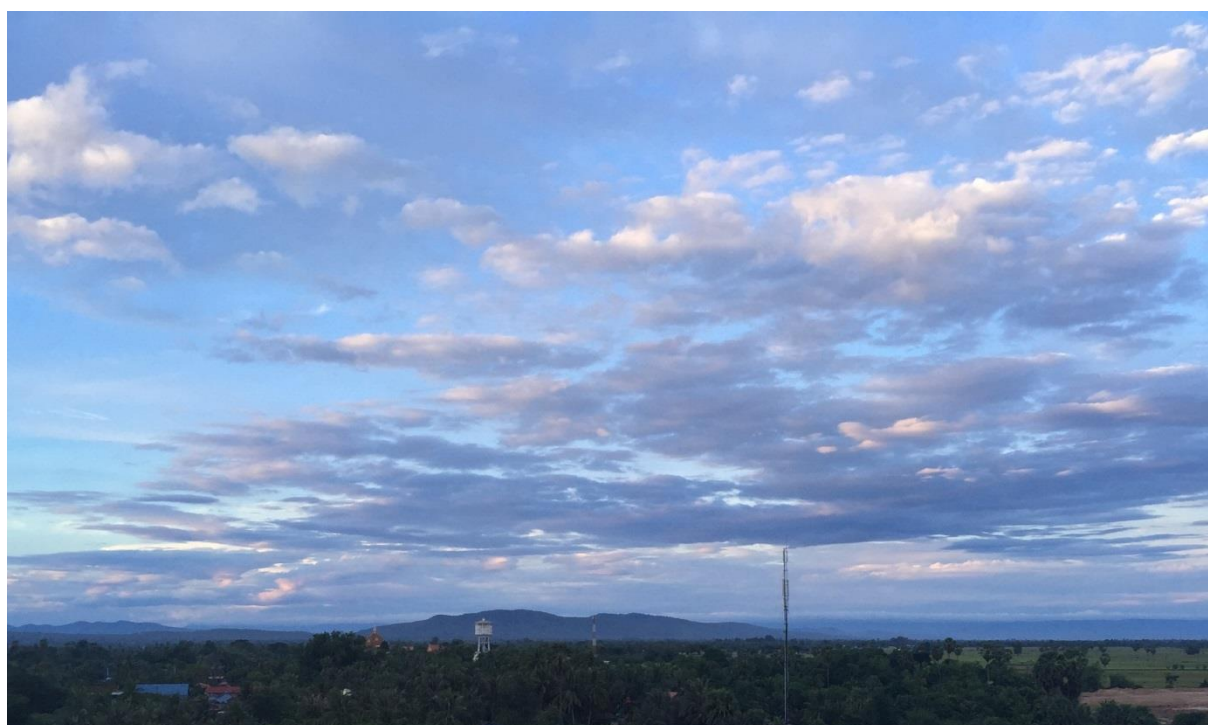


Overseas Fieldwork Report 2017:

Pursat Province, Cambodia



**Graduate School of International Development
Nagoya University**

Overseas Fieldwork Report 2017

Pursat Province, Cambodia

March 2018

Graduate School of International Development

Nagoya University

Nagoya, Japan

Overseas Fieldwork Report 2017

Pursat Province, Cambodia

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Acknowledgements

Like all the previous years, Overseas Fieldwork 2017 could not have been realised without the kind and heartfelt support from many people and offices. It is my honour, on behalf of the Overseas Fieldwork Project faculty and students of the Graduate School of International Development, Nagoya University, to express our sincerest gratitude to all the people who supported us by making kind arrangements and sharing their knowledge.

We are indebted to the Governor of Pursat Province and his staff for accepting our fieldwork project, making the necessary arrangements with community representatives and patiently listening and giving useful advice to students regarding their preliminary findings. We are also grateful to the village chiefs, staff members of government offices, and all the people who generously shared their time and knowledge to help with our fieldwork.

We are also heavily indebted to the faculty and students of the Royal University of Phnom Penh. Without hesitation, our biggest “thank you” goes to Dr. Chansopheak Keng. Without her support, OFW 2017 would not have been as smooth as it was. Her efficiency with elegance, smile and humility in making arrangements and giving advice to students is something I admire. May I add that the excellent Cambodian dinner at her family home is a wonderful memory which all of us will cherish for years to come. Our warm appreciation, of course, goes to the faculty members of RUPP, Dr. Nyda Chhinh, Dr. Serey Sok, and Mr. Sam Ath Chin who, despite their busy schedules, made time to come with us to Pursat and gave valuable advice and support to our students. Our gratitude also goes to the four students from RUPP, Mr. Bora Sou, Mr. Samorn Khem, Mr. Chansopheak Hem, and Mr. Pheaktra Lok, who assisted OFW 2017. Last but not least, I would like to express warm appreciation to Dr. Penghuy Ngov. His warm support did not come to the forefront so much, but his joyous company always lifted up our spirits and his thoughtful tips enabled us to navigate the safer path.

Akiko Ueda, PhD
Associate Professor
Chair of OFW 2017 Committee
Graduate School of International Development
Nagoya University

Introduction

The twenty-fifth Overseas Fieldwork (OFW 2017) of the Graduate School of International Development (GSID), Nagoya University, was carried out in Pursat Province, Cambodia, from 20 August to 2 September 2017. The OFW is an important part of GSID's curriculum, designed to provide students with exposure to "real world" development issues in rural areas of a developing country.

In the educational field, balancing the 3Hs, i.e. Head, Hands and Heart, is often discussed for fostering students' learning. In my view, in the context of development studies in higher education, Head corresponds to theory and knowledge about development, Hands are the skills of implementation such as project cycle management, and Heart is an ability to empathise with people in difficulty and to see the world from their perspectives. In classroom teaching, we often emphasise the Head and Hands elements, but not so much the Heart. The OFW is an excellent opportunity to nurture the Heart element through talking with people and understanding how the world looks from their perspectives. By striking the balance among the 3Hs, we can ensure our curriculum produces effective and compassionate development practitioners and researchers.

Each year, GSID carries out the OFW in a developing country in Asia in cooperation with a local partner university of GSID. This year, the Royal University of Phnom Penh (RUPP) once again kindly accepted to host the OFW, adding to the past successful collaborations in 2005, 2006, 2007, 2012, 2013 and 2014. Building on many years of cherished relationships between the two universities, OFW 2017 was managed smoothly and it contributed to further strengthening GSID's ties of academic exchange and collaboration with this prestigious university in Cambodia.

Considering the relevance of topics to Pursat's local development context, we divided 20 graduate students into four thematic working groups under the umbrella theme, "Community Development & Well Being of People": Youth's Perception and Participation in Local Politics (WG1), Labour Migration for Family Livelihood (WG2), Education (WG3), and Muslim Community as a Cultural Minority (WG4), to study and observe various dimensions of rural development in that area in a holistic manner. Students conducted their research in communities of Krokor District, Pursat Province. On 30 August, the teams of OFW 2017 had the honour to present their preliminary research findings to the provincial vice-governor and local officials. On 1 September, before departure from Phnom Penh, they shared their findings at RUPP to receive feedback from faculty and students. On 25 October, we also held a presentation session at GSID.

This report is the outcome of all the efforts mentioned above. Students of all working groups worked very hard, polishing their analyses and incorporating the comments and advice received at

the presentations and in the course of their fieldwork. It is my hope that the entire experience of OFW made the students draw closer to the complexity of reality and made them realize the excitement of working with people.

Akiko Ueda, PhD
Associate Professor
Chair of OFW 2017 Committee
Graduate School of International Development
Nagoya University

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List of Participants

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WG4	Wataru Kusaka	Serey Sok
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Logistics/Coordination	Jing Liu	

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** Group leader, * Sub-leader,

DID: Department of International Development

DICOS: Department of International Cooperation

Program of OFW 2017

Preparatory Seminar at GSID

	Date	Title of the Lecture and the Lecturer (s)
1	April 26, Wed. 14:45-16:15	Introduction to OFW2017& Team building By OFW Committee
2	May 10, Wed. 14:45-16:15	Cambodia 1: About Cambodia/Pursat Province By Dr. Chansopheak Keng, Royal University of Phnom Penh
3	May 17, Wed. 14:45-16:15	Cambodia 2: Buddhism and Development By Prof. Satoru Kobayashi, Kyoto University
4	May 24, Wed. 14:45-16:15	Cambodia 3: Contemporary History and Administration System of Cambodia By Prof. Kuong Teilee, Nagoya University
5	May 31, Wed. 14:45-16:15	Cambodia 4: Education By Dr. Chansopheak Keng, Royal University of Phnom Penh
6	June 7, Wed. 14:45-16:15	How to make research proposal (Joint session with DFW seminar) By Prof. Francis Peddie, Nagoya University
7	June 14, Wed. 14:45-16:15	Interim Presentation By OFW Committee
8	June 21, Wed. 14:45-16:15	Cambodia 5: Community Development By Prof. Ayako Ido, Nagoya University
9	June 21, Wed. 16:30-18:00	Research ethics (Joint session with DFW seminar) By Prof. Yoshiaki Nishikawa, Ryukoku University
10	June 28, Wed. 14:45-18:00	Research Methodology (Joint session with DFW seminar) By OFW Committee
11	July 5, Wed. 16:30-18:00	Group Presentation of Research Proposal By OFW Committee
12	July 12, Wed. 14:45-16:15	Risk Management By Prof. Akinari Hoshino and Prof. Takashi Sakai, Nagoya University
13	July 19, Wed. 14:45-16:15	Presentation of past OFW experience By OFW2016 participants
14	July 21, Fri. 16:30-18:00	Khmer Language By Mr. Cheb Hoeurn and Mr. Vannpoly Chhay

Interim Presentations of Research Findings

The interim presentation of research findings was held at Pursat Century Hotel on August 30th, 2017. Based on the comments received in Pursat, participants made another interim presentation in the Royal University of Phnom Penh on September 1st, 2017. Each WG presented for 20 minutes and followed by Q&A session by the participants.

Presentation of Research Findings at GSID

The presentation of research findings was held at GSID by each working group to disseminate and to collect feedback from colleagues on October 25th, 2017.

Overall Schedule of Fieldwork in Cambodia

Date	Place
Aug. 18 (Fri.)	13:00-14:30 Pre-survey Orientation on OFW2017 at GSID
Aug.20 (Sun.)	8:15 Meeting at Chubu International Airport 11:00-15:00 Nagoya to Bangkok 18:45-19:55 Bangkok to Phnom Penh Check-in at Aquarius Hotel
Aug.21 (Mon.)	10:00-12:00 Killing Field Museum Move to Pursat Province
Aug.22 (Tue.)	9:00-11:30 Courtesy visit to Provincial Government Introduction to Pursat Province and Krokor District 13:00- Group meeting/discussion 17:00- Get-to-know-each-other Party
Aug.23 (Wed.) - Aug.25 (Fri.)	Field survey by each WG
Aug.26 (Sat.) - Aug.27 (Sun.)	Free time
Aug.28 (Mon.) - Aug.29 (Tue.)	Field survey by each WG
Aug. 30 (Wed.)	Presentation preparation 14:00-17:00 Presentation at Pursat Century Hotel 18:00- Farewell party
Aug.31 (Thu.)	Move to Phnom Penh 17:00- Dinner party with GSID Alumni Cambodia
Sept.1 (Fri.)	Preparation for Presentation 14:00-16:00 Presentation at RUPP 16:30 Departure for the airport 21:15-22:20 Phnom Penh to Bangkok 0:05-8:00 Bangkok to Nagoya
Sept.2 (Sat.)	8:00 Arrive in Nagoya

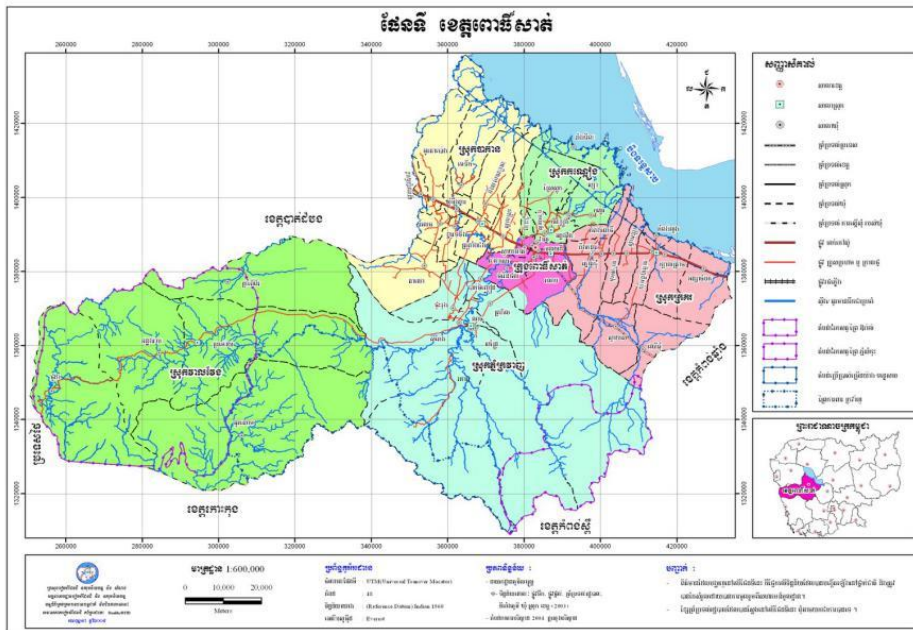
Pursat Province of Cambodia

Chansopheak Keng



One of the provinces on the National Road 5, Pursat Province is a sleeping beauty of Cambodia. It is the fourth largest province with a population of only 463000, ranking No. 14 in density. Located on the western part of the country, it is known to have the representation of Cambodia for its geographical characteristics. It is a mix of plain area, river and mountains. It is connected to the largest lake called Tonle Sap in the east and the Cardamom mountain on the north. Forests cover approximately 58% of the province. The Cardamom mountain range rise high in the west and southwest of the province along the border with Thailand and the coast of Tonle Sap. The fertile plains where much of Cambodia rice crop is harvested covers 40% of the province area.

Administrative Structure



Over an area of 12992 sqkm, Pursat is divided into 6 administrative districts.

- Bakan - A district with ancient history and pagoda, dated back to 16 century.
- Kandieng - A district located along the Pursat which flows across the province from the Tonle Sap.
- Krakor - A district located on the Tonle Sap Lake. A large proportion the population are fishermen.
- Phnum Kravanh - As the name indicates, it is a district with mountains.
- Pursat - An urban area of Pursat province. It is a densely populated area where government offices and urban businesses locate.
- Veal Veang - Located far west, it is a remote and sparsely populated district, one of the last strongholds of the Khmer Rouge until the late 1990s.

Economy

Agriculture is the main economic activity in the province. Population is largely farmers and fishermen. The province's main cash crop is orange. However, many other cash crops are introduced including pepper, cashew nuts and cassava. Ecotourism is a new initiative as the province has waterfall, mountains and access to Tonle Sap Lake.

Social Indicators

Pursat ranks medium in many social indicators. Pursat has 28% of the population living under poverty line, while the national average is 19.8%. Infant mortality rate is 31 per 1000 born, slightly above the national average of 28. Education statistics of Pursat show that 13.6% of the adult population is illiterate. However, as of the academic year of 2016-2017, Pursat has a gross enrollment rate of 117.9% in primary level and 51.3% in lower secondary level and 20.5% in upper secondary level.

Table 1: Number of schools, students, and teachers in Pursat province

Education level	Number of Schools	Number of Students	Number of teachers	Enrollment Rates
Pre-school	166	7386	170	
Primary school	301	67739	1613	117.9
Lower Secondary School	44	11386	722	51.3
Upper Secondary School	15	12826	701	20.5
Total	526	99337	3206	

Source: MOEYS, 2017

References

- Ministry of Education Youth and Sport (2017). Education Statistics and Indicators 2016-2017. EMIS office, Department of Planning, Phnom Penh
- National Institute of Statistics (2014). Cambodia Demographic and Health Survey 2014. Ministry of Planning, Phnom Penh.
- National Institute of Statistics (2016). Socio-economic Survey 2015, Ministry of Planning, Phnom Penh

Working Group 1
Youth's Perception and Participation in Local Politics

**Local Youth Political Participation in Cambodia
and its Implications for Democratization**

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At the outset, we would like to express our sincere gratitude to the Graduate School of International Development (GSID) of Nagoya University for organizing such a unique learning process as overseas field work. Especially, we are extremely grateful to all professors, under the coordination of Professor Akiko Ueda, who have worked tirelessly to coordinate and guide us at the school and in the field work. Our special thanks go to Professor Isamu Okada, our supervisor, for his professional guidance, critical and constructive feedback and friendly approach.

The fieldwork would have been impossible without the crucial role of several actors in Cambodia. We are greatly indebted to Dr. Sopheak from the Royal University of Phnom Penh (RUPP), who not only spared her time to advise us but also coordinated our work with the local officials and communities of Pursat Province. The special treatment and warm reception we enjoyed at her house was also memorable. We would also like to express our deepest appreciation to the provincial officials and people of Pursat, Commune Councilors of Krokor District, and Tnoat Chum Commune. The friendly reception and responses of our informants and cooperation of the tour-guide was paramount to the survey. We further commend Sam Ath and Lok Pheaktra from RUPP for their professional dedication and feedback throughout the fieldwork. Our gratitude also goes to Dr. Rath Sethik, Dean of the Faculty of Development Studies and Dr. Sok Soth, Dean of Faculty of Education at RUPP for organizing a presentation and discussion session from which we benefited significantly. Last but not least, we would like to extend our gratitude to the staff of Pursat Century Hotel, who warmly welcomed us, and our driver, who treated us like a father in Cambodia.

1. Introduction

Cambodia has been in the process of democratization since it held its first national election in 1993 under the supervision of the United Nations. With the upcoming national election scheduled to be held in 2018, at the time of this research Cambodia finds itself in a crucial political and socio-economic transformation. In this particular situation, understanding the political participation of youth, who comprise a large proportion of the population, is paramount. In this context, we carried out surveys and semi-structured interviews in Krokor district, Pursat province, the Kingdom of Cambodia from 22nd-29th August 2017.

This report is organized in the following manner. First, in the formal literature review, the conceptual and theoretical aspects of political participation as well as Cambodia's political situation and youth's political participation at the national level are discussed. In the second section, the statement of the problem, research objectives and questions, as well as the hypothesis are briefly discussed. Thirdly, the report discusses the methodology employed to conduct the survey and thereafter presents the main findings of the research. As a follow-up discussion with some analytical perspective, interpretation of the main findings is also presented. In the last section, in the form of recommendations, some thoughts are offered with the view to promote local youth political participation in the Tnoat Chum commune. Finally, the report highlights the main contents and sheds light on the significance of the study.

2. Literature review

2.1 The Essence of Political Participation

Political participation has been the focus of various academic studies and policy debates for a long time. The political participation of citizens has been said to essentially shape the political system in general and the democratization process in particular. The underlying motive and interest behind political participation of individuals and/or groups remains a source of academic and practical controversy among contemporary political and sociological theorists. Political participation of different sectors, and especially that of youth, varies broadly depending on the level of political awareness, educational background, age, gender and socio-cultural realities.

Although there is no universally accepted definition in this particular research area (Uhlener 2001), political participation has often been referred to as political engagement or public involvement in decision making. According to Munroe (2002), political participation is described as the degree to which citizens are exercising their right to engage in political activities, for example to protest, to speak freely, to vote, to influence, or to get more energetically involved. Furthermore, Huntington and Nelson (1976) defined political participation as an activity by citizens designed to influence government decision making, whereas Verba et al. (1995) characterized it as an activity that has the intent or effect of influencing government action either directly by affecting the making or implementation of public policy or indirectly by influencing the selection of people who make those policies.

