, too, that the fish were being left out of consideration. The large and the small fish, he said, needed to be treated differently to protect them. Some types were already lost completely, while others were becoming rare. He spoke of the different species which had disappeared and the need to remind the younger generations of what could happen if there was no protection.⁴⁷

Clearly, access to this important resource is being affected by a combination of climate and environmental factors, as well as human agency such as forest clearing and over-fishing. Illegal methods are also being used to access the depleted resource. These include out of season river fishing by the method of tree branches placed in the river and netting, which was to be seen all along the lower reaches of the Sangke River in the dry season. Much of the illegal fishing, it was said, was done under the auspices of the military and “powerful people” who paid police and fisheries officials to turn a blind eye to their activities, or to silence those who protested.⁴⁸

Villagers also asserted that they were being unlawfully excluded from areas claimed by fishing lot holders.⁴⁹ Around the Tonle Sap these lots are licensed to private

⁴⁷ Village interview 15/3/05.

⁴⁸ Village interviews 15/3/05; and 21/4/05. It was claimed that soldiers were supported by wealthy people to do the illegal fishing. The wealthy provided the capital to buy branches to put in the river. “Only the high ranking and wealthy can do that kind of fishing. Only they can pay the police and fisheries officials.”

⁴⁹ Village interviews 21/4/05. The exclusion from fishing lots was not a new phenomenon. Already in the 1920s under the French colonial administration, villagers were excluded from flooded forest areas around the Tonle Sap by regulations which banned forest clearing and designated fishing lots which were auctioned to private businessmen. The regulations also imposed limitations on fishing seasons as well as restrictions on fishing tackle. The restrictions impacted on the villagers’ needs and they began to fish illegally. Delvert had already noted in the late 1950’s that due to rapid population growth and a fall in fish yields, the level of illegal fishing had become ‘alarming’ Delvert, *Le Paysan Cambodgien*, 163.

businessmen by auction, and many disputes arise from this system which excludes villagers from access to a traditional resource. As well as such exclusion and reduced fish stocks, any fish that the people do catch must be sold direct to a licensed businessman who sets the price unilaterally. Villagers incur a 4 per cent penalty described as a “tax” if the fish is sold to other than the licensee. However, although the villagers would prefer to sell direct to the licensee, they lack means of transport and must therefore sell to middlemen who come to the village to buy the available fish.

Illegal fishing was clearly a major issue and has led to violence not only in this part of Battambang, but in other areas as well.⁵⁰ It also creates significant economic pressures on families due to loss of sustenance and income.⁵¹ However, the major problem for the villagers is not necessarily the loss of access and income but the risk they face in attempting to assert their rights, and in attempting to prevent illegal activities. The law is clear on their rights and those of lot owners (whether these are fair and equitable is another matter). Human security is thus affected by the management of the resource by those legally responsible – department officials, police, the courts and local commune representatives – who determine whether villagers’ rights to peaceful and sustainable access to these resources are upheld. However, fisheries officials are reluctant to visit the villages; police and fisheries officials may be in the service of powerful people; disputes do not get to court and commune council involvement in the resolution of problems may be hampered by councillors’ political associations with powerful people. In very large part, the threat to livelihood and human security is thus in consequence of responsible government agencies failing to intervene and uphold the law. It becomes an issue of governance, not only of the fishing sector, but also of the military, police, justice and other responsible departments and the commune councils. In this situation it falls to the NGOs to provide whatever protection and support they can to help villagers to claim their rights.⁵²

⁵⁰ Village interviews 21/4/05. See also Mak Sithirith, "Fishing Conflict in Battambang," (Phnom Penh: NGO Forum on Cambodia, 2000); Mak Sithirith, "Fishing for Lives: Conflicts and Struggles between Communities and Fishing Lots in Kompong Chhnang Province."

⁵¹ Village observation 27/3/05. American Friends Service Committee, "Crossing Borders, Crossing Norms: Vulnerability and Coping in Battambang Province," (Phnom Penh: The Socio-Cultural Vulnerability and Coping Strategies (SCVCS) Research Project, 2000), 7.

⁵² Village interviews 21/4/05. A committee had been set up to try to address these issues with the authorities with the help of NGOs.

NGOs such as KAWP, Village Support Group, Aphivat Strey and the Fisheries Action Coalition Team (FACT) were all working to protect the people's lawful access to fishery resources. They were particularly active in promoting and, as the need arose, facilitating contact with the relevant government officials and extension services. This was done as far as possible in consultation with the commune councils. I observed several meetings where villagers, commune councillors and NGOs discussed issues of concern. People in the fishing villages were generally keen to have training on fisheries protection and to establish agreements with the councils on what could and could not be done.⁵³ One group requested KAWP to arrange for an official from the Fisheries Department to come to the village. The villagers could not make the request alone as it would be necessary to fund a meeting and provide a *per diem* for the official, since poor pay and a genuine deficit in resources for local extension activities is compensated by rent taking. It is not clear to what extent the shortfall in resources and limited active engagement of officers is due to higher level mismanagement and their lack of commitment to departmental policies and programmes. Thus, the question of how serious senior provincial fisheries and police department heads are about eliminating illegal fishing, or whether they are part of it as rumoured, remains open. So, too, the question of where the commune council loyalties lay and to what extent they may be intimidated by other powerful people. In the final analysis, however, it is unlikely that commune councils can manage their responsibilities for law and order and the protection of villagers' fishing rights without line department support and cooperation.

What is important is that the problem of access to fishing resources and illegal fishing has demonstrated that from a human security perspective, villagers must find a way to address not only problems of access but, at the same time, the broader social issues of rights and how these are to be protected by local and line department governance.

In my discussion with fishing villagers, land matters were not raised as major concerns other than as passing references to expropriations by powerful persons and the military.⁵⁴ There was recognition of the existence of landlessness in the villages

⁵³ Village interviews 15/3/05; and 21/4/05.

⁵⁴ Village interviews 15/3/05; and 7/4/05. This is not surprising as land ownership and access are sensitive matters impacting directly on peoples' lives and relations with others. I did not pursue the matter as there are statistics on landholdings in the region and the general

and of the livelihood difficulties which resulted from small, inadequate holdings. These villages had limited wet season rice land and many had depended formerly on harvesting floating rice and, more important for cash income, harvesting jute which, in the past, had been important to the local economy as the local jute factory had provided both income for suppliers as well as employment for others.⁵⁵ Although some jute is still sold to a Thai businessman (at low prices), the factory closure has impacted heavily on those formerly dependent on jute harvesting for a significant part of their annual income.⁵⁶ Access to the jute resource remains, but the markets for it has been radically reduced.

Water shortages and limited market access

While the extensive flooding of the countryside and the expansion of the Tonle Sap in the wet season provided the base for rice production and a generous fish resource, the dry season left the countryside parched and barren except for the few crops made possible by accessible water supply. Some in the fishing villages complained that in the dry season, “there is not enough land or water. The poorest have to follow the water [i.e. the receding flood] for fish” while others try alternatives such as cash cropping. However, only small amounts of dry rice, peanuts, maize, green beans, watermelon, tomato and other crops could be produced because of water shortage and lack of basic techniques. There were concerns, too, at the low market prices offered for these crops (in part due to quality) and competition from both Thai and Vietnamese produce. The local view was that “the government stifles local production in favour of imports on which they can collect taxes and import duties. Even manure is being trucked in ... and Vietnamese take produce to Thailand, put a “made in Thailand” stamp on it, and re-import it at a higher price. The government doesn’t care.”⁵⁷ Nevertheless, considerable effort was being made by many villagers

proposition that many households could not survive solely on agricultural activities was evident. Not only land size, but also factors such as skill levels, access to physical and capital resources, and household size could all affect survivability on available land. These issues emerge in the rice producing villages.

⁵⁵ Village interviews 15/3/05. I was told the local floating rice variety was no longer available having been lost since the Pol Pot period, and that the depth and rapid fluctuations in the flood in the area prevented the growing of available floating rice types from other regions.

⁵⁶ Village interviews 25/3/05; and 15/3/05. Discussions with KAWP and VSG. The Battambang jute factory closed amid rumours of scandals and corruption in 1994. Proposals to re-open it since have all failed. This is due in part to the lack of demand resulting from the use of plastics rather than hessian for rice and other grain bags.

⁵⁷ Discussion with NGOs.

to create income from gardens. Despite this, it was a struggle and with very limited government agricultural extension services or assistance with market access, and no alternative agribusiness approach, there was marginal if any economic benefit. Again the people looked to the NGOs either for direct assistance or to invite (and pay for) government extension workers to give training in the villages.⁵⁸

These same issues were prevalent in the rice-growing villages in communes such as Bay Damran, located further up the Sangke River beyond the range of the Tonle Sap flood, where wet season rice was the major income source and there was less involvement in fishing.⁵⁹ There, the people were particularly concerned that dry season income was curtailed, even for many of those who had land and wanted to plant dry season crops, by the lack of water for rice fields and gardens. One complained that there had been no rain in three years and that although he used to get 20 sacks per hectare before, now his yield was down to 8-10 sacks. "Farmers need nothing but water," he said.⁶⁰ There had been no rain, ponds had dried up (partly due to illegal fishing in some areas), and there were not enough pumps to use available water. Low prices for vegetable and fruit produce and lack of capital and knowledge of techniques for vegetable production were common complaints. Villagers felt they needed more help with techniques and marketing of various crops as businessmen came to buy organically grown crops, such as jasmine rice, but they could not always supply it.⁶¹

In these parts there was much more concern about the area of land owned by families and its future availability.⁶² People here all knew of cases where small and

⁵⁸ Village interviews 25/3/05. My view of a training day was not very positive as it was all classroom presentation and not demonstration in the field which would have been more appropriate. Nevertheless critical questions were asked, particularly about marketing which was not the real subject of the training (which was about how to pick and prepare vegetables for transport to market).

⁵⁹ Village discussions 21-22/3/05. Fish is nevertheless important and is caught by villagers in the ricefields and flooded areas (including flooded forest).

⁶⁰ Village interviews 21/3/05. 2005 was a serious drought year and the WFP was providing emergency food aid, especially in Pursat province.

⁶¹ Village interviews 21/3/05. The businessmen, I was told, could tell by the taste if chemicals had been used.

⁶² Village discussions 5/4/05; 7/4/05; and 10/4/05. See also American Friends Service Committee, "Crossing Borders." In some areas land holding patterns vary greatly. In neighbouring villages in Bansay Treng commune in Battambang it was reported that 54 per cent of families did not hold land for cultivation in one resource poor village while in a neighbouring village only 18 per cent of families lacked land. In another village, 10 non-residents owned between 60 and 100 hectares each. Other land holding was reasonably high at up to 3 hectares per family.

unprofitable land holdings had meant that loans could not be repaid and villagers had sold up to rich landowners and left. Many still depended on access to the commons in the off-season but resources there were increasingly scarce. Overall, the community seemed most concerned about was the lack of long term opportunities for dry season crops and for off farm income generation and employment – especially for the young who would be unlikely to have access to adequate land in their home villages and who, therefore, faced limited prospects of raising their own families in the future.

In both fishing and rice growing villages visited, there was a common concern with the human security issues of basic food production and of producing a surplus or other income to meet household income requirements. The non-availability of off-farm employment was also a major issue. There was little support, other than from Seila and the NGOs, as the people tried the best they could to make off-farm income to meet their family needs. Hence, it was not uncommon to find a girl of school age selling soup on the side of a dusty road under a makeshift shelter, another minding a neighbour's cows, or school age boys searching for labouring work—all missing important schooling to help their families. In difficult times, it was common practice for children to be taken out of school to help the family, and the children themselves considered it their duty to do this while regretting the loss of education and future prospects. Another response to these economic insecurities is labour migration.

Push migration to access survival income

Many rural Cambodians are forced to search for supplementary livelihood incomes outside their normal village context, migrating to find work as labourers in Thailand or at the border, in Battambang or elsewhere in Cambodia, especially during the dry season.⁶³ Thailand is a strong lure since labour rates are four times higher than Cambodia's one US dollar per day. Landlessness and poverty have been identified as the reasons for labour migration to work in Thailand, at salt works in Kompot (which includes child labour), in fishing industries on the Tonle Sap or in expanding industries in the cities.⁶⁴ In every commune I visited, villagers and officials

⁶³ This issue arose in all village discussions. Ibid., 7; and Cambodia Development Resource Institute (CDRI), "Moving Out of Poverty," 111.

⁶⁴ Chan Sophal and So Sovannarith, "Cross-Border Migration Hit by Asian Crisis," *Cambodia Development Review* 3, no. 1 (1999): 1-4; Steve Gourley, "Child Labour, Migration and Salt

expressed disquiet at the lack of jobs, especially for young people. These, they complained, went to Thailand where they were vulnerable to exploitation and at high risk of returning with drug addictions, sickness (HIV/AIDS), and where girls sometimes became sex workers.

Research has confirmed that the reasons for migrating are “overwhelmingly economic.”⁶⁵ It was reported that in one Battambang village up to 40 per cent of women between 20 and 40 years of age had left at some stage for work on the border or in Thailand.⁶⁶ However, migration is often illegal and migrants can suffer at the hands of unscrupulous employers with long hours and relatively poor pay and conditions. They risk being cheated or beset by the police or gangs for payment on return. Many are exposed to drugs and HIV/AIDS.⁶⁷ The impact can be severe on innocent children who lose parents and are left with grandparents. One young boy told me his father had died of AIDS and that his mother had gone to Pailin leaving him with his grandparents. The mother came back each month, if she could, to see him. He wanted to be a doctor, but did not think he would have the chance. He was lonely without his mother.⁶⁸ The long-term future of such children is particularly insecure if they lack support, and the education which will allow them to have genuine options for their future livelihoods.

A survey of migration—both internal and external—identified it as “a survival strategy for large sections of the population.” Desbarats and Sik Boreak’s study shows that migration was mainly “for landlessness and poverty reasons.” Rural-rural migration was 57 per cent; rural-urban 21 per cent; urban-urban 14 per cent and urban-rural migration 8 per cent. Those who migrate include youth and young adults

Production," *Cambodia Development Review* 5, no. 1 (201): 9-11; Sarthi Acharya, "Poverty Reduction in Cambodia – Some Reflections," *Cambodia Development Review* 5, no. 2 (2001): 4-7; Chea Huot and Sok Hach, "The Cambodian Garment Industry," *Cambodia Development Review* 5, no. 3 (2001); and Suzanna Stout Banwell, "Vendors' Voices," *Cambodia Development Review* 5, no. 3 (2001): 9-11.

⁶⁵ So Sovannarith, "International Migration: Some Issues in Cambodia," *Cambodia Development Review* 5, no. 1 (2001): 5-9.

⁶⁶ American Friends Service Committee, "Crossing Borders," 14. See also Chan Sophal and So Sovannarith who detail “long range” migration to Bangkok and other locations for work in the construction industry, manufacturing and food processing, and on fishing boats, while “short range” migrants are involved mainly in agricultural activities such as rice harvesting, vegetable and fruit picking. Chan Sophal and So Sovannarith, "Cross-Border Migration Hit by Asian Crisis," 14.

⁶⁷ So Sovannarith, "International Migration," 5-9; Cambodia Development Resource Institute (CDRI), "Moving Out of Poverty," 113.

⁶⁸ Village interview 15/3/05.

who are “disproportionately represented;” while in terms of gender, girls go to Phnom Penh to work in the garment industry; men to “frontier provinces” for land and agriculture. They concluded that “employment creation in the non-farm sector appears to be the most promising solution.”⁶⁹ Cambodia’s is “push” migration rather than “pull” to areas of labour shortage. Some 30 per cent of Cambodia’s internal migrants were young (15-24 years), and 13 per cent in the range 25-29 years (= 8 per cent of the population).⁷⁰ Child labour is not uncommon and children may be passed to other families to pay “bondage” debts or cover loans; young daughters previously “sheltered and groomed” to be future wives are often sent to work outside the village, as servants or agricultural labourers, to towns and even as far as Thailand.⁷¹ Other forms of child labour are widespread in Phnom Penh and include begging, street hawking (shoe shine, garlands, flowers, books and newspapers) and foraging (bottles and cans, plastic, food scraps) as well as domestic labour and portering.⁷²

There may of course be positives associated with migration for work where moneys are remitted to support village households which might otherwise be in dire straits. However, as regards the garment industry, only 13 per cent of migrant workers remit to their families, but this may not necessarily be to the poorest households.⁷³ Migration can also lead to the development of new skills and their application. It can also lead to lives of destitution in urban slums and deprive children of education and any hope of achieving a better life. There is little evidence that efforts are being made by the central government and provincial authorities to reduce the circumstances which produce push migration and to create better access to employment and basic services which are critical to national and human development, and hence to human security.

⁶⁹ Jacqueline Desbarats and Sik Boreak, "People and Land in Rural Cambodia," *Cambodia Development Review* 4, no. 3 (2000): 6-10.

⁷⁰ Sarthi Acharya, "Labour Migration in the Transitional Economies of South-East Asia," *Cambodia Development Review* 6, no. 1 (2002): 12-15. See also Lundström and Ronnås, "Employment and Growth in Cambodia: An Integrated Economic Analysis," 25, which discusses “distress migration” for employment.

⁷¹ American Friends Service Committee, "Crossing Borders," 13.

⁷² American Friends Service Committee, "Bins of Gold: Livelihoods of Young People in the Tonle Bassac Squatter Area, Phnom Penh," (Phnom Penh: The Socio-Cultural Vulnerability and Coping Strategies (SCVCS) Research Project, 2000).

⁷³ Cambodia Development Resource Institute (CDRI), "Moving Out of Poverty," 9.

Access to services

The village studies have shown how in terms of access to resources, human security is influenced by the performance of line departments as well as local commune councils and civil society, represented mainly by NGOs. As well as addressing resource issues the people were also concerned by the poor level of health, education and justice services being delivered to the countryside.

Health Services

There was widespread dissatisfaction with rural health services generally. The people complained in particular that fees and informal costs charged by health providers excluded the poor and risked impoverishing others. This they said was not just. The fact that medical services were often some distance away was not seen as a problem so much as that health centres were regularly unattended because health workers preferred to take private patients, despite the reforms which had introduced 'user pay' fees from which the income of health workers could be subsidised. While these reforms were said to have brought responsibility and better services in some places, it appeared to have had very limited effect in this region.⁷⁴ Local services were limited and a commune health centre in one locality was only staffed by a nurse three days a week, but villagers complained she "could only explain."⁷⁵ Some said the commune health centre was "not serious" and people preferred to consult private doctors even if that meant going to other villages. Costs were considered to be too heavy. People said it cost 10,000 Riel for two days for childbirth and that medicines had to be bought on top of this.⁷⁶ People did not like the regional hospital as the staff "used harsh words" and it cost 40,000 Riel for one week. The service was said to be better if the medical people knew there was an NGO helping the sick person, or they had a reference from the commune council chief. While health services were supposed to be free for the poor if they had a letter from the commune council chief and the hospital director agreed, it was claimed that hospital staff would still try to extract money from the patient.⁷⁷ Nevertheless, health workers were preferred to

⁷⁴ The reforms are presented in Khmer and English in Health Messenger, "User Fee Schemes," *Health Messenger (Khmer Edition)*, no. 18 (2004).

⁷⁵ Village discussions 21-22/3/05; and 7/4/05. The following discussion comes mainly from these interviews.

⁷⁶ Compared with a daily labour wage of about 4,000 Riel.

⁷⁷ KAWP had arranged a visit by commune and community leaders to the hospital to familiarise them with the hospital, rules and workings.

traditional healers despite the expense. The fact that people will go into ruinous debt for medical treatment highlights the value placed on modern medicine. Traditional midwives were, however, widely consulted.⁷⁸

These are widespread attitudes which are representative of the “universal” barriers to health services, both public and private, outlined in recent research in Cambodia.⁷⁹ The barriers included transport and distance from health care facilities; direct and indirect (informal) costs of health care; real and perceived poor quality of services; poorly trained staff and poor attitude to patients; staff conflict between public role and private practice; weak regulation and poor referral systems; inadequate understanding of the health services and consumer rights; poor communications between service providers and the communities; and widespread ignorance of health issues and diseases.⁸⁰ The MOPS study found that while health services have improved over the years of their study, they are still of poor quality and are still more accessible to better off households which can bear transport and other costs.⁸¹ In a number of provinces and districts, various formal health equity and health insurance schemes have been introduced by donor organizations with varying success. These will be looked at further in the next chapter. Such schemes were not established in the areas visited in Battambang, although KAWP and other NGOs did support community health associations which I will refer to below under civil society. What was notable during my visits was that safe water supply, sanitation and the general condition of the village were not raised by villagers as health issues though, as an outsider, they were often the first things I noted.

Education

Primary schools were relatively accessible for most, but again, despite a policy of free education, there were informal costs imposed on the people which many found difficult to meet. In particular some teachers showed more commitment in their paid private tutorial classes than in normal school hours. Children were often required to pay teachers for notes and had a reduced chance of progress if they did not purchase private tutorials or notes. Many reported that schoolteachers were not regular in

⁷⁸ Village discussions 21/4/05.

⁷⁹ Peter Annear, "Study of Financial Access to Health Services for the Poor in Cambodia: Phase 1 - Scope, Design, and Data Analysis," (Phnom Penh: For the Ministry of Health, WHO, AusAID and RMIT University, 2006).

⁸⁰ Ibid., 15-17.

⁸¹ Cambodia Development Resource Institute (CDRI), "Moving Out of Poverty," 62-65.

attendance at school. This had been the case for years and a decade earlier KAWP had tried to help parents lobby for improved teaching standards.⁸²

Despite these problems, villagers considered the education of their children to be important and looked for better services from teachers. They also wanted schools nearby and in one case I was told that a community seeking to have a school restaffed but did not have the resources for restoration of buildings. They objected to being told that the community was required to provide the facilities.⁸³

Education in Cambodia is basic to the national future in a world of knowledge industries. It is also increasingly important for ensuring individual human security. The current policy is based on a decentralised cluster school approach that is intended to engage communities with teaching staff in school management. But, although valuing education, there is little evidence of an active participation by villagers in school committees. Nor did the commune councils see a need for their involvement.⁸⁴ This has been found to be the case in other studies which note the poor educational standards, poor pay for teachers, rent taking, and low level of community participation in the cluster school arrangement.⁸⁵

Justice

In addition to the major issues of illegal fishing and land seizures, the people cited other instances where due process and justice were commonly denied. These included references to thefts, gambling, domestic violence, gangs, police taking money, the lack of protection from the law, and abuses of human rights. These same issues are reported by the MOPS study which refers to them as new vulnerabilities.⁸⁶

Gangs were seen as a particular problem in some villages.⁸⁷ These represented a threat to property and life, but police action was inadequate, being largely responsive to payment in return for leniency or total neglect of duty. In the absence of real

⁸² Krom Akphiwat Phum, "Changes in the Villages," 10.

⁸³ Village discussions 5/4/05. Communities have normally provided material support but this has been decreasing. See Arnaldo Pellini, "Decentralisation of Education in Cambodia: Searching for Spaces of Participation between Traditions and Modernity," *Compare* 35, no. 2 (2005): 210.

⁸⁴ Village discussions 5/4/05, 7/4/05, and 10/4/08.

⁸⁵ Pellini, "Decentralisation of Education in Cambodia," 214; and Charlene Tan, "Education Reforms in Cambodia: Issues and Concerns," *Educational Research for Policy and Practice* 6, no. 1 (2007): 23-24.

⁸⁶ Cambodia Development Resource Institute (CDRI), "Moving Out of Poverty," 117.

⁸⁷ Village discussions 7/4/05; and 21/3/05. Gangs also appear as a major issue in *ibid.*, 20 and 85-6.

opportunities, youth were at risk of being drawn into illegal activities, often led by the children of powerful people who benefited from an immunity not granted to their followers.

Villagers also feared the proximity of military camps which often brought gambling, drunkenness, prostitution, and even seizure of land and property, which villagers were powerless to challenge. There were regular references to the role of the military in illegal activities. Villagers often talked of those who have association with ‘powerful people’ which also enables them to act with impunity (for example to conduct illegal fishing or to take land).

The Cambodian military is a composite of factional armies and, in principle, subject to an ongoing government policy of reform and demobilisation. It suffers, from corruption “shamelessly spread in the Cambodian society, especially among the high-ranking military officials” and has been involved with *Oknha* in land grabbing—often forcibly removing the poor.⁸⁸ Other problems identified by Chieam Channy in the military include: “corruption, pressures and nepotism in the promotion and task distribution” and, despite adequate sub-decrees to deal with such issues, “... those who do not belong to the parties or serve the party interest would never be promoted and in fact would be removed from their current positions in spite of their hard endeavours.”⁸⁹ In areas controlled by the military, people have suffered many injustices, especially where the military have acted against the poor to support logging companies.

The essential message coming from such reports is that the military in Cambodia is unprofessional and ill-disciplined – a reflection on its poor leadership. It is also questionable as to what its real role is in national defence and what its civil support activities are. Tea Banh considers part of its function is to “protect our territorial integrity, natural environment, human and food security, national security and

⁸⁸ Chieam Channy, "The Future of Civil-Military Relations in Cambodia: Prospects for Change and Improvement," in *Civil-Military Relations in Cambodia: Issues Challenges and Prospects*, ed. Kao Kim Hourn (Phnom Penh: Cambodian Institute for Cooperation and Peace, 2002), 34-40. Chieam Channy, a former soldier, is a member of the National Assembly and of the Commission on Interior, National Defence, Ethics and Investigation

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 37.

Cambodian territory.”⁹⁰ From my fieldwork there is no evidence of any of the human security roles being fulfilled by the military.

