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Forced evictions in Phnom Penh, Cambodia:

Women’s narratives of risk and resilience.

Colleen McGinn

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
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ABSTRACT

"Every day is difficult for my body and my heart."

Forced evictions in Phnom Penh, Cambodia: Women's narratives of risk and resilience.

Colleen McGinn

This study uses narrative analysis to explore the question: *How do forced evictions impact the psychosocial health of displaced women in Phnom Penh, and what sources of risk and resilience frame how they manage the exigencies of displacement*? I use Stress and Coping Theory to frame analysis of the narratives of evicted women in order to understand their lived experiences and pathways of adaptation. Analysis of 27 interviews with 22 women demonstrated highly diverse experiences and divergent outcomes. I present a typology of post-eviction socioeconomic pathways because women's coping strategies and adaptation are deeply grounded in the nature and degree of economic harm that they experienced. From this context, I explore how women coped with their displacement. Stress tended to manifest in the form of somatic ailments and rumination. Social support and livelihood capacity emerged as key protective factors. The better-off participants for whom eviction tended to represent harm to assets, community, and aspirations typically exhibited a great deal of anger and/or anxiety, and they experienced forced eviction as a discreet, tragic, and even traumatic event. By contrast, those who lived in poverty tended to manifest depression,

hopelessness, and passive resignation. These women spoke of their forced eviction as a terrible but somehow normal event within lives characterized by the exploitation and suffering shouldered by the very poor. I conclude with recommendations for policymakers and social work practitioners.

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Acknowledgements and Dedication

My greatest thanks is to the women who shared their stories of displacement and its aftermath with me. I have tried to honor them in the writing of this dissertation, and the thousands of others displaced by forced evictions in Phnom Penh and across the world. Their stories, voices, and experiences can and should shape a better future for Cambodia.

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Chapter 1: Introduction and Overview.

1.1 Introduction and Problem Statement.

Forced evictions[1], that is, "the involuntary removal of persons from their homes or land, directly or indirectly attributable to the State" (OHCHR, 1996, p. 3) are a worldwide phenomenon; the most recent global survey on forced evictions counted some 5.5 million between 2003 and 2006. In other words, every year over 2 million people are displaced by forced evictions worldwide (COHRE, 2006). They have become widespread in Cambodia in recent years; it has been estimated that as many as 400,000 Cambodians have been uprooted nationwide since 2003 (LICADHO & The Cambodia Daily, 2012). Such evictions are highly controversial from political, legal, and urban planning standpoints, and there is a considerable body of literature reflecting these perspectives. However, in-depth analyses of the impact of these evictions on the lives of those displaced are relatively scarce. This research constitutes a narrative analysis, utilizing Stress and Coping Theory, of interviews conducted with 22 women in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, who had been forcibly evicted within the two and a half years prior to being interviewed. This chapter provides an overview of the context and background of the

[1] Definition and discussion of technical terms and key concepts can be found in Appendix A. These terms are italicized the first time they appear in the chapter text.

dissertation study, which is followed by statements of the research problem, purpose, questions, significance, methods, and theoretical framework.

1.2 Background and Context.

Forced evictions are not unique to Cambodia. They are a common but often overlooked impetus to *forced migration* across the globe: according to The Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions (2006), over 5.5 million people worldwide were displaced by forced evictions between 2003 and 2006.[2] Those subject to forced evictions, as defined by the United Nations (UN), have legitimate claims to the property from which they have been evicted, and their claims have been subverted by authorities who have denied them adequate compensation. As much as 22% of Cambodia's land has been sold for economic concessions or other development projects in recent years (LICADHO & The Cambodia Daily, 2012). In many cases, the contested property was inhabited or otherwise in use by local populations. This controversial "land grabbing" has become a major political issue in Cambodia (Engvall & Kokko, 2007; Hughes 2008).

Forced evictions have been carried out on a large scale in Phnom Penh since 1990 (Ballard & Runsinarith, 2007), fueled in part by rising property values. As Poslewaite (as cited in Fleischman, 2009) explained, "a decade ago, Phnom Penh lacked even a single traffic light.

[2] This figure continues to be widely cited; there is no more current estimate of forced evictions at the global level.

Today, as land speculators rake in profits . . . all over the city, shanty towns and old villas are being sold for land value and razed to make way for high-rise apartments, office buildings, shopping malls, and new villas" (p. 13). Some evictions of entire communities have been carried out by armed agents, and accompanied by violence; land rights advocates and activists are also at risk of being arrested or harmed (Amnesty International, 2009).