From a broader perspective, political participation takes conventional and unconventional forms. Conventional forms of participation are more structured and normally lawful, for example joining a political party, voting, lobbying, campaigning, attending political meeting, contacting officials, and so on. On the other

hand, Bourne (2010) presented the following list of activities as being unconventional: protests, demonstrations, barricading a community, firing at security forces, blogging and making social commentaries on talk radio. Marsh (1990) described such activities as ones challenging elites, which is certainly confrontational but not necessarily illegal or unlawful.

For the purpose of this research, we focus on both the conventional and unconventional political participation of youth. This is because, instead of putting more weight on either form, we consider both to be equally important to understand what political participation means to a concrete group of people, Cambodian local youth in our case. By doing so, we will discuss what the patterns of their participation mean to the current dynamics of Cambodia.

2.2 Political Participation and Social Contexts

A number of factors have been identified as being related to political participation. Vecchione and Caprara (2009) found that gender, education and age are significant factors affecting participation levels. More specifically they found that more educated as well as male and elderly people are more likely to engage in political activities compared to other groups. Furthermore, they found that income level was not significantly related to political participation. Verba et al. (1995) suggested that education is a dynamic predictor of political participation, whereas Conway (2001) claimed that although gender gaps in political participation are shrinking, the male population is still more actively engaged than females.

Age as a determinant of political involvement has been a very popular theme in participation research. It has been argued that a number of young people may feel isolated and even excluded from a political system which tends to be self-reproducing and often self-serving. Lister (2007) argues that since young people are often considered to be immature and financially dependent on their parents, they are often not treated as equal members of the planning process and power arrangements.

According to Briggs (2008), Henn et al. (2002; 2005), O'Toole et al. (2003), and Phelps (2004; 2005), there is a steady increase in the corpus of research which suggests that young people are not generally disengaged from politics, but instead they have a critical attitude towards institutional politics. Besides, young people are not a homogeneous group attached to the same behavioral attitudes towards participation in political activities. Geniets (2010) has showed that young women from low socio-economic backgrounds are among the least politically engaged compared to other groups. He also concluded that it has been established that traditional political media do not reach young women from low socio-economic status backgrounds.

More recently, social networking services such as Twitter have been disproportionately used by specific population groups such as young people. Getting real-time information through Twitter about upcoming events and getting actively involved at very short notice demands a person have the capacities to use technology effectively and to have physical strength to join protests on the streets. Arguably participation in subsequent events during demonstrations must be easier for some younger or unemployed people and students, simply because they can afford to be there.

In sum, so far, several factors have been recognized as catalysts which make political participation more likely, such as age, gender, educational level, access to social media networks, and so on. However, it appears that there is an ongoing and wide-ranging theoretical discussion on this aspect.

2.3 Political Participation and Democratization

Democracy as a political system is constituted by representative government, citizens' participation in the political process, freedom (in the wide sense, basic freedoms such as freedom of speech, association, thought, and so on.) and transparency of political acts and processes in general. Thus, political participation is regarded as an integral component of the process of democratization.

The democratization process is related to the general process of socio-economic development (Lipset, 1959) and the process of modernization (Inglehart, 1997; Inglehart & Welzel, 2005). A broad range of research and literature on political participation confirms this relationship both at the macro level (the relationship between the level of participation and the level of socio-economic development in a society) and on the individual level of participation (the political participation and the situation of individuals within social structure; Almond & Verba, 1963; Nie et al., 1969; Verba, 2003; Inglehart & Welzel, 2005; Newton & Montero, 2007).

2.4 Current Cambodian Situation

Cambodia has a parliamentary system and since 1993 has held elections for legislators for the National Assembly and Commune/Sangkat councils. The prime minister, Commune/Sangkat chief, and other local authorities at provincial and district levels are not directly elected but indirectly selected by those representatives elected at national and Commune/Sangkat levels. The elections have taken place periodically and consolidated legitimacy, except in a few cases, such as in 2013 when distrust in the electoral process provoked a riot after the national election.

Since 1979, the Cambodian People's Party (CPP) has dominated the political landscape of Cambodia. The CPP holds a tight grip on voters through a patronage system which links the electorate to the party, utilizing gift-giving, such as material rewards or money politics (Nilsson, 2016).

The Paris Peace Agreement (1991) is regarded as a major political landmark in the recent transformation of Cambodian politics. According to the Paris Accords, Cambodia was called to follow a "system of liberal democracy on the basis of pluralism." The Accords also mandated "periodic and genuine elections...with a requirement that electoral procedures provide full and fair opportunity to organize and participate in the electoral process" (Manikas & Bjornlund, 1998, p. 147). Premier Hun Sen, as a strong leader of the CPP, has been regarded as a guarantor of peace, order, and prosperity following decades of genocide by Khmer Rouge, and in the national elections of 1998, 2003, and 2008, the CPP gained an increasing vote share (Deth and Bultman 2016).

In previous national elections, the Cambodian National Rescue Party (CNRP) had demonstrated a strong surge in support by holding up a rights-based agenda and combatting money politics, which CPP relied on for a long time (Nilson, 2016). Despite being a newly-formed party (2012), CNRP has already established itself as a competitive opposition party. The results of the national election in 2013 and subnational election in 2017 revealed the tight competition between these two parties (CPP: 49% CNRP: 44% in 2013, CPP: 51% CNRP: 44% in 2017).

Within this context, the impact of youth's political participation cannot be neglected in this changing

process. It seems that for both the CPP and CNRP, the votes of youth can be a key factor in forming the government.

On the other hand, the recent rapid socio-economic change of the country has brought a change of social structure. Driven by garment exports and tourism, Cambodia has sustained an average growth rate of 7.6 percent in the period 1994-2015, ranking sixth in the world. As shown in Figure 1, Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in Cambodia has drastically increased every year. According to the World Bank, Cambodia attained lower middle-income status as of 2015, with Gross National Income (GNI) per capita reaching US\$1,070. According to NISC (2014), Cambodian income has also increased dramatically at the individual level (877,000KhR in 2010 and 1,141,000KhR in 2013).

2.5 Youth Political Participation

Deth and Bultman (2016) argued that with an extremely young population, deep shifts in the structure of economy, and a rising middle class, new styles of politics are being demanded. This means that transformation of the social structure can affect the democratization process of Cambodia in some way. According to Chansambath and Chantarasingh (2017), the proportion of youth in the Cambodian population is large. The voice of youth is important for the country's politics and development, and, therefore, they are considered as key resources. However, their space in national politics is still limited, as only 1% of representatives in parliament are youths.

Political participation influences not only the nation but also youths themselves (BBC, 2014). First, it is argued that political participation helps develop the entire community or society. It contributes to building the backbone of a democratic nation because active youth participation plays a significant role to construct consciousness of their community belonging and contribution. Second, youth participation helps to promote the civic and political life of young people. Apart from their contribution to helping develop their community, addressing various social issues and promoting democracy, youth themselves can also benefit from their own participation. Third, political participation promotes the responsibility of youths as citizens, such as open-mindedness, personal responsibility, social and civic competence, moral and ego development, and a sense of efficacy and self-esteem (Chansambath and Chantarasingh, 2017). CDRI (2014) also argued that these attributes are related with volunteering in the community. Accordingly, grass-roots volunteer activities involving young people contribute to promote infrastructure projects, gathering information from villagers, teaching children part-time, night-time security patrols, and raising awareness about voter registration.

Youth motives for political participation have been also the focus of researchers. According to the UNDP (2014), the most common reasons for voting in the Cambodian national and commune election include “to choose a leader”, “to fulfil their duty as a citizens” as well as for “improving infrastructure” and “developing their country”. On the other hand, the reasons for not voting are also revealed as “not registering to vote in time” and “not having an ID card/election card.” Chansambath and Chantarasingh (2017) for their part observed that youth are interested in political participation, but they face some obstacles in their political environment, culture, education and access to information. They further noted that some of the youth have negative perceptions towards political participation because they think that political participation is something that could drag them into ‘trouble’ in a political environment dominated by a single party.

Youth's understanding of politics also differs depending on various factors. UNDP (2014) indicated that a considerable proportion of youth have difficulty to identify or articulate concerns about politics. Accordingly, “the social environment and conservative beliefs such as deference to elders or age hierarchy discourage young people from active participation in or beyond their communities (UNDP2014).” Youth are expected to listen to their elders, and the elders should be in decision-making positions. In the same vein, CDRI (2014) highlighted that economic condition affects youth political participation because poverty and necessity are the utmost priorities for youth.

In sum, youth political participation in Cambodia's socio-economic and political transformation is a growing trend worth noting. Certainly, this significant sector of the of nation holds a very crucial position in this dynamic and it will continue to do so, with potential influence to the country's development.

3. Problem Statement

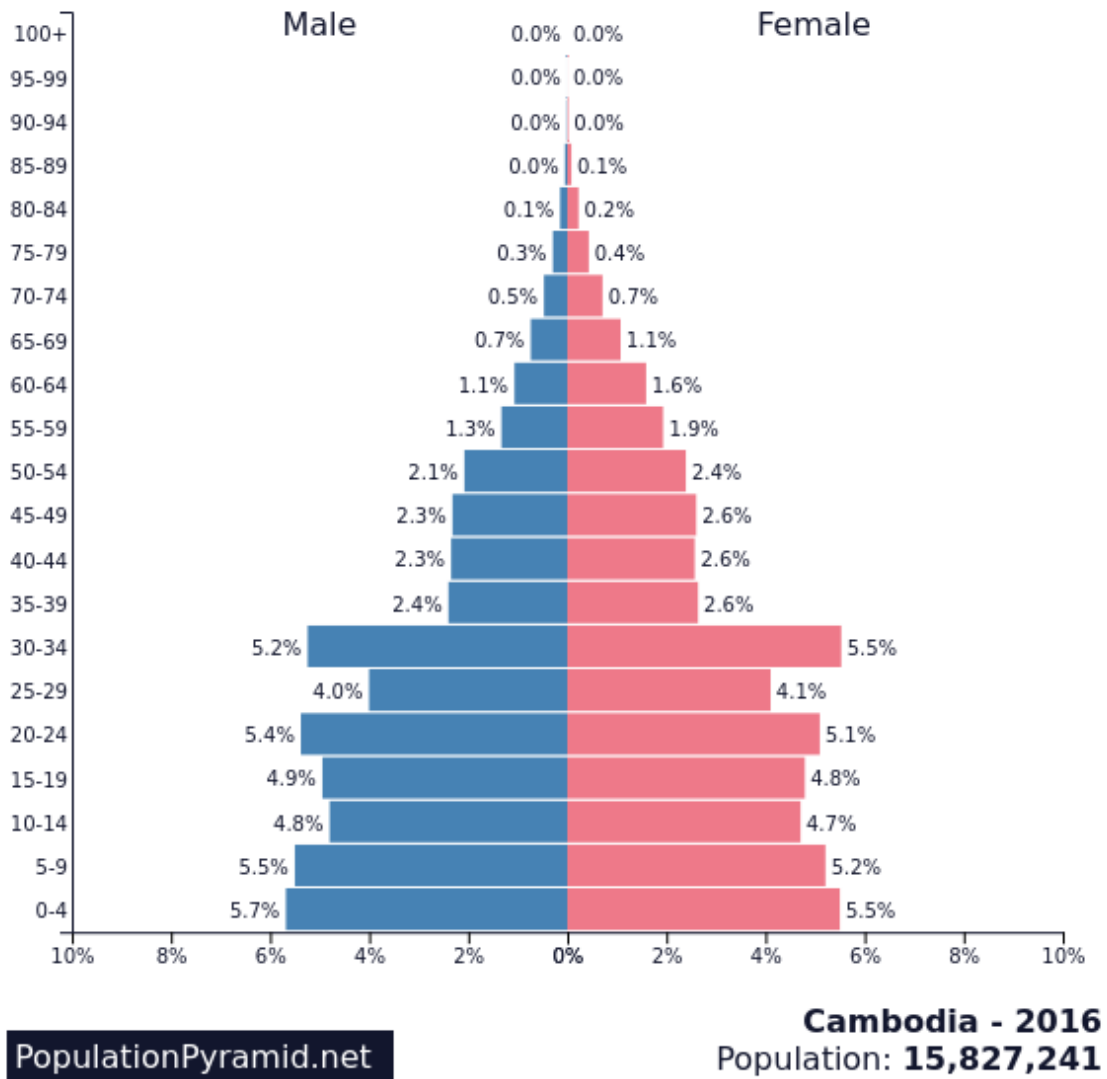
As noted above, Cambodia is a country undergoing rapid socio-economic and political transformation. As demonstrated in the Demographic Distribution of Cambodia (2017), the proportion of the youth is considerable, accounting for almost two-thirds of the total population (Figure 1). This is substantial compared to other age groups in the country.

As the largest age group, Cambodian youth will have a crucial role in shaping the political and socio-economic dynamics of the country. Within such a transformation, it is timely and important to explore the context of political participation of such an integral sector of Cambodian society.

However, it appears that little is known about the current nature of their political participation. In other words, the youth sector and its political participation does not seem to be appropriately recognized.

According to a preliminary interview we conducted with four Cambodian informants, there seems to be disparity in the understanding of the political participation of the youth. The informants were two PhD students at Nagoya University, Graduate School of International Development, another is an employee in a Japanese company, and the last one is a visiting lecturer from the Royal University of Phnom Penh (RUPP). To have a general overview of the situation of youth, their political participation, existence of youth associations and their general aspirations, we conducted individual interviews and consultations. The interviewees had different perceptions of the issue of youth political participation, as some of them think that the youth actively participate in politics while others think they are passive.

Figure 1: Population Pyramid of Cambodia 2016



Population Pyramids of the World from 1950 to 2100 [Retrieved November 26, 2017]

Source: PopulationPyramid.net: <https://www.populationpyramid.net/cambodia/2016/>

4. Research Objectives

As highlighted previously, although there are some studies and reports on political participation in Cambodia, it is difficult to conclude that they all hold the same view on the political participation of youth and the factors that influence their participation, especially at the local level. Hence, as the first objective, we attempt to identify the form and the status of local youth political participation. Secondly, we attempt to study the main challenges to their political participation. Also, we attempt to examine the prospects of youth political participation. Finally, the research aims to analyze the implication of local youth political participation in the political dynamics of Cambodia.

5. Research Questions

To achieve the stated objectives, we set the following three fundamental questions:

- i. How do local youth participate in politics?
- ii. If some youth participate in local politics more actively while others are passive, why?
- iii. How does political participation influence the livelihood of youth?

To identify the form and status of Cambodian youth political participation, this research attempted to reveal how local youth participate in politics. Furthermore, we also explored political platforms as means of political participation. Questions were devised to explore their involvement in formal or informal political platforms.

As far as the second objective, we sought to uncover if some youth participate more actively while others are passive. Through observing the frequency of their political participation and the extent to which they engage in political activity, we attempted to grasp the situation of local youth political participation and find the challenges. In this context, we also tried to discover the factors that can promote active participation.

Finally, through examining the perception of those who are involved in political activities, we attempted to understand how political participation influences the livelihood of youth.

6. Hypothesis

Corresponding to the above research questions, we formed the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1:

It corresponds to the first research question. As far as the forms of political participation are concerned, we assumed that those youth who belong to an organization or association participate in politics more than others.

According to our preliminary interviews with Cambodian informants, we found that there are youth associations or organizations that are engaged in political activities. We assumed that these kinds of platform can be a framework to mobilize them for political participation. In the voting process, for example, they can get access to political information through the connection with party leaders. For government officials, those associations have quite an important role to mobilize collective votes. Even after the election, particularly for the opposition parties, they are potential power to be mobilized for social protest or demonstration against the result.

Hypothesis 2:

Concerning the factors that could have impact on the political participation of youth, we considered the level of income, education, difference of gender, access to communication facilities, and inter and intra-family relationship as potentially influential indicators.

Hypothesis 3:

From a broader perspective, we supposed that the political participation directly or indirectly benefits the livelihood of youth. As argued in the BBC's report (2014), youth political participation has three-way benefits,

namely: it can contribute to the entire community's development, the promotion of the civic and political life of young people, and promotion of their responsibilities as citizens. Hence, we assumed that the level of youth political participation, to some extent, influences their livelihood.

7. Methodology

In order to understand the political participation of the youth in terms of the different forms of participation, political platforms, motives of participation, relationship with local officials, and their overall expectations, we conducted surveys and semi-structured interviews. Our respondents were residents of Tnoat Chum, a community located in Krokor District, Pursat Province, with 3,285 households, and a total population of 14,059. With the aim of gathering empirical data and further comprehending the local political and administrative context, and thereby political participation, we employed two rounds of interview. First, based on a set of questionnaires, a total of 31 youth¹ respondents were randomly selected and interviewed. The second round was a semi-structured interview for 12 respondents: two commune councilors, two community representatives, and eight youth association members.

In the first round of the interviews, we prepared a questionnaire mainly designed to address three interrelated facets of local youth political participation, that is, forms of political participation, platform of political participation, and political perception.

As noted in the literature review, political participation may take different forms, including voting, discussing political issues, meeting with government officials, campaigning, protest, sending letters, and so on. In this regard, although these forms of political participation are not exhaustive, we attempted to examine them in the context of the local youth. We assumed voting as a common form of political participation, hence we asked if the respondents had voted or not in the commune election held in June 2017, and how they knew the information (whether through parents, acquaintances, official announcements, candidates' campaigns, social media, or other means). To have an overview of their political participation, we further asked if the respondents had ever participated in voting, meeting with government officials, volunteering for campaigns, talking or discussing election-related issues, engaging in social media concerning an election, participating in social movements (such as protests) or writing a letter to government officials. As a follow-up, we also asked about the underlying motives of the respondents if they had participated in the listed activities. In addition, we attempted to learn if they faced any challenges in terms of accessing election centers.

As far as the platform of political participation is concerned, we endeavored to understand the possible means by which the youth are engaged in local politics. These platforms can be both formal, such as political parties or governmental institutions, and informal, such as youth associations or other forms of organizations. Accordingly, respondents were asked about their membership and involvement in such political platforms. To grasp their level of engagement, we further inquired if any political activities are conducted in those platforms. More importantly, to comprehend the relationship and context of youth interaction with local officials, we explored how they make requests and their involvement in community affairs. Essentially, at this stage of our survey, we realized that the village structure and village chief are the most important platforms through which citizens engage and participate in local politics as well as socio-economic activities.

Finally, to contextualize the general political perception and awareness of the local youth, we forwarded

questions concerning the level of their satisfaction in terms of social services and their expectation at the national, local and personal levels in the context of political and economic changes. Moreover, we asked them to elaborate on the priorities of their community. Depending on the interview environment, we consulted on average 20 to 30 minutes with each respondent. Additionally, for clarification and confirmation purposes, we asked every respondent extra questions and their responses are reflected in the findings.

In the second stage of interview, which were the semi-structured interview, our approach was guided by the results and observations of the first survey. The survey had provided us insight to revise our previous thoughts and to better prepare for the semi-structured interview. In this context, besides the basic socio-economic information of the commune, we asked the commune councilors about their perception of youth political participation and their relationships with the youth. We further inquired if some specific activities or programs are undertaken to promote youth political participation. From the interview with the community representatives, who also happened to be the commune councilors, we attempted to understand the role and perception of parents in the participation of their sons and daughters in local politics. Moreover, we inquired if the local culture motivates youth to participate in politics. As for the youth association representatives, questions related to the purposes and activities of their associations, local youth's political participation and their motivations as well as challenges were asked. Furthermore, we inquired about the attitude of commune councilors towards the youth and their community priorities to be addressed by the government. Although the interviewees were selected from among the local officials (either by the political party or youth associations), their status and experience were crucial in order to corroborate the hypotheses and to have a comprehensive understanding of the overall context of local politics and youth participation.

8. Main Findings

Before proceeding to the main findings, it has to be noted that the scope of the survey and interview was limited to informants from the Tnoat Chum Commune in Krokor District, a locality mostly dominated by the Cambodian People's Party (CPP).