As we have seen above, while the commune council chief has some responsibility for law and order, access to protection from the law for the ordinary villager is not guaranteed since the interests of the powerful are always put first and where money is more likely to buy protection. Villagers were consistently sceptical about the prospect of police protection and saw them more or less as agents of the powerful. The council chiefs, too, were treated with certain distrust as representing the powerful and their own interests first. The police service and justice system were largely out of the reach of the ordinary villager and inaccessible for the poorer ones.⁹¹

While the access to services is closely related to governance in terms of state agencies (or private sector contractors) providing services in accordance with government policies and programmes and protecting people’s rights by application of relevant regulations and guidelines, there is another aspect of governance that is crucial to human security. That is the right of all individuals and groups to participate in local decision making processes and in commune council deliberations. In other words, governance processes must not only protect people’s rights and entitlements but also give them a say in what rights and entitlements have priority and how they are to be protected or delivered. Since such participatory governance assumes an effective civil society, the next section begins with a description of several civil society associations in practice, and proceeds with more specific observations relating to the workings of the commune councils.

Access to resources and governance

Day-to-day problems have been identified in relation to people’s access to resources needed for basic food and economic survival, and to services to protect their rights and to develop their capacity through education and good health.⁹² The main issues

⁹⁰ Tea Banh, "Civil-Military Relation in Cambodia: Challenges and Prospects," in *Civil-Military Relation in Cambodia: Issues, Challenges and Prospects*, ed. Kao Kim Hourn (Phnom Penh: Cambodian Institute for Cooperaton and Peace, 2002), 46-54.

⁹¹ See also Cambodia Development Resource Institute (CDRI), "Moving Out of Poverty," 81-82.

⁹² Vulnerability to food insecurity was evident during the drought season of 2005 when the WFP introduced emergency food programmes in several provinces.

have concerned environmental change, access to commons, dry season water shortage, and the need for infrastructure development, markets for dry season crops and off-farm income generation opportunities. Even agricultural diversification into new dry season crops has proved to be of mixed benefit due to lack of water, insecure access to markets and inadequate returns for the effort of production. It has also been shown that health, education and justice services are severely curtailed by informal fees and rent taking by officials. While this is partly due to government salaries being grossly inadequate to support a family, it is also question of the culture of governance within the organisations—from the central ministries through to provincial and district administrations to the schools, health care clinics, courts and extension services. From a human security perspective, people are vulnerable to distress from many causes which, instead of being relieved by government programmes, are compounded by the failure of governance institutions to carry out their responsibilities equitably.

Participation in governance

One of the most important aspects of local NGO activities I encountered during fieldwork was their support for village and commune associations of various sorts. These are, in a sense, the training grounds for the development of civil society organizations which development theory argues are necessary for people's participation in local, regional and national governance and for ensuring the accountability of governments and institutions.⁹³ It is a problem of Cambodian civil society that national or regional civil society organizations have not formed to date from local initiatives in rural Cambodia. It appears that the creation of social movements with political objectives may be restricted by the current authoritarian political climate. Nevertheless, NGOs such as KAWP, Village Support Group (VSG) and Aphivat Srey include in their aims the development of civil society which they approach through their work with village associations.

⁹³ There is a need for caution here as civil society organizations may also include mafia and criminal gangs as interest groups with other than social welfare in mind. Here I want to focus only on those organisations concerned with citizen welfare and development.

Associations and civil society

I observed a number of association meetings and reporting sessions during fieldwork in Battambang. These included fisheries associations, rice banks, rice co-operatives, health and funeral associations, farmer associations and human rights, school parents and youth associations in various communes.⁹⁴ The issues raised were not in themselves out of the ordinary. The elected leader of a fishing association had failed to attend meetings and was not available to sign an agreement with a department concerning a new village well and pump.⁹⁵ The other members were uncertain how to manage the leadership issue and how to reactivate the deal with the department. The matters were aired quite forthrightly and the guidance of the NGO representatives sought. There was, it emerged, confusion as to the village head's responsibilities and whether approval was needed from the Fisheries Department. The villagers decided to arrange a workshop and wanted KAWP to arrange for a Fisheries Department official to come and explain the system and what was required. It was also decided to address the failure of the elected leader to attend meetings and, if there was no satisfactory explanation, to consider his removal and replacement by the vote of members. Although KAWP was trying to encourage self-help and to empower villagers to decide and to take their own actions, the association still sought guidance from the NGO on how to manage the leadership issue and assistance in reactivating contact with the department officials concerned.

Similar advice was sought in another village where a rice bank leader was having trouble retrieving loans because, it was said, of the drought. Of 27 households which had borrowed rice, only 8 had managed to repay, while several had returned the interest only. Most had promised to repay the following year but the problem persisted as some did not honour their promises and were avoiding the rice bank leader. Discussion among the group suggested that if people didn't honour their promises they should be reported to the Village Chief; or the rice bank leader should go with a cart to collect the rice, or that people be "named." Others thought that those who made promises should "sign the paper" or "make a contract." One member interjected that some borrowers said the rice belonged to the NGO's and not

⁹⁴ Association of some sort were observed in all the communes visited. Since the issues reported may be particular to one association and identifiable, I have not provided dates for the village visits in this section.

⁹⁵ Village observation and discussions.

to the rice bank and, he argued, if this attitude was allowed to persist they would never repay. The discussion was lively and the NGO encouraged the leaders to try to persuade members to meet their obligations, to hold a meeting with all the borrowers to discuss the way out of the impasse, but not to take harsh measures such as the suggestion that people be forced to sell a cow or other asset to meet the loan repayment.⁹⁶

A village rice cooperative was experiencing similar difficulties due to drought with some users unable to return the allocated rice and interest. It was claimed that rice yields had dropped from 3 to 2 tonnes per hectare and "... we cannot improve," said the leader. "The same people borrow each year but return less. Some owe three sacks but still need to borrow. Some think 'why return any' and treat it as a gift. I do not know how to collect from the poor." There was an interjection that most of what the cooperative did was "for the businessman" in any case.⁹⁷

Participants at the meetings did not really blame those who failed to pay back their loans. It was understood why this would happen, even if not in accordance with the association rules. The scheme was intended in the first place to help those in need, so the risk was high. There was also a strong sense among some villagers that NGOs were there to provide handouts.⁹⁸ The issues that arise are of trust between members and the problem of how to sanction those who do not repay when they are already needy and must to be treated with compassion.

In the context of food insecurity caused by drought and declining yields, it is not surprising that the rice associations were facing problems. In fact it is doubtful whether they can become self-sustaining when their significant role is welfare in the first place. The attempt to develop trust and caring in relation to food insecurity is in a sense challenged by the problem that it involves competition for a scarce resource. Trust and caring are far more likely to flourish in situations of relative prosperity and

⁹⁶ Village observation and discussions.

⁹⁷ Village observation and discussions. The issue of membership was discussed along with the rice bank activities. There was a decision to combine the two rice associations and to try to resolve issues with greater effort to pursue recalcitrant borrowers – or exclude them from the schemes.

⁹⁸ After years in the camps, many had become dependent on such hand-outs and were used to dealing with NGOs. On a social visit to the relatives of an informant in Battambang, I was initially surprised at how openly the house owner scoffed at the NGOs. All they were good for, he said, were for the hand-outs – people should just take what they want and forget the rest.

economic security. Small rural associations designed to meet urgent needs may thus be limited in their capacity to develop civil society.

In another case, a farmer association was providing information about the System of Rice Intensification (SRI) methods, and 19 families were active in the association, which was helping to supply higher value seed.⁹⁹ The leader said growers would need less of the better quality seed but could return more after harvest—borrow 8 kilograms and return 15 kilograms. He was positive about progress and wanted to continue with the 19 participating families and improve the programme rather than open it to new members.¹⁰⁰ It may well be that the trust between the families was established and a slow opening to others after consolidation of the success was a practical approach, especially as the association appeared to be self-sustaining.

Two associations, one for the poor and a cow bank, appeared to be less troubled. The first, which was largely concerned with welfare, was not very demanding on the recipients of assistance. In the case of the cow bank, all the cows and calves were being properly cared for and, except in two cases, money borrowed had been returned. The threat of taking back the cows if the money was not returned was roundly rejected by the group and it was agreed that people should be given leeway, as there was a need for them to learn to save and to do as they agreed. However, the difficulties faced by associations became evident when a member responsible for money indicated there was, in fact, no money in the box as she had used it for family purposes and would put it back later. The NGO person explained that this was poor practice and could lead to trouble. “It must be stopped.”¹⁰¹ Again the emphasis on trust and a preparedness to give people the opportunity to meet their obligations were the key messages being expressed by the people themselves and promoted by the NGO.

Not surprisingly, health associations seemed to be at considerable risk of tension and failure.¹⁰² While they could be valuable in training and supporting mothers and

⁹⁹ The System of Rice Intensification (SRI) introduces new techniques for rice growing including the transplantation of individual plants rather than several together, wider spacing and attention to weeding. It requires skilful management, however, to achieve improved yields. See the SRI at <http://ciifad.cornell.edu.sri/>.

¹⁰⁰ Village observations.

¹⁰¹ Village observations.

¹⁰² Health schemes are complicated and there is a significant literature on health schemes in Cambodia discussing different types of approach such as Community Based Health Insurance; Health Equity Funds; and Contracting (district level health services to NGO

infants, lack of financial support has led to problems. While member's contributions are small and manageable on their low incomes, payments to meet a members urgent medical expenses is likely to be high, depleting the association's financial reserves and putting pressure on subsequent claims for assistance. Apart from the scandal of collected money "disappearing", some members had, it was claimed, received up to 10,000 Riel for health care but then stopped contributing.¹⁰³ A few in the meeting thought people weren't sure how the association worked, others scoffed and said people knew very well! The discussion was also about whether these people should be allowed to remain members and whether it should be open to new members. There were mixed views but general agreement that people needed to learn how the association worked and that they should continue to help the sick.¹⁰⁴ It seems likely that such a small scheme might be impracticable in the first place as studies of health equity funds show that they draw on a larger contribution base and have the benefit of both external funding and management support.

Despite the difficulties within the associations, it was noticeable that there was a process of embedding new concepts and processes. In particular, the idea of democracy was mentioned regularly and that people needed to be accountable for their actions. Leaders were expected to be open in what they did as well. The idea of contract was often referred to as a way of holding people to the word and creating trust. Human rights was a familiar concept to the extent that the leader of one human rights association believed that the few who did not understand it were better than before and he felt the human rights group could disband. A Village Chief, however, opposed this and said they needed a new strategy to explain human rights since "people with violence never listen ... especially if they are drunk and they could

providers). Health Equity Funds are hospital or district based and funded externally or partly by individual subscription. They are considered to best meet the needs of the poor. See for example Annear, "Financial Access to Health Services."; Wim Hardeman et al., "Access to Health Care for All? User Fees Plus a Health Equity Fund in Sotnikum, Cambodia," *Health Policy and Planning* 19, no. 1 (2004); Bart Jacobs and Neil Price, "The Impact of the Introduction of Use Fees at District Hospitals in Cambodia," *Health Policy and Planning* 19, no. 5 (2004); Bart Jacobs and Neil Price, "Improving Access for the Poorest to Public Sector Health Services: Insights from Kirivong Operational Health District in Cambodia," *Health Policy and Planning* 21, no. 1 (2006); Bart Jacobs and Neil Price, "Community Participation in Externally Funded Health Projects: Lessons from Cambodia," *Health Policy and Planning* 18, no. 4 (2003); and Mathieu Noirhomme et al., "Improving Access to Hospital Care for the Poor: Comparative Analysis of Four Health Equity Funds in Cambodia," *Health Policy and Planning* 22 (2007).

¹⁰³ Reil is the Cambodian currency. At the time, 4,000 Riel was equal to US\$1.

¹⁰⁴ Village meetings.

threaten the one who tries to stop them. The next day they don't remember." It was also said that some villagers complained that human rights was just an excuse for wives to abuse their husbands! As with other groups, it was decided that the association should keep on trying to promote the idea of human rights.¹⁰⁵

Most of the associations steered clear of criticism of the commune councils or of considering engagement with the councils on matters of concern. The leader of a youth association, however, was more inclined to press for their involvement in youth affairs. He explained that it was difficult to get members because they say to him "we don't listen to our parents, why would we listen to you?" Some were shy, and not "brave" enough to join. Two years ago he said the youth were "good" but now they were "not good." He asked KAWP to talk to the commune council to convene a meeting with the young two or three times a year. That might help, he said, as otherwise youth are "very hard to talk [to]." Another interjected that it was important and talk was good, but she was "afraid of the ones who don't talk."¹⁰⁶ Interestingly, it is with the youth that one begins to see a different view of local governance and the need for commune councils to engage with particular groups within the society.

What emerges from the associations is that food security for many in the villages is a significant issue and people need access to credit to survive. There is also the risk that village cooperatives and banks are abused by some, probably very needy, villagers. The NGOs here see the solution in increasing the people's experience of associations and their management, developing leadership, empowerment and participation while advancing the villagers' political skills and trust to work together to improve their lot. Rather than promoting civil society in terms of confronting and making demands on government, they support cooperation with local authorities while also trying to encourage officials to trust and respect the people and to carry out their duties openly and accountably. These grass-roots social development activities of the NGOs, embedded as they are in the social reality, highlight the absence of a politically active civil society with interest groups and associations able to propose policies and press governments on specific issues of concern.

¹⁰⁵ Village meetings. Human rights were raised in most village discussion.

¹⁰⁶ Village meetings.

The significance of these associations is that they represent nascent civil society activities at the village level. They bring people together to discuss wide-ranging issues and search for solutions within the existing social and political realities. What is also particularly important is that they are not only organised for the poor. They recognise the critical fact that for the poor to benefit, the broader society must recognise its responsibility and use the governance mechanisms and resources available to advance the condition of all villagers at the same time as providing for the special needs of the less well-off. The associations engage local commune and village officials with local interest groups in an open and structured environment. What was particularly interesting, nevertheless, was that there were few demands being directed to local commune councils or state departments for the resolution of particular problems or for better performance and delivery of services. Privately, though, as we have seen, there was widespread criticism of the health and education systems in particular, and people were more prepared to demands better government services.

It is not clear what proportion of commune populations participate in such associations, but the MOPS study suggests about 30 per cent in the villages they studied.¹⁰⁷ The associations are, however, important in that they offer an alternative to more traditional forms of patronage networks and provide opportunities for building trust, open discussion and cooperative action. They are formed to deal with real issues and provide the possibility for political engagement with commune councils. It is the hope of NGOs such as KAWP that they will develop further contact across villages and communes to become broad civil society organisations.¹⁰⁸

From a human security perspective, the associations did not suggest a strong engagement of the people with local governance. This left open the question of what role the commune council and government did play and how villagers viewed the role of officials and their activities as they impacted on the situation of villagers generally and of the poor in particular. More sense of this emerged in private talks, suggesting a lack of trust in open discussion and political processes, as well as a

¹⁰⁷ Cambodia Development Resource Institute (CDRI), "Moving Out of Poverty," 76-77; John Holloway, Chom Sok, and Researchers from Crossroads Consultancies Group, "Follow Up Survey on Governance (CMB/01/R72/RILG)," (Phnom Penh: For the Cambodian Seila Task Force, 2005), 18-19.

¹⁰⁸ I am not aware of any studies of associations and the development of civil society in Cambodia.

view that council members looked after their own first – “... if the commune council has money, they use it to help their own families. The council does not publicise its budget, only the key people get the information, not the simple people.”¹⁰⁹ This was a theme repeated in a number of discussions. However, the association leaders also expressed the view that when they consulted with the commune council on particular issues, the councils were usually helpful. In part at least this was because they were conscious of the NGO backing.¹¹⁰

Governance

Commune councils have been given responsibility for security and public order; social and economic development; and general wellbeing of the citizens. Village heads are also expected to work with the council to meet these objectives.

It has been shown that there are many issues of public order in the communes, including the vexed problems of illegal fishing, land seizures, domestic violence and gangs. I did not pursue the question of public order in interviews. It was evident in relation to law and order, as in the case of illegal fishing, that councils were somewhat powerless to control events due largely to the involvement of officials, influential people and, often, the police and military. In this situation the councils had no effective backing from the law and the justice system. There was, however, in these cases and in other public order matters, a close engagement with the NGO backed associations which supported villagers’ rights and sought council involvement in resolution of the issues. People remained sceptical of councillors’ impartiality in cases involving powerful outside parties, but also recognised that the council was limited in what it could do in the face of gangs and domestic violence. These are widespread problems in Cambodia and it is reported that up to 60 per cent of a commune chief’s time may be spent on mediation of disputes even though the village chief was more likely to be consulted first, while elders were also important mediators ahead of the police.¹¹¹ The most prominent personal security concerns nominated by the people were gangs, while councillors considered land conflicts to

¹⁰⁹ Village interviews.

¹¹⁰ Discussion with NGOs.

¹¹¹ Kim Ninh and Roger Henke, "Commune Councils of Cambodia: A National Survey on their Functions and Performance, with a Special Focus on Conflict Resolution," (Phnom Penh: The Asia Foundation, 2005), 42-57.

be the main problem.¹¹² Although dispute settlements made locally are usually honoured, there remains an underlying apprehension about the impartiality of council mediators.

There was also concern that opposition political party representatives were regularly intimidated and were unable to conduct their normal political activities or participate fully in commune council functions.¹¹³ Minor party councillors were simply not informed of meetings and kept ignorant of council information to which they should have had access.

People interviewed were widely sceptical of the commune councils, saying they only looked after their own, had no power over police and military, and were not interested in the villagers – especially the poor. It was telling too that the people felt that without the NGOs and Seila they would be left to their own devices. Some interviewees were sceptical of the political affiliations of councillors and considered that they put their party interests, or at least policies, ahead of the commune wishes, and that party members got preferential treatment. Two surveys of commune councils suggest that party members are favoured while another found that while the villagers claimed there was no preference for party members, 30 per cent of councillors themselves believed there was bias.¹¹⁴ This indicates that there is a need for civil society associations to be alert to local political activities and to be free to openly challenge undue preference to party members.

These are new challenges in a society with strong traditions. It is evident that the role of elders and village heads in dispute resolution in Cambodian society has survived the Pol Pot years and the disruption of the Vietnamese and later UNTAC periods.¹¹⁵ The survival of aspects of traditional society are also evident in the

¹¹² Ibid., 42; and Biddulph, "Landlessness: A Growing Problem," 13.

¹¹³ Several minority councillors cited cases of intimidation in private discussions.

¹¹⁴ Biddulph, "Landlessness: A Growing Problem," 24. See also Kim Ninh and Henke, "Commune Councils of Cambodia," 32.

¹¹⁵ While some have argued the whole fabric of Cambodian village society has been destroyed this has been refuted by others. Among the former see: Judy L Ledgerwood, "Rural Development in Cambodia: The View from the Village," in *Cambodia and the International Community: The Quest for Peace, Development, and Democracy*, ed. Brown and Timberman (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Asia Society, 1998); Kim Sedara, "Reciprocity: Informal Patterns of Social Interactions in a Cambodian Village near Angkor Park" (MA, Northern Illinois University, 2001); J Ovesen et al, *When Every Household is an Island: Social Organisation and Power Structures in Rural Cambodia* (Stochholm: Uppsala University, 1996); UNESCO, *Between a Tiger and a Crocodile: Management of Local Conflict in Cambodia - an Anthropological Approach to Traditional and New Practices*

cooperation that takes place directly between families, relatives and friends when certain forms of assistance are required, in 'community' activities which take place around ceremonial needs such as weddings and funerals where the village may provide general assistance, or when people are organised by village heads, commune councils, NGOs or other agencies for local development.¹¹⁶ This illustrates the changing roles of commune councils, new legal frameworks and new relationships of power arising from modernisation which fall outside the traditional framework and influence dispute settlement.¹¹⁷ The implications for the more traditional, less educated, or less aware villagers is that they may be increasingly unable to depend upon the security of the village traditions and become more vulnerable to conflict through failure to understand and adapt to the new power sources, and to establish patrons connected to them. Village associations supported by NGOs can play a useful role in urging councillors to respect and to protect the people's rights and to find just solutions to disputes.¹¹⁸

Patron client relations are important since they are, on the one hand an exercise of status and power by the patron, while on the other hand they are a source of support and security for the client. They may have positive benefits in the village community.¹¹⁹ However, as it is not always the case that the parties can deliver the level of service sought by the other, and so the relationships can be quite flexible in Cambodia where the parties involved may simply vary their allegiances to meet particular circumstances. Patrons may be drawn from kin, the rich, monks or

(UNESCO, 2002); and Pierre Lizée, *Peace, Power and Resistance in Cambodia: Global Governance and the Failure of Conflict Resolution* (London: Macmillan, 1999).

¹¹⁶ Timothy Hugh Conway, "Poverty, Participation and Programmes: International Aid and Rural Development in Cambodia" (PhD Thesis, University of Cambridge, 1999), 253.

¹¹⁷ Caroline Hughes, "Conflict Management: A Village-Level Approach," *Cambodia Development Review* 5, no. 2 (2001): 8-11. Kim makes a similar point that "reciprocal norms in the village are being transformed, while the influence of the cash economy is changing the nature of reciprocity in the village", Kim Sedara, "Reciprocity: Informal Patterns of Social Interactions in a Cambodian Village," *Cambodia Development Review* 5, no. 4 (2001): 5-8. Also Bottomly notes that "logging has also placed the governance systems of some highland villages under stress. Villager elders, who in Tampuan and Kreung villagers have traditionally played a central role in mediating over village conflicts, appear to be feeling their increasing exclusion from decision-making processes concerning the logging. Bottomley, "Contested Forests," 587-606.

¹¹⁸ Robin Biddulph, "Study on the Performance of the SEILA Provincial Investment Fund: DFID-SIDA Permanent Advisory Team," (SPM Consultants; Oxford Policy Management, 2004), 13-14.

¹¹⁹ See especially Meas Nee, "Social Reconstruction in the Post-Conflict Situation"; and Meas Nee and Joan Healy, *Towards Understanding: Cambodian Villages Beyond War* (Sydney: Sisters of Saint Joseph, 2003).

traditional healers and the educated (who are treated with considerable deference by Cambodians). However, other important patrons are those with positions in the administration or those who have access to outside funding through association with development assistance agencies such as NGOs.¹²⁰ Patronage also provides a mechanism of protection for illegal fishers and land grabbers as well as gang leaders who may often be the children of influential persons. Thus, rather than institutional governance processes promoting democratisation and development in accordance with donor strategies, patronage networks appear, to some extent, to have infiltrated and appropriated them to serve their own purposes of power and wealth accumulation.

Although the councils have development responsibilities, and the Village Development Committees are active in meetings to identify priority projects, there seemed to be a certain ambivalence towards the planning process and outcomes. Village Development Chiefs I met really had little to say about the process or about what sort of schemes were being considered.¹²¹ Although it was not possible to form a view on whether participation and empowerment were being realised from the local planning process, people generally considered they had benefited from the council projects in the past, although some attribute it to Seila, NGOs or generous people rather than to the councils.¹²² It will be shown in the next chapter that the majority of development plans proposed by councils for funding through provincial and line department programmes are ignored, leaving very limited sums of money for council run projects (around US\$10-15,000 per council). Councillors pointed out they could do little with such small sums. Surveys support these views with the interesting observation that while people appreciated the council activities and contribute to them, they were less likely to consider their standard of living had improved as a result.¹²³

¹²⁰ See Judy L Ledgerwood and John Vijghen, "Decision-Making in Rural Khmer Villages," in *Cambodia Emerges from the Past: Eight Essays*, ed. Judy L Ledgerwood (Southeast Asia Publications, 2002), 109-11.

¹²¹ Biddulph, "Study on the Performance of the SEILA Provincial Investment Fund," 22, suggests VDCs only active if they have support of outside agencies.

¹²² See also Kim Ninh on participation – 60 per cent knew about meetings, 40 per cent had participated at least once. Kim Ninh and Henke, "Commune Councils of Cambodia," 27-34.

¹²³ Biddulph, "Study on the Performance of the SEILA Provincial Investment Fund," 22. He also notes that councillors were aware of "discontent" but were frustrated they could do little with their small funds.

When I put it to one council member that the councils could not meet the demands of the people for development and asked whether some problems might be too big for the communes to manage and might therefore be taken to a higher levels of governance, he quashed any such suggestion saying that the communes had to be self sufficient and to find their own solutions.¹²⁴ There is a sense of unrealistic expectation in this attitude which appeared to have more of a party policy ring than a governance imperative. It is reflected, too, in the view of the agriculture department that, despite all the inherent obstacles to agriculture in Cambodia, poverty can be reduced through improvements in small-scale agriculture and the corresponding focus on agricultural training and techniques, rather than infrastructure development.

In the villages visited there was a positive relationship between the NGOs and the councillors on a quite regular basis. Councillors and Village Chiefs attended several of the association meetings and were open to questions – even though responding along strictly formal lines in most cases. The associations are an important nascent civil society which will be essential for effective and democratic local government. They will also need to broaden their base across communes and on a province wide basis at least to become politically effective advocacy groups.

While the fieldwork focused on the issues confronting people, it was unable to undertake a detailed assessment of the function of the commune councils. Governance at the village and commune level is strong on process as defined by the decentralisation laws, but not yet working with an open and effective civil society which is able to countervail the influence of party, powerful persons and the central government influences in the commune councils. As with local governance everywhere, there are questions of participation and representation in the creation of local policy and the making of decisions affecting service delivery to the community. This will be looked at in the next chapter. The MOPS study discovered a strong negative attitude towards governance issues to the extent that people in seven of the nine villages were scared to talk about such issues and were afraid of being “disappeared” by powerful interests.¹²⁵ Similar fears – “they had guns” – influenced people’s reluctance to claim their rights.¹²⁶

¹²⁴ Village interviews 25/3/05.

¹²⁵ Cambodia Development Resource Institute (CDRI), "Moving Out of Poverty," 75.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 79.