Migration in Cambodia and worldwide is propelled by both *pull and push factors* (Maltoni, 2007); people leave their home towns and provinces in search of a better life, or to escape hardship or difficulty. Contexts of forced migration, however, are characterized by extreme stress, including deepened poverty, exposure to violence, social breakdown, and family stress. It is clear from Derks (2008), Lim (2007), and other scholars of internal migration in Cambodia that Phnom Penh serves as a "pressure valve" for the rural poor; the capital city is the destination when livelihoods collapse, or for those seeking opportunity. Living conditions for many in Phnom Penh, however, remain marginal; according to the most recent UN estimate, 78.9% of Cambodia's urban residents live in *slum* conditions (UN-Habitat, 2012)[3]. What then happens when entire urban neighborhoods are displaced? Where do people go, and what becomes of them?

[3] Many within Phnom Penh regard this figure to be inflated because any area with sewerage systems that do not meet UN standards are automatically classified as "slums" regardless of other characteristics. However, I have been unable to find any written references that confirm this, or calculate alternative estimates.

Soto (2011) has commented that "housing, land and property rights affect men and women differently; hence these issues are not gender-neutral and require a gender equality analysis of the problem" (p. 3). In Cambodia, these issues tend not to be official – women have the same legal property rights as men – but they are often the more socially and economically marginalized, and this is likely to be exacerbated in the event of a forced eviction. There are large numbers of female-headed households in Cambodia, especially among those who lived through the war years. Women tend to be overburdened at home, with full care-taking responsibilities for children and the elderly, while also contributing significantly to household income. There is evidence that the evictions are exacerbating these circumstances, in part because they lead to separation of family members: women, children, and the elderly on the margins of the city, unable to support themselves and dependent on remittances from men earning a livelihood elsewhere.

The focus on women is thus particularly advantageous for capturing the impact on family systems, functioning, composition, and livelihood strategies, and how these in turn influence adaptation and *coping*, i.e., the "constantly changing cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage specific external and/or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of the person" (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984, p. 141). Exploring these processes can illuminate dimensions of women's *risk* and *resilience*, highlighting sources of both vulnerability and strength. *Risk* can be understood as "a state or status defined by the possibility for harm or negative development. Risk factors, when present, increase the probability of the experience

of harm…. this concept implies an increased probability of non-optimal or maladaptive developmental processes or outcomes (Wenar & Kerig as cited in Russell, 2005, p. 7). By contrast, resilience refers to the "process of, capacity for, or outcome of successful adaptation despite challenging or threatening circumstances" (Masten, Best, & Garzemy, 1990, p. 425). Understanding sources of both risk and resilience can inform public policy and social work practice to better support this population, and others in Cambodia who are struggling with adversity. There is a tendency in social work literature to focus on risk, often out of legitimate and well-meaning concern for those in difficulty. However, it is now widely recognized that understanding strength, resilience, and *protective factors* are essential to develop nuanced, balanced analyses as well as strengths-based interventions.

Despite important contributions to the research on forced evictions in Cambodia, the emphasis in the literature to date has been on political, legal, and urban planning perspectives. There has been little in-depth investigation of the social impact of these evictions, particularly regarding those who do not inhabit designated relocation sites, which are usually well beyond the city center.[4] As a result, little is known about the sources of individual and group risk and

[4] Evictees are frequently resettled in locations on the outskirts of the city. There is no consistent policy, but a common pattern is for renters to be transported to a field where they are given small plots to build basic encampments, whereas homeowners might be given a newly-built rowhouse. Other homeowners may receive a cash settlement, and some (whether homeowners or renters) may not be compensated at all. These people do not go to designated resettlement areas. Among those who do, many leave due to lack of access to transportation and livelihood opportunities. Journalists and NGO assistance concentrate on those in the relocation sites themselves, presumably due to ease of access. I have been unable to locate any publications that systematically investigate outcomes of those who leave them.

resilience that comprise evictees' coping processes. Earlier research (e.g., McGinn, 2006; Caritas et al., 2009) suggested that forced evictions in Phnom Penh lead to profound personal and social problems that include loss of livelihood, family separation, increase in female-headed households, domestic violence, substance abuse, gambling, commercial sex work, and interruptions to children's schooling. However, it is clear that some do indeed adapt quite well. A fuller understanding of these complex processes is essential for the development and implementation of informed public policy, programming, and practice assistance strategies.