On the basis of the survey and semi-structured interview, we collected significant data that illustrate the level and context of local youth political participation. For convenience of reporting, the main findings are summarized in accordance with the main questions and structure of the questionnaire as well as the semi-structured interview. Depending on the prevalence and frequency among the respondents, three major findings are identified for the form of political participation, the platform of participation, and the expectations. In the following sections, each finding will be presented with the support of empirical data.

8.1 Socio-demographic Profile

Tnoat Chum Commune has 3,285 households, and a total population of 14,059.

For the first round, 31 respondents were randomly selected for the interviews. These informants were diverse in terms of their gender (18 female and 13 male), age (between 18 and 30 years old), educational levels (elementary to university), occupation (students, farmers, housewives, self-employed), and their marital status (married and single).

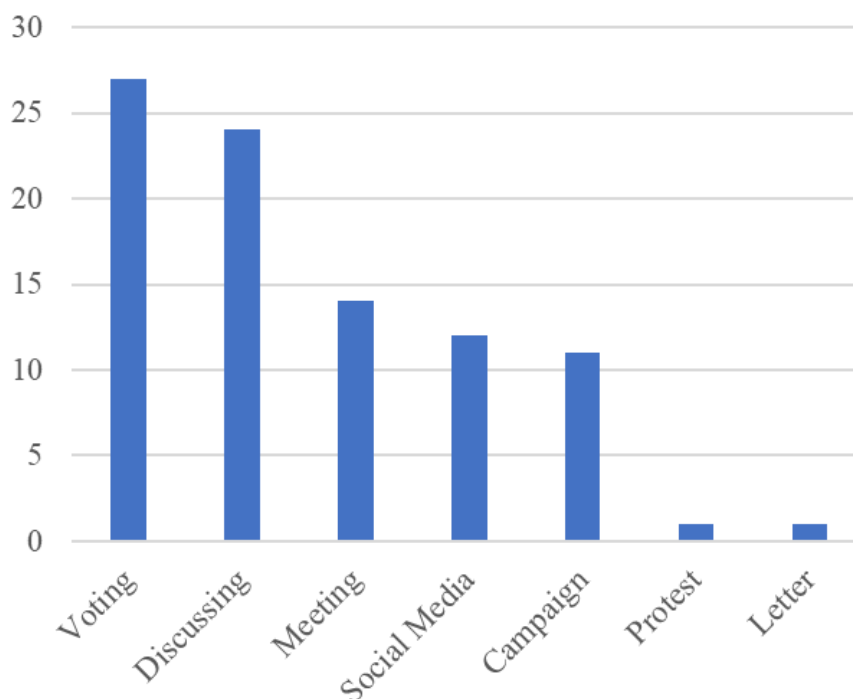
The second round was a semi-structured interview for 12 respondents: two commune councilors (male and female, aged 60 and 56), two community representatives (male and female, aged 57 and 60), and eight youth association members (3 male and 5 female, aged between 18 and 30).

8.2 Forms of Political Participation

As demonstrated in Figure 2, the different forms of political participation have been categorized according to the responses. Voting, discussing election issues and meeting with government officials stood out as the major forms of political participation.

The other indicators, namely social media, campaigning, protesting and sending letters received low frequency of responses, at 12, 11, 1, and 1, respectively. Although 12 respondents mentioned social media usage, they indicated that they did not use it for election-related information. Those who joined campaigns indicated that they were invited by their party. Protesting and sending letters were rare among the respondents.

Figure 2: Forms of Political Participation in Knot Chum commune



Note: Sample size is 31, 16 (M) 15 (F); the number of yes answers were counted for each activity

Source: the authors

8.2.1 Voting

As noted above, the commune election in June 2017 was used as a reference to explore the electoral participation of the youth in local politics. 27 out of 31 respondents replied that they had voted. The remaining four respondents did not vote because two of them said they were under 18 at the time of the vote, one said that he lost his identity card, and another one said that he had just moved to the commune. The motives of each

voter seemed to differ depending on his/her political orientation, party and family influence, personal awareness, and so on. Generally, the main reasons to vote were: to support their party and elect a good leader of the commune; to be a good citizen through fulfilling their obligation; and to have a leader who could realize their needs, including better roads, schools, hospital facilities, and job opportunities. Concerning the sources of information related to election events, almost all respondents declared that they had prior knowledge through different connections, with parents, acquaintances and television the most frequent answers. Moreover, none of the respondents indicated difficulties in transportation or access to election centers. In general, voting centers were located within less than one kilometer. Overall, it can be concluded that voting appeared to be the most common form of political participation in which the majority of youth could actively participate.

8.2.2 Talking About or Discussing Election Issues

The second-most common form of political participation was discussing election-related issues. Out of the total respondents, 24 indicated that they had been engaged in discussions with family members, friends and neighbors. However, some of them said that the discussions were limited to only basic information such as the place or the date of the election. Although this factor may be manifested only during election events, we assumed that it would be an important lead to realize the political consciousness of the respondents. However, as indicated above, perhaps because of the fact that the commune is a CPP-dominated locality, respondents did not seem to engage in substantive political discussions apart from sharing basic election issues.

8.2.3 Meeting with Government Officials

Meeting with government officials also had frequent positive responses as a form of local youth political participation. 14 respondents expressed their participation in meetings with government officials. According to those respondents with positive answers, these meetings are either organized by government officials or initiated by the villagers. In most cases, they said that government officials and party representatives conducted meetings to transmit administrative directives. During election times, for example, party officials mobilize the locals to secure political support. According to two commune councilors, (interview with Mr. H & Ms. C, August 24, 2017), the youth, who constitute the largest percentage of the general voters, are the main targets of the candidates. Indeed, the commune councilors claimed that they maintain a good relationship with the youth and indicated that they often organized meetings.

The local people could also initiate meetings in order to make collective requests to the officials. One youth informant, for instance, shared her experience in a meeting with a government official in which she brought to his attention a damaged road in her neighborhood. Although she could not confirm that her request received immediate consideration, she said that the road was eventually repaired. Other reasons for the local youth to meet with government officials included administrative services, such as to obtain a marriage certificate.

8.3 Political Platform

The second major task of the survey was exploring the existing political platforms that enable youth to participate in local politics. We assumed political parties as the formal means of political platforms, and

associations/organizations as informal platforms. As is revealed below, however, both platforms are highly shaped by the ruling political party, the CPP.

8.3.1 Political Party

As indicated above, the Tnoat Chum Commune is one of the strongholds of the Cambodian People's Party. Probably because of this reason, 10 youth out of 31 respondents testified that they participated in political activities through the CPP. One of those platforms is the CPP Youth League (the League hereafter), a youth association that formally operates under the party's mentorship. According to the information gathered, the League is composed of eight youth representatives from the commune and implements programs set out by the party. Members of the League undertake their activities on a voluntary basis and no payment is given. Indeed, the youth seemed to be self-motivated to be engaged in such voluntary activities.

As an important political platform, we also realized that the League and its activities stimulate the youth to aspire for future political leadership. One League member, for instance, expressed his long-term ambition to be a commune councilor. However, despite being 30 years old and having some experience in the commune/party activities, he confessed feeling that he lacks the necessary qualities/experience to be a commune councilor at this time. He also confirmed that there has been no young commune councilor elected in any commune or Sangkat of Cambodia yet. Such a trend could be further proven by the fact that almost all the commune councilors we interacted with had been in their positions for more than 20 years. However, it has to be underlined that the ruling party still provides a political platform for the youth and the locals at large.

8.3.2 Associations/Organizations

In line with our previous proposition, we endeavored to grasp the existence of youth or other professional associations or organizations and their political activities. Although we discovered some associations, only five of the total respondents held memberships. The two main associations are the teachers' association and youth volunteer group. Apparently, the teachers' association mainly deals with educational matters and there are no political activities carried out by it. Some teacher informants, however, indicated that they held meetings with commune councilors who are in charge of educational matters to discuss logistical needs. Thus, the association seemed to maintain a relationship with government/party officials for any issues related to their concern.

The youth volunteer group, locally identified as the 'Red Ant', was found to be the most vigorous local youth association that provides an important political platform. According to its members, the group was originally established by a school teacher as a form of student association. However, as respondents explained, the group soon appealed to the CPP officials and they began to make use of it for promoting various party activities. In our extensive interview, we realized that the Red Ant had remained instrumental in helping local people with various needs. For instance, the group distributed food items and clothes to the needy in remote rural areas. Pregnant and elderly people were the main targets of the support activities. Moreover, the youth also engaged in agricultural activities and assisted local farmers. Based on observation of our respondents, the group appeared to be enthusiastic and self-motivated. In fact, the practice of helping each other and voluntarism seemed to be an inherent characteristic of the Tnoat Chum community. A credit to the CPP's promotional

strategy, such practice seemed to be utilized for maximizing political leverage and served as a strong political support.

8.3.3 Village and Village Chief

An important platform that was noticed during the course of our survey was the village and village chief. Such an administrative structure was not foreseen in our questionnaire and it was only incorporated during the fieldwork. The village is the smallest administrative unit headed by a chief who is appointed by commune councilors. As a matter of administrative procedure, villagers are supposed to maintain direct contact with the village chief and communicate their demands through him/her. 12 out of 31 respondents, for instance, mentioned their frequent contact with the village chief and participated in village meetings. Evidently, the village seemed to remain a vital administrative structure and provides an essential political platform between villagers and commune councilors.

8.3.4 Family/Parents' Influence

The role of family/parents in influencing the local youth's political orientation and participation is worth noting in the commune. A commune councilor whom we interviewed as a community representative indicated that she personally encourages her children to participate in politics, through which they can identify and elect a good leader who can assure freedom and peace. She further admitted that her children are better educated than her generation and could make better decisions. Mentioning that the local culture has been changing over time, currently there is no cultural barrier for youth to participate in politics. She also believed that most parents encourage their children to participate in their community affairs. Youth representatives for their part confirmed that their parents are very supportive of their activities in the associations. As highlighted above, the political participation of the youth is highly oriented by the political history and party officials' indoctrination.

8.4 Expectations

Through the third component of the questionnaire, we further strived to contextualize the general political perception of the youth by inquiring about their expectation of change at the national, local and personal levels. From these efforts, we gathered some important insights.

Most respondents expressed their satisfaction with the overall social services provided at the commune level. They acknowledged that the commune had developed more than before in terms of infrastructure, schools, local businesses, and so on. They further wished to see more community development programs. As far as their expectation of economic and political changes, two-thirds expressed their expectation of some changes. However, they did not clearly express the nature and perspectives of change when asked. Similarly, 11 out of 31 respondents who indicated that they did not expect changes could not elaborate on their responses when we asked them to do so. In rare cases, respondents appeared to be uncomfortable to openly express their views.

At the personal level, most informants indicated expectation of positive changes such as to be

economically better off by being engaged in private businesses. At the community level, they identified some specific social services to be implemented by the government. Construction of water ponds, roads and expansion of schools were among the major ones. Furthermore, the respondents indicated some societal problems that needed to be addressed, namely robbery, drug abuse and illegal tree cutting.

9. Interpretation of Findings

The quest to understand local youth political participation in Tnoat Chum Commune did not only involve youth. It was also imperative to understand the general historical and socio-cultural aspects of the community. In this regard, the legacy of the Khmer Rouge regime appears to play a major role in shaping the current political context and perception of Cambodia. CPP officials and its supporters retrospectively compare the hardships of the old times with the prevailing peace and prosperity. Indeed, maintaining the peace and harmony of their nation guides the ruling party. During an event organized to share our findings with the provincial officials of Pursat, the deputy governor stated that during the Khmer Rouge period, there were no freedoms at all, and people were killed, tortured and starved. Currently, the Cambodian population is enjoying development and freedom. Essentially, political participation of the youth in the Tnoat Chum Commune is closely associated and understood in this context. The feedback of the government/party officials clearly imply the political value attached to this background. Therefore, in order to have a comprehensive understanding of local youth political participation, the historical and political context is worth noting.

As manifested by various political activities in the commune, the CPP maintains a strong influence at the grassroots level. The support activities of the volunteer youth groups exemplify the party's influence and control over local communities. Indeed, such practice could be regarded as one form of the so-called 'gift-giving' politics, as referred to by Nilsson (2016). As attested by the volunteer youth group (the Red Ant), such practices are seen as noble and benevolent measures of the political party towards the local people. Accordingly, the beneficiaries are extremely appreciative of goods and support offered by the party. From our own observations, we could notice the satisfaction and pride of the youth who are involved in such activities. Despite its political connotation, the culture of supporting the needy appeared to be deeply rooted in the communities.

Research on Cambodia has explored the creation of social capital and volunteerism in Khmer communities in various ways. The different aspects of these concepts can be separated into: reciprocal social exchanges; traditional volunteerism; state-sponsored and what could be broadly termed 'modern civil society' volunteerism (Brown 2008). By implication, such socio-cultural practices can be easily employed by political parties, as the CPP does, to garner a political support.

Despite their party-affiliated activities, it is generally believed that the youth are not politically experienced. As highlighted by the testimony of the CPP Youth League representative, youth candidates who contested seats for commune councilors did not get votes. Commune councilors themselves seem to consider the youth as sources of support for their party candidacy. However, as confirmed by the interviewed councilors, the level of support is showing a gradual decrease in recent years. Migration to urban centers as well as to Thailand in search of better job opportunities was mentioned as one of the reasons for such deterioration of

support for the CPP. Therefore, the CPP needs to strategize about upgrading and promoting youth officials so as to maintain their support. Furthermore, the youth, as the working and dynamic force of the community, have to also be engaged in the community development planning and implementation. In fact, we learned that there is no development program or budget dedicated to youth.

The results of the survey revealed a high rate of political participation, particularly in voting. However, it was also noticed that there is a gap of understanding and articulation in expressing their motives or expectations. 11 out of 31 respondents, for instance, did not explain their motives for voting and expectation of change in the economic and political situation. On the basis of this, we interpret that there possibly exists different political understanding according to the educational or other background of each youth. For example, a respondent with elementary level of education could not get the point of our question, or sometimes hesitated to answer, while an RUPP graduate expressed critical opinions about the current political situation, sometimes even in English.

10. Recommendations

In line with the main findings and general implications as well as the local context, we identify the following recommendations to be considered by the local government, commune officials, village chief and the community to strengthen the youth political participation:

To increase the level of youth participation and representation at the village meeting, instead of having one representative from each family, which in most cases are the parents, the commune councilor, village chief and family members should consider inviting the youth and encouraging them to participate in the discussions.

To change the existing perception that youth are too inexperienced for political positions, affirmative measures should be taken to empower youth as commune councilors. Considering the substantial number of youth in the commune, it is imperative to accommodate their views in development planning and implementation as well as the administrative affairs of the community. Thus, at least one youth representative needs to be appointed at the commune councilor level.

Finally, for further research, the sensitivity of the topic needs to be carefully considered and utmost flexibility is necessary. In the course of the survey and feedback from government officials, we realized some degree of skepticism and resistance to openly discuss the subject matter. Hence, any further research and policy consideration of the topic should be cognizant of the internal political dynamics of Cambodia.

11. Conclusion

Political participation, as the actions of citizens intended to influence the outcome of a political issue, has been central to the discussion of democratization and electoral politics. Individual citizens, depending on their political interests and orientations, can be involved in different forms of political participation, namely voting, public consultation, political discussion, meeting with government officials, demonstrations, protests, civil disobedience, and so on. Other forms may include signing petitions, volunteering for a campaign, writing a letter to a public official, and so on. All these actions have direct or indirect effects on the performance of a government as well as the political attitudes and perceptions of the citizens.

This research was inspired by the recent socio-economic and democratic transformation of Cambodia. Very notably, however, the fact that the Cambodian youth constitute almost two-thirds of the total population, the largest in South-east Asia, stimulated us to conduct fieldwork research to understand youth political participation, especially at the local level. The preliminary interviews/consultations with some Cambodian informants, revealing a disparity of understanding on the level of youth political participation, also provoked us to further inquire and understand the political participation of youth in the context of the current political dynamism of Cambodia. The fieldwork was conducted through questionnaires and interviews with a total of 43 informants (youth, association representatives, commune councilors and community representatives) in Tnoat Chum Commune.

Key findings of the study confirmed that the local youth's election turnout for the commune election of 2017, 27 out of 31 (87%), seems to almost correspond with the general trend at the national level (86%, according to early reports; Chansambath and Chantarasingh, 2017). Mainly mobilized through the CPP platform, local youth participated in the election at a very high rate. Discussing election related issues, such as place and date of election, appeared as the second form of political participation of the youth, where 14 out of 31 expressed for doing so. Meeting with government officials also seemed a common form of political participation of the local youth, as 12 out of 31 indicated their participation in meetings organized by commune councilors or village chiefs.

As far as the political platforms is concerned, the study found that the CPP provided an important political platform for the local youth and the commune at large. Indeed, in Tnoat Chum Commune, as a stronghold of the CPP, the youth are further engaged in socio-political activities through party-led programs to help the poor and pregnant women. Basically, the Youth League and Red Ant group, important political platforms, operate under the direct guidance and mentorship of the CPP and its senior members. The village is another crucial administrative unit that allows villagers, including the youth, to participate in local community affairs. The village chief maintains a special position as a bridge between the villagers and the commune councilors, through which s/he transmits villagers' requests and needs. In the same vein, the family/parents play an important role in nurturing the youth with their local tradition, history and patriotism. The testimonies of the community representatives and members of the youth associations revealed that parents (senior party members or supporters) encourage the youth to participate in local politics. As opposed to such positive remarks, however, the general perception of youth as inexperienced to exercise political power is still reflected in the commune. The confession of a youth representative, who wished to be a commune councilor after some reasonable time, is illustrative of such an attitude.

The study also attempted to understand the perception of local youth towards politics through their expectations. Accordingly, although most of the youth expressed their satisfaction with existing public services, there seems to be a gap of understanding in terms of expressing their opinions on their expectations of socio-economic and political changes. Educational background appears to influence the disparity of understanding and articulation among respondents.

To sum up, understanding the political participation and perception at the local level, such as in Tnoat Chum Commune, involves several factors. Political parties, associations, commune councilors, and village chiefs as well as families and local culture considerably shape the context of youth participation. Hoping that the study has revealed and discussed some key findings and laid out the context to understand local youth political participation, it may be significant for commune officials, village chiefs and the community to adopt youth-centered socio-economic and political development. Furthermore, we hope that the study will stimulate profound academic and policy research focused on local youth political participation.

Notes

1. For this research, we adopted 18-30 as our operational definition of youth. This is because voting eligibility is from 18 years old, and 30 is the maximum threshold as recognized by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports. By using this definition, we try not to be biased by any definition used by political parties.

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Working Group 2
Labour Migration for Family Livelihood

**ILMs remittance and the challenge of poverty reduction
in Krokor District, Cambodia**

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1. Introduction

According to the International Organization for Migration, international labour migration can be defined as “the movement of a person or a group of persons across an international border” (IOM, n.d.). This external migration occurs around the world mostly from South to North and from South to South. Some of the time, internal labour migration is from South to South or from one developing country to another developing country. According to previous research, many scholars found that in developing countries, every year numerous young people enter the labor market and Cambodia as a developing country is not an exception. It was estimated about 250,000 new young workers start search for job opportunities each year (Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training [MoLVT], 2010). However, due to the lack of domestic employment opportunities and the attraction of wages offered abroad, Cambodians have a tendency to move out of their country to find better work; there were 350,000 Cambodian migrants in 2010 (World Bank, 2011). Indeed, for these reasons in Cambodia many young people choose to migrate to other countries, especially neighbouring Thailand. This migration to Thailand enables Cambodian migrants to send some money to their families left behind.