Line departments

To look at these matters in the context of human security however, we need to be aware that governance is not only about the commune councils but involves line department functions as well. Councillors seemed fairly reluctant to be in direct touch with line agencies or police on a regular basis to press for adequate services. This applied even to education and health departments which had initiated procedures for representation on school committees and for monitoring local health centres respectively.¹²⁷

The obscure relationship between provincial authorities and line departments, and provincial responsibility for commune councils are both discussed in the next chapter. However, the people's comments to me on the poor performance of government departments were supported and well summarised in a rare public meeting between villagers and Provincial Officials in Battambang in April 2005.¹²⁸ Opened by the Deputy Provincial Governor on behalf of the Governor, the meeting was based around presentations by provincial officials followed by questions from the villagers. Thus, the meeting also provided opportunity for villagers to ask about policies and performance in many areas of concern to them including health and education, agricultural needs and employment issues, policing and justice.

Officials were asked about the inadequate services reaching villages, informal payments and exclusion from proper health care. They were defensive and reiterated policy statements, noting that delivery of services was not always perfect and all were learning. While the responses of military, police, health, agriculture and education officials all reflected a lack of control over the performance of their personnel and shortcomings in service delivery, there were no suggestions of solutions other than that villagers should know and expect their rights. The basis for poor performance lies in the institutional cultures as well as the poor pay and, perhaps in some cases, limited capacity of officials. One of the more telling statements was that by the health official who highlighted the issue of control over

¹²⁷ Leonardo G Romeo and Luc Spyckerelle, "Decentralisation Reforms and Commune-Level Services Delivery in Cambodia" (paper presented at the Workshop on Local Government Pro-Poor Service Delivery, Manila, 2003), 13. See also Biddulph, "Study on the Performance of the SEILA Provincial Investment Fund," 20.

¹²⁸ The two day conference on 25-6 April 2005 was organised by KAWP for villagers and officials to hear from and to question each other. There were some 220 participants including Provincial department representatives, 14 Commune Council representatives and a number of NGOs.

quality of health services by noting that only a very small proportion of private chemist outlets in Battambang township were registered as required by law. So, he warned, there could be no guarantee of either the qualifications of the dispensers or the quality of the products they were selling.

These sessions highlighted the responsibility recognised by government to provide services, while at the same time demonstrated the inability of government to implement its own policies. A major excuse commonly claimed for poor performance is that the level of salary for public servants is so low as to discourage any real commitment to the job. This failure of government departments to carry out their responsibilities has, as shown above, a direct negative impact for human security in rural Cambodia. This issue will be pursued further in the next chapter.

Freedom, peace and safety

Freedom, peace and safety are in the end basic conditions which depend on the outcome of access to resources, protection of rights, and governance. If we take Sen's view of development as freedom, then there is a long way to go before rural Cambodians can be said to have freedom based on their capability and opportunity to shape their own destinies.¹²⁹

If peace is defined as freedom from war, then that has been attained in Cambodia, though military confrontation ceased only in 1998 with the final laying down of arms by the Khmer Rouge. If peace means freedom from organised conflict, then that too appears to have been achieved for the present by Hun Sen's seizure of power by military means in 1997. Yet, such peace is at best tenuous while political power continues to be supported by military interference in national affairs. The fact that the state police and military are seen as a threat to the people's safety also suggests that the peace is fragile and vulnerable to disruption.¹³⁰ As noted in chapter 2, econometric studies also suggest that there is an ongoing risk of Cambodia's relapse into civil disorder and conflict.

¹²⁹ Sen, *Development as Freedom*.

¹³⁰ The econometric analyses discussed in chapter 2 consistently report the risk of former conflict states falling back into conflict.

Individual safety is a more personal issue and open to perceptions. People may feel unsafe or be fearful of gangs and crime when in fact statistics suggest otherwise.¹³¹ To some extent, safety depends on the perception also that the relevant authorities, such as commune councils and police, are providing a level of protection that makes people feel safe. However, the feeling of safety is not assured in a society where the powerful are able to largely ignore the law with impunity and where the threat of violence hangs over those who might seek to assert their rights to fishing grounds, or protest against land seizures. There is also a perception that safety is threatened by a rise in the incidence of youth gangs, gambling and alcoholism. Domestic violence is also a continuous threat to the safety of many women. In one survey, 85 per cent of respondents indicated that the government was not doing enough to make all citizens feel safe and secure.¹³²

Although freedom, peace and safety can only be assessed in quite general terms in this thesis, it is appropriate to conclude on the basis of the information presented in this chapter, that freedom is compromised economically, socially and politically. While the country is militarily at peace and free of international or civil war, most Cambodians are conscious of the risk that this could be broken at any time as challenges to authority in Phnom Penh are regularly met with police intimidation and violence. A lack of trust in political process was evident in the villages visited where it was a commonly held view that if the Cambodia People's Party was voted out of power, Hun Sen would refuse to leave and would be prepared to use force to retain power.

Overall therefore, Cambodians do not live in freedom, peace and safety but rather in a fragile social environment where freedom is denied and where there is considerable threat to personal safety and vulnerability to breaches of the peace. In terms of these criteria, human security is not achieved in rural Cambodia.

¹³¹ This is discussed in the Human Security Report for example. Human Security Centre, *Human Security Report: War and Peace in the 21st Century*, 48-54.

¹³² Holloway, Chom Sok, and Researchers from Crossroads Consultancies Group, "Follow Up Survey." 7 and 35.

Conclusion

It has been demonstrated that for many people in rural Cambodia the conditions of human security are not met. While people live in basic peace and safety, their freedoms are curtailed, as are many of their fundamental rights. Access to the resources necessary for day-to-day existence and to secure future needs also eludes many villagers despite their best efforts, and there is limited participation in governance.

The most significant point to emerge from my field research is that, despite the considerable individual effort made by rural Cambodians, these are not adequately supported by the government. Thus, to achieve human security, the people need the support that comes from improved infrastructure, agricultural extensions services, industry and employment policies as well as from the protection of rights and from effective justice, health and education facilities. I have identified the poor performance of local government and line-departments as major factors in the persistent human insecurity which exists in rural Cambodia. It is also evident that commune councils can make only minimal improvements in human security on their own and that they require the commitment and support of line departments.

A second and related issue that arises from the chapter is that there is no effective political process for rural Cambodians to put their demands to the government and provincial authorities. Thus, human security matters are not raised in public political debate, nor are they prioritised for policy responses. In part, this is due to the nature of society and its traditions, as well as to politics and the institutions and processes of governance. In the absence of effective civil society organizations, people depend largely on international NGOs to raise rural concerns directly with political parties or ministries.

The next chapter will explore issues of politics and governance further. It will question some of the basic assumptions of state building and nation building that lie behind the international approach to development and security and their applicability within Cambodian society. Also, it will show that a human security approach demands a different emphasis in relation to leadership and institution building, for expanding opportunities and improving the delivery of services to rural Cambodians.

CHAPTER 5

GOVERNANCE AND HUMAN SECURITY

Governance: the action or manner of governing.¹

Governance is the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's social and economic resources for development²

Good governance is effective, participatory, transparent, accountable and equitable and promotes the rule of law. Governance is led by the state, but transcends it by collaborating with the private sector and civil society. All three are critical for sustaining human development. The state creates a conducive political, economic and legal environment. The private sector generates jobs and income, and civil society facilitates political and social interaction and mobilises groups to participate in economic, social and political activities.³

The aim of this chapter is to analyse the governance framework and processes which impinge on human security in rural Cambodia. However, governance has various meanings as the quotations above indicate, and may take many possible forms depending on a country's social and political systems and its national development objectives. Therefore, the concept is discussed in the following section to more closely define its meaning for analytical purposes and to situate the concept of "good governance" within its broader conceptual framework. This is followed by a section which shows how Cambodia is linked into a system of local, national and international governance institutions and processes, which influence Cambodia's rural development and, hence, the human security of people in the countryside.

The development of Cambodia's governance framework and the manner in which it functions cannot be separated from Cambodia's historical context. The concepts of state building and nation building, the participation of the population and the distribution of national resources are used to outline the dynamic processes of change in Cambodia's governance systems as it has responded to outside influences and internal tensions. This highlights social and cultural factors which have in the

¹ The Concise Oxford Dictionary, Sixth Edition 1976.

² This is a standard definition widely used by major development agencies such as the World Bank and Asian Development Bank.

³ Statement of the UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan quoted in Laura Zanotti, "Governmentalizing the Post-Cold War International Regime: The UN Debate on Democratisation and Good Governance," *Alternatives* 30, no. 4 (2005): 471-72.

past tempered the acceptance and functioning of introduced methods of governing in Cambodian society and continue to influence contemporary developments.

This theme is used to explore the relationship between human security and governance at the local level. In particular, the joint lenses of participation and empowerment are used to show that the lack of cohesion between local government and line departments in Cambodia is especially detrimental to the achievement of human security. A further analysis of line departments in terms of public sector corporate governance highlights the influence of past practices on Cambodian governance processes.

The chapter argues that although state building in Cambodia under international influence has put in place a framework of democratic institutions and “good governance,” this has not been matched by nation building which requires the acceptance and legitimisation of the institutions in terms of society and culture. I argue that political leadership is essential both to reform the culture of governance in Cambodian institutions, and to encourage the social and cultural change that is also necessary to generate confidence and trust in them. To support such nation building, I contend that international, national and local governance need to work towards a common purpose, and that human security provides a sound basis for the harmonisation of their policies, programmes and practices.

Governance

Governance is a useful term primarily because, although it describes a process of governing, it is not necessarily associated with the government of a state, or of its institution. Thus, the way in which global trade is managed or governed by the WTO, represents a process of “governance without government.”⁴

There are many approaches and theories associated with the processes of governance.⁵ At a national level, governance theory has a strong ideological

⁴ R.A.W Rhodes, *Understanding Governance: Policy Networks, Governance, Reflexivity and Accountability* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1997), 18.

⁵ Jon Pierre and B Guy Peters, *Governance, Politics and the State*, ed. B Guy Peters, Jon Pierre, and Gerry Stoker, *Political Analysis* (London: Macmillan Press, 2000), 37-47. They identify approaches to the study of governance through the traditional authority of the state; self-organising networks and the decreasing power of government; cybernetics and steering in which institutions respond to maintain a stable state; the use of policy instruments such as

association with Western forms of liberal democracy and economic rationalism. In this context, it adopts the liberal philosophy of small government and the central role of a free market economy. Hence, it is closely associated with the winding back of the welfare state, decentralisation of authority, the expansion of the role of the private sector and civil society in public service delivery, and economic globalisation—all of which demand new ways of managing state functions. As well as appearing to dilute state power, these governance approaches may also change the processes of democratic government itself. Thus, the concept of governance suggests a shift in power from the state downwards to local organizations; outwards to non-state actors; and upwards to international organizations.⁶

A shift in power upwards occurs when states accept binding regulatory and compliance regimes through membership of global governance organisations. There are many such international organisations governing matters such as international security, the regulation of trade and corporate behaviour, and a host of international and regional arrangements for the management of issues such as post and telecommunications, environmental protection and preventing the spread of disease. These organisations are considered to represent forms of global governance and, for some commentators, represent a weakening of state power.⁷ The shift of power

tax as tools to govern by steering society; institutional analysis an how they establish norms and promote or resist change; rational choice institutional analysis; networks and policy communities (new governance) which function in relation with government or independently.

Rhodes, for example, identifies approaches to governance as Minimal State which “embodies the ideological and political call for downsizing the state”; as Corporate Governance which “focuses our attention on the policy making, goal setting role of government and sets the requirements for transparency and public accountability”; as New Public Management (NPM) it projects the “...notion of government directing or ‘steering’ action by structuring the market, which takes over the actual service provision or the ‘rowing’ function of government”; as Good Governance it is “... advanced by the World Bank [which] marries new public management to the advocacy of liberal democracy”; as a Socio-cybernetic System based on “... interactions among government, social, political and economic actors wherein no one actor has a monopoly over information or experience”; and finally as Self-organising Networks “... in which private, non-profit, and public individuals and organizations interact to provide public services.” R.A.W Rhodes, "The New Governance: Governing without Government," *Political Studies* 44, no. 4 (1996): 652-67; and Rhodes, *Understanding Governance: Policy Networks, Governance, Reflexivity and Accountability*, 47-52.

⁶ Pierre and Peters, *Governance, Politics and the State*, 83-87; Craig and Porter, *Development Beyond Neoliberalism? Governance, Poverty Reduction and Political Economy*, 17; and Rhodes, *Understanding Governance: Policy Networks, Governance, Reflexivity and Accountability*, 17.

⁷ Power here being the authority and control over certain domestic matters which is voluntarily passed to international non-state institutions. Membership of the European Union involves a particularly significant form of such power transfer.

downwards is represented by domestic policies of decentralisation of state powers to regional and local bodies and, in particular, to communities through their relationship with state institutions and public service delivery. The third aspect of the power shift is outwards to the private sector and non-governmental organisation, which are increasingly engaged in the delivery of public sector services on behalf of governments. Although these are represented as shifts in power, national governments still play a central role in deciding whether to participate in the arrangements and in setting or “steering” the political and economic environment to facilitate the adoption of the new governance approaches. To the extent that governance implies a greater political engagement with non-state actors and the public, the role for governments in reconciling demands and determining policy responses which are accepted as legitimate by society (democratic or authoritarian) becomes more significant. In particular, different societies may arrive at different governance solutions depending on societal and cultural factors.⁸

The World Bank has focused its attention on “good governance” as part of its neo-liberal reform agenda, emphasising the need for “... efficiency in public service, rule of law with regard to contracts, an effective judiciary sector, respect for human rights, a free press, and pluralistic institutional structure.”⁹ These outcomes are to be achieved by classic economic rationalist reforms including “marketisation of public services, reduction of public sector overstaffing, budgetary discipline, administrative decentralisation, and NGO participation.”¹⁰ The early UN approach to governance was similar to that of the World Bank but, to avoid being seen to promote democratisation and normative approaches, it promoted “good governance” as a “... series of techniques for optimising institutional arrangements.”¹¹

The late 1990s brought greater freedom for the UN and the World Bank to engage openly in the promotion of democracy, and by 2000 the UN Millennium Declaration proclaimed that the UN would “spare no effort to promote democracy.”¹² The following year the UN encouraged the “the expansion of political space in order to

⁸ Pierre and Peters, *Governance, Politics and the State*, 163-92. Pierre and Peters discuss different models of governance in several developed countries.

⁹ Zanotti, "Governmentalizing the Post-Cold War International Regime," 468.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.: 469-70. Zanotti traces the UN debate from the early 1990s on good governance and its relations to its expanding involvement in democratisation and state building.

¹² UN General Assembly, "United Nations Millennium Declaration," (A/RES/55/2, 18 September 2000).

guarantee the full exercise of the political, economic, social and cultural rights.” and noted that there was “no single prescribed form” of democracy. Instead, it argued, democracy must reflect the “culture, history, and political experience of its citizens.”¹³ The Secretary General’s plan for implementation of the UN Millennium Declaration was essentially a restatement and consolidation of existing goals and strategies, but introduced a set of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to focus national attention. It expressed the need for political will and asserted that democratisation demanded “good governance, which in turn depended on inclusive participation, accountability and the promotion of the rule of law.”¹⁴ Although the Secretary General’s reports and goals referred to the role of politics and culture in development, these aspects were not pursued further in subsequent documents.¹⁵ Instead, the focus of attention shifted to administrative institutions and, in particular, “democratic governance” (or “good governance”) which it considered was essential for achieving the MDGs.¹⁶ Thus, the Secretary General warned that while governance was important to achieving peace and security, it went beyond political processes to include economic and administrative systems.¹⁷

These are all important, but in fact it has been the political governance – or government itself – which has been neglected in Cambodia, as elsewhere, especially in the decentralization process. During his brief period as head of the World Bank, Paul Wolfowitz appeared to recognise the importance of politics and government for governance when he argued that corruption “... undermines the ability of the government to function properly,” and that people wanted governments that delivered on promises. He added that in the development community, “good

¹³ UN General Assembly, "Support by the United Nations System of the Efforts of Governments to Promote and Consolidate New or Restored Democracies: Report of the Secretary-General," (A/56/499, 23 October 2001), para. 7, 26; and Zanotti, "Governmentalizing the Post-Cold War International Regime," 474. The Millennium Development Goals also make a specific association between security and development. Violent conflict is identified as arising from “social injustice and the failure of governance institutions and public administration systems.”

¹⁴ UN General Assembly, "Road Map towards the Implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration: Report of the Secretary General," (A/56/326, 8 September 2001), para. 7, 218.

¹⁵ Zanotti, "Governmentalizing the Post-Cold War International Regime," 476-77.

¹⁶ UN General Assembly, "The Role of Public Administration in the Implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration: Report of the Secretary General," (A/57/262, 16 August 2002); and UN General Assembly, "Public Administration and Development: Report of the Secretary General," (A/60/114, 12 July 2005).

¹⁷ UN General Assembly, "The Role of Public Administration in the Implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration: Report of the Secretary General," para. 5.

governance” is the name given to “what helps governments function effectively and achieve economic progress.” Here, at least, the central and essential role of government is recognised even as the liberal agenda is assumed to reduce the role of government by adopting a standard “good governance” approach.

There are many studies of the processes of governance in developed countries where individuals, civil society groups, local governments and the private sector all become significant actors in decisions concerning the devolution of responsibilities to non-state actors for the delivery of services on behalf of the state. An early outstanding example is Barbara Cruikshank’s study of empowerment and participation as applied in the US Government Community Action Programmes (CAPs) in the 1960s to address poverty and to reduce the cost of large bureaucratically run government welfare programmes.¹⁸ Not only does it provide an example of a governance approach, but also an analysis of that approach in terms of Foucault’s concept of power based on the idea of the state knowing and identifying groups, such as the poor, engaging them through individual participation and empowerment activities so as to enable them to choose gainful employment and escape from poverty. A similar approach is basic to the contemporary development wisdom, which promotes participation and empowerment as the means of changing individual behaviour to realise poverty reduction objectives.

The CAP programmes were introduced in the US also because of liberal concerns that welfare was leading to dependency on the state and creating a ‘culture of poverty’ among certain defined groups. It represented a new approach designed to break the individual dependency on welfare and to assist the individual to find a way out of the so-called culture of poverty. As such, participation by the poor was intended to guide the government in designing and providing programmes which the poor themselves wanted and in which they would freely take part. It was anticipated the participatory process would empower individuals by offering training and follow-up opportunities to access employment (or income support) which would help them to break out of a cycle of poverty and to become fully active citizens in the economy and society.

¹⁸ Barbara Cruikshank, "The Will to Empower: Technologies of Citizenship and the War on Poverty," *Socialist Review* 23, no. 4 (1994): 29-55.

More recent manifestations of the liberal governance approach based on individual freedom include the Thatcher reforms in the UK. These also sought to downsize government bureaucracies by replacing their welfare programmes with a range of optional services provided by the private sector under government contracts. Individuals were then free to exercise (rational) choice to select from the market place the assistance options which most suited their needs. This was considered to involve the participation and empowerment of the individual. The challenge to the individual was characterised by the view that “if you require guidance and training in the practice of freedom you must first practice your freedom as a consumer of employment [or other services] to gain access to such guidance and training.”¹⁹

Studies of governance and “democratic spaces” in public administration reveal how participation and empowerment are significant elements in the processes of decentralised governance in developed countries. Nevertheless, questions still emerge, as in the USA case 40 years before, as to who is really exercising power and whether key civil society leaders engaged in local activities are genuine representatives of a constituency or merely representing themselves.²⁰ The art of governance is thus an intensely political process in modern democracies. To maintain legitimacy, public cooperation and acceptance of their objectives, governments must respect and balance not only individual freedoms but also the demands of communities, organised groups and the population as a whole.

A number of studies in developing countries also identify tensions which emerge around issues of leadership and representation, and the nature of engagement with governance institutions.²¹ Similar problems emerge in local government in Cambodia where the same principles of decentralisation, empowerment and participatory governance are promoted by international development agencies and the government itself. The commune councils have been given responsibilities in relation to law and order, preparing and approving village and commune development plans; preparing council budgets; establishing commune rules and

¹⁹ Mitchell Dean, *Governmentality: Power and Rule in Modern Society* (London: Sage Publications, 1999), 161.

²⁰ Andrea Cornwall, "Introduction: New Democratic Spaces? The Politics and Dynamics of Institutionalised Participation," *IDS Bulletin* 35, no. 2 (2004): 3-6.

²¹ See for example *ibid.* This paper summarises studies from seven countries, developed and developing.

regulations; and imposing local taxes and service charges.²² To the extent these responsibilities and, in particular, the processes involved are designed by international development actors, they are intended to use processes of governance to infuse new social and economic norms and to incorporate people within a global neo-liberal governance orthodoxy.²³

The political and social aspects of the way governance operates at the commune council level in Cambodia have been largely overlooked. Attention has instead focused more directly on “good governance” as a technical means for promoting democracy and setting in place the processes and regulations considered by donors to be necessary for economic development and poverty alleviation. Politics and its role in local as well as national government decision-making continues to be de-linked from governance (or at least government is reduced to a minor technical role of regulatory agent). Issues, such as market regulation, land law and local government policies, which might otherwise be part of open political debate, are instead determined largely according to internationally defined (and universalising) policies and practices. These policies and practices are supported by international NGOs which, while emphasising humanitarian concerns, are committed to the same development orthodoxies and principles of participation and empowerment as those promoted by the World Bank, UNDP and other agencies.²⁴ However, their prescriptions ignore the actual culture of governance in Cambodia, which is heavily politicised, incorporates networks of patronage, and sees rent taking as a right. In Cambodia, this means the government can appear to accept the donor inspired principles and practices of “good governance” by moving, however slowly, to enact laws and regulations which, in the end, it has neither the intention nor the political will to implement.

Governance, however, endures whether good or not and continues to impact on the lives of ordinary people. The next section examines the governance framework in practice in Cambodia as it relates to the rural people and their human security. The

²² Royal Government of Cambodia, "The Law on Khum/Sangkat Administrative Management." Note that I have taken out reference to the municipal elements and *sangkat* as I am dealing with rural Cambodia in this thesis.

²³ Andrea Cornwall and Karen Brock, "What do Buzzwords do for Development Policy? A Critical Look at "Participation", "Empowerment" and "Poverty Reduction"," *Third World Quarterly* 26, no. 7 (2005): 1043-60.

²⁴ Craig and Porter, *Development Beyond Neoliberalism? Governance, Poverty Reduction and Political Economy*, 64-89; and Cornwall and Brock, "What do Buzzwords do," 1045-48.

commune councils are of particular interest in the framework as it is largely through them that international donors hope that, somewhere in the future, decentralization, the promotion of civil society through participation and empowerment and the principles of “good governance” will result in a free and open political system and effective democracy in Cambodia.

Cambodia in an international – national – local governance framework

The governance framework depicted in Figure 5-1 below can be considered in terms of three interlocking processes. First, local governance is based on the commune councils which, subject to their place within the Ministry of Interior, have decentralised responsibilities to engage with their rural constituency in the democratic formulation of policies for the welfare, or human security, of their constituents. Commune councils are also empowered to establish local bodies with paid workers or officials to deliver certain services to the commune or to particular groups within it.²⁵ In addition, they are entitled to establish local revenue collection systems, subject to specific conditions. Local governance is also closely associated with the people and civil society and private sector organizations.

Participatory approaches to council affairs and “good governance” principles are built into the legislative and regulatory frameworks in the form of mandatory processes which must be followed in matters such as development planning, private sector contracting and financial management.²⁶ This assumes that participation and “good governance” can be achieved through tightly defined administrative processes. However, this is somewhat contrary to the experience in developed countries, such as Australia, where public sector governance reforms reduced reliance on mandated procedures. Instead, greater attention was given to the culture of organisations and the responsibility of officers to make appropriate management decisions rather than simply follow procedures. This will be discussed below.

²⁵ Description of some services which have been developed such as sanitation and road maintenance are referred to in Cristina Mansfield and Kurt MacLeod, "Commune Councils and Civil Society: Promoting Decentralisation through Partnerships," (Phnom Penh: Pact Cambodia, 2004).

²⁶ Royal Government of Cambodia, "The Law on Khum/Sangkat Administrative Management."; Royal Government of Cambodia, "Inter-Ministerial Prakas on Commune/Sangkat Development Planning."

The second governance process has its origins in the international sphere. In this context, international development organisations with global agendas conduct their activities in direct contact with what may be called their constituents (or clients). While these organizations are grouped together in Figure 5-1 under “donors”, they represent a mix of types including the WTO, World Bank, UNDP and other UN agencies, official bilateral donor countries and international NGOs. All have governing arrangements whereby their primary policy objectives, such as a common commitment to promoting human rights, “good governance” and poverty reduction, as well as neo-liberal economic reforms, are formulated in consultation with their own constituencies outside Cambodia.²⁷ They each promote, with varying degrees of forcefulness, their own programmes within Cambodia – directly with the government, within state institutions and with civil society and the private sector. These agencies comprise forms of international governance and are able to have their policies and programmes adopted by the Cambodian governments. They also have the capacity to project policies and programmes directly to the population of Cambodia through their support for decentralisation and for the many local NGOs which promote international development approaches and undertake advocacy, as they see it, on behalf of the people. While this would appear to support the commonly held view that international governance reduces the power of the state, it must be recognised that while the Cambodian government largely accepts international development approaches, it retains a firm political control over the country and its decentralised administration.

Interlocking with the international and local governance processes are the institutions of national governance. The key national institutions in this third process are the government, which makes policy decisions for the nation, the ministries which manage and implement government policies and programmes, other institutions of state, such as the commune councils and, finally the private sector and civil society. Here, a very different picture of governance emerges from that promoted internationally as “good governance.”