1.3 Problem Statement.

Research suggests that forced evictions in Phnom Penh (and, indeed, throughout Cambodia) lead to enormous stress for those affected, and many if not most experience considerable harm to their housing, health, and livelihood conditions. Most of the key literature (academic, news media, and NGO/UN agency reports) to date has focused on political, legal, and urban planning perspectives. By contrast, systematic investigation into the social impact of the evictions on those who have experienced them is relatively undeveloped. This dissertation makes an important contribution to the knowledge base about both the forced evictions specifically, as well as lending insight about coping and adaptation among contemporary Cambodians in difficult circumstances. It should be noted that *psychosocial health* and *mental health* "are closely related and overlap . . . [but often] reflect different, yet

complementary, approaches" (IASC, 2006, p. 1), and they are thus often used interchangeably. However, it is useful to distinguish these terms since "unspecified use of 'psychosocial' . . . is likely to degrade the usefulness of the term" (Martikainen, Bartley, & Lahelma, 2002, p. 1091). Psychosocial can be defined as "pertaining to the influence of social factors on an individual's mind or behavior, and to the interrelation of behavioural and social factors" (Oxford English Dictionary, as cited by Martikainen et al., 2002, p. 1091). While the term mental health is often associated with individual factors and functioning per se, psychosocial health is often favored by those, like myself, who take a broader or ecological orientation.

1.4 Research Question.

How do forced evictions impact the psychosocial health of displaced women in Phnom Penh, and what sources of risk and resilience frame how they manage the exigencies of displacement?

The purpose of this narrative study is to explore the lived experiences of twenty-two women who were forcibly evicted from five urban neighborhoods in Phnom Penh, Cambodia between 2008 and 2010. This study contributes to an understanding of how these women and their families have been affected by the evictions, as it describes the diverse experiences and processes they have endured in their adaptation to the multiple losses associated with the destruction of their urban neighborhoods. These narratives contribute an important and

heretofore overlooked perspective on this issue, and provide important implications for public policy and assistance strategies.

1.5 Rationale and Significance of the Study.

This dissertation takes a novel approach to understanding forced evictions in Cambodia by examining the commonly-overlooked perspective of women. The stories told by these women demonstrate significant psychosocial impact of these evictions, and how those affected have adapted to the loss of their homes and communities. The use of a stress and coping framework to examine, risk, adaptation, and resilience reveals sources of strength, while also documenting difficulties associated with the aftermath of this loss. This study, by giving voice to dislocated women, explores not only the impact and significance of the forced evictions in Phnom Penh but can also serve as a case study within the literature on this worldwide issue.

1.6 Research Approach.

This study utilizes narrative analysis to examine the experience of forced evictions on displaced women in Phnom Penh, with a particular focus on the factors and processes that underpin their risk and resilience. Narrative methods are especially well-suited to this purpose because stories are a universal means through which individuals interpret and explain their past

experiences and perspectives and integrate these into views of the present and expectations about the future.

Female Cambodian Research Assistants interviewed 22 adult Cambodian women about their experiences of forced eviction and its aftermath. In-depth interviews were guided by open-ended questions and probes designed to prompt stories and explore key themes and issues about the experience of forced eviction. From this pool, five women with especially rich narratives for the purpose of the study were invited to share accounts of their lives. The purpose of gathering these life narratives was to more fully frame and nest the eviction experience within the broader course of their lives.

I used *purposive sampling* to select participants, and they were located through *snowball* techniques. The sample includes women evicted from five neighborhoods – Boeung Kak Lake, Borei Keila, Dey Krahorn, Group 78, and Reak Riey – with variance across age, occupation, income level, compensation package, socio-economic circumstances, current location and housing conditions, level of well-being, and eviction outcome. The sample included both renters and homeowners, although some of the homeowners purchased their property through informal means and may not have had or been eligible for full legal title.

Khmer Research Assistants conducted open-ended interviews, which were then transcribed, translated, and reviewed by myself and a Senior Translator. I then coded all the transcripts in ATLAS software using *grounded theory* conventions to identify, develop, and code

thematic anchors which were then grouped into broad categories and analytic constructs. This was an iterative, inductive process to analyze the interviewees' eviction experiences and outcomes.

1.7 Theoretical Framework.

The principal theoretical framework of this dissertation is Stress and Coping Theory. Stress and Coping Theory was initially developed by Lazarus and Folkman (1984) and has since been elaborated on and refined by numerous scholars. This theory highlights transactions between an individual and his/her environmental context and events, and it holds that emotional responses are mediated by such factors as commitments, beliefs, cognitive appraisals, relationships, resources, and problem-solving strategies. Thus, stress responses are transactional and a function of both environmental and personal variables. Stress and Coping Theory underpins current analysis of risk *and* resilience and is particularly suited to identifying strengths and protective factors that enable individuals to effectively manage adversity. Van de Put and Eisenbruch (2002) commented that "much has been written about mental health problems [of Cambodians but]…less is known about how the people in Cambodia cope" (p. 94). My study, using this framework, contributes to filling this knowledge gap, while documenting the harmful impacts of forced evictions.