In 2010 the World Bank estimated that Cambodian migrants sent home about 364 million USD as remittances. This number is considerably lower than remittances to other countries: 1.2 billion to Thailand, 4 billion to Vietnam, 13.5 billion to Philippines, and 4.2 billion to Bangladesh. Furthermore, forty percent of Cambodian migrant workers in Thailand reported that remittances were the main sources of income for their families, and the money was mainly spent on daily expenses, health care, and household appliances (Max & Rim, 2013).

There are important reasons why we chose international migration as our focus for this overseas fieldwork (OFW) in Cambodia. If labour migration is well managed, generally it generates a considerable employment and income effect not only in the short and medium terms, but also in the long term in the case of many countries in the Southeast Asian region. This means labour migration can contribute to poverty reduction. Therefore, the pressure for emigration is significantly increasing (Sophal, 2012).

Tracing back in history, Cambodia is a relative latecomer in terms of cross-border labour migration. As for the migration trend, it has transformed in recent years; for example, the change from forced migration of refugees or displaced people due to civil war to voluntary migration in search of work in other countries in the last two decades. However, many out-migrants travel by illegal or informal ways these days, mostly to Thailand, while the legal option is relatively new, costly, and inconvenient for most. In practice, 249,055 undocumented migrants submitted their registration documents to register in Thailand from 15 June 2011 to 15 September 2011 (Tunon & Rim, 2013). Furthermore, the number of workers who migrated officially was only about 25,000 from 1998 to the end of 2008 according to the official statistics of MoLVT in 2009 (MoLVT, 2009). In terms of the drivers of migration, it is both the lack of employment in Cambodia and the availability of jobs in the receiving countries such as Thailand, Malaysia, Korea, Japan, and Singapore. The last decade has seen a new wave of migration to work in Thailand and other countries (Sophal, 2012).

2. Problem statement

The wages available abroad may be a push factor for people to migrate. A Cambodian socio-economic survey in 2009 showed that the daily wage for agricultural activity was about 3.44 USD, while the salary in other countries such as Thailand was 9.78 USD (Tunon & Rim, 2013). In addition, Thailand and Cambodia share a border, which may facilitate people crossing to find a job in Thailand. Therefore, we chose international migration to Thailand as our OFW research topic.

Remittances are important to the livelihood of Cambodian ILM (international labour migrant) families. Remittances are also important for wider economic development. The lack of regulation of migrants and the use of remittances on consumption are not ideal for the issue of broader development. Family livelihood and community development are not sustainable without remittances. In our research, there was the need to identify the structure of remittances for improved poverty reduction. We needed to think about how remittances could be used in a better way in order to contribute to the reduction of poverty for the smooth development of Cambodian districts such as Krokor.

3. Research Objectives and Questions

3.1 Research Objectives

Our main research objective was to identify the effects of ILM remittance on poverty reduction in Krokor District, Cambodia. As for sub-research objectives, they were as follows: to identify the effects of remittances on the livelihood of families with migrants and to find the differences in certain indicators after the families received remittances. Indicators which show an improvement in livelihood and reduction in poverty include transportation means (motorbikes), cell phones, cement bricks for the walls of houses, roof tiles, and/or cultivators. Moreover, we attempted to find the effects of remittances on the local development of Krokor, such as the use of donation money from local people by pagodas.

3.2 Research Questions

The main research questions were:

- What are the impacts of ILMs' remittances on poverty reduction in Krokor, Cambodia?
 - ⇒ According to indicators which we could see in the local area, the criteria of poverty reduction were assumed to be obvious in the research.

As for **sub-research questions**,

The first one was:

- How does remittance contribute to the improvement of family livelihood?

This question focuses on changes in indicators after families began receiving remittances.

The other question was:

- How can remittance be employed to contribute to broader local development in Krokor?

This involves how pagodas use money donated by local people, some of which may come from remittances.

- ⇒ We focused on economic impacts for this research, because we had limited time and the evidence of poverty alleviation using indicators could be easily communicated to the local government.

4. Literature review

Our research was shaped based on the review of previous studies and documents.

4.1 The Relationship between International Labor Migration (ILM) and Poverty Reduction

In 2010, there were an estimated 350,400 Cambodian migrants (World Bank, 2011 p. 84). According to the Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training, Cambodia's labor force was projected to grow by 22 per cent between 2007 and 2015. As a result of the limitation of opportunities in the domestic market and the low wages compared to the attractive ones offered abroad, Cambodians are showing a tendency to move to other countries to find better employment.

In terms of poverty reduction, over the period 2004 - 2011, the poverty rate fell dramatically in terms of income poverty. There are many factors contributing to the decrease in income poverty, such as the increase in the price of rice, growth in agricultural wages and higher incomes in non-agricultural businesses. However, due to the high migration rates, cash and in-kind remittances also play an important role to increase the consumption of many rural households. Between 2004 and 2009, income from remittances increased 25% (Cambodia Country Poverty Analysis, 2014).

It is unclear if remittances can contribute to poverty reduction; however, the 25% increase in income from remittances influenced us to do research to determine if the impact of that income source will lift residents of Krokor out of poverty.

4.2 The Effects of ILM on Poverty Reduction

There is some evidence from previous studies about the effect of ILM on poverty reduction. Richard H. Adams Jr. and John Page (2003) examined the impact of ILM and remittances on poverty alleviation for 74 low and middle-income developing countries. They found that international remittances have a strong significant impact on reducing poverty. On average, a 10 per cent increase in the share of international remittances in a country's GDP will lead to a 1.6 percent decline in the share of people living on less than \$1.00 per day. However, that number may not demonstrate the large effect of ILM due to the fact that migrants have a tendency to transfer their remittances by unregulated channels. This research showed us that remittances can play a positive role in the reduction of poverty in developing countries. However, this research did not mention about the negative impacts of migration.

In a study by Heng Molyaneth in 2013, which was conducted in 234 households from four villages in Banteay Meanchey province, Cambodia, her research found that the decision to engage in overseas migration was based on family consultation, and the effects of ILMs can be positive and negative. It was shown that the positive effect of ILMs' remittances consist of improving the livelihood of migrant households, especially in terms of consumption. However, this research also has shown that ILMs have negative impact on households' productive investments, including education and agricultural tools, and also create a situation of dependence for the family left behind.

Heng (2013) sums up her argument in the following quotation:

Regarding the consumption-based poverty, Cross border labour migration (CBLM) reduced poverty by improving household's ownership of durable goods and house quality but exacerbated poverty in terms of education since MHHs had fewer households members currently enrolled in school than non-MHHs. The effect on house quality was more visible than the effect on ownership of durable goods because MHHs were more eager to improve their house condition to a level comparable with that of non-MHHs. Regarding the production effect, the present study found that CBLM negatively affected MHHs income diversification measured by the number of economic activities (p. 217).

The impact of remittances on household's livelihood is clearly described by Sophal (2012) in terms of percentage. Thus, according to this author, "ILM's remittances contribute about 77% to the migrant household's consumption which includes 20% for food, 12% for debt repayment and 8% for medical healthcare" (p. 157). However, "remittances contribute only about 23% of household's productive activity such as fertilizer for farming 3%, land for production 5%, machinery for agriculture 4%, vehicles for business 2% and investment in new business 1%, loan to others at interest 1% and other 6%" (p. 157).

This research gave us more details about the contribution of remittances to the reduction of poverty but did not clarify whether this contribution can be related to the documented or undocumented status of migrants. Therefore, our research attempted to identify the impacts of remittances on poverty reduction and fill out the gap from previous studies.

4.3 Conception of Poverty

There are two different conceptions of poverty, the orthodox and the alternative view (Baylis and Smith, 2011). In the orthodox view, the notion of poverty is related to the lack of money or income. According to this view, people are poor because they do not have money to buy food and satisfy their other basic material needs. However, according to the alternative view, poverty includes both the lack of material and nonmaterial needs. Therefore, poverty is a situation where people cannot meet their material and nonmaterial needs through their own efforts. The United Nations' definition of poverty reflects this alternative approach. Indeed, for the UN, poverty is "more than the lack of income and resources to ensure a sustainable livelihood. Its manifestations include: hunger, malnutrition, limited access to education, health care, social insurance and other basic services, social discrimination, social exclusion and the lack of participation in decision-making" (United Nations, 2015). Therefore, this is the concept of poverty we used as part of our conceptual framework for this study.

5. Hypotheses

Based on our research questions and objectives, discussion with Cambodians at the Graduate School of International Development, and the literature we studied, we formulated two hypotheses prior to the fieldwork. First, we hypothesized that remittances may have an important impact on the reduction of poverty in Krokor District in the province of Pursat. Second, migrant families' donations to pagodas might make a significant contribution to community development.

In conclusion, we hypothesized that our research could contribute to the understanding of both the alleviation of poverty for families and to community development in Krokor.

6. Methodology

To carry out this study, we used the qualitative method. This method was based on primary and secondary data:

- Primary data

Our primary data was based on three targets: migrant households, families with member(s) working in the local factories, and monks and lay workers in pagodas. We collected our primary data during four days, from 22nd to 27th August 2017, in Kampong Pou Commune, Krokor District. We used a focus group method to conduct interviews with twelve families with members working in the local factories in the district. We also conducted semi-structured interviews with eleven households with migrants in Thailand. Furthermore, we did interviews with monks and lay workers at two pagodas and some local officials. Also it is important to mention that our purposive sampling method was facilitated by the commune and village chiefs.

- Secondary data

We collected the secondary data based on some books, reports, and articles related to our topic. Moreover, for the purpose of this research and based on the previous literature review, we focused our research on a theoretical framework based on both the neoclassical theory of migration and also the Cambodian ideology of making merit. According to the neoclassical theory of migration, international labor migration is an individual decision for maximizing income (Massey et al, 1993). However, as we discuss later, in our research we found out that this theory does not reflect very accurately the context of Cambodians' migration to Thailand.

The Cambodian ideology of making merit is an ethical and moral principle whereby doing good for people produces happiness and benefits from divine blessing. Therefore, this ideology was used as a hypothesis to justify the level of migrants' participation in the reduction of poverty and community development. However, in our research we found out that this theory does not have significance for poverty alleviation or achieving community development, because the donations given to the monks were only assigned for traditional and religious purposes, as we outline in greater detail in the Findings section.

7. Findings

We interviewed 11 migrant households and 12 households with members working in local factories. We made some significant findings and comparisons. We will start by examining results from the migrant households.

For the migrant households we discovered three types of experience: positive, negative and neutral. For the positive experience, we found that they have favorable material changes, such as buying a new motorbike, building a new house or expanding a business. For the negative cases, we found some families did not have any positive changes and sometimes they remain poor and vulnerable. For neutral cases, some families have experienced only small material improvements. They have enough money for daily life but it is not enough for saving or upgrading their houses. In the 11 respondent families, 6 families are positive cases, 2 families are negative cases and 3 families are neutral cases.

7.1 Positive Experience of Migration

The families who testified to positive experiences of international labor migration to Thailand seem to have several common features. One of these is having an established network within Thailand. For example, Family 1 of our sample has five children working in Thailand; the eldest son has been there for twenty years, and has supported and facilitated the migration of other family members to work together on a rubber plantation.

Duration of migration may also be a significant positive factor. In the case of the same family, the migrants now speak Thai fluently. This allows them to find better-paying jobs compared to other workers who can only do basic physical tasks. We hypothesize that this may also allow them to work in jobs that are better paid than basic manual labor, such as in factories or as housekeepers.

Those with positive experiences often have multiple family members working in Thailand. This has a strong effect on the amount of remittance sent back. In Family 1, the migrants were sending 2000 USD a year; Family 2 has three members working in Thailand who send 150 USD home a month. The three work together as a construction team, and one of them is the team manager, and earns more money.

Higher remittance allows for more possibility of poverty alleviation and improved family wellbeing. For example, Family 4 has used remittances to buy a motorbike, build a new house, and buy a smartphone to do video chats with their children in Thailand. Families 1 and 2 have also used remittances to buy water buffaloes and power tillers, thus improving their agricultural efficiency. For example, by using water buffaloes and power tillers people can save cultivation time and improve yield. Family 6 has used the gains from labor migration to expand their agricultural lands, from two to ten hectares. Family 8 has used remittance money to expand the family store.

The majority of those who have positive migration experiences are documented workers with passports and work visas. A few families are still in the process of getting passports and work visas; however, they can still send small amounts of remittances. Some may have begun as undocumented workers but legalized their status once they had saved money. They may also have had initial high expenses, as a visa and passport cost 660 USD as opposed to 180 USD for the broker's fees for undocumented workers, but have benefitted from having regular status by having access to contract positions that have higher pay and better social and legal protections. For example, Family 7's ILMs has paid sick leave; Family 8's works for a company that retains

90 USD a month as mandatory savings, to be paid out to workers after two years, which acts as a financial safety net.

Those with positive experiences also have a tendency to visit home at least once a year for the New Year festival. This has implications for their continued social ties in their home area that may have positive effects on their sense of wellbeing. In conclusion, for the positive cases, they may be aware of the long term livelihood strategies of migrants; positive migrants send remittances to their parents for buying plots of land, building new houses with permanent materials, and send school-age children home for studying. Therefore, remittances can have positive effects on family-level poverty reduction.

7.2 Negative Experience of Migration

Two out of eleven families have had negative experiences of migration. Their cases merit individual examination.

In the first case, Family 3 work together as a couple in Thailand; however, since the husband works as a temporary construction worker, which is unstable work, his wife works as a housekeeper and needs to cover daily expenses from their earnings. When their income is low, they cannot send money home to support their child. Although they are documented, this has not been a path to higher wages. Moreover, as this family has their own business, which is processing palm sugar, this family does not experience much negative impact on their economic wellbeing; however, they must live apart from their daughter. This could be considered a negative effect. In the case of this family, they have been in Bangkok for two years, but their lives are still unsettled. When they can send a small amount of remittance (90 USD a month jointly), it only covers food expenses and the cost of caring for the child left behind with the grandparents, who are elderly and have low levels of education, which limits their ability to provide educational support. The grandparents want their child to come back home and find work in one of the factories in Pursat. The children could return and work in Pursat either as palm sugar farmers or in factories; however the migrants prefer to stay in Thailand since the employment opportunities in Pursat are very limited and they do not have enough land for agricultural production.

Family 9 is landless and former refugees on the Thai border. One son and two daughters are working in Thailand. The son has been there since age 14, or for 13 years, and works as a construction worker in Bangkok with his family. He does not seem to maintain contact with his family in Cambodia and does not contribute remittances. The two daughters have been working together near the Thai border for ten years, but as undocumented workers they are at the mercy of job brokers and change tasks often, such as chemical spraying and wood cutting. The grandmother in Cambodia cares for one grandchild from her daughter. However, she receives only 60 USD per month in remittance even though at least 120 USD per month is needed for properly supporting the granddaughter and for the grandmother's healthcare. The grandmother is sick and in debt to a doctor, so she cannot work now and does not have enough money to pay the daily expenses to send her granddaughter to school every day. She only hopes that her granddaughter will learn how to read, and then go to join her mother working in Thailand.

These two examples show that some of the factors that are positive for migrants, such as duration of stay, existence of a network, and documented status are not guarantees of a profitable migration experience. A lack of strong family bonds seems to have a significant role in negative migration experiences. One common thing between these two families is those left behind strongly hope their children come back from Thailand to be with them. Because most of the migrants are undocumented, they cannot have stable jobs and the remittances that they send home are insufficient to support their families. Moreover, because undocumented migrants live in insecure conditions, it is difficult for them to keep in contact with their families.

In the short term, they use migration as livelihood strategies to earn extra income. So far, this group has practiced this approach to meet the needs of the family.

7.3 Neutral Experience of Migration

For three of the respondent families, the experience of migration is mixed, and can be characterized as neutral.

Family 5 has three children in Thailand who have been sending 90 USD a month for five years. The grandmother who receives the remittances lives alone and uses the funds for her own healthcare and food. She needs to take care of herself even though she is 70 years old. It seems migration has brought no significant material change to her life.

Family 10 has a son who has been in Thailand for two years. He has a network for working on a rubber plantation; however, he is an undocumented migrant, and his remittance amount varies depending on the season. The remittances are 90 USD a month to feed three grandchildren, and pay for farm workers and fertilizer. The respondents report no significant changes thanks to migration, and the only upgrade to the family home was adding a tile roof in 2000, long before the son migrated. The house is mostly wood plank and palm leaf.

Family 11 has three children working in Thailand, one daughter working in a local factory, and two children who are not working but help take care of two sick relatives. The three children have been working in Thailand since April 2017 and have made one joint remittance of 300 USD, which was used for the support of three grandchildren and to pay back the broker's fees. The reason that people have to pay for brokers is because often migrants have no money to pay for a passport and work visa before migration. Then, they borrow money and pay for a broker who can prepare the simple entry document for them. Thusfar the migrants have not had a significant impact on family livelihood; the daughter who works in the factory and her husband have contributed more, such as by paying for the family house to be connected to the electricity grid and buying a motorbike. The family house is still as it was when built in 1999, with wood plank, palm leaf and a zinc roof. The parents worry about their children's safety because they are undocumented, and want them to come home after the debt to the broker is repaid. The parents hope they will work in the local factories and feel guilty that their youngest migrant son, 18 years old, had to abandon his studies to work in Thailand for the good of the family.

These three cases illustrate that international labor migration can have positive and negative features. We may speculate that the experience of Family 11 may become positive over time, as it has three children working in Thailand who may eventually be able to contribute more in remittance. However, the overall impression

from the neutral group is that labor migration has only marginal effects on family livelihood and no significant impact on poverty alleviation for these families.

In all cases, leaving grandchildren with their grandparents while parents work in Thailand may be problematic. The generation gap between grandparents and grandchildren may be significant, and the grandparents may not be young and healthy enough to properly care for the left-behind children. Moreover, these grandparents often do not have much formal education, and cannot encourage their grandchildren to go to school, as mentioned by the respondent from Family 6. This may result in poor educational attainment among children of migrant workers, which may make a negative contribution to generational chain labor migration.

To triangulate these data, it may be valuable to compare livelihood changes, the satisfaction of having members staying together, and seeking employment opportunities for sons, not just daughters. It was implied that local people want increased employment. In the eyes of non-migrants, people do not really think that migration to Thailand is a good choice. They would rather that local people seek employment in the area as it is safer and family members can be together.

Overall, the neutral group at the moment does not show many material changes because their time in Thailand is quite short and they are undocumented. However, in the near future, they may have more savings to change to being documented workers and to support their family with higher remittances.

7.4 Findings for Factory Workers

We conducted focus groups with twelve families divided into two groups. The purpose of the discussion was to understand the perspective of families which have members working in a local factory.

For group 1, with six families who have children working in factories, all are satisfied that their children are working in factories in Cambodia. Among these six families five have children working in a factory in Pursat Province and one family has children working in another province. All these families received some money from their children. However, the money that they receive depends on how much overtime the children work, ranging between 100 USD to 150 USD. Moreover, families spend money that they receive more on food and health care. In addition, some of these families save money for religious ceremonies, weddings or emergency cases.

These six families do not want their children to migrate to another country because if they did migrate most of the time they would be undocumented, therefore they could be vulnerable and live in insecurity. Also, among these six families some of them used to participate in a saving group to help each other and offered the possibility to borrow money at a low interest rate cheaper than microfinance institutions. Sometimes they could also use this system of saving money for buying fertilizer, pesticide, rice seed, labor and renting agricultural machinery.

For all these families, the fact that their children are working in factories improves their livelihoods; for example, they can afford to buy a motorbike or they can eat better than before. At the community level, the fact that young people are working in factories reduces the rate of unemployment. However, for better community development, the families want to have more roads, more hospitals, a better irrigation system, schools and bridges.