²⁷ The major critique of global governance institutions is that they are undemocratic and represent the interests of already wealthy and powerful states when they assert an international consensus on matters such as good governance, democracy, participation, human rights and development.

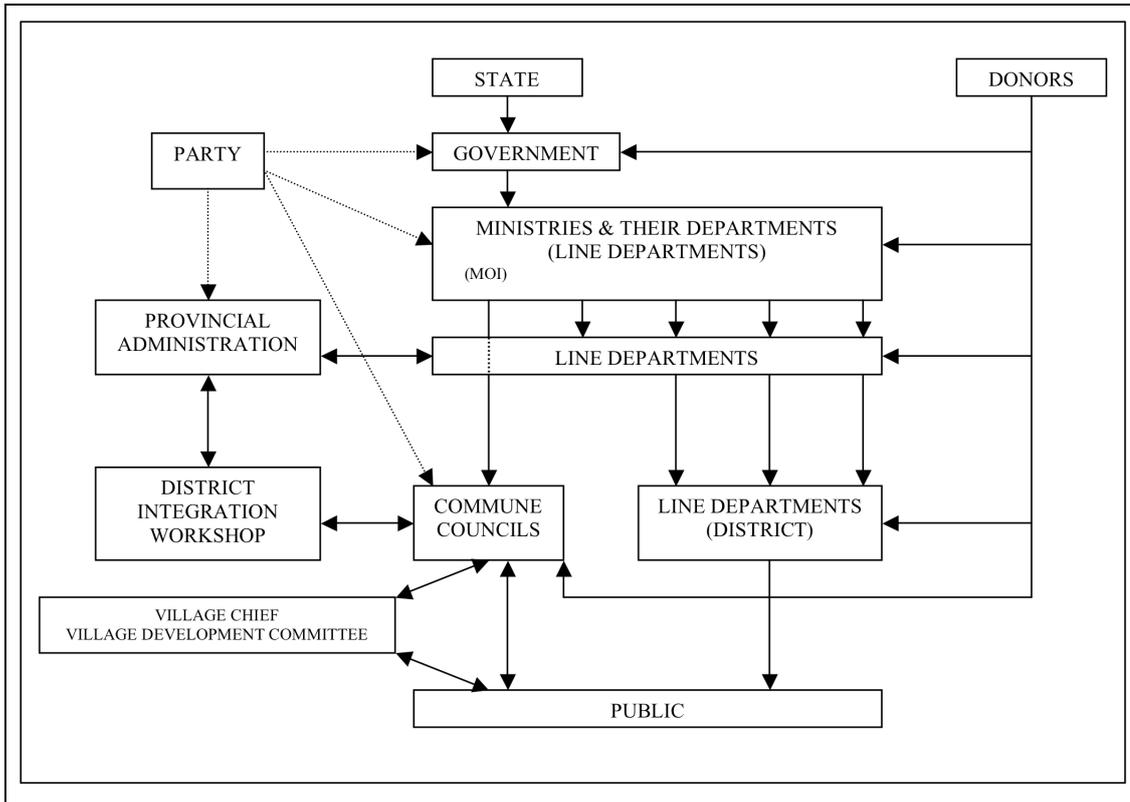


Figure 5-1 Governance framework: international – national – local

Democracy is tenuous, human rights not respected, law and order compromised, corruption and nepotism abound and the government’s commitment to “good governance” is illusory. While the blame is regularly attributed to the Cambodians and internal factors, the nature of international development assistance must not escape attention. Development assistance has led to “capacity destruction” within state institutions as a result of aid projects delivering services rather than working within and improving the capacity of national institutions to do so.²⁸

That approach is prominent in Cambodia, where donors have supported discrete projects within ministries but managed separately from the mainstream ministry bureaucratic processes to shield them from perceived poor governance and corruption. This highlights the complexity of governance within Cambodia where the combined international and domestic approaches—the latter with its roots firmly in Cambodia’s society and past history—produce uncertain outcomes in service delivery to rural Cambodia. Thus, the international donors also attempt to use a decentralisation approach to reach the rural population and to engineer social change

²⁸ Francis Fukuyama, *State Building: Governance and World Order in the Twenty-First Century* (London: Profile Books, 2005), 55.

by engaging the people in specific regulated processes associated with democracy and “good governance.” There is an expectation that these processes and associated training will lead to the embedding of new concepts and values as well as empowering people to participate, not only in local commune council governance, but also in national democratic governance.²⁹

That the political processes in Cambodia are not democratic is due in part to the nature of Cambodian government, but also in part to the dominant policy role played by the major international institutions. Using their vast capacity for defining and “knowing” the populations of developing countries in statistical terms, the donors are able to determine what they perceive as a country’s development needs, influence government policy and pressure countries to adopt “universal” solutions without reference to domestic political debate. While attempting to “embed” norms, however, the process simply bypasses the Cambodian population politically since they have no opportunity to access the information and analysis, or to debate the policy proposals and their social impact.³⁰ This becomes even more evident in considering the operation of Cambodian government line departments, and the level of centralised control over their provincial functions.

The line departments do not operate unencumbered to the local level. Instead there is a small Provincial administration in the form of Executive Committees and Provincial Rural Development Committees (PRDC) which are intended to coordinate the line department functions within the provinces. The line departments are formally structured within the central ministries, although funding is transferred to the provincial line department offices through the provincial finance department. Most line departments also have district offices within the provinces. Overall, the linkage between the different levels is not straight forward, a fact that is highlighted by national and donor discussions on proposed deconcentration reforms. These propose to devolve line department responsibility to the provincial authorities and to give the provincial governors greater autonomy (as well as subjecting them, in theory at least, to greater public scrutiny).³¹

²⁹ Zanotti, "Governmentalizing the Post-Cold War International Regime," 471.

³⁰ This reflects the process of the “anti-politics machine” discussed by Ferguson. See James Ferguson, *The Anti-Politics Machine: "Development," Depoliticization, and Bureaucratic Power in Lesotho* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994).

³¹ See for example UNDP Cambodia, "US\$34.8 Million to Support Cambodian Decentralisation and Deconcentration Reforms," *Newsletter*, no. 15 (2007). The Konrad

Provincial governors are currently appointed by the Prime Minister and, attesting the mutual suspicions and potential political and material benefits to be had, a deputy from an alternative political party is also appointed by the Prime Minister.³² The governor's position is organisationally located under the Ministry of Interior—as too are the commune councils. The provincial governor also has direct responsibility for the police and military within the province, adding to the complex relations of power. Currently there is no open and effective mechanism for the people and civil society to put policy proposals, political concerns and social and economic demands to provincial governing authorities.

Despite significant international involvement, government plans to produce new organic law for deconcentration have been put off until after the 2008 national election. The deconcentration debate has, however, raised significant issues concerning the nature of the governorship and whether it should be an appointed or elected position, the extent of political freedom to be given to the provinces and their role in policy and strategic control over provincial development, the processes for civil society inputs, and provincial budgetary allocations and controls. Much of the debate concerns the future levels of power (particularly budgetary control) to be exercised by politicians and senior civil servants at central and provincial levels. It also concerns the basis for determining priorities and allocating resources to national versus provincial programmes and projects.

Currently, the confused state of governance inherent in the administrative arrangements, as well as the lack of resources and financial control at provincial level, severely limit the ability of provincial governors to develop and implement policies and programmes designed specifically to address infrastructure needs and to promote agricultural development, create new industries and trade and tourism opportunities. In the case of Battambang, for example, the province has been unable to develop significant long-term plans and projections for employment creation, especially to meet the needs of the young educated and computer literate who flock

Adenauer Foundation organised a major seminar for the Inter-Ministerial Committee for the Drafting of the Organic Laws. See Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, "Decentralisation and Deconcentration in Cambodia," Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, Cambodia Office, www.kas.de/proj/home/events/2/year-2006/month-6/veranstaltung_id20950/index.html accessed on 7 November 2007.

³² This may change now that the CPP has a clear government majority following the 2008 national election.

to the towns for employment.³³ The Battambang Plans are not documents to guide investment and the development of the province and its people into the future. Nor has a decade of international aid and development assistance focused on regional economic development and local needs. At the same time, the international emphasis on “good governance” principles and practices has achieved little for the human security of Cambodia’s rural population.

Governance and its links to Cambodian culture and history

To understand governance and the ability of a country to achieve “good governance” in the delivery of services to rural people, it is necessary to consider the nature of domestic governance and how it came into being. In the process of political and social change, many social and cultural values and processes existing under one regime may carry over into the new system. Thus, family ties, patronage and the old school tie; religious or ethnic affiliation; locality or other sources of bonding, may survive in new forms. This means that culture and history are important factors in state development in terms of its structure, political institutions and organisation; in the process of nation building and the development of popular identification with the state and its legitimisation by the people; how the population can participate in government; and how resources are distributed among the population.³⁴

The following sections consider, in turn, the processes of state building in Cambodia and the institutions directly engaging the population; nation building in terms of culture and legitimisation of the state processes; and, finally, participation and distribution in relation to the institutional processes.

State building

In principle, the state of Cambodia and its institutions achieved their current form as a result of the adoption of the constitution following the UNTAC supervised elections in 1993. Apart from its introduction of representative democracy, the separation of powers and a free market economy, the constitution and new

³³ Kingdom of Cambodia, "Battambang Provincial Development Plan 1999-2000," (Battambang: Provincial Department of Planning, 1998).

³⁴ See for example Gabriel A Almond and G Bingham Powell, *Comparative Politics: A Developmental Approach* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1966), 34-41.

government left in place the administrative arrangements from the previous regime. These included a system of local government, provincial governors and line-department structure, largely consistent with previous regimes. The detailed form and functioning of these institutions were, however, subject to ongoing change as reforms were introduced to meet international demands and to improve their effectiveness. Appendix C illustrates the administrative arrangements for local government in the different periods of Cambodian state building.

Records suggest that from about the seventh century, a form of bureaucratic control was developed, replacing or absorbing the roles of hereditary princes.³⁵ By the eleventh century, it has been claimed, that bureaucratic power "... rivalled or even surpassed the power of the king."³⁶ This state development was accompanied by an urbanization of the population in the region of Angkor involving the "herding" of people into administered areas and the "destruction" of the traditional Cambodian village.³⁷ The granting of titles by king and dedication of religious foundations to central control were, as described in Appendix A, important factors in reorganising and consolidating state control. This bureaucratic form of state in Cambodia reached its peak in the Angkor period with the comprehensive organization of rice production and release of wealth and human resources for the construction of cities, hydraulic systems and religious monuments.

Little is known of local institutions other than references to district heads and a range of inspectors and village officials under the district head, some of whom represented the king's interest in the territory.³⁸ Districts had their own courts of justice which,

³⁵ Michael Vickery, *Society, Economics, and Politics in Pre-Angkor Cambodia* (Tokyo: The Centre for East Asian Cultural Studies for UNESCO, the Toyo Bunko, 1998), 367-68 and 390-91. The 8th century was also a period of architectural and artistic development which suggests growth and consolidation of central power. On titles see Vickery, *Society, Economics, and Politics in Pre-Angkor Cambodia*, 300-4. See also Sachchidanand Sahai, "Les Institutions Politiques et L'Organisation Administrative du Cambodge Ancien (VI-XIII Siècles)," *Publications de Lécole Française d'Extrême-Orient* LXXV (1970): 72-3.

³⁶ David Chandler, *A History of Cambodia*, Second ed. (St Leonards: Allen & Unwin, 1993), 43.

³⁷ Ibid.; Sahai, "Les Institutions Politiques," 28; George Coedès, *The Making of South East Asia*, trans. H M Wright (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966), 100; and Vickery, *Society, Economics, and Politics in Pre-Angkor Cambodia*, 312.

³⁸ The administrative units referred to in the pre-Angkor period were roughly "city", "district" and "village", though the last could apparently be similar to the first. Vickery, *Society, Economics, and Politics in Pre-Angkor Cambodia*, 327-28.

as well as administering regulations, controlled land transactions and boundaries.³⁹ There is mention of village chiefs but it is not clear whether they were popular representatives or simply government agents. The role of respected elders in the villages was also considered to be important.⁴⁰

Although, following the move from Angkor, the institutions for producing an agricultural surplus for religious and public works so important to Angkor had in large part become redundant, the king continued to be at the centre of an extensive entourage of princes and appointed ministers and major officials.⁴¹ The “administrative puzzle,” as Forest called the pre-colonial governance arrangement, had two main lines of authority. One was through a number of ministers such as the prime minister and ministers of the palace, justice, navy and war. These in turn appointed support staff and officials to whom they delegated responsibilities.

A second line of authority was based on partition of the country administratively into “apanages”, domains, and provinces.⁴² The king, his mother, the crown prince and other high royal persons held domains and, in turn, nominated provincial governors for appointment by the king.⁴³

Governors were perhaps the main administrators in terms of ensuring peasant compliance with royal decrees. They appointed deputies as well as judges and other officials responsible for districts delineated by the governor (as many as he chose)

³⁹ Sahai, "Les Institutions Politiques," 80. The 'justice' system was apparently comprehensive and had system of procedures, specified crimes and corresponding penalties, but relied on trial by ordeal. For details of justice see *ibid.*, 88-110.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 83-4.

⁴¹ Alain Forest, *Le Cambodge et la Colonisation Française: Histoire d'une Colonisation sans Heurts (1897-1920)* (Paris: Éditions L'Harmattan, 1980), 17-33. The king, he says, was surrounded by up to 7,000 persons including functionaries, princes, slaves and women (with the abolition of slavery under the French, some 3-4,000 were still employed by the king in Phnom Penh).

⁴² *Ibid.* An “apanage” is literally a “privilege.” It is a vague term and is suggestive of a titled position with no direct responsibilities (though probably authority to extract some benefit). Tully refers to the apanages as “fiefs” presided over by high ranking members of the royal family who levied taxes on such things as crops, livestock, fruit trees, implements of farming and fishing. John Tully, *France on the Mekong: A History of the Protectorate in Cambodia* (Lanham: University Press of America, 2002), 36-8. Sahai also refers to the Angkorian administration being divided in four categories but says there is no basis for equating them with the apanages. Sahai, "Les Institutions Politiques," 47.

⁴³ Forest, *Le Cambodge et la Colonisation*, 18-9; and Sahai, "Les Institutions Politiques." The king administered 49 provinces grouped in 6 domains, while the *obbareach* (the prince nominated to succeed the king) held in “apanage” a domain of 5 provinces and the queen mother a domain of 3 provinces. The king allocated some of his provinces to his ministers – 9 each to the prime minister and minister of the Palace; and 6 each to the ministers for justice and war. Their provinces were not necessarily contiguous.

and for which he sold the title to the highest bidder. The governor also appointed village heads who in turn appointed two assistants. Governors were required to act as judges; supervise tax collection; organise corvée and arrange transport as required by the king. They were independent, so long as they submitted to the king and forwarded adequate finances. At the same time, it seems, ministers also appointed officials to the provinces to look after their separate functional interests.⁴⁴

The sale of titles and positions and rent taking at all levels of the administrative pyramid were the norm. Unsalaries officials drew sustenance from a vast network of lesser officials who collected taxes from the villagers, administered corvée, recruited for military and other service, and maintained some form of local justice and security. The relationships between the various functionaries seems to have depended on power and association rather than any allocation of responsibilities and hierarchy within a bureaucratic structure and, with a certain resonance in more recent bureaucratic practices, the more positions that could be generated, the more wealth could be accumulated at the top.⁴⁵ This system was dominated by the “rapacious self-interest of the rulers,” which “stunted private enterprise” and in contrast to the Angkor period, produced virtually no public works.⁴⁶ Governance was little more than a means for the extraction of wealth from the peasants, whose extreme poverty and oppression was noted by travellers and colonial officials alike. Figure 5-2 shows the general steps in the extraction of taxes which roughly accords with the administrative system outlined above.

⁴⁴ Forest, *Le Cambodge et la Colonisation*, 24. For example, the minister for justice appointed representatives to each province to extract 1/3 of the proceeds from the justice process. Forest also refers to a high functionary responsible for agriculture who similarly extracted 1/3 in relation to property cases. The king also placed officials who extracted 1/3 of all fines. Similarly, the kings men determined the taxes for each village and advised the governor the the amount of total tax to be collected from each village in his charge. This was collected as the governor determined

⁴⁵ When the King Ang Duong tried to simplify the organization, one super-governor was involved in organising an insurrection. *Ibid.*, 19.

⁴⁶ Tully, *France on the Mekong*, 35, 59-60, 67. The Vietnamese had similar perceptions: “Cambodian officials only know how to bribe and be bribed. ... offices are sold; nobody carries out orders; everyone works for his own account” was general Giang’s exasperated conclusion! Quoted in Chandler, *A History of Cambodia*, 126.

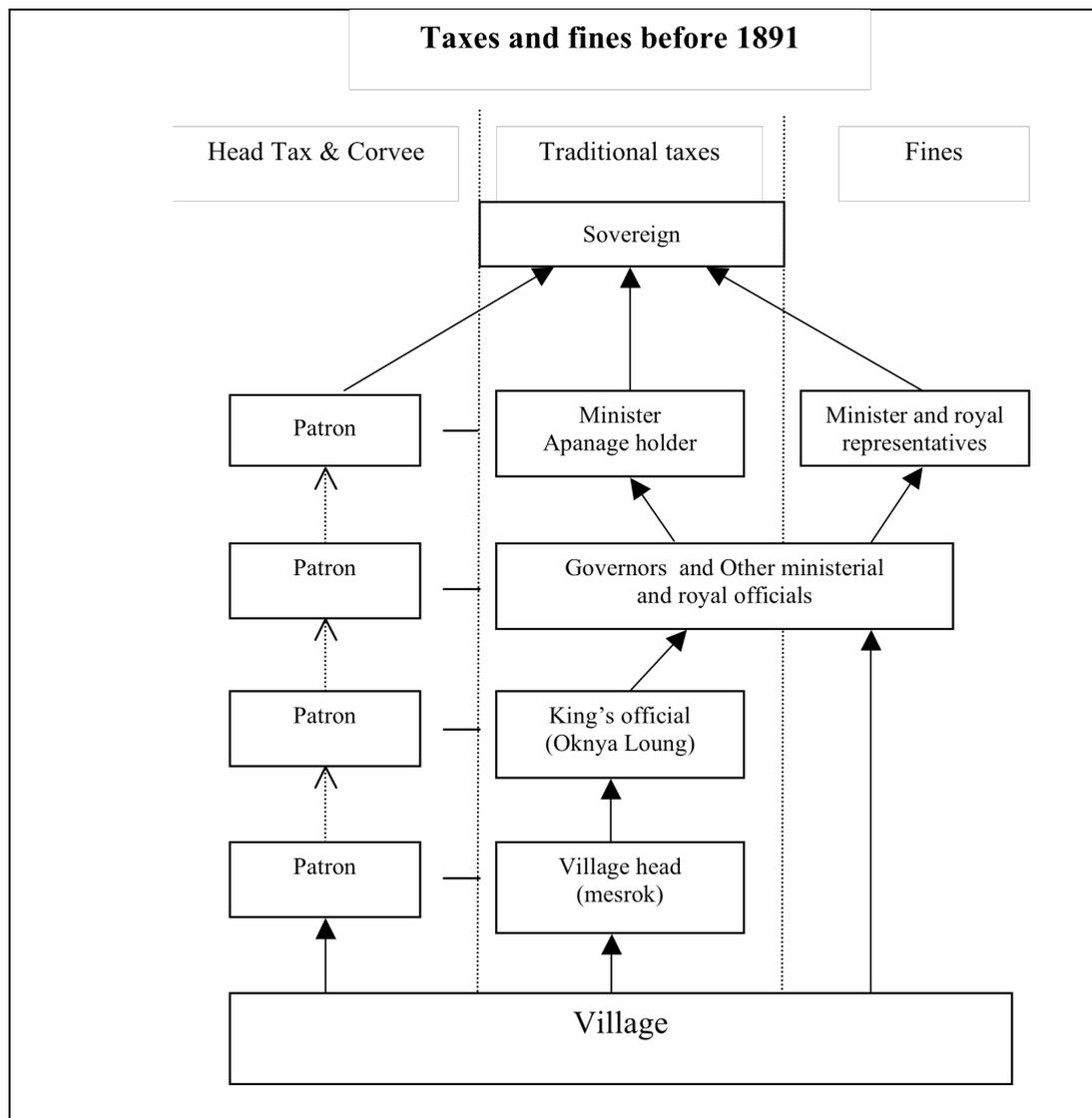


Figure 5-2 Patronage and the administration of taxes and fines before 1891

It would appear that patronage was an “organisation parallel to the official organisation” under which each free person could choose a patron from among the functionaries and princes or their officials.⁴⁷ A villager might choose a local official such as the village head who, in turn, could select a patron from the host of petty officials connected to the various administrative arms. Each patron in turn selecting a patron from a higher rank. It was a hierarchical network of associations between village and the high level patron, and would have been riddled with conflicting interests of official and patronage duties.

Patrons assisted their clients, in theory at least, in matters of justice and paid taxes for those otherwise in default. As well as functioning as an intermediary and

⁴⁷ The following outline is from Forest, *Le Cambodge et la Colonisation*, 31-3.

protecting their clients, patrons also carried complaints to the king. It is through the patron that the king would have become aware of what was happening in the provinces. For his services to clients, the patron collected a head tax payable to the sovereign (and for himself no doubt), and organised men for the army or *corvée* for the king as required. What is important is that, overall, the system of administration was essentially predatory and designed to extract various forms of formal and informal taxes and *corvée* from the people. It was not a royal administration designed to ensure the safety, welfare and prosperity of the population.

State building during the French colonial period

The French protectors, like the Vietnamese before them, initially sought to rule through the king and existing institutions but soon concluded that more direct methods would be needed to meet their colonial objectives. French Résidents were put in place to supervise the Cambodian governors, in large part to oversee the collection of revenue and its transfer to the central budget from which allocations were made for the colonial administration and the implementation of provincial public works. The purpose was both to assert control as well as to divert allegiance and revenue from the king and the existing patrimonial system. The French moved to reduce the number of Cambodian officials and to introduce colonial administrators, using Vietnamese and French personnel.⁴⁸

More direct rule by the French initiated a new phase of state building through the introduction of Western governance institutions.⁴⁹ These new institutions of state building include departments and bureaucratic methods with their rules and regulations, salaried positions and concept of civil service. The French presence in the province expanded to include Résident schools, medical and veterinary services, police, post and telegraph, public works, and customs, all with a need to engage local people. Eventually, the training of local administrators was initiated in Phnom Penh.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ The French were particularly concerned to abolish the “apanage” officials and the *Oknya* (titled officials) who they considered to be grossly incompetent.

⁴⁹ The Cambodian kings had sought French protection at the same time that King Rama V in Thailand was introducing modern reforms to prevent colonisation by the British or French.

⁵⁰ Forest, *Le Cambodge et la Colonisation*, 89-116. Although rules requiring examinations for those being nominated to public functions were proclaimed from 1901, little was done in this regard until 1914 when the first administration school was set up to train *kromokau* (a middle level functionary between the governor and village chief). In 1917 further schools for

Initially, the French tried to formalize the role of the village heads which, under the new rules, were: to receive royal envoys charged with census and collection of taxes, to publicise royal ordinances, recruit men for war, and judge disputes; and act as local policeman in return for which they received a proportion of fines levied, and tax relief.⁵¹ Dissatisfied with the regular involvement of village heads with bandits, pirates, and various schemes to defraud the tax collectors, the French moved to establish elected village councils in Cambodia in 1901 and again in 1908. An underlying assumption seems to have been that the democratically elected council would provide some transparency and eliminate fraud.

This meant that the French, who were of the view that the idea of village “community” as a social and political entity simply did not exist in Cambodian society, considered it possible nevertheless to create administrative communities.⁵² To break with the past, they introduced a new entity called *khum* (or commune) and a commune head (*mekhum*). Trying to accommodate the dispersed and irregular nature of habitation, the new law recognized the less structured group of residents in hamlets or villages (*phum*) which became the basic entities forming a commune. Councillors were to be elected, representing each hamlet or village. Those elected appointed a commune head from either within or outside their ranks (the list of candidates had to be approved by the Résident). The commune head then chose assistants and appointed a leader for each hamlet or village. The commune councils were to meet every three months and an independent budget was to be provided for each. While elections were held, it seems that councils rarely, if ever, met.⁵³ Increasingly, however, the commune head became the agent of the French whose rule was highly centralised. Commune heads were kept busy maintaining records of villagers for tax purposes, as well as overseeing justice and implementing colonial directives.⁵⁴

justice, teachers and administration were established with a view to putting the administration on Western lines.

⁵¹ Ibid. However, as Forest says, “In brief, he lives above all on his role as policeman”

⁵² The general consensus among historians, anthropologists and commentators is that Cambodia was typified by “weak” or “loose” social structures and that the household was the basic unit. Vickery, *Kampuchea*, 52; Conway, “Poverty, Participation and Programmes”, 249; and Delvert, *Le Paysan Cambodgien*, 201-4.

⁵³ The reforms in 1911 also changed the role of the Résident Supérieure and the structure of the Council of the Protectorate (replaced in 1913 by an Indigenous Consultative Assembly). Tully, *France on the Mekong*, 142-3.

⁵⁴ Forest, *Le Cambodge et la Colonisation*, 117-31.

The final step in this phase of state building was to come with the formation of the independent state of Cambodia when the French granted Independence in 1953. However, despite its democratic parliamentary system, political parties and general elections, Cambodia lacked the democratic political traditions and a bureaucracy capable of meeting the demands of Independence.⁵⁵ Sihanouk's abdication and move into political leadership symbolising, in a way, an attempted transfer from a patrimonial to a democratic role. Nevertheless, the patrimonial tradition was preserved as Sihanouk introduced "Buddhist socialism" and created what was, in effect, a one party state centred on himself as ruler.