1.8 Outline and Conclusion.

I chose this topic in order to investigate an important but under-explored aspect of a critical issue in contemporary Cambodia. The findings of this study can also inform broader issues concerning stress, coping, and adaptation in Cambodia, as well as contribute to literature on forced evictions and forced migration worldwide. In this chapter, I have presented the research question for this study, provided background and context concerning forced evictions in Cambodia, and briefly highlighted the methodology and theoretical approaches that frame this study. The remaining five chapters are outlined below:

- The second chapter reviews literature pertaining to the dissertation, in particular three key topics: forced evictions worldwide, forced evictions in Cambodia, and mental health and coping strategies among Cambodians. It will be evident that the forced eviction literature in Cambodia is overwhelmingly written from legal, urban planning, and housing standpoints, with limited attention to the socioeconomic and psychosocial outcomes of those affected. The mental health literature, meanwhile, stands as a separate body of work. This dissertation specifically seeks to bridge these topics.
- The third chapter concerns methodology. It describes the rationale for and application of narrative methods and purposive sampling to investigate the research question, and introduces the participant narrators and the five selected neighborhoods from which they had been evicted from their homes.

- The fourth chapter presents key socioeconomic findings that emerged from the study. In particular, I document the variability of socioeconomic outcomes and present a typology of four post-eviction trajectories.
- The fifth chapter presents an overview of Stress and Coping Theory and then uses this framework to explore how participants interpreted, coped with, and adapted to their displacement.
- The sixth and final chapter discusses issues that emerged in the narratives that should be of interest to policymakers and social work practitioners who may be working with this population. I then go on to present a synthesis and summary of this study as a whole, and highlight how the original findings from this study advance knowledge regarding forced evictions in Cambodia.

Chapter 2: Literature Review.

2.1 Overview of the Literature Review and Rationale for Topics

The purpose of this narrative study is to explore the narrated experiences of women displaced by forced evictions in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. A critical review of the literature on this topic has been ongoing throughout the planning, fieldwork, and writing of this dissertation. This literature review focuses on three key topics. I begin with a broad overview of the literature concerning forced evictions globally. The second part concerns forced evictions within Cambodia. The third section concerns mental health, stress, and coping among Khmers; this section represents a separate body of literature. The confluence of these three subjects enhances how we can interpret the experience and outcomes of forced eviction on women in contemporary urban Cambodia. Wallerstein (as cited in Schouten, 2008) has commented that:

> Social science divides the real world into three arenas – politics, economics, and socio-culture. This distinction was an invention of classical liberalism, subsequently imposed upon the world of knowledge, and now forms the basis of contemporary social science. It is, however, a very unfortunate mode of approaching social reality, because it divides the unique human experience into artificial spheres that each claim importance over the others, and underplaying the inseparable links of each with the other (p. 5).

My study bridges these arenas by exploring the socio-cultural aspects of a topic that is usually approached from other angles.

2.2 Global Context of Forced Evictions.

Forced evictions refer to "the removal of individuals, families or communities from their homes, land or neighbourhoods, against their will, directly or indirectly attributable to the State. It entails the effective elimination of the possibility of an individual or group living in a particular house, residence or place, and the assisted (in the case of resettlement) or unassisted (without resettlement) movement of evicted persons or groups to other areas" (OHCHR, 1996, p. 2). Forced evictions have come under increased scrutiny in recent years by agencies, including the UN and the international human rights community, as they increasingly address *economic, social, and cultural rights (ESCR)* (see, for example, OHCHR, 1997). The most recent global survey on forced evictions counted some 5.5 million people displaced between 2003-2006; in other words, worldwide forced evictions turn over 2 million people out of their homes every year (COHRE 2006, p. 11). This slightly dated estimate continues to be widely cited and has been adopted by UN-Habitat documents; more recent global data are unavailable.

The practice of forced evictions is hardly a new or unnoticed phenomenon. Marx (1867) devoted much of Part Eight of *Das Kapital* to a lengthy description of "primitive

accumulation" (which he also termed forcible expropriation). He described this process in dramatic terms:

> In the history of primitive accumulation, all revolutions are epoch-making that act as levers for the capital class in course of formation; but, above all, those moments when great masses of men are suddenly and forcibly torn from their means of subsistence, and hurled as free and "unattached" proletarians on the labour-market. The expropriation of the agricultural producer, of the peasant, from the soil, is the basis of the whole process. The history of this expropriation, in different countries, assumes different aspects, and runs through its various phases in different orders of succession, and at different periods . . . The great feudal lords created an incomparably larger proletariat by the forcible driving of the peasantry from the land . . . The Glorious Revolution brought into power, along with William of Orange, the landlord and capitalist appropriators of surplus value. They inaugurated the new era by practising on a colossal scale thefts of state lands, thefts that had been hitherto managed more modestly. These estates were given away, sold at a ridiculous figure, or even annexed to private estates by direct seizure. All this happened without the slightest observation of legal etiquette . . . The process was carried on by means of individual acts of violence . . . The law itself becomes now the instrument of the theft of the people's land, although the large farmers make use of their little independent

> methods as well. The parliamentary form of the robbery is that of Acts for enclosures of Commons, in other words, decrees by which the landlords grant themselves the people's land as private property, decrees of expropriation of the people (p. 501 – 506).