Next, with group 2, we had a focus group discussion with six households at a pagoda. All of them have children or spouses working in a factory and are satisfied with that situation. Four of them received 26-50 USD per month from their children. Two other families receive 200 USD from their wives. In order to figure out how they use the money for their daily life, we distributed 10 papers to each participant to represent their budget. For the result of the simulation, 20 of 60 papers were for food and 16 of 60 for health care. From those results, food is indispensable for their daily life and health care is also a necessity for them. This may be because people in this commune are elderly. In addition, one person kept one paper for emergency savings. Four people chose the Other category, which they would use for clothes and agricultural tools such as axes. According to the results, they do not have enough money to buy the other material goods we used as indicators. This illustrated that they need more stable, high-paying jobs in this commune.

As we compared working in a factory and migrating abroad, we found that local people desire that their children work in the factories. In the case of migration, the majority had a positive perspective regarding legal migration. In contrast, undocumented migration was considered as negative. For instance, women can be sexually abused and all workers may be exploited. In addition, the payment for the broker is a high expenditure. We also heard one case where a young local woman was declared missing. As a consequence of the aforementioned issues, the families prefer to keep their children with them.

In addition, we found that families without migrants and who have a child working in a local factory have a positive attitude toward community development. They receive money from their family members working in the local factory. This money contributes significantly to improve their livelihood, but is not enough for the community development. However, they answered they would like to participate in community development if they have extra money. Moreover they mentioned that they have specific sectors that they want to prioritize: education, better roads, more water gates and hospitals.

In conclusion, families would like their children to work in factories more than to migrate. In other words, they give priority to their children's safety. They also have the desire to improve their community. In addition, one thing they mentioned was that the factories employ mostly women, with few opportunities for men. Therefore the government creating more job opportunities for men could be one of the solutions to the employment situation in this commune. Furthermore, they have a positive perspective on community development. Therefore, there is a possibility that this community would be developed further if local people become able to contribute to community development.

7.5 Comparison between MHHs and Households with Member(s) Working in Factories

The comparison between families with migrants and families with factory workers shows different effects on family and on local community.

There are positive impacts both on family and the local community when people work in factories in the province. Indeed, working in factories contributes to improve families' living conditions. For example, from the money they received from their children working in the factories, families can increase their food intake, afford material needs such as motorbikes, machinery for farming, and build houses or improve house quality. The positive impacts on the local community consist of reducing the unemployment rate and contributing to local economic growth.

However, in the case of families with migrants, migration can have three type of effects: positive, negative and neutral. The positive impact of migration on family is that remittances contribute to maximize family income and also to improve their living conditions. However, for some families migration has a negative impact on the family itself. For instance, because most of the migrants are undocumented, they cannot have stable jobs and the remittances that they sent home are insufficient to support their families. Moreover, because undocumented migrants live in insecure conditions, it is difficult for them to keep contact with their families. The neutral type of effect on family concerns the case where migration shows small material impacts.

At the community level, there are both positive and negative impacts of migration. The positive impacts of migration on community rest on the improvement of the local economy. For example, migrants used the local microfinance businesses (Wing, for example) to send money and pay local workers to build houses, buy local materials, and create small businesses. However, migration also has an important negative impact on community, which is the loss of labour.

7.6 Pagoda Interviews

We conducted interviews at two pagodas in Kampuoung Pou commune with the hypothesis that remittances from migrant households may be higher than those from other households and have a potential to be channeled by the pagodas to community development projects.

First, we had a group discussion with two monks, one nun and five lay people, including the chief of the Social Development Committee, at the first pagoda. The discussion at the first pagoda revealed that this place has a central role in the life of the local community, but not in ways we had anticipated. The pagoda was rebuilt beginning in 1982 after relative peace had returned to the area. At first construction was funded by small donations from local residents and money sent from Cambodians outside the country. There was also some support from the government. The main temple was started in 2003 and completed in 2007. Large donations were provided by wealthy and powerful locals in order to gain standing in the community; some of them continue to donate to important ceremonies. At present the pagoda is gradually building a guesthouse for visitors using donation money, but it is only proceeding a little at a time.

The chief of the Social Development Committee testified that the pagoda receives sufficient support to feed the eight monks and one nun, but that outside of important festivals the average collective donation from days of worship is between thirty and fifty thousand Riel. If there is a shortfall, they collect money from local residents. However, local residents rarely have savings of over 50 USD, so the amount of donation expected is low.

The committee chief voiced the consensus view of the group that there was no noticeable difference between the donation amount received from migrant and non-migrant households. She stated that migrants may be better off in certain ways, but that those who do not migrate also have wealth in land and animals. The overall view of migration was that it was undertaken by more financially secure families that could afford the initial expenses, so it was not an effective strategy for the very poor. The committee chief stated that migration was not the reason for prosperity in the commune, but rather an option when other opportunities are not available, and one that comes with risks and no guarantee of more prosperity. There was a consensus view that parents preferred their children to stay at home and work in the factories. Most surprisingly, the committee

chief informed us that the evidence of prosperity in the commune, specifically the construction of new houses and upgrading of others, was largely due to improvements in agricultural income as a result of infrastructure development, and not, as we had thought, thanks to remittances from internal or international migrants or increased income due to factory wages.

Based largely on the testimony of the committee chief, it is clear that this pagoda serves as a focus of development activity, but that the agents are foreign and domestic non-governmental organizations (NGOs). A Czech NGO helped elevate and prepare the land on the pagoda so it can be used as an evacuation center in times of flood, and a program called WASH helped improve the toilet and other sanitation facilities. An Australian organization sponsors a life skills program for local children that uses a pagoda building; money raised from Australia through the sale of pictures the children draw provides the children with a snack, writing utensils and stationery, with any leftover funds channeled to unspecified community development projects. The committee chief also noted that one of the most significant changes in the local community was the improvement in health facilities and awareness of health issues due to efforts by the international NGO Action Aid. Local NGO OSCD (Rural Friend Development) plays a role in agricultural extension, and the committee chief also mentioned workshops and training on issues such as the empowerment of women and instruction about democracy and rights. In these cases, the pagoda seems to serve as a location where such activities take place and a passive player rather than an initiator.

In terms of more active community involvement, the respondents mentioned solidarity actions, such as local people helping repair roads damaged by floods, transporting pregnant women to hospital, and caring for the elderly. The committee chief stated that the pagoda hoped to help upgrade the toilet facilities for the community's primary and secondary school, as approximately 500 students are using one toilet.

It is clear from the discussion that this pagoda does play a role in community development, but that international migrants and donations are not a part of the equation. In addition, it appears that the pagoda is a passive player that provides a physical setting for governmental and non-governmental organizations to initiate development projects. The active participation of the chief of the Social Development Committee also seems to be an important consideration.

In contrast, the second pagoda does not seem to have a significant role in local community development. We saw no evidence of development projects initiated either by the pagoda itself or governmental or non-governmental organizations. The conversation took place with two priests, two nuns and four lay people, including the village chief and the chief of the Social Development Committee.

While there were similarities with the first pagoda, there were also stark differences. The consensus view of migration and its role in poverty alleviation was also largely negative. The village chief testified that there were more than 30 seasonal migrants from his area, but their migration was out of necessity and lack of work and the effect on prosperity was minimal. He also highlighted that some local men had to take part in seasonal migration because factory work was only available to women. The respondents also stated that migrants did not contribute more than others, and that the average donation was relatively low.

The development concerns of the respondents focused largely on the pagoda itself. The Social Development Committee chief stated that the goals from donations were to pave the pagoda grounds and build a crematorium, priorities seemingly emphasized by the two priests who joined us part way through the

conversation. While the committee chief said that the pagoda had once played a more active role in community improvement projects, such as road paving, its contribution had diminished as governmental and non-governmental organizations became more prominent. The only contribution to the wider community was donations of surplus materials such as rice, pottery and mats to poor residents. The village chief stated that paving roads, repairing old bridges and building new ones were priorities for his area, but made no connection between these developments and the pagoda. He also said that the area needed better access to local markets for its goods to contribute to prosperity.

The consensus view was that the development of the local area was dependent on the economic prosperity of Cambodia as a whole. There was no sense that the pagoda itself could play an active role in the local development process. The priests seemed to be focused on the pagoda itself, and the lay people deferred to their view.

In summary, the two pagodas presented some differences and several significant similarities. Based on the testimony, remittances from international migrants do not result in higher donations to pagodas, and migration is viewed as a necessary evil rather than a channel for local development. Donations to the pagodas are higher than in the past, but still only significant during special occasions such as New Year. Representatives from both pagodas are aware of the development needs of their local communities, but do not identify the pagodas as potential initiators of projects. There seems to be a passive approach to the community, even though the first pagoda does host activities that contribute to development in important ways and manifests concern for the children of the area. In fact, it seems like the role of pagodas as potential initiators of local development is decreasing rather than increasing, and that the pagodas' primary focus will be on the religious health of their areas and not the material health.

8. Discussion

The findings from the previous studies have shown that ILM's remittances have a positive impact on poverty alleviation (Adams & Page, 2003; Sophal, 2012; Heng, 2013). Heng (2013) clearly demonstrated the significant impacts of ILM's remittances on poverty reduction by stating that "...while MHH's average duration to make the improvement (Duration) was 4.68 years, non - MHHs had up to 11 years to produce to poverty outcomes as observed" (p. 170). However, our results show that labour migration contributes less to poverty reduction than anticipated. Some households from our interviews experienced a positive effect of remittances on their livelihood. Indeed, in our interviews conducted in Kampuoung Pou commune, six households of eleven explained that because of remittances they get from their children, these households can improve their food consumption, upgrade the quality of their houses, buy water buffaloes and land. This first finding confirms the previous studies about the positive impact of ILM's remittances on household livelihood.

However, the previous literature does not emphasize much about the negative and neutral effects of remittances on reduction of poverty. Thus, from our interviews, we found that five families experienced negative and neutral effects from ILM. For these cases, our findings in Krokro District do not confirm our hypothesis. Furthermore, two reasons clearly explain this contrasting effect of remittances. On one hand, we can mention the undocumented status of most of migrants, which does not allow them to have good jobs and salaries. Therefore, they cannot send enough money to their families. Also, because of their undocumented

status migrants live in an insecure situation in Thailand. For that reason they can easily be arrested. In our interviews, two families claimed that they worried about their children's security because they are undocumented, therefore they would like their children to come back. Moreover, it also appears difficult for undocumented migrants to keep in contact with their parents. In such cases it is difficult for their parents to receive remittances from them. Also, for some families migration has increased their poverty because of the loans that they borrowed from neighbours in order to send their children to Thailand. When migrants are undocumented they cannot send remittances to their parents in order to pay back the money borrowed. In that case it is up to their families to pay back the loans although they are poor.

On the other hand, we did not consider the existence of new local factories in the district. Indeed, these local factories play an important role in the reduction of the unemployment rate. Also, families that have children working in the local factories have experienced more positive changes to their livelihoods than migrant households. That is why some migrants families want their children to come back.

Therefore, we can conclude that in the case of Krokor District ILM's remittances do not uniformly play a significant role in the reduction of poverty. Also, the local authorities do not encourage people to migrate to other countries. In consequence, it can be difficult to see the important impact of migration in the development of the community.

8.1 Further Questions and Lessons Learned

One important point that we found in this research is that regular or documented migrants have more positive impact on poverty alleviation and on local development. In addition, the time they live in Thailand (more than three years seems to be a benchmark) may help them stabilize their lives. However, the majority of migrants are undocumented, and because of this situation it is difficult to see a significant positive impact from remittances both on family and on local development. Therefore, for a more effective impact of remittances on poverty reduction it appears essential to increase the documentation of migrants. So for that we recommend the establishment of a passport office in Pursat Province, improving the dissemination of information related to getting documented at the local level, reducing the passport fees, which range from 40 USD to 200 USD, and finally we recommend the reduction of the passport processing time. These measures, we believe, will help increase the number of documented workers going to Thailand. These are the lessons learned from our fieldwork.

Also, these are some lessons learned and further questions in terms of academic issues. We estimated that migration would be the largest contributor to poverty reduction based on our literature review. However, we discovered that this was not really true through our fieldwork research because of the role of local employment in this district. Thus, we underestimated the impact of local economic development. We also observed family livelihood strategies which combine migration, factory work and farm work, which we did not expect.

8.2 Result of Hypotheses

According to our findings, international labour migration contributes less to poverty reduction than anticipated. Therefore, remittances may not be the most important income source for all families whereas we thought they would be. In addition, remittances cause both positive and negative impact on community development. The donations to pagodas are not used for community development. Remittances constituted a smaller contribution than income from agriculture and income from factory workers.

8.3 Limitations and Concerns

An important limitation is that we stayed only five days in the community, so we could not embed deeply. Also, we interviewed less than 40 households, so it did not reflect broad experiences. In addition, we stayed at a hotel. One of the government officials told us that our condition of stay was quite different from the local people. Therefore, if we had experienced the same life as local residents, there might have been more new discoveries.

We were also uneasy about making recommendations in this situation. It sometimes can make local people upset, since they may understand their situation better than us. Therefore, we felt a little bit guilty to give them recommendations based on five days of research. In this kind of research, it may be more appropriate to identify lessons learned rather than make recommendations.

In addition, according to Sub Decree No 205 of the Royal Government of Cambodia on Providing Regular Passport for Cambodian Workers and Students, MoLVT dropped the new passport fee from 135 USD to 4 USD for both migrant workers and scholarship students in 2014. Cambodian migrants need the document, which requires strict checks and proof that they have received work or a scholarship from abroad. However, according to the interview with the Department of Labour Vocational Training (DoLVT) in Pursat, there is a 40 USD passport fee which takes one year and a 200 USD version which takes three months to procure. It is quite a high cost for MHHs. This situation may increase the number of undocumented migrants. There is an enormous gap in passport fees between MoLVT and DoLVT. MHHs may spend considerable funds to acquire a passport through DoLVT before they pay the passport fee through MoLVT. We wondered if DoLVT may gain more benefit from this gap, a matter that should be discussed.

9. Conclusion

To conclude, we can mention that, as the previous research pointed out, remittances can contribute to the reduction of poverty. However, in our research we found that this evidence can be relative.

In the case of households with migrants in Thailand in Krokor District, the remittances from labour migration have three types of effect on poverty reduction, positive, negative and neutral. Indeed, when migrants are undocumented, the remittances sent to their families are often not enough to improve their family livelihood. Also, labor migration at times had a negative impact which can even worsen the poverty situation of a family.

In contrast, in the case of families with member(s) working in the local factories, we found such employment has improved some families' livelihood. Therefore, it appears that these local factories have increased the job opportunities and also contributed to increasing household income in Krokor District.

Therefore, our hypothesis about the positive contribution of remittances to poverty reduction was wrong in the context of Krokor District. Our second hypothesis related to the role of pagodas in community development was also wrong because the donations motivated by the concept of making merit given by the migrants households do not contribute to the development of the community. We overestimated the social role of pagodas in our research.

However, an important recommendation that we can make is that labor migration remittances can play a vital role in the reduction of poverty if migrants are documented. Therefore, the improvement in administrative infrastructure, such as a passport office in Pursat Province, and cheaper, faster service for passports is essential to increase the number of documented migrants.

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Abbreviation

DoLVT	Department of Labour and Vocational Training
ILMs	International Labour Migrants
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
MHHs	Migrants Households
MoLVT	Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization

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Appendix: Questionnaires

For families who have a migrant member

- What is your name?
- How old are you?
- How many people are there in your family?
- What is your job?
- Is it a family business?
- How many family members do you have in Thailand?
- How many children do you have?
- If you have family members in Thailand, what is the job(s) of this person/these people in Thailand?
- Where is the person now (Prefecture)?
- Will the person come back to Cambodia?
- When will the person come back?

-Subjective Perceptions-

- What are the largest differences before and after one of the family members migrated?

-Indicators-

- How have your house changed after migration?
- What was it before migration?
- What is your house made of? (Do you have roof tile and cement bricks?)
- What kinds of material goods do you have? (Do you have TV, bicycle, rice cooker, agricultural machine?)
- How much money do you spend for each item? (Do you spend more money for food?, Do you use more money for better education?)
- What kinds of animal do you have? (Do you have pig, cow and chicken? How much did it cost to get these animals?)
- How has your eating changed? (Did the amount of food increase?)
- Can you afford to buy any vehicle with the money you received?

-Remittances-

- How much money did you receive?
- How often do they send money?
- How do you use the remittances?(Is it for food, better education or other items?)
- How is the remittance sent ? (Did you get the money from bank?, Did you get the money from broker?)
- How much does this money help you in your daily life?

For returnee migrants

-Transportation-

- How much did it cost to migrate? (How much money did you spend for Visa and/or transportation?)
- How much did you pay the broker?

For families with factory workers

- Are you satisfied with the situation that your children are working in the factory?
- Is your child working in the province?
- Do you receive some money from your child who is working in the factory?
- How much do you receive from your child? (monthly)
- How do you use this money?
- If you have amount of money what would you like to do?
- What do you think about migration?
- If they have a system which is kind of Tontine (system of saving money) how they want to use money for Tontine?
- How they use this money (saving money) for?
- What do they need to improve this community?
- How is the impact of family?
- How is the impact on community?

For pagoda representatives

- How do you use the donations from local people?
- Do you know how much money comes from the remittances of Cambodian workers in Thailand?
- Do you think you can improve the use of donation for sustainable development?
- Where does donation come from?
- Is it only from the local people? Or is it from other communes and/or government?

Working Group 3

Education

Community Participation in Primary Education: The Case of Krokor District, Pursat Province

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1. Introduction

Community participation in school education has been a momentous factor to improve students' learning conditions. Uemura (1999) identified nine positive effects of community participation in education, including maximizing limited resources, creating and nourishing community-school partnerships, increasing accountability and improving home environment, and 20 ways of contribution, such as advocating enrollment and education benefits, raising money for schools, ensuring students' regular attendance and completion, constructing, repairing, and improving school facilities, and handling the budget to operate schools, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Effects and ways of community participation in education

Effects	Ways
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximizing limited resources • Developing relevant curriculum and learning materials • Identifying and addressing problems • Promoting girls' education • Creating and nourishing community-school partnerships • Realizing democracy • Increasing accountability • Ensuring sustainability • Improving home environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocating enrollment and education benefits • Boosting morale of school staff • Raising money for schools • Ensuring students' regular attendance and completion • Constructing, repairing, and improving school facilities • Contributing in labor, materials, land, and funds • Recruiting and supporting teachers • Making decisions about school locations and schedules • Monitoring and following up on teacher attendance and performance • Forming village education committees to manage schools • Actively attending school meetings to learn about children's learning progress and classroom behavior • Providing skill instruction and local cultural information • Helping children with studying • Garnering more resources from and solving problems through the education bureaucracy • Advocating and promoting girls' education • Providing security for teachers by preparing adequate housing for them • Scheduling school calendars • Handling the budget to operate schools • Identifying factors contributing to educational problems (low enrollment, and high repetition and dropout) • Preparing children for schooling by providing them with adequate nutrition and stimuli for their cognitive development

Source: Uemura (1999)

Although 'community participation' has been discussed around the world, the definition of 'community' is varied. According to Nishimura (2017), 'community' can be understood differently within three categories: geographical, cultural and school (or functional) community. Geographical community categorizes people based on their residence. Cultural community is a group of people with the same language, ethnic and religious context. School community stands for a group of people who are collected for the purpose of school

management. This paper presumes school community as the definition of community which participates in primary education.

As a form of community participation, many countries have launched a decentralized educational system which is called School-Based Management (SBM). Caldwell defined SBM as “the systematic decentralization to the school level of authority and responsibility to make decisions on significant matters related to school operations within a centrally determined framework of goals, policies, curriculum, standards, and accountability” (Caldwell, 2005: 1). Through the transfer of responsibility and decision making to teachers and community members, SBM is expected to contribute to improvements in school conditions (Philipps, 1997). Under the tendency of decentralization, many Asian countries have promoted SBM since 2000. For instance, the Indonesian government introduced SBM nationally in 2001 to improve educational quality, equity, relevance and efficiency (Kristiansen and Pratikno, 2006). Also, in Cambodia, the government has promoted educational decentralization through the establishment of School Support Committees (SSCs) since 2002 (Nguon, 2011).