Sihanouk's system failed to control factionalism and corruption, and state building in Cambodia received a harsh setback with the Pol Pot interlude which attempted to abolish all previous institutions and to replace them with a new extreme form of state organised on a military structure. At its centre was the secretive Angkar—"the organization." The 1979 occupation by Vietnam heralded a return to state building which basically revived the institutions of the previous Sihanouk and Lon Nol regimes, but under a socialist state formation. The new state was established as a triumvirate of the Front, the Party and state institutions – government and bureaucracy (See Figure 3-2). The ministries and departments of state were re-activated as were the provincial, district and commune level institutions. The communes were further divided into village and group level (*krom samaki*) organizations to take into account the socialist agenda of communal production.

The local government structure, initiated by the French and retained at Independence, was effectively in place again as the State of Cambodia prepared for the signing of the peace agreement and UNTAC supervised elections. It was maintained then by the new democratically elected state which restored the institutions of parliamentary democracy and the king. As outlined in chapter 3, the Seila programme also brought the ongoing state building process directly to the people with its democratic and administrative reforms of the existing commune institutions. While the specified functions of the commune councils vary little from the previous arrangements, they replaced the socialising agenda with training in democratic principles and open and accountable local government. This reflects the importance placed on local governance by powers wishing to transform societies.

⁵⁵ Osborne, *Politics and Power*, 114.

Nation building

Given the background of state building in Cambodia, an important issue for consideration is whether the various state structures and organisations were accepted and legitimised by the population at large. Here we look to nation building and the legitimacy of the state and its institutions and political system in terms of people's loyalty and commitment to them. While little can be gleaned from the earliest periods, those living within the urban bureaucratic system based on religious foundations might have given legitimacy to the sovereign in return for the performance of rituals deemed necessary to ensure security, good seasons and agricultural success. In return, the functions of the king—who embodied the state—were “to protect the people against external aggression and internal disorder”; to please the people [probably festivals, ceremony etc]; and “to create conditions favourable for a prosperous economy and permitting the subjects to gain their subsistence.”⁵⁶ For those outside the urban system, local forest spirits were the more immediate concern along with avoidance of the sovereign's officials and military.

With the depopulation of the Angkor area, people dispersed and were no longer bound to the urban bureaucracy. Buddhism also became a more widespread and popular religion, teaching the people moral responsibility to the king and those in authority.⁵⁷ Thus the king retained his symbolic and ritual status and his legitimacy in the eyes of the people, despite the oppressive demands for taxes, corvée and military service. It was his officials who bore the brunt of peoples' displeasure, being referred to by the people in all manner of derogatory terms as “tigers”, “spotted snakes” and “demons, or as “crocodiles” and “venomous snakes” who “ate” and consumed the domains and provinces allocated to them.⁵⁸

As a patrimonial system, there was allegiance to the king but there was no concept of nation in pre-colonial Cambodia. What continued to hold it together was not protection from the king or his officials through public services, but comfort in ritual and, specifically, ritual that needed to be performed by the king to guarantee the harvest and the very viability of the peasant subsistence. Patronage also provided

⁵⁶ Sahai, "Les Institutions Politiques," 24-5.

⁵⁷ Tully, *France on the Mekong*, 39. Tully reflects on harsh climate and difficulties despite which he says peasants were “relatively content because they could envisage no other life and their fatalism was reinforced by the ubiquitous Buddhist teachings.”

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 35; and Chandler, *A History of Cambodia*, 105.

some protection from harsh officials. However, loyalty to the state was problematic. There was widespread banditry, and revolts which became even more prominent with the French presence as anti-colonial sentiment developed into active opposition. The sense of national identity emerging among sections of a growing educated élite, however, did not penetrate the countryside.

This suggests that to the extent there was a “social contract,” it was the responsibility of the population to sustain the king through taxes, *corvée* and so on. Thus, the exploitation and poverty of the people was more likely to be explained in terms of the excessive demands of officials and not attributable to the king. At the same time, the host of lesser functionaries played little or no role in the “harmonisation” of relations between the king and his people. Nor did the introduced forms of local administration through supposedly elected commune councils encourage new bonds of loyalty to the state institutions. On the one hand, commune and village heads lived to some extent from exploiting villagers financially while on the other protecting them from excessive exploitation by higher officials. The welfare of villagers was protected within the immediate ties of family and kin and, to some extent, their association with “place” and common spirit worship.⁵⁹ Outside the family or kinship networks, trust in institutions and their legitimation were perhaps limited to the patronage system that created a network of relationships reaching to the ultimate patron—the king. The bureaucracy established under French rule did not reduce peasant oppression, nor did it bring widespread benefits to the countryside. It was staffed by French and Vietnamese officials and there was thus, from a Cambodian perspective, little reason to trust or value it.

Independence, in 1953, brought a resurgence of loyalty to the person of the king (Sihanouk), who was revered especially in the countryside. The countryside benefited from an expansion of rural education and road networks, but performance in other sectors, such as health and industry, as well as protection of rights, was poor. What little nation building had been achieved was quickly shattered by the coup, war, the victory of Pol Pot, and his draconian form of state. After 1979, too, there was little achievement in terms of nation building. Rather than legitimising the new regime, people were reluctant to adhere to socialist objectives and were suspicious of

⁵⁹ Peasants often resided in scattered hamlets and village affiliation and loyalty as such was questionable. The French and later governments tried to consolidate villages for security reasons.

the government and of officials who cheated and harassed them. Popular loyalty and trust again eluded the state as commune organizations were infiltrated and abused by self-seeking officials. A lack of faith was also evident within the *krom samaki* where people ignored the instructions and guidance of officials and maintained their private economic activities—the so-called family economy. At the same time, as shown in chapter 3, patronage networks were reconstructed throughout the new governance system established after 1979 and remain largely in place today.

It could be argued that nation building and the legitimisation of the state in the eyes of the people were, along with state building, primary objectives of the UNTAC intervention in Cambodia. The widespread assumption was that an acceptable electoral process would lead to the popular acceptance of an elected government. A further assumption was that an elected government would act on behalf of the people and create loyalty and commitment to the democratic state. Voter turn-out under difficult conditions exceeded expectations and was construed as evidence that people across the country wanted to be involved in the political process. Popular elections, political parties and factions were of course not new to Cambodia and many would have recalled the elections and party politics of the 1950s and 1960s. They would also have recalled the turmoil of factional politics in Phnom Penh, the fall of Sihanouk and the collapse of the country under Lon Nol, and the impact of events on conditions across the country. People, it seems, placed great hope in the electoral process and hoped that with UNTAC and donor support, this time would be different.

Nevertheless, once the vote was counted Cambodia's political élite, many of whom had been opponents in armed conflicts since the 1970s, took over and the people were no longer consulted as a coalition government was formed and a constitution ratified. Despite the belief of donors that they could engineer social and cultural change, nation building in terms of creating social and cultural acceptance of democratic institutions, trust in government and respect for the constitution, was abandoned from the start by the political élite. The institutions of state—the ministries in particular—became captive to political parties and the personal gain of the leadership rather than becoming managers of government policies and programmes on behalf of the people. These were political processes outside donor control.

Hence, nation building in terms of public good or social contract has lagged badly behind state building. For the villagers, the principal concern remains survival within the particular institutional and political power structures existing at any time. The traditional patronage and family loyalties appear to offer more security than loyalty and commitment to the nation, which is discouraged by a lack of trust in political leadership and the ability of élites to capture resources for their own purposes. The political élite which ignores democratic principles today comprises the same people and families who in the 1980s ignored socialist nation building tenets and used the Communist party, patronage networks and their official positions for their own ends. Unfortunately, some legitimacy is given to such patterns of behaviour by the Buddhist concept of *karma*—good actions create merit and happiness, while bad actions bring suffering in this life or in rebirth. A person of official status has good *karma* and has, people say, earned the right to use that status for his/her own ends even at the expense of others. These factors also influence the distribution of national resources which are, in turn, determined by participation in the political decision making processes of governments.

Participation and distribution

Participation in the context of “good governance” has been shown to be concerned primarily with peoples’ engagement in development projects and programmes designed mainly by international donors. These have largely ignored popular political and community processes. However, in the context of state and nation building, participation is concerned with how people are engaged in the overall process of government decision-making. Popular participation in the early forms of the Cambodian state, embodied by the king, was limited to audiences with the people who came, often against the wishes of officials, to lodge petitions or to register complaints. Feedback from officials would also have been significant, but may have been somewhat tempered by the officials’ own ambitions and hence of dubious benefit to the peasants. Decisions would have been reserved to the king and his court. Local rebellions and banditry also conveyed messages to the rulers. Aspects of these former processes are retained in current practice in the form of demonstrations, especially where groups, often travelling from rural areas, converge

on the parliamentary offices or ministerial residences to convey their demands direct to the government and leadership.

Political parties under Sikanouk and Lon Nol were elitist and had little if any popular input into the formulation of their policies and programmes. The local commune councils then were arms of central administration and control rather than local consultative and policy forming bodies. The communes developed under communist Heng Samrin and Hun Sen governments were part self-help organisation and part agents of the central administration, and intended to engineer socialist change and development. While mass organisations, commune councils and the party committees may have provided some political feedback, they were intended to train the people and embed socialism. A similar self-help theme runs through current arrangements while the ideological objective has changed to the development of democracy at the local level on the assumption that embedding democratic processes at the local level of society will influence its upward progress into higher levels of political and administrative institutions.

Gottesman provides ample evidence that the governments under Heng Samrin and Hun Sen were well informed as to what was going on in the administration across the country, whether through feedback from mass organizations, the party or the bureaucracy.⁶⁰ Apart from local level contacts, the rural population had no way of providing direct input into debate about political issues. Participation in politics at the local level may have been as much about the avoidance of officials and their demands and ignoring government directives as about activating the family and patronage networks necessary for survival. In extreme cases, local politics led to banditry and revolt. Since 1993, other factors, such as political intimidation, absence of media freedoms and a lack of trust in government institutions and officials arising from years of conflict, have limited popular participation in government decision making. In rural Cambodia, the emphasis on “good governance” processes has also overshadowed political processes, both local and national, which means that the problem of how to develop participation in government decision making remains an ongoing nation building issue.

⁶⁰ Gottesman, *Cambodia after the Khmer Rouge*.

Since Independence, and certainly under Sihanouk, distribution to the countryside became a demonstration of personal largesse by the ruler rather than presented as government programmes responding to government policies and priorities. However, from 1979 to the early 1990s there were few resources to share as external aid from Eastern bloc countries was minimal and domestic accumulation was also low—being largely ambushed by provincial authorities which managed their own economies independent of Phnom Penh. Since 1993 there has been a massive injection of international aid, but it has come tied to donor priorities and conditionalities which have influenced government policies and programmes and, to some extent, hampered the development of public policy debate. The current Prime Minister and other political party leaders continue to practice largesse and personalise rural projects. This often ignores or interferes with ministry programmes and budgets, making a mockery of government priorities and plans. Such political processes have stifled participation and discouraged the development of trust in government processes and the legitimisation of state institutions.

Commune council line department interface – ‘participation’ and ‘empowerment’?

In the current system, participation and empowerment take on a very contemporary meaning in the context of human capacity building and democratisation. While important in this sense, it is also vital to see them in the wider context of state and nation building and participation in government decision-making. This level of participation is also critical to human security for rural Cambodians. In the following sections I will outline the issues impinging on participation mainly in relation to governance structure and the state defined processes for rural development planning, which involves both commune and line department governance.

Commune councils

Figure 5.3 outlines the eleven steps in the commune development planning process according to official guidelines. Commune and Village Development Committees are established to determine development needs in consultation with villagers. These needs are prioritised by the commune councils and incorporated into a set of

project proposals which are processed through District Integration Workshops (DIWs). The DIWs are intended to harmonise commune proposals with provincial and line department development policies and strategies and to form an integrated programme of projects at commune, district and provincial levels. The projects agreed for commune council implementation, called Temporary Agreements (TAs), are incorporated into Commune Development Plans (a 3-year plan) and Commune Investment Programmes (a 5-year programme). Other projects and programmes with broader impacts are set aside for provincial/line department and donor action.

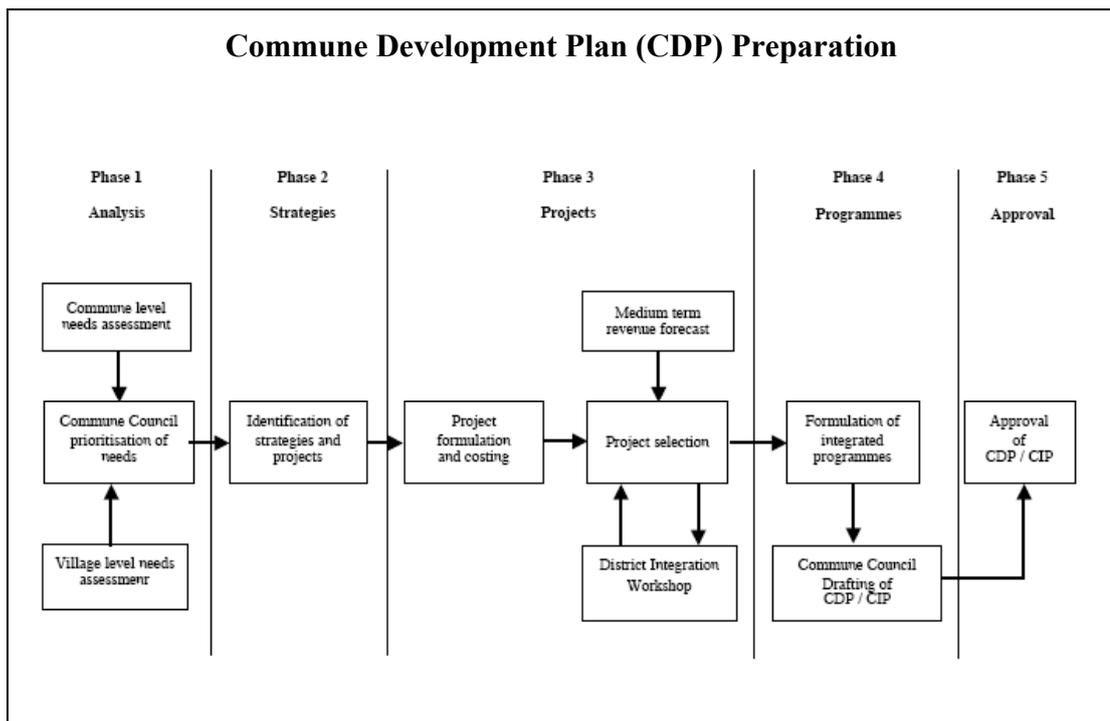


Figure 5-3 Commune Development Plan (CDP) preparation⁶¹

Two aspects of the process are particularly important in relation to peoples’ participation in governance and to their human security. Consultation with villagers in the early stages of development planning is the first, and the second is the role and outcome of the DIW process.

I found that there was a very tentative attitude to the village development planning process and some reluctance among village development chiefs to discuss the sort of plans being developed other than in the most general terms. There was a sense that the process was not as open and participatory as intended by the law, despite the

⁶¹ The figure is adapted from unpublished presentations provide by the Seila Programme.

extensive training by Seila and its step-by-step guidelines. Holloway's 2005 audit of commune/sangkat funded projects in four provinces concluded, similarly, that few projects had arisen from genuinely participatory processes and that few of the commune council chiefs, most of whom had been engaged in civil service activities since the 1980s, had much empathy with participatory practices.⁶² This was also evident in complaints to me that leaders tended to look after themselves and their families first.⁶³ Holloway found, too, that there were generally diverse views on who identified and funded projects and their objectives. Yet, while only half the beneficiaries and 20 per cent of non-beneficiaries knew about the project planning and about commune development funding, most were satisfied with the choice of project, even if the quality of implementation was often lacking due to both poor design and poor monitoring of contractor performance. The general agreement that projects were, on the whole, useful and beneficial to the village was also found in other studies and in my own observations.⁶⁴

While participation in decision-making is promoted as a key concept in effective governance, the power of officials is often unchallengeable in Cambodia, meaning that participation in open forums may not be a practical choice for many villagers. It requires trust in each other and in the institution if people are to participate. Trust is however a difficult issue in view of Cambodia's recent history and the likelihood that there may be former Khmer Rouge people, officials who held positions under the former socialist regimes, as well as former victims of oppression, living side-by-side in the communes. The political affiliation and business associations of many leaders also makes villagers reluctant to participate in local governance activities. A great deal of NGO work in the villages I visited has been to restore trust and to break down barriers between officials and the people.⁶⁵

Another impediment to participation in the newly created institutions is that villagers may feel they lack the necessary skills to engage productively in the processes of deliberation. Thus the opportunity for group participation is important since it is potentially more comfortable for some people, including those with limited literacy

⁶² Holloway, Chom Sok, and et. al., "Process Audit of Commune/Sangkat Fund Projects (CMB/01/272/RILG)."

⁶³ Village interviews, see chapter 4.

⁶⁴ Kim Ninh and Henke, "Commune Councils of Cambodia." Village interviews and discussions.

⁶⁵ See for example Meas Nee, *Towards Restoring Life: Cambodian Villages*.

skills, to contribute and be empowered as a part of a group with common interests than it is to participate in more open fora as an individual. It is in this regard that NGOs have come to play a critical and essential role in local governance.

While the associations we discussed briefly in the previous chapter are important empowering agencies, without NGO involvement it is unlikely they would have been formed and resourced in the first place. There are concerns that such associations are only viable because they have the protection of international donors or parent NGOs, or that they promote their own agendas rather than those of the villagers. There is the problem, too, that the NGOs become part of the patronage system and that, similarly, the associations may become the tools of an élite, or that the NGOs themselves are an élite. These issues of representation are not dissimilar from those raised in studies of local governance in developed countries. What it highlights is that governance must be recognised not simply as a narrow administrative process but also as a deeply political process as well.

Thus, the commune councils (despite their promise) are not the ideal democratic or “good governance” environments in which trust, participation and empowerment are operative. Dominance of the CPP and its strong rural presence, as well as possible local association with the military, police, officials and the private sector, are all matters which make many villagers reluctant to participate in local affairs. The fact that legislation excludes independent members being elected to commune councils also enhances the prospect of centralised party control over local policies. Nevertheless, there is some evidence that commune council members are learning to work together and to cooperate across party lines. The authoritarianism of commune council chiefs is also being tempered where there is an active NGO presence. The ongoing role of the NGOs in encouraging interaction between associations and councils is important. NGOs are also playing a significant role in broadening the experience of local associations through networking with similar bodies in other communes. They are also helping to open dialogue between villagers and officials at various levels as was seen in the provincial meeting in Battambang. Local governance does show signs that it can become participatory if leaders are prepared to be open and accountable.

Holloway’s survey of governance in rural Cambodia concluded that of seven objectives identified for commune councils, the only one partially met was to

provide the opportunity for people to participate in commune governance. The failed objectives included economic growth, poverty reduction, provision of services, security, accountability and combating corruption.⁶⁶ Thus, improvement in governance at the commune level will depend on the continued involvement of NGOs in supporting associations and dialogue with commune councils and officials. There is no doubt that, as was said by an official at the Battambang meeting, “we are all learning.” What is required is a change in institutional and political cultures, but this cannot occur at the commune level without a similar change in central and provincial governance institutions.

If human security is to be served, participation in governance needs to be encouraged also in relation to line departments. In the previous chapter, I identified the significant shortcomings of line departments in carrying out their responsibilities in rural Cambodia. The DIW process reveals the structural problems of line department governance which also works against the objectives of participation and empowerment and, hence, human security.

District Integration Workshop

The DIW process is shown in detail in Figure 5.4. It represents a critical element in the commune development planning process outlined earlier. In particular it illustrates how line department and provincial projects and programmes, along with NGO and other donor proposals, are included in the process. It also shows that not only are commune project proposals assessed in the Workshops, but also certain provincial and international donor projects and programmes.

What emerges from the process in practice is that commune council priority project proposals are largely overlooked in favour of line department and donor (mainly NGO) projects nominated from ‘outside’ the commune council priority lists. In 2004, just 30 per cent of commune development projects (TAs) agreed through the DIW process corresponded directly to priority requests proposed by commune councils. The same data shows that more than 65 per cent of line department and nearly 80 per cent of NGO projects included in commune council programmes as

⁶⁶ John Holloway, Chom Sok, and Researchers from Crossroads Consultancies Group, "Follow Up Survey on Governance (CMB/01/R72/RILG)," (Phnom Penh: For the Cambodian Seila Task Force, 2005).

TAs were based on the NGO and line department’s own perceptions of need rather than as a direct response to priorities established, in principle at least, through village participation and empowerment approaches. Thus, responsibility for village and commune development is re-centralised and is not consistent with the objective of promoting the participation and empowerment of villagers. Instead, central and provincial governance oversight and control is asserted over rural development.⁶⁷

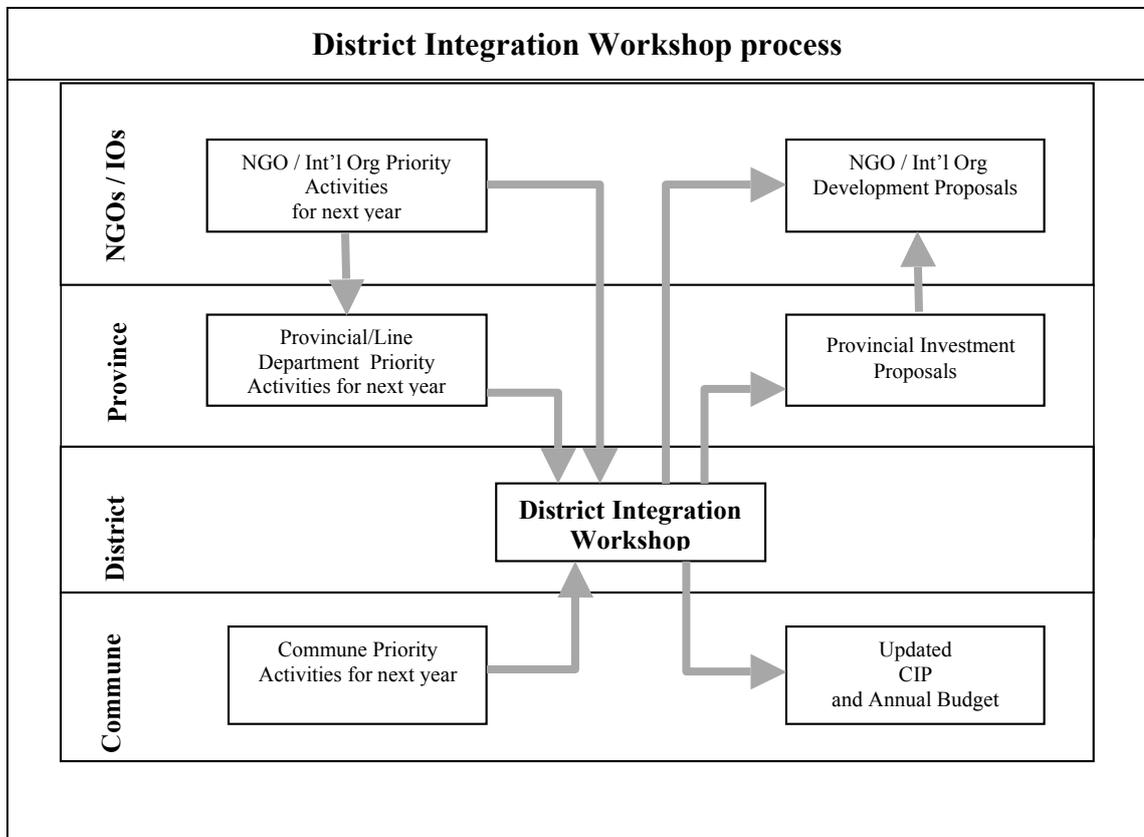


Figure 5-4 District Integration Workshop process⁶⁸

At a sectoral level also, line-departments and NGOs shun commune requests for agriculture (irrigation) and transport infrastructure projects while incorporating their own preferred agricultural training projects.⁶⁹ The same occurs in the social category where, for example, the number of health projects is more than double the priority requests, but do not correspond to commune priority issues. Line

⁶⁷ “Guided democracy” has been built into the system by the international donors and experts who set up the Seila experiment and oversaw the development of the governance process incorporated into legislation and guidelines.

⁶⁸ Copied from unpublished official presentations provided by the Seila Programme.

⁶⁹ Seila Program, "Commune Development Planning Database 2004 Analysis: Report on Commune Priority Requests and Agency/Donor Support Commitments at the District Integration Workshops in 2004," (Phnom Penh: Ministry of Planning and Partnership for Local Governance, 2005); and Biddulph, "Study on the Performance of the SEILA Provincial Investment Fund."

departments and NGOs also neglect administration and physical security priority requests.⁷⁰

Thus, there are two issues which warrant new approaches. First, it is evident that in relation to development, the extensive legislated governance framework of participation and empowerment does not translate into local control over commune councils, or over local development. Instead, line departments and donors have maintained control over the direction of development and the use of development resources. While it is important that the key departments, such as health and agriculture, do implement national and provincial strategies it is unclear why these need to be enacted through a supposedly participatory process designed to respond to locally determined needs. It would make more sense for line departments to identify their priority programmes, including funded projects, for national, provincial and regional strategies which they intended to implement. Such programmes might be for AIDS, bird flu, malaria or dengue control, for employment creation or to promote particular crops and marketing in certain regions. If necessary, commune participation in these programmes, but not funding, might be mandatory.

Secondly, line departments might then offer a further set of optional development projects and programmes at a provincial level which councils could select from according to their locally determined needs.⁷¹ Allowing communes to choose and fund projects from the line department list would be far more consistent with participation and empowerment objectives. The DIW could then become more of a political space for harmonising commune needs and a forum for identifying district and provincial projects and policy initiatives which might emerge from commune proposals.