Literature and analysis of forced evictions for most of the twentieth century tended to be grounded in – and arguably marginalized by – Marxian traditions, although some of these analyses continue to be influential in some circles. There are echoes, for example, within contemporary discussions about *globalization* and modern incarnations of *dependency theory* that discuss economic processes by which the "core" (i.e., concentrations of wealth and power) extracts resources from the "periphery." These terms are often used to refer to the *Global North and South*, but the distinctions are not necessarily geographic. Rather, they are a "relationship of production . . . and they both exist in all countries" (Wallerstein as cited in Schouten, 2008, p. 6).

Most of the current literature on forced evictions is instead grounded in analysis of the nature and challenges posed by the worldwide "urban explosion." The world's population became majority urban for the first time in human history in 2008 (UN-Habitat, 2008), and rapid rural-to-urban migration is a hallmark of the late twentieth and early twenty-first century human geography. With it have come enormous challenges in terms of adequate housing and services. In the Global South especially, cities have been flushed with new migrants seeking opportunity and escape from poor rural conditions. Some one billion people today live in urban

slums (see Figure 1), and this figure is expected to triple in the next three decades (New Internationalist, 2006).

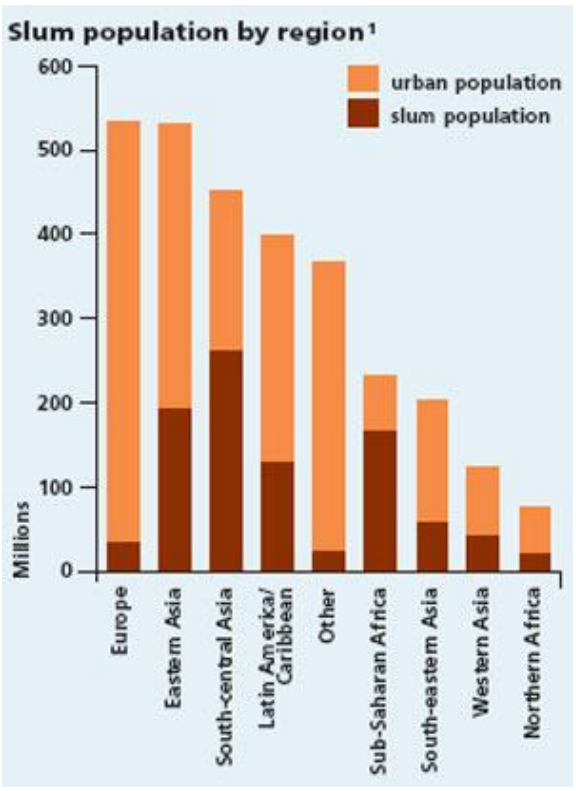

Figure 1: Slum population by world region. (UN-Habitat, as cited by New Internationalist, 2006.)

A concurrent trend has been toward greater attention to economic, social, and cultural rights (ESCR) among the human rights community. Since the 1990s these two policy communities have increasingly converged around the issue of forced evictions. Examples include explicitly clarifying international human rights law on forced evictions within the context of the right to adequate housing (Article 11.1 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights), the establishment of an Advisory Group on Forced Evictions at UN-Habitat in 2004, and a proliferation of attention among human rights NGOs. The latter has included long-established human rights groups like Amnesty International that have added forced evictions to their advocacy campaigns, as well as the founding of new,

specialized international advocacy groups such as the Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions (COHRE).[5]

Despite the fact that forced evictions have become a major topic in "urban" planning, they can and do occur in rural areas worldwide, including Cambodia. Rural communities are also vulnerable to displacement to make way for dams, natural resource extraction, large-scale commercial plantations, seaside resorts, and other uses. The literature on forced evictions in rural areas tends to also be associated with environmental conservation and sustainable agriculture concerns. Forced evictions also occur in developed countries; 25,000 occur annually in New York City alone (UN-Habitat, 2008, p. 11). The United States is often pointed to as being "home" to some of the most egregious forced evictions in the developed world, especially in disproportionately affecting minority communities. There is a considerable body of literature documenting how *urban renewal* projects devastated African-American communities in the second half of the twentieth century (e.g., Fullilove, 2005; Johnston, 2006; Teaford, 2000).