2. Problem Statement

As mentioned above, community participation in education has been gaining much attention, and in Cambodia, it is promoted through the SSC, which is assumed to be relevant for the improvement of schools. In addition, there should be other ways of community participation in school operations aside from SSC. However, there is a lack of research focusing on community participation in the Cambodian context, including SSC. Moreover, it is unclear how a community is motivated to participate in primary education. Therefore, it is important to find out how a community participates in the school operation inside and outside of SSC, and what makes a community participate (or not participate) in the school operation in practice.

Although the Cambodian government has introduced SSC into both primary and secondary education, this research focuses on primary education, since it is the main target area regarding the issue of quality education.

3. Research Objectives and Questions

There were two objectives of this research. One was to find how community participates in primary education in the research site. The other was to investigate the community’s motivation to participate in primary education. In accordance with these objectives, we set two research questions:

- (1) How does a community participate in primary education?
- (2) What is the community’s motivation to participate in primary education?

4. Literature Review

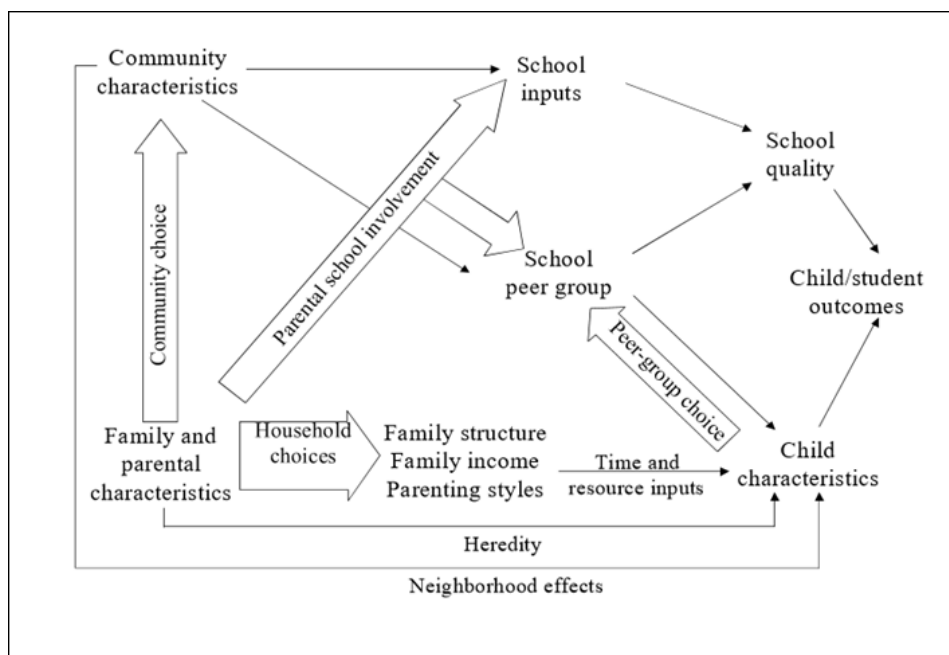
4.1 Community Participation in Primary Education

4.1.1 The importance of community participation in primary education

In terms of the concept of “community participation”, Epstein (2002) introduced six components or types of community participation in education. Among these components five of them are emphasized: (1) Parenting: Creating home atmospheres to care for children as pupils; (2) Co-operating: Active communication between schools and families to inform about school plans and students’ evolution; (3) Contribution: Request and consolidate parental assistance; (4) Studying within a household: Providing opportunity to support pupils in households by checking assignments and other activities; (5) Decision-making: Involving relatives in school resolutions. Those components can be defined as the contents of community participation. There are nine major positive effects of community participation for improving quality of education: maximizing limited resources; developing relevant curriculum and learning materials; identifying and addressing problems; promoting girls’ education; creating and nourishing community-school partnerships; realizing democracy; increasing accountability; ensuring sustainability; and improving home environment (Uemura, 1999).

Using the diagram shown as Figure 1, Nechyba et al. (1999) described the actors and their interactions. The authors stated that families make various decisions, such as how to be involved in school activities, and these decisions may affect their children’s educational outcomes. Nevertheless, as Desforges and Abouchaar (2003) pointed out, the diagram is a simplified one and there should be other forms of interaction such as influence of individual characteristics on the type of peer groups. It is relevant to say that community cannot be separated from education and it can be a critical factor in primary education.

Figure 1: Factors affecting student outcomes



Source: Nechyba et al. (1999)

4.1.2 Parents' involvement in primary education

In general, among others, parents are expected to play especially significant roles to improve their children's educational development. Desforges and Abouchaar (2003) conducted a thorough review of past literature, and concluded that the effect of parents' spontaneous participation is notably positive for their children's academic performance and school adjustment. They also stated that the difference in levels of parents' involvement has much more impact than school quality, especially in primary education. Naturally, this kind of participation can occur both inside and outside of SBM activities.

4.1.3 Driving force of community participation in primary education

According to Yamada (2011), the existence or non-existence of a person who exercises strong leadership is a key factor to determine active community participation in school. She says without such a person, the school administration and community bond will be loose and lack vitality. She mentioned that leadership is not only charisma and a vision, but how much a leader can mobilize people and resources. Moreover, she divided of the leaders who have strong power of mobilization in Oromia Region, Ethiopia into three types:

1. a leader who has many personal resources and contributes proactively
2. a leader who develops method to supplement people who do not have resources
3. a leader who can bring involvement from NGOs, government and people who are living in distant places, such as migrant workers

(Yamada, 2011: 119)

However, it was unclear whether these characteristics would be seen in the Cambodian context, and how much such leaders' existence would have an impact on active community participation in education.

In addition, Nishimura (2017) indicated that when the central government could not manage administration, community might take a complementary action to maintain governance. El Salvador's Community-Managed Schools Program, which is called EDUCO (Educacion con Participación de la Comunidad) is a good illustration of community participation as a complementary action. Initially, since a civil war dismantled the central governmental administration in El Salvador, EDUCO was launched as a promotion of decentralizing authority to the community level. The program gave parental associations the authority to recruit and fire teachers. They also visited to the school monthly (World Bank, 2003). The delegating of authority made a considerable improvement in students' and teachers' attendance and educational outcomes (Jimenez and Sawada, 1998). On that point, community might be motivated by the ambition of procuring clear governance.

Parent's educational attainment might influence their participation in education. Buchmann and Hannum (2011) showed that parent's educational background strongly affected in their children's educational achievement. Another study also reported that parents' educational background has a strong effect on the household's financial situation, and it might be a crucial determining factor (Buchmann, 2000). From the standpoint of community participation in primary school, background might be an influential factor. Berg and Noort (2011) reported parent's low educational attainment might trigger absence from school meetings. Mfum

and Friedson (2014) revealed that educated community members tend to carry the torch of school meetings and other community activities. Given these situations, it is certain that parent's educational background is a factor in determining educational involvement.

4.2 Community Participation in Primary Education in Cambodia

4.2.1 School Support Committee (SSC)

As mentioned in the background, the government of Cambodia intends to promote community participation in education through activating School Support Committees (SSC), and this can be understood as a form of SBM. According to the guideline from the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MoEYS), the targets were set in the Education Strategic Plan (ESP) 2009-2013 and require the establishment of a Primary School Support Committee in all public primary schools. It is expected to "ensure smooth, transparent, accountable and effective education process" (MoEYS, 2012: 1) and to coordinate and develop a school by communities. According to the guideline provided by MoEYS, the committee is composed of an honorary chair, 1-3 advisors, a chair, 1-3 deputy chairs and 2-4 members, according to the size of a school. Women members are encouraged for this committee and each member will not have double roles. The guideline also described that committee members are elected before starting a new school year and have a term of one school year. Moreover, the committee has eight duties:

1. Formulating/implementing and monitoring the school's plan
2. Collecting and enrolling children
3. Monitoring students' learning
4. Generating revenue and mobilizing funds
5. Involvement in constructing, repairing and maintaining the school
6. Sharing of experiences and life skills
7. Preventing irregularities from happening inside and outside the school
8. Strengthening and expanding capacity and awareness of school development

(MoEYS, n.d.)

Fata and Kreng (2015) found that a SSC consists of 8 members on average, but depending on the school scale and context, it might be smaller or larger. However, even though the SSC members are organized in line with the governmental guideline, those nominated have little knowledge about the role of the SSC. From those factors, it might be said that the form of SSC is spread widely, but understanding of the committee is still in its infancy.

In terms of their activities, SSCs conduct their actions in agreement with their duties written in the governmental guideline. Based on Fata and Kreng's survey, SSCs have the ability to raise contributions to develop and maintain school facilities, monitor teachers, organize meeting with the students' parents at least quarterly, coordinate with community members to prevent violence in school, implement campaigns to promote enrollment and prevent students from dropping out, support some administrative tasks, plan school

events, improve the transparency of procurement processes, and develop annual plans (Fata and Kreng, 2015). In addition, SSCs are relevant in promoting community contributions, supporting students, making plan for student learning, purchasing school materials, establishing a friendly environment, monitoring school, teachers and school funds, and participating in school events or meetings (Nguon, 2011).

Attending school events or monthly/quarterly school meetings is a significant opportunity for SSC members to build connections and discuss children's behaviours, their absenteeism, irregular attendance, plan school development, and other problems. Nguon's regression analysis reveals joining school gatherings and being involved in school development strategies have positive relationships to school outcomes (Nguon, 2011). However, although the meeting is regarded as a crucial opportunity for discussion among SSC members, the number of meetings is not sufficient. Under these circumstance, Fata and Kreng suggest increasing the frequency of meetings (Fata and Kreng, 2015).

4.2.2 Evaluation of SSC by the government

MoEYS uses an evaluation titled "Monitoring and Evaluation Sheet for Work Outcome of School in Child Friendly School Program" to evaluate SSCs in each school. The evaluation is divided into six parts:

1. All children can access education
2. Effectiveness of study
3. Health, safety and student protection
4. Response to gender
5. Participation of children, family, and community
6. Supporting education program from the SSC

(MoEYS, n.d.)

Moreover, each category is divided into detailed information with indicators for work outcomes: D (below average), C (average), B (fairly good) and A (good). Part 5.2 and 5.3 mention community participation; 5.2 evaluates how children's family participate in education, and 5.3 focuses on how the community participates (Table 2 shows the contents of 5.2 and 5.3 and describes the evaluation items of the SSC).

Table 2: List of criteria for evaluating community participation

5.2 Families' participation	1. Student's family school visit	1. Having program for parents to visit the school
		2. Parents visit the school/class
		3. Parents participated in school year opening day
		4. Parents participated in outstanding student prize ceremony
	2. Student's family involved in their study monitoring	1. Parents received follow-up book from the school
		2. Family help to teach children at home
		3. Communicate with the school about their children's performance
		4. Family provide opportunity and motivate children to study hard
	3. Student's family participation in school and class development plan	1. Participation in annual planning
		2. Coming to meetings regularly
		3. Sharing ideas in the planning
		4. Contribute resources to make the plan work
		5. Participate in plan implementation
	4. Student's family participation in school meetings and events	1. Participate in house mapping
		2. Participate in network group
		3. Participate in school enrollment campaign
		4. Participate in school celebration / ceremony
		5. Participate in donation to children in poverty and disadvantaged teachers.
	5. Participate in experience sharing	1. Helping to teach children at life skills at home
		2. Helping in moral education in class hours
		3. Advertising prevention of domestic violence
		4. Other knowledge (HIV, landmines)
	6. Accepting teaching request for student mentoring at home	1. Checking and following up the results of their children in the follow-up book.
		2. Accepting the result with signature in the follow-up book.
3. Giving feedback and comments to the teacher/school		
4. Taking action on teacher's requests		

5.3 Students' community's participation	1. Community participation in school development plan	1. Participate in school development plan meeting
		2. Participate in plan implementation
		3. Help in plan monitoring and implementation
		4. Help revise and adjust plan by semester/annually
	2. Contribution of financial resources to school	1. Having budget to help the school
		2. Giving tools and equipment to the school
		3. Having budget or equipment for poor students
		4. Arranging savings boxes in various places
	3. Participating in school protection and prevention from irregular events	1. Helping to fix/repair the school
		2. Protecting the school (from animals)
		3. Helping to guard the school
		4. Mentoring low performance/ troubled students
		5. Helping to intervene when the school faces problems
	4. Participating in announcement and finding sponsorship for school programs	1. Help to mentor students in school
		2. Help to mentor students outside of school
		3. Help to mentor family within the villages
		4. Announcing all the school programs to the community
		5. Securing donors to sponsor the school

Source: MoEYS (n.d.b)

5. Methodology

To achieve our research objectives, we conducted fieldwork in Krokor District, Pursat Province, Cambodia. We visited two primary schools in the district. School A is located facing the main street where traffic is heavy. School A is larger than School B in the number of the students and teachers. On the other hand, School B is in a remote location far from the main street. Although the school is smaller, the members of the community are cooperative in this school, such as a woman who makes breakfast for pupils from 4 a.m. Both schools have their own SSC. According to the government's evaluation on community participation, the community where the first school (School A) is located is evaluated as active in participation in primary education, while the community where the second school (School B) is located in evaluated as inactive. We intended to reveal positive and negative factors to pursuing active community participation by comparing these two schools that are evaluated differently.

Figure 2: Informants and general information about SSC at School A

	Female	Male	Total	Interviewees	
Students	161	188	349	School	School principal 3 teachers 1 informal education teacher
Teachers	8	5	13		
SSC <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 years of history • 3 core members (9 in total) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 2 village chiefs ➤ 1 village vice-chief 				SSC	1 village chief (SSC chair) 1 village vice-chief (SSC member)
				Community	4 families

Source: Authors

Figure 3: Informants and general information of SSC at School B

	Female	Male	Total	Interviewees	
Students	137	140	277	School	School principal 4 teachers
Teachers	3	1	4		
SSC <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 years as a formal SSC <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Started as a Parents' Association • 5 members in total <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ SSC chair ➤ SSC vice-chair ➤ 3 members 				SSC	1 village vice-chief (SSC member) 1 cook (vice SSC chair)
				Community	3 families

Source: Authors

We conducted semi-structured interviews to answer our research questions. At School A, we interviewed seven people (the school principal, three teachers, an informal education teacher¹, a village chief who is chairing SSC, and a village vice-chief who is one of the SSC members), and four households in the community. At School B, we interviewed eight people (the school principal, four teachers, a village vice-chief who is one of the SSC members, a community member who is a cook for the school's breakfast program and a SSC vice-chair at the same time) and three households.

Aside from some general questions, we prepared different questions according to different types of informants because of the variety of stakeholders in a community to have a holistic view of community participation in the research sites. For school principals, we intended to find out what the current challenges are for the schools, how the parents support the students' learning, what the roles of their SSCs are, how and what kind of things they communicate with other stakeholders, such as parents, teachers and local government, how they perceive the local government's support in terms of community participation, and what they expect for community participation in primary education.

For teachers, we asked about the challenges of their schools, the ways of communication with other stakeholders, and their expectation for community participation in education. We also asked if they have supplementary classes after school or on weekends.

For SSC board members such as village chiefs and vice-chiefs, questions focused on SSCs: the structure, activities and roles of teachers within the SSC. We also asked the interviewees' individual role within the SSC, their motivation to join it, the length of time they have participated, the changes in the school or community thanks to the SSC, their personal expectation of being a member of the SSC, and how they encourage other community members to be active in community participation.

For parents, we tried to find out their participation in their children's education both inside and outside the SSCs, through asking if they check their child's homework, if they talk with their child about their school life and future, if they attend SSC meetings, if the teachers and SSC members visit the household, if they donate to school, and so on.

6. Findings

6.1 Ways of community participation

Our research revealed that community participation in primary education can be explainable in two ways, which are outside SSC and inside SSC. Outside SSC represents the community participation which is not mediated by SSC. On the other hand, inside SSC denotes the community participation which SSC facilitated. Both schools where we interviewed have these two types of community participation.

6.1.1 Outside SSC

The activities outside SSC can be divided in two ways. One is an individual donation and the other is household participation in children's studies.

1) Individual donation

We found some community members donated materials to their neighborhood school. At School A, one affluent community member donated about a hundred books to the school library. Owing to the donation, the school's library could provide various books. In the case of School B, we found that an affluent household gives significant contributions to the school. Since the head of the household has a strong friendship with the school's principal, he often supports the school by means of cash contributions and learning materials. From the factors mentioned above, both schools benefit from affluent neighbors and it is not an exaggeration to say that affluent community members might be factors to improve the school's condition.

In addition, we also found individual parental donations. Although the World Food Programme (WFP) provides assistance by means of rice provision for children's breakfasts, the school has a concern about their nutritional balance. In light of this, parents donate their vegetables as ingredients to cook various meals and maintain the children's nutritional balance. In that sense, parents have a willingness to give donations to schools.

2) Parental participation in children’s studies

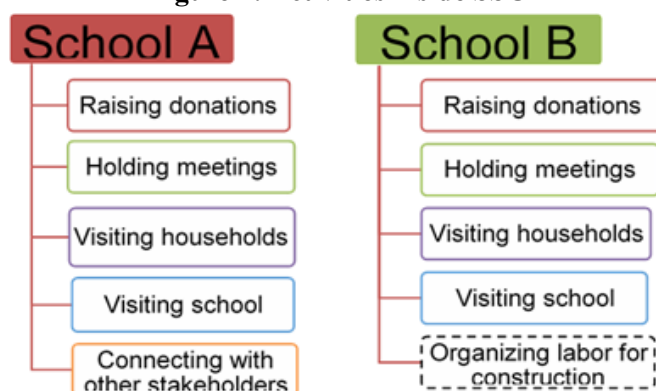
We observed that in both schools’ parents promote their children’s studies. There are four types of parental participation in their children’s studies. Firstly, parents can communicate with teachers through communication books. Parents have an opportunity to give their comment or opinion to teachers by means of the communication book. School teachers can also provide school information to parents. Even though parents cannot visit schools due to their work, they have a chance to communicate with teachers. Secondly, they support their children’s homework. Although some parents are illiterate, they ask their children about the progress of their homework and check it. Thirdly, parents encourage their children to study harder and go to school. They mentioned that they often talk about children’s school life and their future, and motivate them to study harder. Lastly, they visit the schools at least on the first day because of the new semester events.

However, parents still have the potential to improve their participation. Firstly, parents still do not understand fully how to use communication book. Some teachers mentioned that the communication book is useful to communicate school announcements, but some parents often forget to give the book back. Given the situation, gaining parents’ understanding of the communication book might be effective to promote parental participation. Secondly, some parents do not visit the school frequently. They mentioned they only visit school at the beginning of a new semester. Since those parents do their work and household chores, they cannot find the time to do so. Those two areas have room for improvement to spur parental participation, but at any rate, all parents we interviewed support their children’s education and they understand the importance of basic education for the children’s future.

6.1.2 Inside SSC

The activities inside SSC can be categorized into five at each school. Although there seems to be only a slight difference, we found that the contents are not the same. Following are descriptions of each activity

Figure 4: Activities inside SSC



Source: Authors

1) Raising donations

We found the SSC members in School A collected voluntary monetary donations. They used the money for school construction, facilities, human resources for cooking, and student awards for good academic results. For instance, they constructed a playground utilizing the donations they collected (Photo 1).

Photo 1: The playground at School A



In School B, the SSC members collected voluntary monetary donations as well as rice and materials as a different way of donation. They collected the rice to sell and used the materials for school construction. Because School B was constructed by their own community and their support system in school was established before the SSC was introduced, they believe that it is natural to provide labor and resource mobilization for the school instead of money.