The outcome of the current situation is that commune councils expend a great deal of nugatory effort on procedures to identify priorities which are most likely to be ignored. A 30 per cent success rate is not good and indicates that even if there is effective participation, the empowerment of people to take responsibility for their own futures is denied under current governance arrangements. Instead, powerful

⁷⁰ Seila Program, "Commune Development Planning Database 2004 Analysis."; and Biddulph, "Study on the Performance of the SEILA Provincial Investment Fund."

⁷¹ The fact that the line department TAs are basically in the form of training and services and not infrastructure would make it a simple exercise to the programmes which may be available to communes on request.

departments and donors are able to impose projects on the communes. It is even doubtful whether departments act paternalistically on the assumption they know better what is good for the communes and rural people generally. Rather, it seems, under-funded line departments may approach the DIW as a source of provincial funding for their own operations.

However, while communes, donors and line departments negotiate small-scale development projects, the villagers I spoke to were far more concerned about their need for wider employment and income generation opportunities and to be able to reap the benefits of equal access to health services, education for their children and a fair system of justice. Yet, these and other development related issues such as irrigation, rural transport, markets and electrification, could not be addressed through the development planning process. The village development chiefs I spoke to were rather vague about village development plans and what could be included. This same uncertainty emerged in Holloway's surveys.⁷²

While the opportunity for villagers to participate in village and commune planning is improving, and capacity building through line department designated training projects is no doubt important, the overall process leaves unattended the people's real concerns for opportunities to become more economically secure and, thus, avoid the need to resort to migration and land sales to meet basic needs. These are the broader development issues which require national attention and political debate and decision-making.

Political

Local governance in Cambodia falls under the responsibilities of the Minister of Interior.⁷³ While it has been decreed by the Government that all official links between communes and other ministries and institutions of the Royal Government must pass through the Ministry of the Interior, this "power" has been delegated to provincial governors, who, although chosen by the Prime Minister, also report directly to the Minister of Interior.⁷⁴ With the completion of the Seila programme in

⁷² Holloway, "Follow Up Survey."

⁷³ Royal Government of Cambodia, "The Law on Khum/Sangkat Administrative Management."

⁷⁴ Royal Government of Cambodia, "Sub-Decree on Decentralisation of Powers, Roles and Duties to Commune/Sangkat Councils," (Royal Government of Cambodia, No. 22 ANK/BK,

December 2006, its functions were also transferred to the National Committee for Management of the Decentralization and Deconcentration Reform (NCDD) in the Ministry of Interior. This, as well as an administrative assistant placed with each commune, imposes a tight control over the commune councils by the Ministry of Interior. The Interior Ministry is headed by a member of the ruling CPP which, as we have seen, also dominates leadership of the commune councils.

There was considerable scepticism among interviewees regarding the commitment of commune councils to democratic principles and “good governance.” Non-CPP candidates felt intimidated and were often left out of council deliberations. The dominance of the CPP and its strong rural presence, as well as its possible association with the military, police, officials and the private sector, were matters for concern among many villagers and made people cautious in how they participated in local affairs.

Despite these issues, commune council members are learning to work together and cooperate across party lines and the authoritarianism of commune council chiefs is being tempered by the presence of NGOs and local associations. It seems though, that in this latter regard, the ongoing role of the NGOs in encouraging interaction between associations and councils has been important. They have also played an important role in broadening the experience of local associations through networking with similar bodies in other communes. The NGOs have also helped to open dialogue between villagers and officials at various levels as was seen in the provincial meeting in Battambang.

Improved governance at the commune level will continue to depend a great deal on the continued involvement of NGOs in supporting villagers’ political dialogue with commune councils and officials. It will also depend on how the concept of civil society is unpacked and realized in Cambodian society. This entails a process of social and cultural change requiring the development and acceptance of the roles and functions of institutions and of the protection they purport to offer. But trust and acceptance cannot be created at the commune level without also being generated in relation to the governance of central and provincial institutions.

2002); and Royal Government of Cambodia, "Inter-Ministerial Prakas on Commune/Sangkat Development Planning."

Line departments and governance

I have demonstrated in chapter 4 that shortcomings in justice, health, education and rural development can be in large part attributed to the poor governance processes of line departments. The international donor community and the government all promote “good governance” and anti-corruption measures and neo-liberal regulatory reforms in their policy pronouncements. However, the emphasis on openness and accountability, and attempts to achieve these through technical means such as streamlining regulatory controls of the private sector, freeing up the market and developing computerised financial systems and public contract processes, are important but only part of the solution for poor line department outcomes.

Focusing more directly on the internal operation of ministries highlights their corporate governance—that is, how departments carry out their responsibilities. Experience in introducing neo-liberal governance reforms has highlighted the importance of the culture of public sector organisations as well as their management structures, regulatory frameworks and how they deal with stakeholders.⁷⁵ The cultural change needed to introduce governance reforms was also found to be critically dependent on leadership which “sets the tone at the top.”⁷⁶ What was also important was that the delivery of services needed to conform, not only with the law and regulations, but also with community expectations of probity, accountability and openness.⁷⁷

Line departments in Cambodia are far from achieving such reforms. A public sector culture of openness, accountability, sound decision making and fearless policy advice is not easily achieved in a public sector where the purchase of positions is common, and where party membership and patronage is a determinant of work placement, promotion and involvement in departmental business. Rent taking is prevalent at all levels and inappropriate relations with business interests common.⁷⁸

⁷⁵ The extensive public sector governance reforms in Australia in the 1990s were based on the same principles of “good governance” promoted by the international agencies but went beyond the principles into the practical issues to be confronted in implementing neo-liberal reforms. Australian National Audit Office (ANAO), “Public Sector Governance; Volume 1,” (Canberra: ANAO, 2003), 6.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁷⁸ I also spoke to several young civil servants who told me that on entry to the service there was an expectation that they would affiliate with a dominant party within the department. If not, they were sidelined, not given work and excluded from the normal operations. They

In other words, those practices which were identified as problems in the civil service in the 1980s remain in place.⁷⁹ In the absence of realistic living salaries in the civil service and strong leadership, it is not surprising that such activities persist even though they are increasingly disapproved of by Cambodians.⁸⁰ Keeping the salaries low may also perpetuate the system of patronage and political domination.

International donors have attempted to isolate the management of development assistance from the perceived corruption of mainstream ministries and departments. To do so they design and fund projects which, although established within the ministries, have separate management control and accountability with donor oversight. Such an approach, in Cambodia as in other developing countries, limits capacity development by removing responsibility and accountability from the mainstream, creates privileged enclaves and puts at risk the effective integration of processes into the line department operations.⁸¹ The project approach also leads to the flight of more capable officers to the higher paid donor projects, and to NGOs and the private sector when the projects are completed. Many young educated people also leave the country, disillusioned by the poor salaries and politicisation of the civil service and the systems of patronage operating within ministries and departments. The project approach also prevents the development of an institutional culture of governance as a public service.

At the provincial level, this is reflected in the failure of departments to relate to the public and civil society organizations and draw them into consultation on the formulation of local and provincial policy making. It is reflected, too, in their avoidance of responsibility for poor performance and the persistence of a governance culture that owes little to a sense of public service. While people express their dissatisfaction with departments, they have little hope of influencing a political leadership which remains uncommitted to change. The poor governance culture and

could not contribute and had no futures within the service. Lucrative positions within departments could also be purchased through party and patronage networks.

⁷⁹ See Christine J Nissen, *Living Under the Rule of Corruption: An Analysis of Everyday Forms of Corrupt Practice in Cambodia* (Phnom Penh: Centre for Social Development, 2005); and Centre for Social Development, *Corruption and Cambodian Households: Household Survey on Perceptions, Attitudes and Impact of Everyday Forms of Corrupt Practices in Cambodia*, ed. Christine J Nissen (Phnom Penh: Centre for Social Development, 2005).

⁸⁰ Centre for Social Development, *Corruption and Cambodian Households*, 41-42.

⁸¹ See Fukuyama, *State Building*, 55, who refers to “capacity destruction” by this approach.

failure to deliver effective services means that there is a lack of belief in the departments and their legitimacy is not embraced by the society.

Conclusion

The long process of state building in Cambodia has been marked by sharp discontinuities as the country lurched from the bureaucratisation of the Angkor period, through the uncertain years leading to colonisation, Independence, revolution, occupation and a return to internationally supported independence. Nation building in terms of creating popular legitimacy of the various forms of state has not, however, automatically followed state building in Cambodia. Societal norms, and cultural beliefs and practices, survive and carry over into the successive state arrangements, often with the effect of hindering and slowing the full incorporation of new ideas and values which underlie the different state structures. Thus, the process of state building has not been matched by nation building.

The Cambodian state since 1993 has been founded, in principle at least, on a democratic constitution and adoption of a free market economy. State building has been strongly influenced by the international donor community, particularly in relation to decentralisation and the promotion of “good governance” principles. However, despite appearing to have all the right structures in place according to donor plans, this chapter has shown that international, national and local governance processes are all closely associated with the failure of Cambodia to achieve the nation building, public participation and the just distribution of resources required to promote human security.

One reason for this is that international, national and local governance are not harmonised to achieve common objectives. While international governance institutions focus attention on influencing government policies at the top and on changing the processes of local governance in the countryside with a view to democratisation and economic development, Cambodia’s political leaders are more concerned to use the governance of national institutions to consolidate power and wealth. These conflicting aims create tensions in decentralised governance between commune councils and line departments and prevent the emergence of people’s confidence and trust in the institutions and their management. Thus, the

harmonisation of governance and its aims becomes an important pre-condition for future nation building and human security.

Therefore, there are critical changes that need to be made to governance at all three levels. First, international governance institutions need to “democratise” in-country development programmes and facilitate public debate. While they are currently able to pressure the Cambodian government to adopt “universal” development policies and priorities, this is currently done at a parliamentary and ministerial level with little regard for due political process and national debate. NGOs, though claiming to represent the people, also participate more in the international governance context than in a national debate.

But the “anti-politics” approach of international governance, in fact, has the reverse effect of entrenching local, largely undemocratic, political power.⁸² Political power also invades state institutions despite attempts by the international governance institutions to isolate projects from direct bureaucratic management. This is an approach that removes government responsibility and accountability and also prevents public political scrutiny of development activities. It also sidesteps the major problem of the entrenchment of a governance culture of political interference, patronage and rent taking which impairs institutional outcomes, creates mistrust and prevents the advancement of human security.

Secondly, therefore, international governance institutions and the national government need to address issues of political will and national leadership and how these can contribute to the institutional and social changes necessary to engender trust in and give legitimacy to political and institutional systems. Leadership and open debate is important to nation building in terms of generating confidence in institutions and their governance and in legitimising them within the Cambodian social system. In this process the culture of Cambodian governance must be addressed and changed to achieve government development objectives and human security outcomes. Also, it highlights the need to encourage the development of Cambodian institutions in a Cambodian way rather than by donors trying to implant a mythical Western model of “good governance.” The focus for all parties should be on outcomes and not primarily on policies and processes.

⁸² Ferguson, *The Anti-Politics Machine*.

Finally, international, national and local governance institutions together need to ensure that there is genuine opportunity for participation and empowerment of the people. While a start has been made at the local level with the reform of commune councils, the potential benefits are stifled by a superstructure of political domination and institutions which inhibit the trust which is necessary for full participation in governance processes and the empowerment of the people. It is a superstructure that promotes its own priorities and largely ignore the people's expressed needs, as well as failing to create an environment which provides rural people with genuine opportunities for economic, social and political participation. International and national processes need to provide opportunities for the people to participate democratically in their policy development, programme implementation and accountability mechanisms.

Governance plays a key role in nation building, resource distribution, participation and empowerment. In Cambodia, the achievement of human security in all its dimensions will depend on the culture of governance in national institutions, on leadership which demands that institutions deliver the services they are responsible for, which creates trust in the institutions and most importantly, in the political processes, including the involvement of international organisations, which determine national policies and priorities.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

In contrast, [to realist practice] critical perspectives argue that, confronted as we are by a frighteningly dangerous world political future, human society urgently needs a security studies that goes beyond problem-solving within the status quo and instead seeks to help engage with the problems of the status quo.¹ (emphasis in original)

I began this thesis by asking in the broadest terms what a human security approach could contribute to the way in which international relations, international security and international development are conducted. The reason for choosing to explore this issue arose from my strong belief that security is as much about people as it is about states. I was also puzzled by the ease with which such notions as food security, health security, environmental security, resources security and energy security were accepted in academic and public debate, while the idea of human security was hotly disputed.

Two of the major problems within the *status quo* of international security referred to by Booth are the large number of people living in poverty and deprivation, and the persistent high level of domestic and interstate conflict. This thesis has taken up Booth's challenge by looking at the problems of security perceived through the lens of human security.

The research question addressed by this thesis is how a human security approach can contribute to human welfare by providing a framework for conceptualising the problems and a foundation for realistic, effective response to them. To answer this question, using Cambodia as a case study, I established that several supplementary questions needed to be addressed. First, is a broad definition of human security practicable; secondly, how has international security and development practice influenced human security in Cambodia; and thirdly, in view of the findings of the Cambodia case study, what new approaches to international security practice—

¹ Booth, "Critical Explorations," 10.

including international development assistance—are needed to improve the human security situation of people generally?

In this conclusion, I address these questions and highlight the contributions the thesis makes to encourage the rethinking of human security and its place in global security.

Is a broad definition of human security practicable?

In terms of human security, there is a strong tendency among commentators to identify situations of conflict or post-conflict reconstruction and development and to equate them to problems of freedom from fear on the one hand, and freedom from want on the other. The Cambodian case has shown, however, that human security cannot be divided in this way. Human insecurity is not represented only by the existence of a situation of war and related violence, but also by the particular forms of insecurities which impact on the people in a given situation. Many insecurities which are present in times of conflict also exist in post-conflict situations. These include such matters as the denial of human dignity, food insecurity and the lack of opportunities for economic and human development.

Application of the narrow approach to human security finds its niche mainly in short-term conflict resolution and peacebuilding and in promoting international treaties to “humanise” war by banning indiscriminate weapons such as land mines and cluster bombs, the use of child soldiers and of rape as a weapon of war. While these are important humanitarian initiatives, I have demonstrated that only by adopting the broad definition can the full potential of the analytical concept of human security be realised in practice.

In support of the broad definition, this thesis has shown that human insecurities of different sorts whether related to violence, livelihood, welfare or human dignity, coexist in each of the pre-conflict, conflict and post-conflict situations in Cambodia. War brought not only violence and death but also loss of property and livelihood as well as food insecurity, loss of freedoms and other deprivations. Refugees and those held in factional camps, as well as people living inside Cambodia, all experienced forms of human insecurity—some common and others peculiar to their particular circumstances. However, despite the cessation of war and general improvements in

livelihood and welfare, the thesis has shown that human insecurity continues to affect many people in rural Cambodia.

By approaching human security from the local perspective of individuals and groups in rural Cambodia, I have been able to demonstrate that wide-ranging human insecurities such as food security, environment security, personal security, and political security are inextricably interrelated and should not be treated in isolation from each other as sectoral issues. This is particularly significant in relation to governance where, for example, it was found that the failure of line department officials to uphold villagers' legal right can result in economic and personal insecurity. It emphasises, too, the mutually supporting roles that state departments need to play in relation to local government and individual human security.

One of the strengths of the broad approach is that it does leave open the prospect for "anything" to be labelled a human security issue. This does not render the concept unmanageable as some have argued but places human security very much on the same footing as wider security analysis and practice. Also, it reduces the risk that potentially serious human security threats and vulnerabilities might be overlooked. At the same time this approach ensures that context can be taken into account to reflect the fact that critical problems for some may be less significant for others. It also provides the possibility for political determination of what constitutes a threat to human security and how it is to be managed, rather than total dependence on quantitative measure such as poverty indices, incidences of disease or violence, or other criteria.

How have international security and development practices influenced human security in Cambodia

Cold War politics and military adventure in the region caused a period of intense human insecurity for Cambodians as their country lurched from domestic unrest and factionalism into war, and endured four years of the brutal Pol Pot regime followed by over a decade of civil war after the Vietnamese intervention and removal of Pol Pot. Policy decisions made by major powers and their allies in pursuit of their own perceived security interests, as well as political choices made by Cambodian governments and factions, all contributed to the human insecurity of Cambodians.

The involvement of three permanent members of the UN Security Council, the US, USSR and China, which were key Cold War protagonists as well as having interests in the region meant that the UN Security Council was sidelined. There were two main reasons for this. First, the power of veto held by the US, USSR, and China and their conflicting positions on Cambodia, meant that the Security Council's collective security mandate could not be applied either to the Vietnam War or events in Cambodia. Thus, the power of veto, acting as a balance of power mechanism, prioritised state security over the rights and human security of individuals.

This power carries over into the second reason for Security Council inaction which is that it only has an indirect interest in humanitarian issues (apart from genocide) to the extent they impact on state (and hence global) peace and security. Thus, despite the state of war and the gross human insecurities being suffered by the people of Cambodia, there was no obligation on the Council to consider the humanitarian situation. Instead, state rights and the veto overshadowed the situation and the people were denied any protection which might otherwise have been forthcoming through the Security Council.

Even as the Security Council was sidelined and unable to prevent war and human insecurity in Cambodia, the UN's humanitarian agencies were engaged in efforts to provide protection to refugees and humanitarian assistance to other victims of war. However, the US, USSR, China, Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand and other ASEAN states, along with their factional clients, obstructed the UN humanitarian agencies, such as UNHCR and UNICEF, and NGOs who were trying to protect refugees and provide assistance to others facing severe human insecurities. Thus, the Cambodian case shows how the UN's mandate to protect individuals and groups was thwarted by its own member states on national security grounds. Membership of the UN, in the end, demands few obligations and many UN treaties remain unratified by governments, of developed and underdeveloped states alike.² Hence, humanitarian treaties and conventions do not protect people unless they are implemented by states themselves.

² The US, China and Russia have, for example, refused to sign or ratify the treaty banning land mines on national security grounds. The UK, France and nearly all other developed countries have ratified the treaty.

From the human security perspective, therefore, the case of Cambodia highlights the need for change, particularly in the Security Council, if the UN is to be able to provide protection to individuals and groups in dire circumstances. It also shows how, with a shift in the balance of power and consensus among the permanent members, a peace settlement could be agreed by the otherwise reluctant Cambodian factions with the support of interested countries and strong pressure from China, the US and USSR. In the post-Cold War context, the peace was also negotiated independently of the UN Security Council which merely endorsed the final agreement.

The Cambodian peace agreement was a form of victory for democracy and the free market. It specified that Cambodia was to become a democratic state governed by the rule of law and respect for human rights, and that it would adopt a free market economy. Assuming that democratisation and development would contribute to stability and security, the agreement also committed international donors to the reconstruction and redevelopment of the country. The international security involvement in Cambodia thus shifted from the application of military power to that of economic and political power in the form of economic and social development.

This new role engaged new players such as the World Bank, the WTO and UN agencies such as the UNDP, and many international NGOs. Together, these global governance institutions control huge sums of development assistance funds, as well as a vast network of researchers, development experts and officials who formulate standardised development policies and prescriptions and control the disbursement of the development funds. They are able, therefore, to exert a powerful influence over the development policies and priorities of developing countries. In Cambodia, their vision has been incorporated into five-year development plans, poverty reduction strategies and the “home-grown” Rectangular Strategy.

On the ground, however, the thesis has shown that the application of such donor power has failed to address a number of critical human security problems in rural Cambodia. In particular, there are many persistent human insecurities which are perpetuated by the poor governance of line-departments and commune councils which, at the local level, do not function in accordance with the universal prescriptions of democratisation and “good governance”

The difficulties confronting donor power are evident when examining Cambodia's recent record of nation building. It shows that the international prescriptions are not consistent with the local social, political and cultural realities, and that donors cannot produce the changes that they consider to be necessary for "good governance." Instead, the culture of governance is dominated by politically inspired authoritarianism and patronage, to the detriment of service delivery and of public trust. No matter how well intentioned it may be, the application of donor power is not achieving its security or development objectives. One reason is that patrimonial political power has been consolidated under recent international development approaches. Applying a human security approach to Cambodia has shown that development policies and practices need to focus more attention on facilitating rather than attempting to engineer social and cultural change. This requires that national leaders become the main motivators of social change and of nation building.

They must also be encouraged to address the lack of economic and employment opportunities, the shortcomings of service delivery in health and education and the failure of officials to uphold people's legal rights. In the process, donors must be prepared to accept the way Cambodian nation building, participation and empowerment emerge.

What new approaches to international security practice – including international development assistance – need to be implemented to improve human security

Global security and global governance

The diagram at Figure 6-1 identifies two parallel structures which together make up a total global security framework. On the left is what I have called "global security." This represents an approach to security based on military power rather than a form of global governance, and is separated into two main parts—the anarchic balance of power mechanism and the UN Security Council as the collective security organisation. The latter is further broadly divided into conflict resolution and conflict prevention components. Global security in this framework is, under current conditions, a governance arrangement only on an *ad hoc* basis when the UN Security Council agrees to act in relation to specific security issues.

On the right of the diagram is “global governance.” In addition to the more familiar balance of power and collective security mechanisms, global governance institutions perform a security function which is outlined below. Thus, the two streams, global security and global governance have a common security objective but no formal institutional relationship. This open relationship is depicted at “A” on the diagram.

Global governance includes institutions such as the WTO, IMF, World Bank, the UN General Assembly and its humanitarian agencies, supported also by international NGOs. These promote democracy, human rights, human development, “good governance” and free market economies, which are also considered to contribute to state and global stability and security. Donor countries all consider it to be in their national security interest to invest large sums of their taxpayers’ money in overseas development assistance programmes through these organisations or independently. Also, econometric research supports the security outlook of global governance by arguing that countries with low income and low growth are, on statistical evidence, prone to unrest and civil war.

In addition, through their development programmes, these global governance organisations operate through state and local governance processes in recipient countries. Thus, they have direct influence on human security which, I argue, is the base upon which state and global security must be built.

Cambodia’s peace agreement placed it firmly within this global governance framework, instituting a democratic and free market constitution while also setting out a framework for reconstruction and development which engaged the major global development institutions. Development assistance became the major stability and security mechanism for Cambodia.

Three other relationships are identified in the diagram at “B”, “C” and “D.” These represent the three areas where changes are needed to ensure that human security becomes a basis for development and security governance. Each of these points is discussed below.

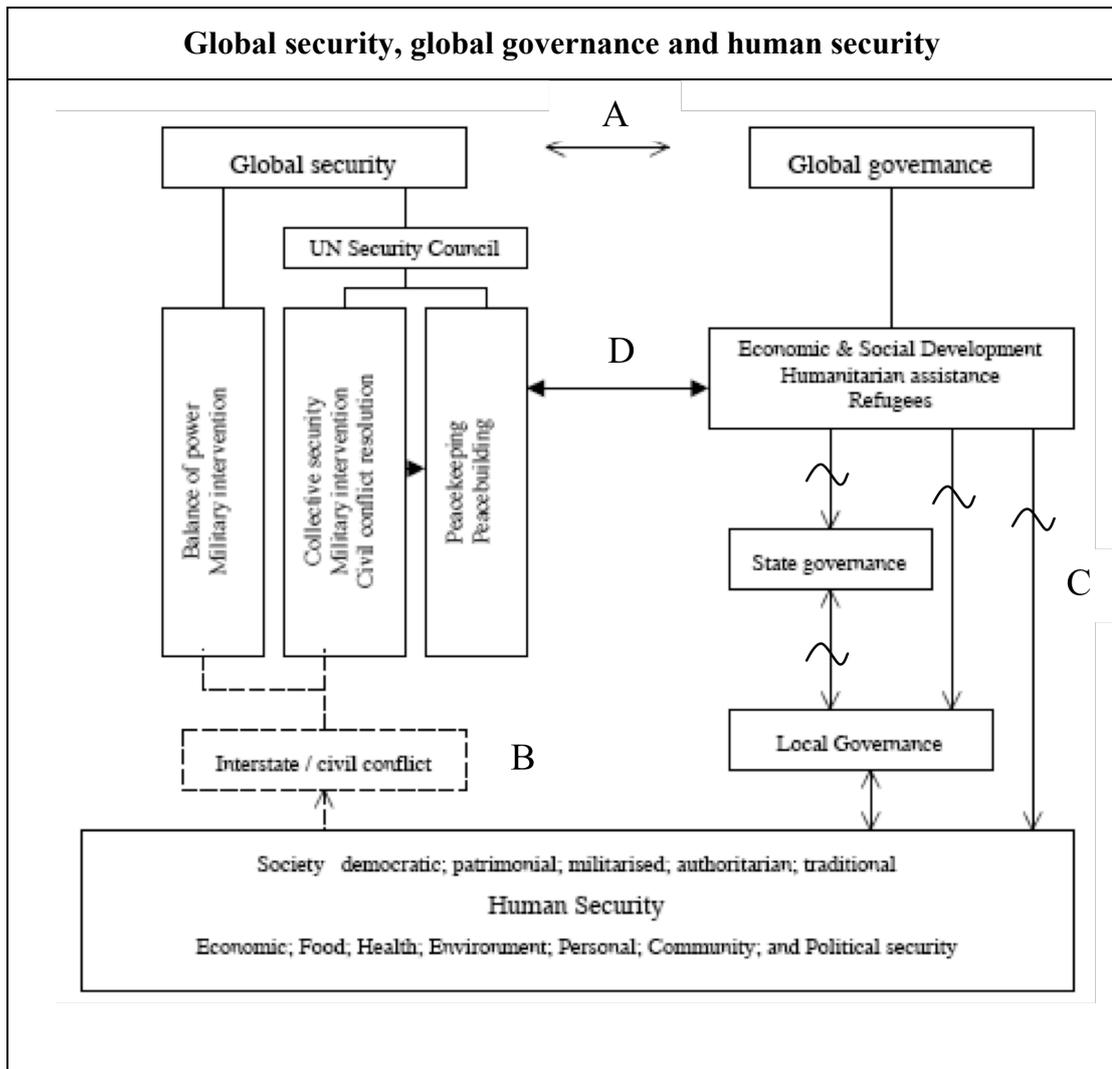


Figure 6-1 Relationship between global security, global governance and human security

Global security and human security

The framework of global security shows its major flaw at “B” on the diagram. First, despite the various treaties and conventions governing the ‘proper’ conduct of war and treatment of civilians, the balance of power system does not recognise or commit to human security. The nature of the system and of war itself suggest that human security cannot be a major consideration of parties to conflict. Secondly, however, a second collective security mechanism, the UN Security Council was created in large part with the aim of preventing armed conflict between states. It, too, has no undisputed mandate for the protection of individuals and groups and does not, to date, recognise an explicit responsibility for human security either through conflict resolution or prevention processes.