Slums, sometimes massive ones, have sprung up and multiplied in and around urban areas of the Global South and have often overtaxed those cities' capacity to provide basic services such as electricity and sanitation. As New Internationalist (2006) commented, "while

[5] COHRE recently dissolved, so there is currently no human rights organization that specializes solely in forced evictions and housing rights. However, a number of groups with more general mandates are addressing forced evictions.

not all squatters live in slums and not all slum dwellers are squatters, the categories substantially overlap" (para. 4). Slums are understood as urban communities where "residents live in sub-standard housing conditions . . . [and] there is a noticeable lack of basic infrastructure [and] services" (Gómez et al., 2008, p. 10-11). However, it is important to also bear in mind that slums are not simply squalor and despair: they are communities built "through community participation, self-help, and the resources of the informal sector" (Davidson, Johnson, Lizarralde, Dikmena, & Sliwinskia, 2007, p. 3). As Neuwirth (2007) comments:

> Most outsiders see these neighbourhoods solely as outposts of misery, lawlessness and criminality . . . [But] in most squatter communities, the residents build and rebuild and build again, often one wall at a time, to make their homes better. In the midst of the squalor and open sewage that typifies many of their communities . . . [there is also] commerce, thrift, energy and hope (p. 45).

Figure 2: Security of housing tenure worldwide. (UN-Habitat, as cited by New Internationalist, 2006.)

Informal settlements also include a wide range of living standards and conditions, and are often home to a diverse range of people and commercial activities. Rather than presenting these communities and the people in them as "problems," there is growing recognition of the importance of achieving better housing and service standards for all. To that end, the *United Nations Millennium Development Goal* Number 7 (Ensure Environmental Sustainability) includes a target to achieve "a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers" by 2020. One of the measurement indicators is the "proportion of people with secure tenure" (UN, 2012, p. 56); *security of tenure* (see Figure 2) is in turn is defined as "the right of all individuals and groups to effective protection from the state against forced evictions" (UN-Habitat, 2008, p. iv). Since the 1990s, questions concerning land/housing tenure in contexts of rapid urbanization and informal settlements have become a key issue in contemporary urban planning policy circles (van Gelder, 2010; UN-Habitat, 2008). In New Internationalist's (2006) words, "One of the biggest issues for the urban poor is their right to stay where they are" (para. 5). UN-Habitat is now approaches tenure security as "simultaneously as both a development issue and as a human rights theme" (p. 7).

There are various kinds of formal and informal claims to land and property; when there is a disconnect or inconsistency among the claims, the likelihood of property conflict is high. Van Gelder (2010) distinguished between three aspects of tenure: as a legal construct that usually involves formal property title; de facto security that is tacitly accepted by the government; and tenure as it is perceived by dwellers. Measures to achieve greater security of tenure include various approaches to codifying formal title and otherwise protecting and strengthening property rights. This is only one strategy, however, and a not always a successful one for improving the lives of the poor. Regularization can go hand-in-hand with removal or exclusion, and furthermore, holding formal title does not necessarily constitute protection against forced eviction.

Payne (2004) outlined a typology of land tenure systems, commenting that there is increasing recognition of the salience of customary systems. Acknowledging them, however, reveals a "bewildering complexity of tenure systems which exist in most cities of the developing world" (Payne, 2004, p. 169), and "security of tenure depends not so much on legal status as on residents' perceptions of past and present government policy" (p. 173). UN-Habitat (2008) echoes that "the role of customary law in the regulation of tenure and secure tenure rights is far more widespread than is generally understood" (p. 8), and there is increasing recognition that legal approaches in some circumstances can be inadequate or even counter-productive to securing tenure for the poor. There may be a multiplicity of systems operating within a given

locale; furthermore, individual households' claims may move fluidly within different categories of tenure (see Figure 3).