Table 3: The ways of donation

	Money	Rice	Material
School A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction • Facilities • Human resources for cooking • Student awards 	/	/
School B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human resources for cooking • Student awards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sold to get money for school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction

Source: Authors

Table 3 shows the way and purpose of donations in Schools A and B. As explained above there is a slight difference between the schools.

2) Holding meetings

The contents of meeting were different for each school. In School A, they discussed how to use the budget, requests from parents, and who to recommend and support for scholarships. On the other hand, School B discussed only about their school mapping. A school map is created by each school to provide student information, such as disadvantaged situation, violence by parents, disabled parents or children, international migrant parents, and so on. It also provides information about the student household distribution, and this eases identifying poor families whose children may need special attention during their studies. Both schools have regular meetings three times of a year: the beginning of the school year, middle of semester, and the end of

school year. During these meetings school mapping, enrolment, dropout and budget issues are discussed as part of the school development planning.

3) Visiting households

Visiting households is different for each school. In the case of School A, SSC members visit households for school mapping with an informal education teacher. From this, they understand each household's circumstance and inform students and parents about the relevance of education. For School B, SSC members gathered information for school mapping and voluntary contributions for the breakfast program. There was no informal teacher in this school, thus SSC members collect student information from door to door instead of teachers.

4) Visiting school

The relationship between SSC and teachers was different in each school. In School A, SSC visited the school for monitoring teachers and asking support for students in difficult situations. Moreover, due to the location of the school (School A is located where traffic is heavy), the SSC help students to cross the road safely. Meanwhile, the School B SSC visited school for gathering information from teachers for school mapping.

5) Connecting with other stakeholders

This activity was seen only at School A. SSC members help make connections with other stakeholders such as Non-Governmental Organizations. For example, Kampuchean Action for Primary Education (KAPE) has been supporting ten students with scholarship each year, and SSC members visit householders and recommend the students for scholarship.

6) Organizing labor for construction

This activity was seen only at School B. School B mobilizes human resources not limited to SSC members but also other community members. For example, if they need to repair the school building, they mobilize the people who can do it and who have materials such as trees. There was a kitchen (Photo 2) and a water filter which were constructed through SSC activities.

Photo 2: The kitchen at School B



6.1.3 Overview of ways of community participation

Based on our research, both schools have the same way of participation. Table 1 explains the basic framework of community participation in both schools. As we mentioned above, the types of participation can be divided as inside SSC and outside SSC.

Figure 5: Framework of community participation

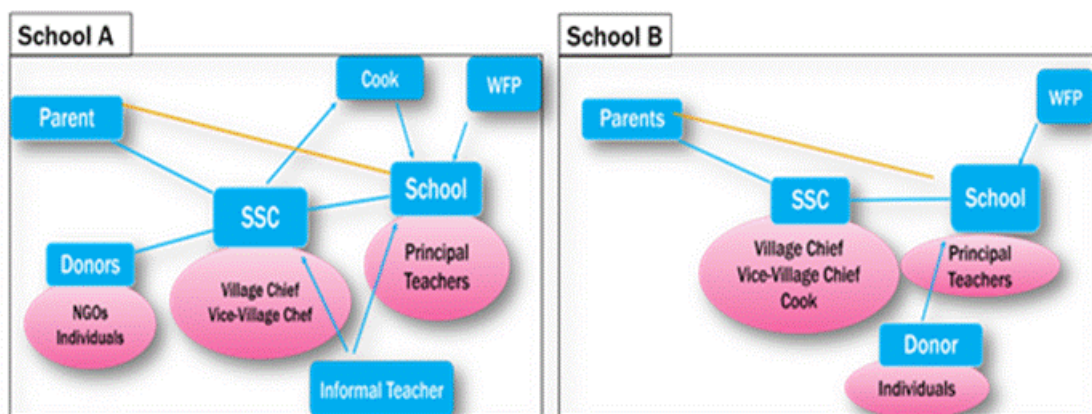


Source: Authors

In Figure 5, the arrow which is directly connecting the parents and school is outside SSC. On the other hand, the two arrows which connect parents, SSC and schools is inside SSC.

However, although both schools have the same framework of community participation, the role of SSC is different for both schools. Figure 6 explains the whole network surrounding each school.

Figure 6: Difference in interactions between School A and B



Source: Authors

In terms of other stakeholders' intervention, since School A's SSC has the role of connecting with other stakeholders, SSC is located between donor and school, while individual donors donate materials to School B directly. This fact can be explained by two reasons. Firstly, since School A has a strong SSC, the SSC plays a

role as a consultant on NGOs projects. School A's SSC sometimes invites NGOs to attend meetings. It can be said that the SSC's enthusiastic activities merge with the other stakeholder's activities. Secondly, School B's SSC does not have any connections with donors, but that does not show weak community participation. Since the community members of School B have a feeling of belonging to their community, it might be said that the individual donations are derived from their sense of belonging, or that they cannot distinguish between the SSC's activity and their own participation. In the case of School B, they potentially have a strong urge to participate in primary education and the way of community participation does not need to be formalized in the circumstances of their community. From those reasons, the location of donor is different between the two schools.

Both schools receive breakfast assistance from the WFP. The WFP provides rice for breakfast, but as a teacher mentioned, the supply of rice alone is not sufficient and the school needs to hire a cook for breakfast. Under this coordination, both schools are forced to have a cook and we can find a difference in the way they allocate the work between the two schools. As the diagram indicated above, School A's SSC hired a person to work as a cook. Since the SSC tackles the school problem enthusiastically, the SSC also manages hiring a cook. On the other hand, School B has a cook within their SSC. In other words, School B's SSC somehow manages the situation on their own. Hence, instead of employing a cook from outside, they handle the matter of human resources with the existing resources in the community. It can be said that the position of cook is different according to the community.

The existence of an informal education teacher can be effective in the SSC meeting. An informal education teacher is the person who visits households around several communes and creates a school map. The informal teacher is employed by the government and gets a salary. Since School A's informal education teacher performed well, the SSC does not need to allocate their time to make a school map. School A's SSC holds meeting for various purposes, while School B's SSC only discusses the issue of school mapping. In that sense, it might be pointed out that the existence of an informal education teacher affects the contents of SSC meetings.

What the reasons mentioned above make clear is that the role of SSC can be different according to the community's context. The enthusiastic SSC activities can lead other community members to participate in primary education, while the sense of belonging within the community can be the root of community participation, and thus the formalization of SSC activities is surely not required under this condition. This network analysis revealed the variety of forms of community participation surrounding SSCs.

6.2 Motivation for community participation

In this research, the following findings are obtained regarding motivation for community participation. School A is proof that SSC leaders are very influential. The leader of the SSC is the village chief and plays an important role in the market. There are two reasons which he actively manages the SSC. The first reason is that his son and grandson have attended this school, so he has long-term relationship with it. Secondly, he was unable to receive an education because of the Khmer Rouge, therefore he believes that education is very important to the future of children. Additionally, in our interview, he said "Even without SSC, school can be operated, however we can provide better school education because of SSC". Thus, he recognizes the importance of community participation. Actually, he collected donations from various stakeholders and used

them for necessary expenses like fixing broken windows, making filters and the playground, and so on. Moreover, the total amount of the donation is about twice the grant from the government. In brief, in this case a strong leader is encouraging the participation of other stakeholders.

School B's motivation is related to the history of that school. This school was originally established by the community on the initiative of the current principal's father. In addition, school administration was also done by the community. Therefore, the community provided what is needed for school management, such as materials necessary for school construction, teachers, funds, and so on. Thus even after the school had been approved, the community was incorporated into school management deeply. Even after the implementation of SSC, there is no change in the structure of community participation itself and the influence of the formalization of SSC is limited only to the clarification of the expenditures of funds through the report. This means that from the time the SBM did not exist, this school created such a structure on their own initiative. In other words, there is consciousness of the institution as “our school”, and the custom of contributing to school education is traditionally rooted.

Also, another point is that in order for stakeholders to participate, it is necessary to share awareness that education has significance and involvement is needed. All parents who we interviewed said that education is important for children. This fact also should be considered as an important sign that the school's community participation is functioning well.

7. Conclusion

In this research, we examined the actual situation and motivation based on interviews with staff of two schools and the parents. One school is evaluated as very active and another school is evaluated as a passive school by the government. However, regardless of the government's assessment, each school develops their community participation in its own way. In School A, it was a great example of how a charismatic leader promotes community participation. If there is no person to demonstrate leadership, the school management community may have difficulty fulfilling its role. From this case, it can be said that the existence of leadership is one factor that separates community participation in active schools and non-active schools.

According to Yamada (2011), people who take strong leadership on the SBM tend to be elites who are educated well. However, in our case study, although School A's SSC chairman could not receive education due to the Khmer Rouge, he extracts resources from other stakeholders. Therefore, this seems to show that people in Cambodia who demonstrate leadership are not always well educated. This seems to be related to Cambodia's historical background. Because of the Khmer Rouge, Cambodian school education was destroyed, and among the generation who now have leadership, education tended not to be received. Therefore, there are other factors that encourage leadership besides educational status, especially in Cambodia. For further research, it is necessary to examine what kind of factors makes people who demonstrate strong leadership be more influential in involving other stakeholders.

The case of School B is that the school itself was originally established by the community and they have the common idea that “this is our school”. In Cambodia, there are many community-based schools which have the same background as School B. Therefore, it seems that the community involvement in construction and operation of school had a long history before the implementation of SSC. It seems that the educational

promotion activities led by a community have an important influence on the current community participation. From these findings, it can be said that the degree of participation of the community is not understood by only considering institutions such as SSC, but rather we have to consider each school's history and situation more deeply.

8. Recommendations

Based on our findings, we suggest three recommendations. First, since both schools have SSCs with specific activities according to the school needs, the provincial Department of Education should consider each community's unique context. To accomplish this suggestion, a decent amount of budget is required. However, although the government budget is given to schools as a lump sum, the government should specifically mandate allocating some money to be utilized for community participation. In addition, both bottom-up and top-down approaches are required to provide sufficient amounts and to ensure efficiency.

As a top-down approach, we recommend reconsidering the evaluation criteria. As we mentioned earlier, Cambodian schools develop their community participation their own way. However, the government seems to focus on inside-SSC activities as community participation, because although the contents of activities are not so different, School A is evaluated as highly, while School B is evaluated as lower rated. This shows that the government does not comprehend actual community participation well. Cambodian education has the tradition of schools which are established by communities and the history of community-led educational dissemination activities. Even if there had been not the government's promotion of community participation, there might have been involvement of the residents in school operation. Therefore it will be important to re-examine the diverse forms of community participation.

For the bottom-up approach, it is necessary to accurately communicate situations from each school and to make requests through the relevant procedures. For this purpose, even though human resources are the most important factor, there is no person who is in charge of education issues. When an organized channel like SSC is established, it is also necessary to prepare a convincing yearly school plan for the province and appeal to development experts outside the provincial government. However, under the current Cambodian context, it seems difficult to provide such person who is familiar with educational administrative management in each country. Therefore, the government should provide an opportunity to learn how to extract resources from outside the school organization, such as from government and NGOs.

Second, we suggest that a forum on community participation is regularly organized. Currently, Cambodia is still in the development stage of community participation and each school creates its own way. Therefore, they have their own unique good and sometimes poor practices, but there is no opportunity to share them. Specifically, a forum would encourage participation by SSC chairs and school principals, and it could be a place for active exchange of opinions. In addition, these forums would be a very important opportunity for the government to grasp the current situation of the community participation.

Third, if the provincial government establishes school district that determine which school each student should attend, it might be more efficient for school mapping. One of the most important roles of community participation is school mapping. Some schools have an informal education teacher who provides information for school mapping to SSC, however they are not allocated to all schools. Sometimes, school districts are not

precisely distinguished, and therefore their work overlaps. Under this situation, it is difficult to manage their work efficiently.

Cambodia has the ambition to transition from a lower-middle income country to an upper-middle income country by 2030 and developed country by 2050. The government regards education as one of the most important means to accomplish that aim. While budget allocation to primary education is the highest, it is still difficult to create the environment which the government is trying to achieve. In this context, community plays a crucial role in Cambodian education because community covers insufficiencies by dealing with the actual situation of each school. Therefore, it will greatly contribute to Cambodian education if the government encourages community participation more.

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Note

1. An informal education teacher is a school staff member who is assigned to a school by MOEYS. His/her job is to collect students' data and make a school map which is utilized by the school in some ways, such as enrollment campaigns.

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Working Group 4
Muslim Community as a Cultural Minority

**Education and Career of Cham Students:
Tensions between Religious and Secular Lives**

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1. Introduction

The aim of this research was threefold: looking at the reality of the Cham as a cultural and religious minority living in both secular and religious society in Cambodia, examining the causes of tensions affecting them and considering how they alleviate these tensions. The tension for Cham youth means a circumstance where Cham cannot pursue both secular and religious careers even if they wish to do so, and therefore they oftentimes are required to make a decision of which career to further build through their lives. These objectives come from the following research questions we wished to explore: why do many Cham youth have difficulty in pursuing the two types of education and career at the same time, and what are the factors affecting Cham youth's career decisions.

Minority groups, including Cham, are treated equally under the Constitution of Cambodia. However, the consideration toward them seems to be insufficient. Although the government supports them by building mosques or issuing a directive to allow wearing the hijab, it does not guarantee the expansion of their choices to realize fulfilling lives. In fact, none of the previous literature mentions that there is a tension affecting them, probably because the researchers failed to look at the situation from the aspect of capabilities, which is proposed by Amartya Sen (1992) and Martha Nussbaum (2000). In this context, the reason why this perspective is important lies on the concept of the Capabilities Approach. This approach focuses on the practical freedom to achieve something that a person puts values on. Nussbaum insists that governments have responsibilities to secure each and every person's capabilities (Nussbaum, 2000). Therefore, if the government can appropriately take their freedom of choice into consideration, they would not be trapped in the tension between secular and religious lives. In this paper, we can see this tension in education and career choice of Cham youth. This is because the education system of Cambodia is also divided into two different types--education in state school and education in madrasah--as the structure of the tension, which traps Cham, and illustrates the conflicting relationship between secular and religious lives.

2. Literature Review

Cham in Cambodia today are officially referred to as the Khmer Islam, an identity which signifies that the Cham are a variant of the Khmers in Cambodia, and they are considered to be a religious minority. This could be considered as part of the efforts of the Cambodian government to mainstream Cham into Khmer society.

However, the American Institutes for Research (2008) opined that this action may suggest a "suppression" of the non-Khmer ethnicity of Cham. In addition, as described by Bredenberg (2008), it is politically incorrect to refer to the Khmer Islam as Cham when speaking in the Khmer language. Some official documents, such as those of the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sport (MoEYS) in Bredenberg (2008) go to the extent of refuting the idea of the Cham as a minority ethnic group since such description should only be applicable to unique ethnic groups consisting of indigenous tribal people who have lived in the forest and mountain areas of the country over a long period of time. It should, however, be noted that not all sections of the Cambodian government are consistent with the correct political usage as, for example, the Ministry of Interior still refers to them as Cham instead of Khmer Islam in many documents. In its research on Cham in Cambodia, Kampuchean Action for Primary Education (KAPE) in Educational Support to Children in Underserved

Populations (ESCUP) program found that very few of its Cham respondents were confident enough to cite instances of experienced cases of discrimination or marginalization against them (American Institute, 2008).

With recent development and especially with the freedom gained after the Khmer Rouge era and in the bid to provide opportunities for better futures and employment for their children, Cham in Cambodia want their children to receive a proper education. They want their children to receive both secular and religious education. However, as noted by ESCUP, some Cham feel that they have limited access to public schools due to both economic and religious differences (American Institute, 2008).

Although Cham seem to have been mainstreamed into the Khmer society politically, their reality seems to offer contrary evidence. Some Cham still find it difficult to gain employment of their choice due to their cultural and religious identity, and this disparity in the “claimed and true” status of Cham is also evident in their access to education within the country.

Bredenberg (2008) observed that researchers found evidence of lowest levels of educational efficiency in the districts with large Cham populations. Research also found that Cham parents have clear expectations for their children’s education, and such expectations include the choice of teaching in and about the Cham’s native language, teachings about the tenets of Islam, and the ability of the teachers to speak the Cham language. However, “The state religion and language of Cambodia are Buddhism and Khmer, respectively. As a result, there is a prohibition against teaching other religions and languages in the state schools. (2008, p.13)”

Such expectations by Cham parents have not been met. Interestingly, research conducted by Bredenberg (2008) revealed that only about 1% of the government-employed teachers were of Cham ethnicity, even in heavily populated Cham communities. This further reveals the disparity between the politically mainstreamed Cham and the daily realities of Cham in the country, although MoEYS explains that the long-term mission of them is “to ensure that all Cambodian children and youth have equal opportunity to access quality education consistent with the Constitution and the Royal Government's commitment to the U.N convention on the Rights of the Child, regardless of social status, geography, ethnicity, religion, language, gender and physical form” (as cited in American Institute, 2008, p. 9).

In addition to this point, state schools generate dissatisfaction for Cham in terms of cost. On the other hand, dissatisfaction with Islamic schools is focused on lack of resources such as a financial reports for Islamic schools and teachers. Parents acknowledged that state teachers are dissatisfied with their low salary paid by the government, and thus they resort to private tutoring out of school in order to earn additional money.

From the perspective of Cham parents, they want their children to go to both state school and religious school. However, financial and cultural barriers prevent them from sending their children to state school. In addition, the distance to state school is another limitation for Cham (American Institute, 2008).

They feel that the available option for them is religious education. This has made them be more open to religious educational help from the international Muslim communities. Yekti and Betti (2014) reported that many Cham in Cambodia had established networks with the Islamic world outside of Cambodia in countries like Malaysia, Indonesia, southern Thailand, and the Middle Eastern countries. These networks afford the Cham the opportunity to pursue their education or training within Islam. The networks also provide them with job opportunities. What then is the reality of Cham in Cambodia if they need to rely on outsiders, the international Muslim community, for education and employment? What does this mean for the future of the

Cham?

This study intended to research the realities of Cham in relation to their educational and employment opportunities in Cambodia.

3. Research Objectives

The objective of this research was to (1) look at the reality of Cham living in both secular and religious society as a cultural and religious minority in Cambodia, and then to (2) examine the causes of tensions affecting Cham, and to (3) consider how they can alleviate these tensions. Although some literature mentions the frustration Cham have in their lives as a minority group, or some do not mention at all, none of the literature successfully portrays the actual circumstances of Cham--being trapped in the tension between secular and religious lives. Therefore, the result of this study may academically contribute to any future study relating to Cham and their current picture.

4. Research Questions

While in the field, a portion of Cham's real lives was glimpsed: the tension that Cham are trapped between secular and religious life. The clearer the reality became, the more obvious the discrepancies between what is written in the literature and what is happening out there became. In reality, according to the American Institute of Research (2008), many Cham perceive that they are welcomed by Khmer society while building good relations with Khmer, and that the government respects and embraces their religious differences (p. 31). However, it seems true that some Cham encounter obstacles in living their lives no matter which path they choose, secular life or religious life. Even if one lives a secular life, the person does not feel he or she fully belongs to Khmer society because of being Muslim; however, living a full religious life may not necessarily be what his or her heart desires, especially for Cham of younger generations. In this sense, their future options are very limited.

Based on such differences in the literature and the present situation which was observable in the field, two research questions arise, and thus, this study will answer the following: (1) Why do many Cham youth have difficulty pursuing the two types of education and career at the same time?; and (2) What are the factors affecting Cham youth's career decisions?