From the 1960s until the finalisation of the peace agreement, the conflict that eventually engulfed Cambodia was managed by balance of power relations—which meant confrontation and military intervention. The UN Security Council was simply sidelined and the people suffered. Two important issues with contemporary significance arise from the Cambodian experience. First, it highlights, the need for the global security framework to adopt human security as a major consideration, and to close the gap which prioritises the state to the near exclusion of the welfare of populations. Secondly, the Cambodian experience illustrates the way in which states, acting in their own perceived security interests, are able to ignore their humanitarian responsibilities under UN treaties, conventions and other agreements, and actively prevent UN agencies from performing their humanitarian functions. In the process, UN member states exacerbated the conditions of human insecurity.

A new approach is needed which bridges the gap between global and human security. This would involve the UN Security Council adopting human security as a concept to guide its deliberations and involvement in situations of conflict and major human insecurity. It also means insisting that, even in balance of power situations such as Cambodia experienced, UN member states respect UN agreements designed to protect the individual. Obviously, these represent major areas of reform but, as discussed below, a human security approach could strengthen the purpose of Security Council reforms currently under discussion in the UN.

Such an approach would, however, require a significant change in the approach of the permanent members of the Security Council, who would undoubtedly be reluctant to adopt a human security approach which might be seen to interfere with their special status and flexibility. However, under present criteria, serious human security issues such as genocide, conflict related deprivation or other humanitarian crisis such as occurred in Cambodia, are too easily neglected by the Security Council. Major obstacles to its intervention arise too easily from appeals by member states to the principles of sovereignty and non-interference in a country's domestic affairs. Nevertheless, there are indications that issue of individual and group rights, and hence human security, are increasingly viewed as matters of international security concern.³ The ICISS report made a series of recommendations, the

³ See the case of Myanmar in Andy Newman and Seth Mydans, "UN Aid Official Criticises Junta," *The New York Times*, 9 May 2008.

Secretary General's High Level Panel and the Secretary General himself have also addressed the issue and proposed guidelines for the Security Council in considering intervention in humanitarian crises.⁴

Development and human security

Shifting the focus to global governance at "C", the Cambodian experience provides significant lessons for the way in which development assistance programmes are formulated and implemented. After more than a decade of large-scale international development assistance in Cambodia, many rural people continue to suffer avoidable human insecurities. The basic problem is that international development institutions have attempted to apply universal solutions which are not readily consistent with the social and political realities. People in rural Cambodia do not live in a free and open democracy, participation and empowerment is severely hampered by local politics and a society that retains authoritarian traits and systems of patronage. People are, however, generally keen to take advantage of whatever opportunities arise and ask for better education and health services, a justice system that can be trusted and for greater economic and employment opportunities.

In Cambodia the governance of state institutions is politicised and ineffective. Also, there is no effective political opposition or public scrutiny of the dominant political party and its authoritarian government. Using a human security approach the thesis has shown, too, that creating opportunities to alleviate human insecurities is not just a matter of bureaucratic processes and of "good governance", but of the attitudes, values and commitment of civil servants to the achievement of policy outcomes, and of a relationship of trust and genuine participation with the public. Instead of confronting these issues, international development agencies have tried to bypass them by supporting independently accountable project activities within state institutions. This has done little more than leave the departmental cultures intact and corruption rife. The problem, of course, is that there can be little improvement in the civil service without a radical change in the attitude and political will of the nation's leadership. Without such change, the effort made by rural people to improve their lot will continue to be curtailed.

⁴ See United Nations, "A More Secure World: Our Shared Responsibility," 67.

In the case of Cambodia, the human security approach has identified the need for international development institutions to focus greater attention on the political performance of recipient governments and how they create national policy and manage the governance of state institutions. Too often, the methods promoted by the development agencies are not consistent with local society values and culture, but assume that these will change to align with western democratic principles and processes. Participation and empowerment are slow to take root in societies governed by hierarchy and patronage – especially when the traditional customs and values dominate state institutions. Principles of sovereignty and non-interference aside, a human security approach highlights the need to confront these political and social issues openly in association with the Cambodian government in the overall context of its responsibility to the welfare of its population. A government which is urged to listen to the people, establish trust in state institutions and attempts to address human insecurity may achieve more than a government driven from outside to implement internationally declared goals.

Human security – the link between global security and development

Point “D” in Figure 6.1 represents a vital link in a human security approach to security and development. It is the area in which the Security Council, taking more interest in intra-state conflict resolution and prevention, is increasingly dependent upon humanitarian and development organisations to protect refugees and displaced people, and to provide other humanitarian assistance. These programmes are directly concerned with human security.

During the time of Cambodian peace making and peace building efforts, the Security Council had little if any direct involvement with global development institutions. Most international development agencies were very limited in what development assistance they could bring to Cambodia because of US-led sanctions and wider political opposition to the regime in Phnom Penh. Nevertheless, it is clear that once peace was made, global governance institutions quickly assumed their stabilising and security role through aid and development programmes. What the Cambodian experience demonstrates is that there was no explicit or formal recognition of the interdependence of the two security mechanisms. Having largely failed in its own security role, the Security Council in a sense handed over the

security responsibility to global governance. This pointed to the need for a far closer and more explicit recognition of the interdependence between the two approaches to security, and for them to build on human security.

Indeed, the increased involvement of the Security Council with UN and other agencies in intra-state conflict resolution in the years since the Cambodian settlement has also demanded closer ties between global security and global governance. This relationship is now developing and tentative steps are being taken towards its formalisation. In particular, the two security arms are brought together by the formation of a Peacebuilding Commission within the UN to harness resources and provide strategic advice on peacebuilding, to focus on post-conflict development strategies and to coordinate the activities of agencies associated with post-conflict recovery. The Commission's membership includes Security Council representatives, key donors of financial and military assistance as well as representatives from specific UN organizations, with the WB, IMF and other institutional donors invited as appropriate. The Security Council has also recently begun to meet with NGOs, which brings the Council into touch regularly with concerns for human security.⁵ While these are initial steps opening the Security Council to new approaches, the Cambodian case demonstrates the importance of a human security approach to both security and development. The research shows that the common ground between global security and global governance lies not only in the security of states but in human security as well.

Achieving security

Achieving human security depends upon two fundamental changes. The first priority for an international security framework based on human security is that the concept be adopted by the UN Security Council as a valid part of its overall responsibility for maintaining peace and security in the world. This closes the

⁵ Working Group on Women, Peace and Security organised roundtable with the Security Council entitled "Towards International Peace and Human Security: Advancing Prevention, Participation and Protection in the Work of the Security Council", 27 January 2004; See also for example the Human Security Network addresses to the Security Council debates on children and armed conflict and on the Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security. Also the "Arrias" formula which encourages the Council to consult NGOs in conflict resolution processes. See for example UN Security Council, "Security Council Stresses Need for Broad Conflict Prevention Strategy - Underlines Potential Contribution of Civil Society in Process: Presidential Statement," (SC/8500, 20 September 2005).

existing gap between the related imperatives of global and human security. In the short term this is unlikely as key countries such as the US reject the concept of human security and focus attention on homeland security.⁶ It is also unlikely while permanent members of the Security Council wish to preserve their privileged balance of power rights and are resisting fundamental reforms such as increased permanent membership and regional representation. Nevertheless, there is some hope in the longer term that, through UN contact with international civil society organisations, attitudes in the Security Council will change and the concept of human security might be adopted.⁷

Secondly, global development institutions should also adopt human security as their primary goal. The Cambodian case shows that despite the many benefits of the development effort, large numbers of people still live in poverty and deprivation, and are subject to wide ranging insecurities. This is largely because development policies and practices pursued by donors have been top down rather than based on existing social, political and economic conditions. A human security approach to development would place greater emphasis on individual circumstances, leadership and the governance of state institutions. It would also harness human rights and human development approaches to a common objective.

These two basic changes would see human security become a unifying concept to focus the activities of global security and global governance on a shared goal. They would also enhance the prospects of peace, security and development in the world.

Contribution of the thesis

The thesis has demonstrated the important contribution that can be made by a human security analysis based on a broad concept of human security. It has highlighted the critical role of governance in providing the opportunities which are necessary for people to be able to achieve human security by their own efforts. In addition, it highlights the need for development approaches to pay greater attention to the

⁶ It could be argued that homeland security has a strong commitment to human security but only within the narrow confines of state boundaries.

⁷ See for example United Nations, "Effective Partnerships for Human Security, Sustainable Development Theme, as Annual DPI/NGO Conference Opens at Headquarters," (UN Information Service, NGO/602/PI/1734, 6 September 2006); and UN General Assembly, "The Thematic Debate on Human Security," www.un.org/ga/president/62/statements/humansecurity/220508.shtml, accessed 2 June 2008.

cultures of governance, and to how societal values and customs are reflected in them. Only when public sector reforms are understood and accepted as legitimate by the people will they be trusted and effective. To achieve this, donors must work to foster a far more committed political leadership which is accountable, not only to them, but to the people.

This thesis has also drawn attention to the link between human security, state and global security and development. The failure of the UN Security Council in the case of Cambodia emphasises the importance of including human security as a working concept in Council deliberations. Its main contribution is to show that adoption of the broad concept of human security could make a major difference to the way the Security Council operates both in relation to its direct responsibility for peace and security, and in the increasing involvement of development institutions in peacebuilding operations. Also, it emphasises the need to reform the Security Council which, Evatt complained, was “designed to suppress wars or incipient wars by organized force, rather than designed to prevent wars by improving those economic and social injustices which are likely to cause wars.”⁸ A human security approach offers an important way to address social and economic injustices and to prevent war and violence.

The thesis has demonstrated throughout that human security means refocusing security and development on local conditions and people’s needs. This calls for political leaders of all countries, including the permanent members of the Security Council, to govern for the human security of their own people and of people everywhere.

⁸ Herbert Vere Evatt, *The United Nations* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1948), 3-6. Evatt was Australian Foreign Minister when he participated in and took a leading role in negotiating the final UN Charter at the San Francisco Conference, April-June 1945.

Cambodian State Formation – Angkor; French Protection; and Independence

Angkor - The Indianised State

State formation is an ongoing process which involves the development of institutions and administrative arrangements to govern the population and to extract resources from it for state purposes. The use of the terms “state”, “king” and “kingdom” in relation to the early political entities in Cambodia can be misleading and Funan, an entity identified in Chinese records, appears to have embraced a number of chiefdoms or local principalities.¹ Cambodia’s processes of state formation were based on the gradual consolidation of power by sovereigns over a number of such “indianised” principalities and the formation of a centralized Khmer state whose influence spread, in its heyday, across Southeast Asia.² The process of state formation and consolidation of centralized rule was gradual and based on the balance of economic, political and, no doubt to some extent, military power and conquest, the control and allocation of royal and religious titles, and the assertion of political authority by a dominant monarch.³ The Khmer empire which developed eventually became a major influence across the region between the 9th and 14th centuries. Its wealth and power attested by the vast complex of temples at Angkor (which means

¹ These processes are discussed in Michael Vickery, *Society, Economics, and Politics in Pre-Angkor Cambodia* (Tokyo: The Centre for East Asian Cultural Studies for UNESCO, the Toyo Bunko, 1998); David Chandler, *A History of Cambodia*, Second ed. (St Leonards: Allen & Unwin, 1993), 11-19; and Sachchidanand Sahai, "Les Institutions Politiques et L'Organisation Administrative du Cambodge Ancien (VI-XIII Siècles)," *Publications de Lécole Française d'Extrême-Orient* LXXV (1970): 56.

² The seminal study of Cambodia is George Coedès, *Les États Hinduisés d'Indochine et d'Indonésie*, Nouvelle édition revue et mise à jour ed. (Paris: E. de Boccard, 1948). These kingdoms were ‘indianised’ in the sense that their religion, courts and administration exhibited, to some extent, the adaptation of aspects of Hindu and Brahman customs, particularly the association of ‘kings’ and their local cults with Indian divinities. They were not ‘colonised’. See also Chandler, *A History of Cambodia*, 12; Sahai, "Les Institutions Politiques."; Vickery, *Society, Economics, and Politics in Pre-Angkor Cambodia*; and George Coedès, *The Making of South East Asia*, trans. H M Wright (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966).

³ Claude Jacques, *Angkor*, English ed. (Cologne: Konemann, 1999), 41-43; Vickery, *Society, Economics, and Politics in Pre-Angkor Cambodia*, 367-78; Sahai, "Les Institutions Politiques," 148; and Coedès, *The Making of South East Asia*, 88-108. Coedès offers a more formal process of one kingdom overtaken by another.

“city”) north of Siem Reap and across present day Cambodia and into Western Thailand.⁴

Historical sources are primarily concerned with the deeds of kings and their monuments and reflect an institutional bias from which only limited information about the lives of the common people and villagers has been gleaned. The building of monuments and the vast hydraulic network at Angkor required an economic base to provide the surplus wealth not only for construction, but also to support the vast army of workers, the royal court and officials and the persons attached to the many temples. In part this seems to have been achieved by bringing religious or temple foundations, which already existed within the principalities, under central administrative control and by endowing new foundations with land concessions.⁵ These were used to “colonise” and “urbanise” the region around Angkor and for “herding people into conglomerates from less tightly administered rural areas.”⁶ They were production units providing the surplus for the king’s construction works and to support the population. It is not clear what villages existed outside the formal organization of foundations and temples, and what their condition may have been. Vickery observes that there is no record of natural villages in pre-Angkor inscriptions and that in the Angkor period the references are to “natural communities being reorganized into state establishments ...”, from which “if we wish to speculate further, we might suggest that the Cambodian village was destroyed by state intervention in the economy during the 7th to 12th centuries.”⁷ Groslier even suggests that life at Angkor was “more or less” communalised.⁸ What does seem clear is that the economy of Angkor depended upon irrigated rice production and a sophisticated bureaucratic administration necessary to achieve this.⁹

⁴ Angkorian monuments extend across present day Cambodia into Thailand. See Damian Evans et al., "A Comprehensive Archaeological Map of the World's Largest Pre-industrial Settlement Complex at Angkor," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 104, no. 36 (2007): 14277-82, for the latest research on the extent of Angkor.

⁵ Coedès, *The Making of South East Asia*, 100.

⁶ Chandler, *A History of Cambodia*, 43; and Sahai, "Les Institutions Politiques," 28.

⁷ Vickery, *Society, Economics, and Politics in Pre-Angkor Cambodia*, 312.

⁸ Bernard P Groslier, *Angkor et le Cambodge au XVIe Siècle d'après les Sources Portugaises et Espagnoles* (Presses Universitaires de France, 1958), 121.

⁹ It is still debated whether the hydraulic complex at Angkor was designed specifically for irrigation of other urban/religious purpose. Vickery, *Society, Economics, and Politics in Pre-Angkor Cambodia*, 300; Chandler, *A History of Cambodia*, 54; and Evans et al., "A Comprehensive Archaeological Map of the World's Largest Pre-industrial Settlement Complex at Angkor."

During the 13th century there was a trend in the Cambodian economic base away from irrigated agriculture at Angkor towards trade, mainly in forest products. Other significant changes were a weakening of control over areas in Thailand, which were coming under the influence of a rising Ayudhya, and an increasing adoption of Theravada Buddhism. Eventually, whether due to harassment by neighbouring states, the adoption of Buddhism, the silting of the extensive irrigation works at Angkor or simply the change to a trading economy, the capital was moved to Oudong, on the Mekong with direct trade access to the sea.¹⁰ The fourteenth and fifteenth centuries saw an almost continuous state of conflict with the Thai and, in 1473, the provinces of Chantaburi, Korat and Angkor were taken by Thailand.¹¹ Regional conflict continued through the 16th century but Cambodia, though territorially reduced, remained a force in the region.¹²

With the move of the Cambodian court to Oudong (and later to Lovek), instead of an emphasis on foundations producing an agricultural surplus for religious and public works, there were now trading villages (*kompong*) established along the banks of navigable rivers. Behind these were the rice growing hamlets and the forests with their isolated minority villages. The rice growing villages or hamlets as an entity must have been reconstituted as the state abandoned its foundation production units.¹³ It is unlikely to have been an easy transition for villagers, especially as it presents a vastly different picture from the urbanization of the Angkor period and its particular form of peasant organization. This meant that not only the village structure but also the central administration would need to have changed to meet the new economic realities. It is also possible that the disruptions to peasant society meant that the village and family were only weakly re-organised and did not create discrete cohesive units—a description of Cambodian village society that has become

¹⁰ Chandler, *A History of Cambodia*, 77-79. Chandler takes the view that the increased interest in trading made Oudong, with its access to the sea, a more attractive site.

¹¹ Coedès, *The Making of South East Asia*, 196.

¹² There were Cambodian forays into Thailand after it was weakened by Burmese attacks and the sacking of Ayudhya in 1569. Angkor was re-occupied briefly in the late 1570s and, in 1594, it was the new capital Lovek itself that was captured by the Thais.

¹³ Forest makes the point that there were radical administrative changes from the Angkor period. Alain Forest, *Le Cambodge et la Colonisation Française: Histoire d'une Colonisation sans Heurts (1897-1920)* (Paris: Éditions L'Harmattan, 1980), 31-32. Vickery however argues that the structure of society did not change from Angkor times. See Michael Vickery, *Kampuchea: Politics, Economics and Society* (London: Frances Pinter Publishers, 1986), 51.

the norm in recent studies.¹⁴ The villagers' existence, however, remained precarious in terms of the demands that could be made by the king and his officials. In return the role of the king appears to have been primarily ceremonial in the performance of ritual for ensuring good harvests. He offered little if any protection from rapacious officials who continued to collect a surplus from the peasants and make payment to the king and religious establishments (keeping some for themselves in lieu of pay).¹⁵

The following centuries were punctuated by fratricidal internal divisions and the increasing involvement of neighbours and, eventually western countries in Cambodian affairs.¹⁶ There was a period of Vietnamese rule in the nineteenth century but unrest and rebellions forced their withdrawal in 1840.¹⁷ The continued threat and territorial inroads being made by its neighbours prompted the king in 1854 to seek French protection which was finally granted in July 1863.¹⁸

French Protection – rebellion and state development

Opposition to the French presence and administrative reforms, together with anti-monarchical sentiments and demands on the peasants, prompted sporadic organized rebellion. This, along with piracy and banditry, was fairly common throughout the first 50 or so years of the French presence.¹⁹

¹⁴ Vickery, *Kampuchea*, 52; and Chandler, *A History of Cambodia*, 87-8. For analysis of peasant life see Jean Delvert, *Le Paysan Cambodgien* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1961; reprint, 1994).

¹⁵ Vickery, *Kampuchea*, 51.

¹⁶ From the 16th century Portuguese, Spanish and other western influences, as well as Malay and Javanese were established in the region as adventurers and traders, the Spaniards in particular becoming involved, along with the Thai and Vietnamese in Cambodia's dynastic and territorial claims. See Groslier, *Angkor et le Cambodge*; Chandler, *A History of Cambodia*, 86-7. During the 18th century, Vietnam occupied much of the Mekong delta while the western provinces of Battambang and Siem Reap were transferred to Thailand which installed a Cambodian official, supported by a Thai army, as governor. Coedès, *The Making of South East Asia*, 199.

¹⁷ As with the French later, the Vietnamese rationalised their presence in terms of a civilising mission and providing material development. The Emperor saw the Cambodians as his "children" and wished to "Vietnamise" them and "... teach them to use oxen, teach them to grow more rice, teach them to raise mulberry trees, pigs and ducks ..." The attempt to "Vietnamise" Cambodia included bringing Vietnamese officials and clerks in to replace what it saw as incompetent Cambodians. Quoted in Chandler, *A History of Cambodia*, 126.

¹⁸ Academics generally agree that without French intervention, Cambodia would have been divided into Vietnamese and Thai spheres of influence. Ian Mabbett and David Chandler, *The Khmers* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), 228.

¹⁹ Ben Kiernan and Chanthou Boua, eds., *Peasants and Politics in Kampuchea 1942-1981* (London: Zed Press, 1982), 2; Forest, *Le Cambodge et la Colonisation*, 454-55; and John Tully, *France on the Mekong: A History of the Protectorate in Cambodia* (Lanham: University Press of America, 2002), 73-6. In 1866, Pou Kombo led an anti-French and anti-monarchical rebellion which involved up to 5,000 troops (including 7-800 Vietnamese).

The banditry involved groups of up to 100 or more men, much of it around border areas and with the connivance of local authorities.²⁰ In some cases notices were placed in villages urging people to violence against the political order. As well as being anti-French, these movements had particular issues relating to taxes, as well as the introduction of regulations limiting access to fishing areas and to forests which provided important resources to supplement rice production and, in many cases, made subsistence possible. The French presence added to the grievances which for centuries had been associated with the demands of officials of a predatory state against whom there were no formal checks and balances other than an arbitrary process of appeal to higher authority or, as a last resort, the king himself. The only protection perhaps came from a patron or an appeal to local religious leaders, and magic.

The rebellions against the French regularly involved bonzes, respected leaders and village officials who gave them some prestige and support among the people, who often provided the rebels with food, hid them and gave misleading information to the authorities. In 1916, large numbers of peasants descended on Phnom Penh to complain directly to the king about the level of taxes imposed by the French and collected by Cambodian officials. While this appeared threatening to the French, the crowds quietly dispersed when asked by the King to return to their villages.²¹ Nevertheless, banditry and revolt continued in the countryside to the extent that in 1933 a French military officer noted his reluctance to visit Angkor.²² There were suggestions, too, that as well as the ongoing banditry, there was also considerable Issarak and communist activity from the 1930s as they attempted to form opposition activist groups.²³

The French introduced an administration based on the role of Résidents and local communes, but did not radically alter the entrenched patronage structure of the king

This lasted 18 months and “turned the tiny Khmer kingdom upside down.” One of Pou Kombo’s lieutenants rebelled again in 1872 with 400 men. In 1876-7, Prince Si Votha led a rebellion and was again involved in a major rebellions in 1885-6.

²⁰ This account comes mainly from Forest’s Chapter XV “Piraterie et Contestation Populaires” in Forest, *Le Cambodge et la Colonisation*, 373-432.

²¹ Milton E Osborne, *Politics and Power in Cambodia*, Studies in Contemporary Southeast Asia (Camberwell: Longman, 1973), 22; Chandler, *A History of Cambodia*, 154; and Forest, *Le Cambodge et la Colonisation*, 412-13.

²² Tully, *France on the Mekong*, 161-63, 167. Tully discusses this as “social banditry” which thrives against oppression.

²³ Kiernan and Chanthou Boua, eds., *Peasants and Politics*, 14.

and his officials. The outcome was a form of entanglement of traditional and modern administration which to some extent has survived to the present.²⁴ These administrative issues will be taken up in more detail in chapter 5. There was little development of education and health under the French, though transport infrastructure and agriculture, including agricultural infrastructure, did expand markedly.²⁵

At the same time, an educated urban élite developed and became involved in activities such as the formation of a student association and a Buddhist institute, as well as the publication of the first Cambodian newspaper. This provided a basis for discussion among Cambodians and foreign scholars, ultimately leading to a sense of political identity and nationalistic aspiration at least among the urban élite.

Independence and political unrest

Cambodia's experience with electoral democracy began soon after the Japanese defeat and the return of the French when three parties (Democratic, Liberal and Progressive Democrat Parties) were formed to contest the first National Assembly elections in 1948, some six years before independence.²⁶ The Democrats used their electoral success to push for full independence and were, it seems, prepared to consider violent means through alliance with Issarak guerrillas and, possibly, the Communist Viet Minh.²⁷ Sihanouk, who had come to the throne in 1941, distrusted the Democrats and pursued his own approach to win independence from the French in 1953. In the process he assumed emergency powers and launched a military offensive against the Issarak guerrillas and the communist Khmer People's Revolutionary Front (KPRP) whose forces together controlled 50-60 per cent of the countryside in 1952.²⁸

Independence came to Cambodia at a time when revolutionary independence movements were a common feature of decolonisation, and at a time when US concern to halt the spread of Communism had already involved it in the Korean war.

²⁴ Osborne, *Politics and Power*, 25.

²⁵ Tully, *France on the Mekong*, 217-29 and 256-85.

²⁶ All were led by princes. Prince Sisowath Yuthevong led the Democratic Party (*Krom Pracheathipodei*); Prince Norodom Norindeth the Liberal Party (*Kanaq Sereipheap*; literally Freedom Group); and Prince Norodom Mantana the Progressive Democrats.

²⁷ Chandler, *A History of Cambodia*, 175. The Liberals (funded by the French) were for the status quo while the third party had little support and soon disbanded.

²⁸ Vickery, *Kampuchea*. pp. 10-12.