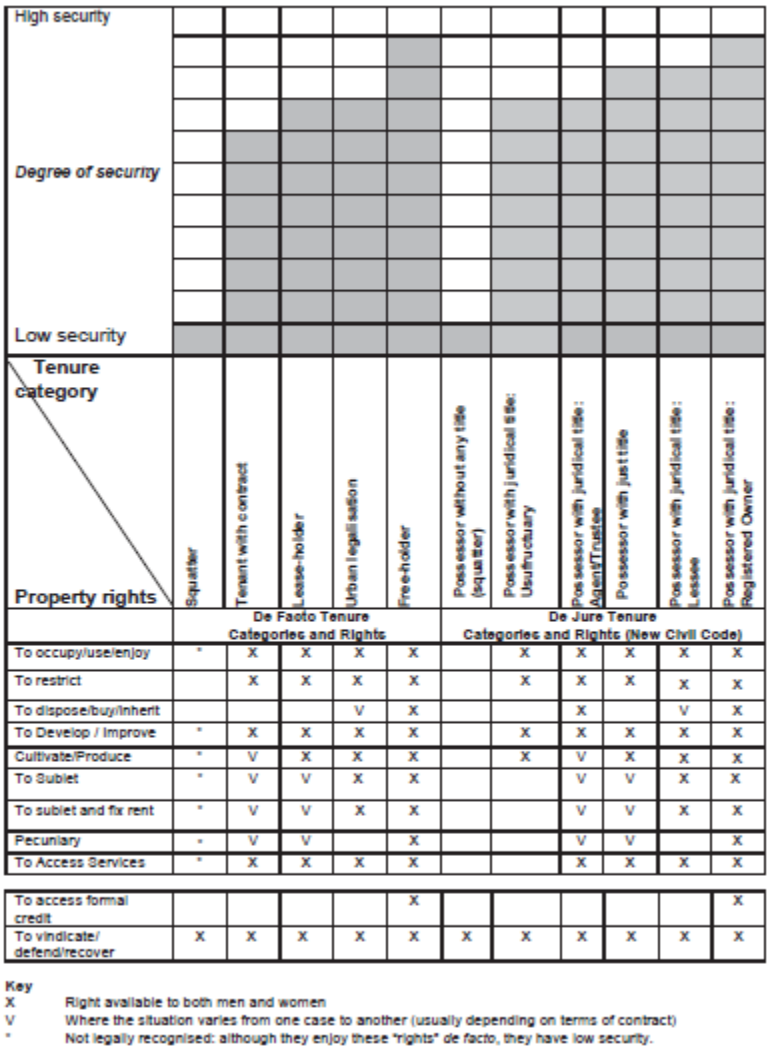

Fig. 2. Typology of urban tenure categories and associated property rights in the Philippines (de facto + de jure).

Figure 3: Typology of urban tenure categories and associated property rights. (Porio & Crisol, 2004, p. 207.)

Forced evictions lie on the extreme coercive end of a spectrum of official strategies to manage the physical space of a locale, and "power and inequality remain the key determinants

of vulnerability from tenure insecurity" (UN-Habitat, 2008, p. 14). Neighborhoods that usually, but not exclusively, house poor and marginalized people are slated for removal to make way for public infrastructure projects, private commercial property development, "beautification," or simply to rid the city of neighborhoods and the people in them who have been deemed undesirable. These removals are presented as beneficial to development or the public good, but they typically represent severe hardship for those affected (du Plessis, 2005). Forced evictions often occur under conditions of actual or threatened violence, and almost always target residents of poor informal settlements (UN-Habitat, 2008). Those subject to forced evictions, as defined by the UN, have legitimate claims to the property in question, and these claims are subverted by authorities without adequate compensation or transparency. There is also "wide agreement that forced evictions, demolition of slums and consequent resettlement of slum dwellers create more problems than they solve" (UN-Habitat 2008, p. 17). Forced evictions have thus emerged in recent years as a major human rights issue (UN-Habitat 2008).

Land tenure insecurity especially affects marginalized groups, including women. Women's lesser social status in most of the world makes them particularly vulnerable to poverty, in large part because their full property rights may not be recognized by formal legal systems and/or social custom. Moreover, they may suffer disproportionately in the aftermath of eviction (UN-Habitat 2008; COHRE, 2006). Research on women in slums in the Global South tends to focus on issues that are secondary to this dissertation, including safety/policing, and property rights surrounding family disputes (e.g., in the event of the death or divorce of a head

of household). However, attention to women's issues in debates surrounding forced evictions is increasing, and they are being clearly addressed in general discussion regarding women and urban slums (e.g., Gómez et al., 2008; Taylor, 2011). For example, women are far less likely to possess full legal deeds, titles, and other documentation, and are thus more vulnerable both to eviction and to exclusion from compensation schemes.

There are considerable gaps in the literature with regard to social impact. It is all too common to read sweeping statements like "the consequences of forced eviction for families and communities, and particularly for the poor, are severe and traumatic" (du Plessis 2005, p. 124), but rigorous psychosocial health perspectives are lacking. One exception is research on the devastating impact of urban renewal policies on African-Americans. It is also notable that analysis of the psychosocial impact of forced evictions in the United States is firmly grounded in disaster mental health literature; Fullilove's (2001 and other) work on African-Americans draws heavily on Erikson's (1976) seminal sociological study of an industrial disaster that destroyed a small town in West Virginia. There are also a number of more recent international studies concerning forced evictions and mental health. For example, Rought-Brooks's (2010) study of forced eviction and women in Palestine concluded that:

> The psychological and emotional impact is often noted in respect of how people are affected after a forced eviction . . . There is an enormous emotional impact on women during the, often lengthy, process leading up to an eviction. The sense of being unsettled, of not knowing what is going to happen, and where

> they will go, manifests itself in both psychological and physical symptoms. Women described anxiety, depression, pain, and difficulties in their relationships with their husbands and with their children, all a consequence of facing the prospect of losing their homes (p. 18).