5. Methodology

5.1 Background of the Cham

In the first place, Cambodia is a multi-ethnic society with a majority of ethnic Khmer, which makes up 90 percent of the population. On the other hand, there are non-Khmer groups, composed of main ethnic groups such as Vietnamese (5%), Chinese (1%) and Cham (1%). In addition to these ethnic groups, there are hill tribes (3%) which mainly live in the northeastern mountains¹ and are known collectively as Khmer Loeu. The Khmer Loeu maintain a way of life which is different from Khmer of the mainstream society, while the Vietnamese, Chinese and Cham are integrated into Khmer society in many ways. Although the various groups coexist, Cambodia can be called a homogeneous country in terms of religion. In fact, Khmer as the ethnic majority believe in Buddhism, which is recognized as the official state religion of Cambodia. Needless to say, freedom of religion is guaranteed to all. Therefore, other religions such as Islam, which is followed by the Cham, Christianity and tribal animism are also practiced in the country.

Regarding the Cham, they are both an ethnic and religious minority due to their background, such as a country of origin, native language and their religious beliefs. That is, some of them have their origin from the Kingdom of Champa which was located in present Southern Vietnam, while others do not. Similarly, though some pray five times a day, others do once a week. Nowadays, their communities are basically centered along or near rivers in 6 out of 22 provinces: Kampong Cham, Kampot, Battambang, Phnom Penh/Kandal, Kampong Chhnang and Pursat. Additionally, they are reported different estimates of the number of Cham, and these estimates range from between 320,000 to 700,000. In the past, during the Khmer Rouge regime (1975-1979), which is also known as the Pol Pot era, they numbered about 800,000, but not less than 70 percent of those were ultimately killed in the massacre (Esposito, 2001). In the case of the Cham, during this regime, it was estimated that there were less than 200,000 of them left in Cambodia, and that only 20 clergy survived (So, 2005). Those who were killed were former regime politicians, doctors, bureaucrats, intellectuals, and rich people, as well as those who did not have the same ideology as the regime regardless of ethnic groups.

In particular, the Cham were persecuted by the Khmer Rouge and they faced not only personal crisis but also the destruction of their culture; for instance, around 122 mosques were destroyed. Of their religious symbols and places to worship, only 20 mosques remained at that time (“Islam Kamboja,” 2009, December 28). Furthermore, mosques had also played a role as schools for Cham children to learn religious knowledge and carry on the traditions of their ancestors. Therefore, the destruction of mosques proved to be the deathblow to their culture. After the end of the Khmer Rouge regime in 1979, all Cambodian people, regardless of being Khmer and non-Khmer, accomplished the restoration of the country. The Cham reconstructed mosques, mushallas, and Islamic scientific institutions. No less than 168 mosques, 200 mushallas, and 300 madrasahs have been established (“Islam Kamboja,” 2009, December 28).

After the Pol Pot regime, the Cham could enjoy the freedom to choose an occupation and a place to live. Moreover, the Cambodian government also gave permission for the establishment of Islamic organizations.

¹ Country Technical Note on Indigenous Peoples’ Issues Kingdom of Cambodia by Moul Phath and Seng Sovathana 2012

Furthermore, the people of Cambodia began to treat the Cham better, and at the same time, their community could carry out their religious activities freely. Currently, they already have 268 mosques, 200 mushallas, 300 Islamic madrasahs and one memorandum of Al Qur'anulkarim. Indeed, such Islamic organizations as the Cambodian Muslim Association, the Cambodian Islamic Youth Association, the Cambodian Muslim Development Foundation and the Cambodian Islamic Institute for Development have emerged, and some Cham are even in important positions in the government (“Islam Kamboja”, 2009, December 28).

5.2 Situation of Education and Career

State school is for both Khmer and Cham students, and in primary and secondary education they can learn basic subjects such as the Khmer language and mathematics. USAID points out that although Cham parents are willing to send their children, for their children are more likely to be able to choose to attend both state schools and religious studies, they simultaneously believe economic factors and cultural differences limit their access to state school (American Institutes for Research, 2008). The main benefit of going to state school, Cham parents think, is that their children can acquire Khmer language skills and mathematics, and get a better job in the future (American Institutes for Research, 2008). If children pursue secular careers after tertiary education at state school, there will be more employment options and they have more possibility of getting high salary.

Madrasah are for Cham children learn religious subjects such as Arabic, how to read Al-Qur'an, and how to conduct prayer five times a day. Attending an Islamic school is also necessary for them to learn their religion (American Institutes for Research, 2008). Almost all parents think that going to Madrasah is important to maintain their identity. If children take such religious education and want to pursue a religious career, it is relatively easy for them to get scholarships from international Muslim networks and study in countries like Qatar, Egypt, and Malaysia, and so on. In addition, when they go back to Cambodia, they can get higher status in their community, such as a religious teacher or Imam, which is a community leader. Cham youth's career choice is formulated in these two different educational settings, and that is why we can see the tension Cham face in their career choice.

5.3 Research Site

The fieldwork was conducted over three days, from the 23rd to the 25th August 2017, in Jong Klong Village, located in Krokor District, Pursat Province. Jong Klong Village is where 937 people reside, and the majority of residents are Cham and their basic means of livelihood is agriculture (Statistic table of Suva Mosque & Islam Krokor District, 2017). In this community, both Khmer and Cham live together and their inter-marriage is allowed and practiced.

The village has two types of schools, which are the public school--owned and operated by the government--and the religious school also known as Madrasah. The Madrasah was established in 1980 by one of the Muslim leaders in the community and the school used to be in his house until 2013, when a Cham refugee in Malaysia erected the current school building for the community. The government commenced payment of the salary of school staff in 2015. At the time of the research, the pupils in the public primary school were 222 while the

Madrasah has 208 students (90 male and 118 female). Five staff members are working in the public school, including one principal, one vice principal, and three teachers. In the Madrasah, four staff members are working: one principal, one vice principal, and two teachers.

5.4 Research Methods

Both a questionnaire survey and interviews were used. The respondents for the questionnaire survey were selected by snowball sampling among adult Cham, while the interviewees were predetermined as those who belong to educational institutions. Respondents amounted to 21 individuals, mainly women in households with children attending both state school and Madrasah, and interviewees were 10 in total: two officers from the Ministry of Education at the district level, one state school principal, three state school teachers, two Madrasah teachers, and two students attending both state school and Madrasah. In spite of the predetermined general profile of interviewees--those belonging to educational institutions--prior to arrival in the field, specific individuals to interview were decided after arrival in the field. Both questionnaire surveys and interviews were basically done in the respondents' or interviewees' houses or places where they were comfortable, such as their workplaces, including government office or schools, in order for them to be able to relax and talk honestly to strangers like us.

The research group members were divided into two separate groups in the field and one group mainly conducted questionnaire surveys and the other did interviews. The questionnaire survey was done in interview-like form; one of the research group members asked questions from the list and another one or two, depending on the number of members in the group, took notes of responses and asked follow-up questions. Each questionnaire survey lasted from 20 minutes to 60 minutes. All questionnaire surveys were recorded either with an iPhone or IC recorder and then transcribed later. Since almost all of the respondents did not speak or understand English, all questionnaire surveys were done in Khmer with the assistance of the Khmer student and professor from Royal University of Phnom Penh (RUPP).

Interviews, another data collection method employed, were conducted in the oral narrative form. A question sheet was prepared before the fieldwork, but in the field, the interviews progressed by letting interviewees talk about what they wished rather than simply answer the questions, and the duration of these interviews was about 30 minutes each. In a similar manner to the questionnaire surveys, one of research group members played the role of the interviewer and another was a note-taker and asked follow-up-questions, with the voice recorder on. The interviews were also conducted with the sincere efforts and commitment of the Khmer student and professor from RUPP to translate English into Khmer and vice versa.



6. Findings and Analysis

6.1 Findings

In order to answer the main research question of why many Cham youth have difficulty in pursuing the two types of education and career at the same time, and the sub-question about the factors affecting Cham youth's career decisions need to be answered because these factors cause the tension which hinder Cham from pursuing the two simultaneously.

Two distinct factors are observable, according to the data collected through the interview as well as the questionnaire survey: community-level factors and social structural factors. Besides discoveries of factors causing tensions, this research may even further find unrevealed relations among Cham within their community.

Community-level factors are gender and generational perspectives existing inside the Cham community. Based on the interviews, most parents send their children to both state school and Cham school for primary and secondary education regardless of gender differences. They even wish their daughters to get higher education. However, through the interviews, it became clear that men are more likely to get scholarships for the tertiary education, so male Cham students have both options of pursuing secular careers and religious careers after secondary school. On the other hand, women have less opportunity to get such scholarships for pursuing secular careers. In other words, compared to male students, career options for female students are limited.

Even if women can get opportunities to work in a secular part of the society, they face difficulties. For example, one of the female interviewees told the story of difficulty that she faced. She obtained a bachelor's degree in accounting, and applied to work at a bank. However, she was rejected because as a Muslim she was not able to wear the uniform the bank provided. Therefore, she had to give up on pursuing the secular career and became a teacher at religious school instead. This case shows gender shapes individuals' career decision-making after upper-secondary education; two options--secular and religious careers--are open to male Cham because of scholarships they are more likely to receive, whereas female Cham's future options seem very limited, for many households prioritize men's education, and religious belief restricts the attire Muslim women

can or cannot wear.

Another element of community-level factors is different perspectives among generations within the Cham community. The respondents showed different views about their ideal careers by generation. Most parents emphasized the importance of religious studies as Muslims, and some people are afraid that their children may become disloyal to their faith if they pursue secular careers. For example, one father in the community said that he wants his children to study abroad only for religious studies because he believes that if people get jobs in secular society and get high salaries, they may forget what Al-Qur'an says is important. He wants his children to remain religious.

However, many Cham teenagers prefer to pursue secular careers. In reality, one student said that his dream is to become a doctor rather than to become a religious teacher or a religious leader. Hence, as this reality implies, Cham in younger generations have distinct viewpoints toward future career decisions from those in older generations. In other words, if Cham of the older generation have negative perceptions toward younger Cham obtaining careers in a secular part of the society, it influences younger generation's career decision making in a way that discourages Cham children from pursuing secular careers.

These situations illustrate that young Cham are trapped by the tension between faith and secular lives. On one hand, religion negatively affects their secular lives. For instance, a Cham woman was rejected to work at a bank due to her faith. She had no choice but to become a teacher at religious school in order to maintain her faith.

Another case is that of a male student. He is now 18 years old and goes to an NGO's school in Phnom Penh, which is called School of the Light of the Muslim in English, and is now in ninth grade. He got a scholarship from the NGO, which is from Kuwait. One of the reasons the NGO selected him for a scholarship is because he is an orphan. This NGO school offers both the curriculums of state school and Cham school. He said he wants to become a doctor in the future, but the problem is that the scholarship ends when he finishes 12th grade. To pursue his dream to become a doctor, he has to find other support for his secular career. A man also told us that he had to hide his Cham name upon applying for a job and instead he used a Khmer name so that he could successfully get a job in the secular part of the society.

On the other hand, as the second factor implies, secular lives also negatively affect their religious faith. Some parents are afraid of their children becoming disloyal to their faith if they engage in a secular job. Related to this concern, there is also a perception that Cham youth who go to university to study subjects other than religion tend to forget their faith.

In addition to these community-level factors, there are social structural factors which are observable between the Cham community and Khmer community. These social structural factors are composed of three different elements: lack of secular scholarships, lack of consideration of religious differences in the private sector, especially for women, and the limited vocational education provided by higher religious schools.

First, current scholarship programs available to Cham are only to deepen their understanding of religion in religious schools and not to further pursue their knowledge in secular tertiary educational institutions. This situation makes it difficult to ensure the access to secular education, and especially poor families who are willing to send their children to higher education tend to choose religious schools for the tertiary education regardless of children's preferences because of only available scholarship programs. Second, private

companies do not pay much attention to the different religion worshiped by minorities. Due to this indifference, Cham cannot fully practice their religious belief while immersing themselves in the secular environment. Third, Cham's future, especially those attending higher religious schools, can be limited, because in school they only learn religion and not vocational education which can empower them to find occupations in secular society.

All in all, there are two factors, and those are community-level and social structural factors; the former factors contain gender and generational elements, and the latter factors are composed of relational elements, explaining the relationship between Cham and Khmer societies. These two factors intertwine with each other, causing and strengthening the tension that traps Cham into the binary of religious and secular lives, and this tension hinders Cham from pursuing the two at the same time.

6.2 Analysis

The dominant liberal view seems very essential to understand how to overcome this issue. The liberal idea is defined as achieving equal opportunity as well as equality for all with the alleviation of social ills while civil liberties and individual human rights are protected and respected (Student News Daily, n.d.). In liberal society, the state should be neutral to any ethnic and religious groups and such basic religious practices as wearing the hijab and freedom of belief are allowed, such as in the case of Muslims in Cambodia. This societal attitude, however, does not necessarily ensure that the Cham can practice their own religious beliefs as they wish, anytime and anywhere. Despite its latent unfriendliness to minority groups, the Cham do not raise their voices against this dominant view. Under liberal society, the Cham's religious practices or their religious belief are not completely denied; they can sustain the minimum level of religious life in Cambodia. Also, because of the government's assistance, the numbers of Muslim schools, at least in Krokor District, have increased. Therefore, although they feel a sense of frustration, they do not raise their voices because they may also appreciate the Cambodian government for showing awareness of their religion.

Therefore, Khmer citizens may take such a present situation for granted and believe that Cham are satisfied with the current environment, and this circumstance clearly shows that the liberal view is prevalent across Cambodian society, believing that minority groups are also taken well into account, in the name of neutrality. This submerged inconsideration to different religions results in making the Cham exercise adaptive preference². Cham have very little doubt that the decisions they make are based on the options available to them, are right and rational, due to this adaptive preference. However, it does not mean that they have neither problems nor grievances in their lives under the liberal institution and idea just because they do not demonstrate their frustrations. This adaptive preference, caused by the predominant liberal view, even limits their capabilities.

Cham perhaps try to eradicate the pain of the actual circumstances where they cannot do what they wish to do since the society does not allow them to act as they wish. One female Cham, for example, who wished to work for a bank, responded in the interview by saying that she does not expect the Cambodian

² Adaptive preference is often understood as one's action or tendency to adjust his or her preference accordingly to the deprived circumstances and to claim to prefer the situation to any other alternatives (Baber, 2007; Begon, 2014).

government to offer more inclusive treatment to them since they understand that Cambodia is not a Muslim country and that they are minority. Besides showing her understanding of the present situation in Cambodia, she now also finds her current occupation--teacher of religion in Muslim school--worthwhile. Although she originally wanted to work in a bank by applying her area of specialty, accounting, attained by attending secular higher education, because she was a female Muslim who cannot follow the uniform requirement the bank asked her to wear, she ended up going back to her home village, becoming a religious teacher, and considering what she does to be what her heart desires.

This case clearly depicts adaptive preference of Cham, especially in relation to Khmer mainstream society. The range of options available to them seems to be limited since Khmer citizens may unconsciously blind themselves to the reality that Cham's freedom of choices as well as religious practices are restricted. Cham thus adjust the preferences of the roles they wish to play according to such oppressive environments, and this situation, at the same time, limits what they want to do and to be.

The application of the concepts may be controversial in depicting the situation surrounding the Cham; some people may argue their situation is rather false consciousness than adaptive preference. False consciousness is the systematic misinterpretation of social relations around the individuals of subordinate classes which conceals or obscures their adverse reality (Little, n.d.). It is likely one of the potential counterarguments against the analytical part of this research that Cham misunderstand their surroundings as well as Cambodian society as their freedom of choices are limited due to the widespread liberal view. For instance, some Khmer, being the majority population, may claim that liberal society is not the attitude of Cambodian society, and so Cham are not adjusting their preferences according to the surroundings, but rather they choose what they believe they can do or be in accordance with their own understandings or views of Cambodian society.

However, it can hardly be justified that such an argument is based on the Cham's true viewpoint of how they perceive Cambodian society, because the concept of false consciousness is likely to be brought up by outsiders--Khmer citizens in this context--who may not be able to fully share the frustration Cham have deep within their hearts. Though this research supports the view that Cham adjust their choices according to the environments surrounding them, which result in limiting their capabilities, and indeed some respondents divulged their grievances against the liberal attitudes of society, such a conclusion perhaps is still fragile since this research lacks enough data to show their precise perceptions toward Cambodian society.

7. Limitations

There were several limitations when the research was conducted. The first was limited literature about the Cham and Pursat Province. Before going to Cambodia, the information gathering process was conducted in order to understand the research target group well. In spite of these efforts, only a little literature was found, and this is the reason why it was difficult to come up with feasible research questions based on information gained through the literature review. The second issue was the limited time for fieldwork. In fact, the whole period of Overseas Fieldwork was less than two weeks. In addition, fieldwork and data collection were conducted over only three days. Deeper insights and more vivid pictures of the Cham might have been gained if more time had been spent. The language barrier can also be another limitation in obtaining accurate

information or responses. Since all data collection processes were conducted in both English and Khmer, interpreters were necessary, and thus some expressions might not have been fully conveyed upon translation from Khmer to English or English to Khmer. Another consideration is the limited amount of data collected through the fieldwork. It was not possible to fully understand the perceptions of Khmer citizens toward the Cham or their society; the research might have been discussed from a more neutral position only if such data was collected. Due to this limitation, the discussion of why Cham feel difficulties in raising their voices remains tenuous. These four issues were obstacles in this research.

8. Recommendation

This paper has mainly discussed the lives of Cham and the issues they have faced and their causes. Based on the findings of this research, four recommendations can be drawn in order to possibly improve their current situation.

The first issue is lack of scholarships for Cham youth to further pursue their academic career in secular tertiary education. As this paper has shown, it is easier for Cham to build religious careers by receiving scholarships for religious educational purposes because they have some international Muslim connections both inside and outside Cambodia. Based on this truth, this research suggests that the Cambodian government or international Muslim network provide more funds for education, especially for secular careers. If they create such scholarships, Cham youth will have more options for their futures.

Some Cham are not wealthy enough to send their children to tertiary educational institutions; even if they could, scholarships for secular tertiary education are not common, and so, some of them have to go on to higher religious schools. Thus, those Cham will eventually only have the option to become religious teachers. However, if vocational education is provided in higher religious schools together with religious studies, their future alternatives will be expanded. Also, if the Cambodian government attempts to offer vocational education in religious schools for Cham in order for them to be more able to find occupations in secular society, such an attempt represents the Cambodian government paying more respect to the Cham.

The second issue is lack of consideration for religious differences in the private sector, particularly for women. This indifference to different religions is proved by the example of the woman who wanted to be a banker. In light of this case, this research recommends that the government encourage the private sector to accept religious differences. One way to encourage social recognition for the Cham is the use of political means, namely affirmative action. Public awareness of the Cham would likely rise by favoring and actively employing Cham so that Khmer would become more familiar with them and their existence can be more visible to the majority.

The third issue is the limited secular knowledge provided by higher religious school. If religious school provides both secular and religious subjects equally until upper secondary school, the Cham will more smoothly be able to go on to further secular education and build non-religious careers. Their future options will be expanded by being able to receive both secular and religious education at the same time in Islamic schools. Therefore, the government and Imam should at least suggest that Muslim associations provide secular scholarships for Cham youth.

The last issue is countering the way of thinking toward religion and the future among different generations,

that is, older Cham's anxiety about secular careers for youth. In fact, those in the younger generation tend to have interest in pursuing secular careers rather than religious ones. As this paper illustrates, they want to be doctors or accountants. In contrast, the older generation is afraid that children may lose their faith, which destroys Cham identity, if they abandon religious life to pursue secular careers and live less-religious lives. Because of this discrepancy in how Cham in different generations perceive religion as well as the future, this research proposes that Cham leaders promote two main ideas: first, that secular careers of youth contribute to the welfare of their community, and second, that living in secular society does not necessarily ruin their religious belief or faith at all. Although it is not easy to alleviate the anxiety of those in the older generation, implementing and practicing those recommendations would bring positive changes and development to the community. These are the recommendations, based on the results of fieldwork, which are worth consideration.



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