The Vietnamese communist victory over the French at Dien Ben Phu led to the Geneva Conference in 1954, which set out territorial claims for the Vietnamese and Lao communists, but did not grant a territorial base for the Cambodia Communist Party (CCP).²⁹ Despite this, some CCP members retained their links with the Viet Minh (later the Viet Cong), received training and at times took refuge in Vietnam from the Cambodian government forces or from their communist rivals inside Cambodia.³⁰

Continued political factionalism following independence prompted Sihanouk to abdicated and yet maintain political power by forming the Sangkum Reastr Niyum (People's Socialist Community), a mass movement to which politicians of all parties were required to belong and to express loyalty to the throne (effectively himself).³¹ This did little, however, to resolve political differences nor in the long run to secure Sihanouk in power. The performance of political leaders reflected the strong tension or, it would seem, almost an incompatibility between parliamentary democracy and traditional politics.³²

The 1960s were turbulent years for Cambodia which was plagued by a divided political leadership, extensive corruption, revolutionary opposition in the countryside, war in Vietnam with increasing Viet Cong incursions into Cambodia along the Ho Chi Minh trail, US secret bombing inside Cambodia, and a Cold War demanding alignments. It was a period dominated domestically by Cambodia by the larger than life Sihanouk who tried to embrace all political factions within the Sangkum Reastr under his own authoritarian rule, whose family and supporters were

²⁹ The Indochina Communist Party under Vietnamese sponsorship had already been divided into national parties and the Cambodia Communist Party formed in 1951. For discussion of foundation dates see Michael Vickery, *Cambodia: 1975-1982* (Boston: South End Press, 1984), Chs. 1 and 4.

The Conference produced agreement to the cessation of fighting and the withdrawal of troops behind specified lines pending elections in 1956. There were extensive breaches of the agreement on all sides leading to the Vietnam war. Parties at the Conference included Cambodia, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, the State of Vietnam, Laos, France, China, the USSR, the UK and the US.

³⁰ Ibid; Michael Vickery, "The Cambodian People's Party: Where has it Come From, Where is it Going?," *Southeast Asian Affairs* 21 (1994): 102-17; Margaret Slocomb, *The People's Republic of Kampuchea 1979-1989: The Revolution after Pol Pot* (Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 2003), 1-18; and Chandler, *A History of Cambodia*, 181, 187. Several thousand Cambodian communists and sympathisers went to Vietnam with the Viet Minh. Some returned after 1975 and were largely purged by Pol Pot. Others return with the Vietnamese in 1978-9.

³¹ Osborne, *Politics and Power*, 55-69.

³² Ibid., 114.

deeply involved in corruption and who tried to play off the US and Soviet Union to achieve neutrality for Cambodia while turning a blind eye to Viet Cong incursions. Despite significant advances in education and with great rural appeal (his semi-divine kingly status never really denied), he still managed to alienate nearly all sections of the élite before being deposed. It was in the end the inability to manage this factionalism and to provide political space for the left as well as the right, which led to Sihanouk being overthrown in a right-wing coup in 1970.

FIELDWORK ITINERARY

Fieldwork was undertaken in Cambodia from 24 November— 14 December 2004 to make arrangements with local NGOs for later fieldwork and to undertake initial documentary research in Battambang and Phnom Penh.

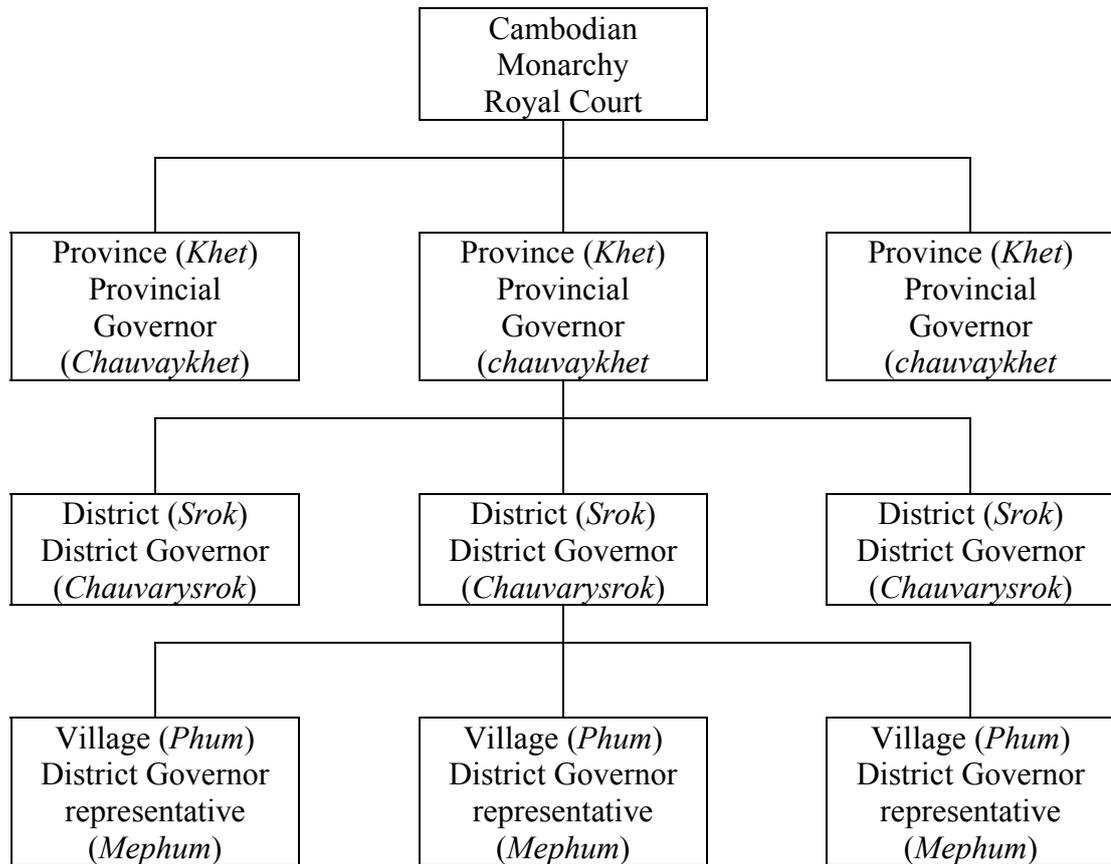
Further fieldwork was undertaken in Phnom Penh and Battambang Province between 2 March—30 May 2005.

Documentation centres and/or staff were accessed at the following institutions:

Cambodia Development Resource Institute
 Cooperation Committee for Cambodia (CCC) Resource Centre
 University of Pnom Penh - Library
 United Nations Development Programme
 World Bank
 Partnership for Local Governance (Seila) – Battambang
 NGOs: Krom Akphiwat Phum (KAWP)
 Village Support Group (VSG)
 Aphiwat Srey
 Buddhists for Development (BFD)
 Cambodia Mine Action Centre (CMAC)
 Catholic Relief Services (CRS)
 Fisheries Action Coalition Team (FACT)

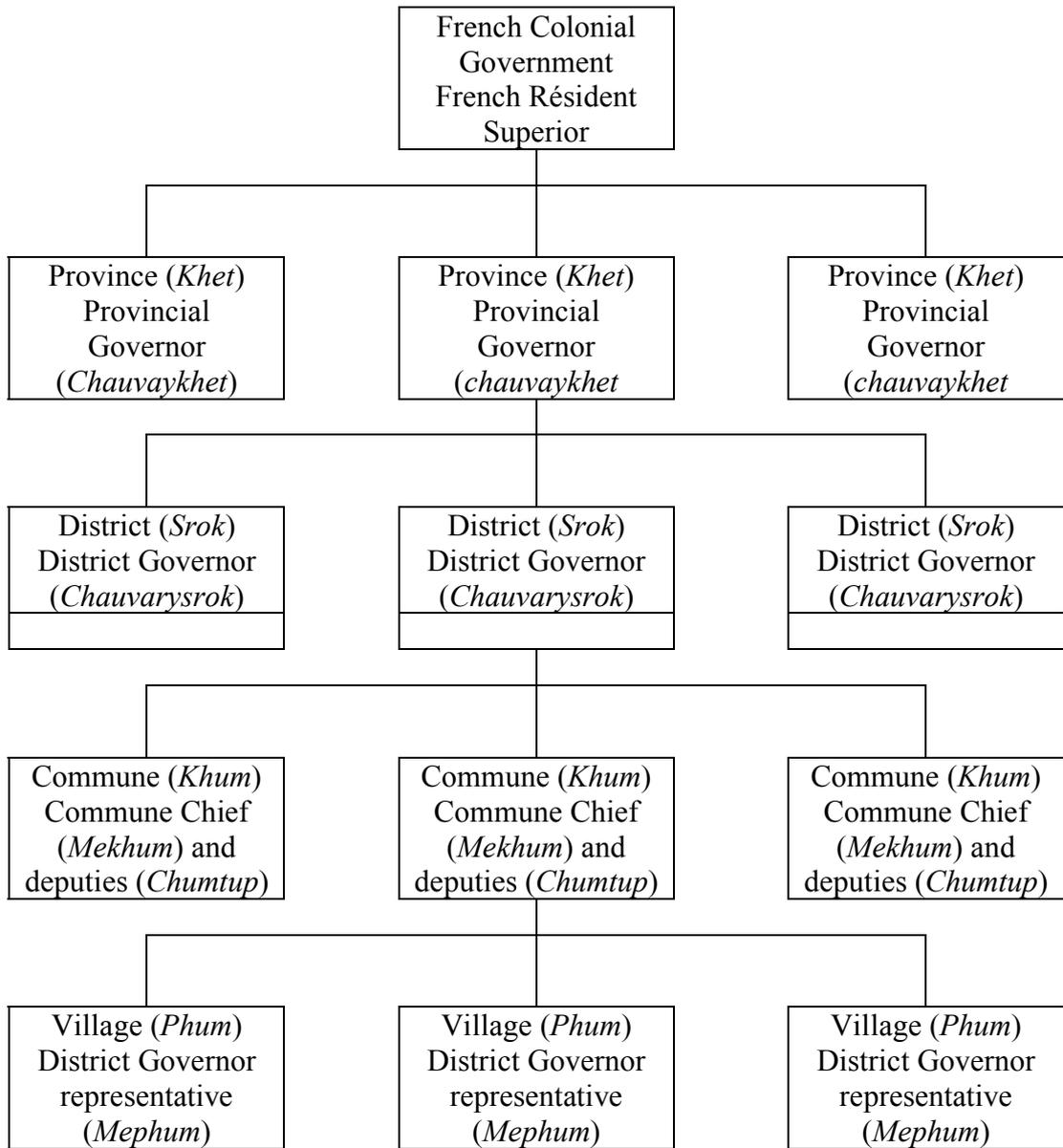
Field visits to villages were made as follows:

	Date	NGO rep or organisation	Commune
1	15/3/05	KAWP	Prek Norin
2	17/3/05	VSG	
3	19/3/05		Samrong Khnomg
5	21-2/3/05	KAWP	Bay Damran
6	25/3/05	VSG	Prek Kpop
7	27/3/05	VSG	Prek Kpop
8	29/3/05	Aphiwat Srey	
9	5/4/05	KAWP	Kouk Khmum
10	7/4/05	KAWP	Phnom Sampeou
11	9/4/05	VSG	Prek Kpop
12	10/4/05	KAWP	Phnom Sampeou
13	21/4/05	Aphiwat Srey	Peam Ek

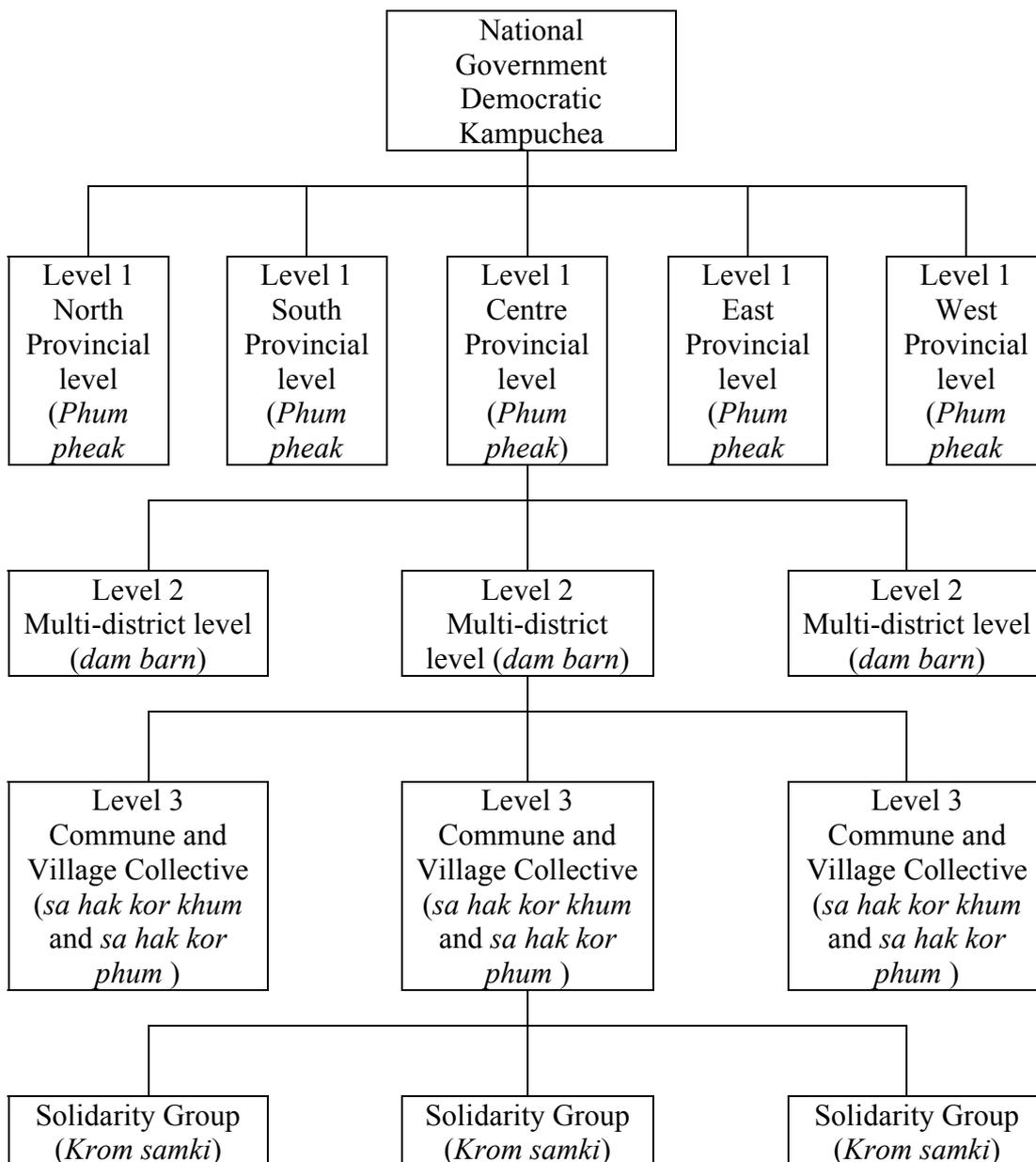
ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS¹

PRE-COLONIAL ADMINISTRATION

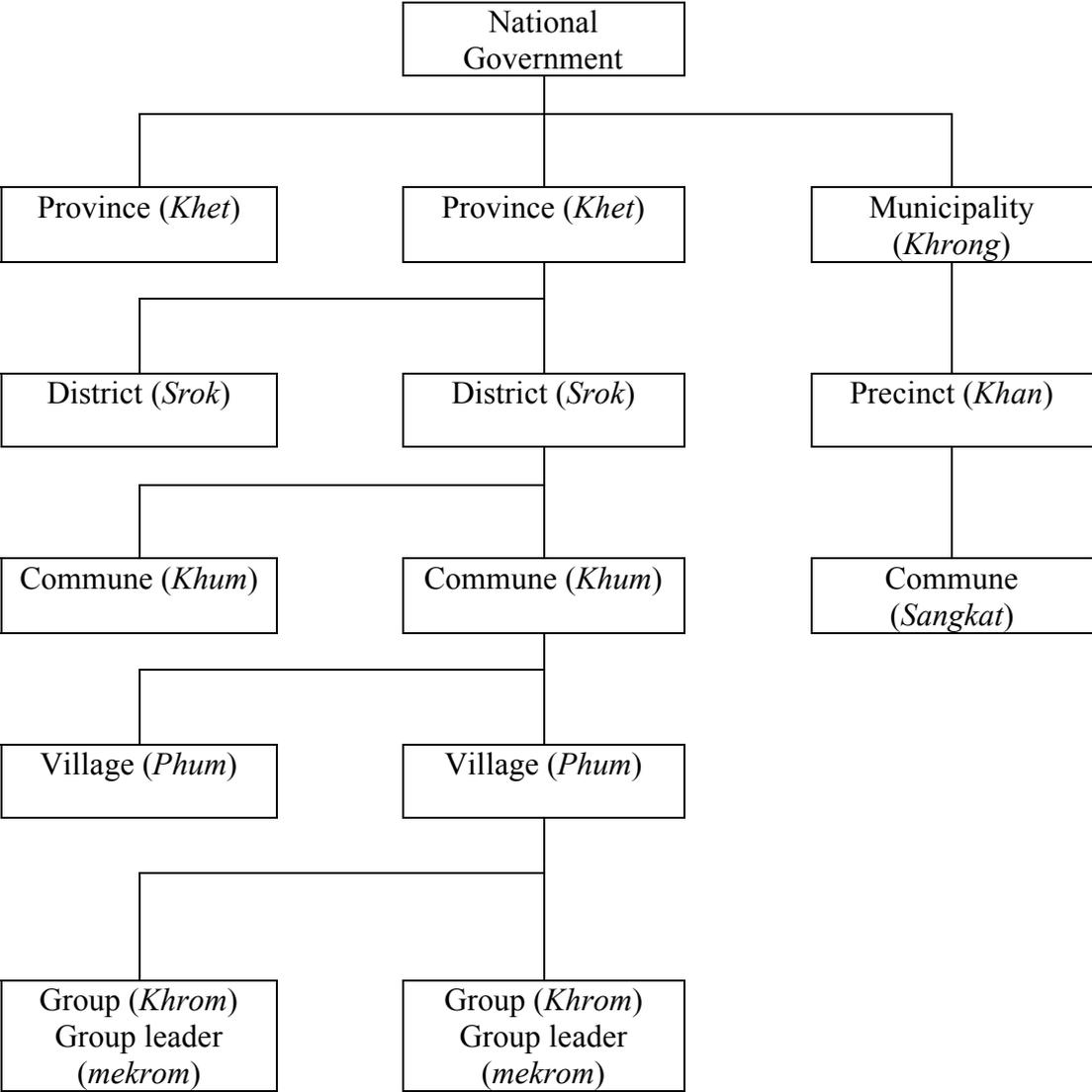
¹ The following charts are adapted from Eric Putzig and Dave Davenport, "Cambodian Law on Commune Elections," (Community Legal Education Centre, University of San Francisco School of Law, Cambodia Law and Democracy Project, 2001).



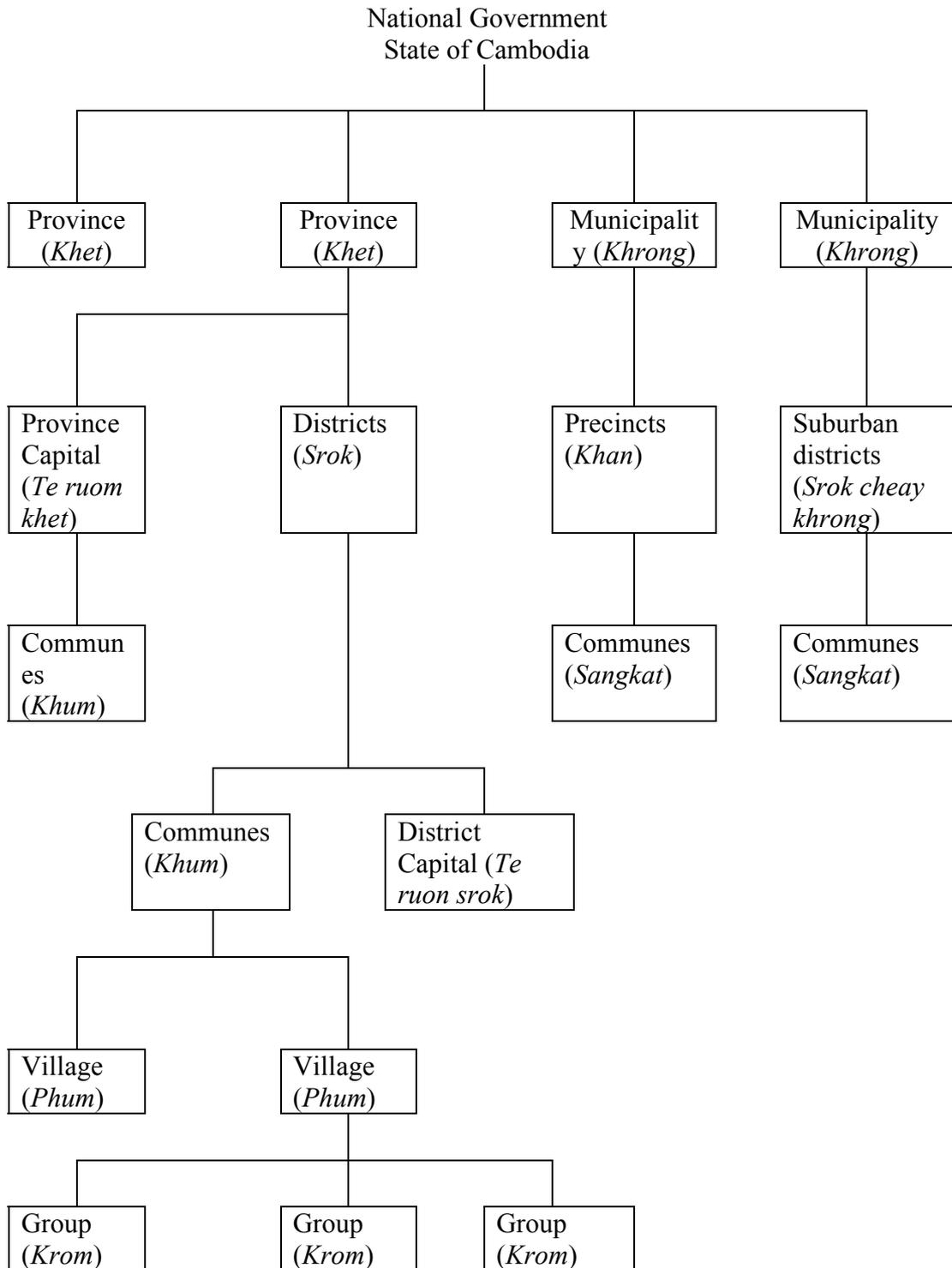
COLONIAL ADMINISTRATION



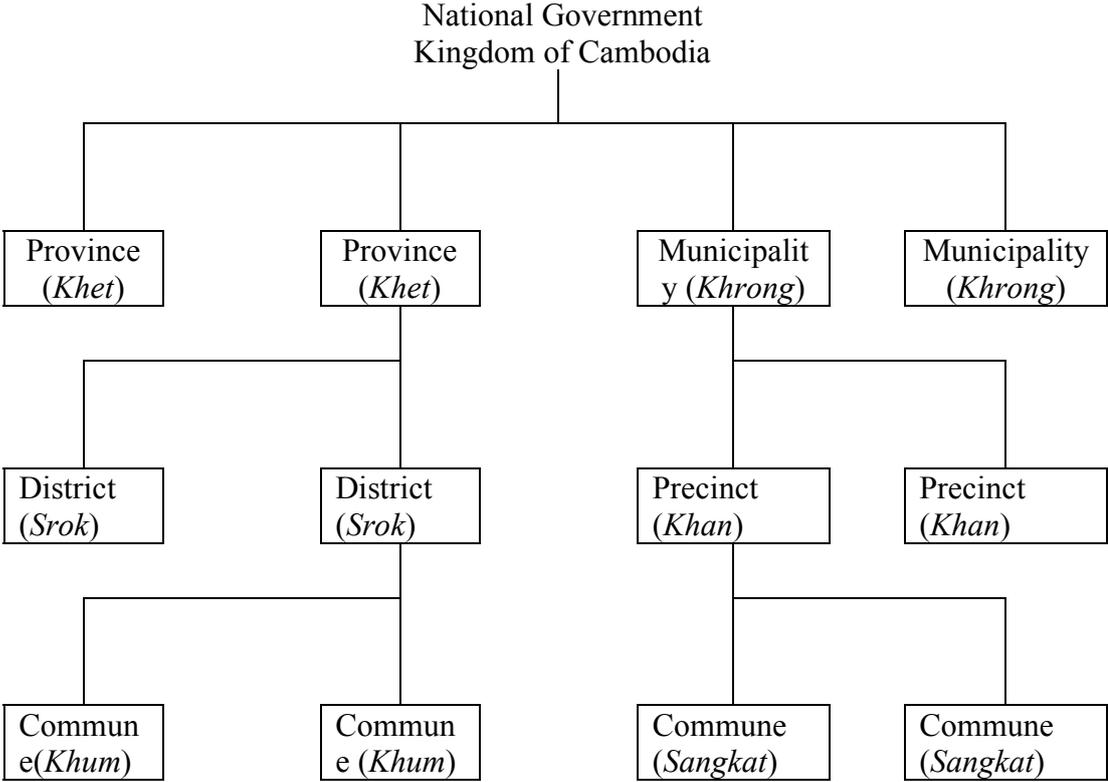
POL POT 1975 - 1979



PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF KAMPUCHEA (1979 – 1989)



THE STATE OF CAMBODIA (1989 – 1993)



THE KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA (1993 – PRESENT)

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