Overall, however, it is striking how often the forced eviction literature is grounded in only a few human science disciplines.

There is a nascent but rapidly-growing body of literature concerning psychosocial health in contexts of disasters and forced migrations. Forced evictions are usually not included, although they could certainly fall under standard definitions of *disaster*, for example, "misfortune that results in the loss of life or property or in other forms of great harm or damage [with] impact beyond just one person, affecting, devastating, and sometimes eradicating an entire community" (Halpern & Tramontin 2007, p. 3). The forced migration literature to date focuses almost exclusively on violent conflict and natural disasters, although a March 2013 conference on development-induced displacement and resettlement at the Oxford University Refugee Studies Center suggests that this may be changing. UN-Habitat has also begun to incorporate disaster management perspectives in its work on forced evictions (e.g., UN-Habitat, 2008).

This section has discussed the global context of forced evictions in the rapidly-growing cities of the Global South, and how forced evictions have risen to the concern of the UN and the

international human rights community. Much of the world's population is now living in informal settlements characterized by poor living conditions and weak security of tenure. However, slums are not simply concentrations of squalor but may also represent vibrant communities in their own right. Although there is considerable agreement that forced evictions often cause more problems than they solve, they remain commonplace and adversely affect poor people, particularly women and their communities.

2.3 Forced Evictions in Cambodia.

Forced evictions have a tragic history in Cambodia. Nearly the entire population of the country was displaced at some point during the 1970-1991 war. During the 1975-1979 genocide, the Khmer Rouge implemented widespread and catastrophic policies to force people into agricultural collectives under slave-labor conditions. People were routinely transported around the country, and often separated from their families. An estimated 2 million people – a quarter of the 1975 population – lost their lives from starvation, overwork, armed conflict, and outright execution. One of the most harrowing episodes of the Khmer Rouge regime was the evacuation of Phnom Penh on 7 April 1975. The entire population was force-marched out of the city; those too old or ill to do so were shot. According to the ultra-Maoist Khmer Rouge ideology, urban peoples were tainted by bourgeois capitalist values and lifestyles, and they were systematically targeted for extermination. Few survived the genocide that followed.

After the Khmer Rouge regime collapsed in the wake of an invasion from Vietnam in 1979, people slowly began to trickle back into the city. "Squatting" was routine; former inhabitants were scattered or dead, and government records were neglected or destroyed. As ACHR (2001) explained:

> In 1979, when people first began to emerge from the jungle into an empty, dilapidated city, they camped out in empty buildings and lit open fires to cook their rice. When all the houses and flats had been occupied, newcomers built shelters wherever they could find space, along river banks and railway tracks, on streets, in the areas between buildings and on rooftops (p. 66).

As fighting continued elsewhere in the country for another decade, more and more people migrated to Phnom Penh, escaping poverty and violence. There were also large influxes of former refugees, as camps along the Thai border and elsewhere closed and inhabitants repatriated. By the time the United Nations Transitional Authority of Cambodia (UNTAC) assumed administrative control of the country in 1992, land records that remained were wildly inconsistent with actual use by residents. The situation in Cambodia was an extreme form of a common post-conflict dilemma (So, 2010). This context is critical to an understanding of the current land tenure situation in Cambodia, although it is also important to recognize contemporary forces driving development and displacement in the country. As Bugalski and Pred (2009) commented, land tenure problems in Cambodia are "a manifestation of unique

historical factors coupled with the recent introduction of policies and programs typical of the dominant development paradigm" (p. 2). Biddulph's (2011) analysis of "geographies of evasion" has also noted that land titling efforts in rural Cambodia have tended to be implemented in areas with de facto tenure security, rather than in areas where land claims are actually contested.

Forced evictions have been carried out on a large scale in Phnom Penh since 1990 (Ballard & Runsinarith, 2007). These evictions have emerged as a deeply divisive and politicized issue across the country, and have garnered international concern. While this dissertation focuses on forced evictions in the capital city, such evictions are not solely an urban phenomenon. Some 400,000 people have been displaced nationwide (LICADHO & The Cambodia Daily, 2012). Murray (2012) has asserted that "Cambodia today is quite literally giving itself away, especially to China and Vietnam… As the Cambodian government welcomes millions of dollars in investments from both nations, the land concessions handed out to these foreigners are forcing tens of thousands off their property and imperiling Cambodia's future" (p. 80). In addition to the urban evictions, large tracts of land in rural areas have been designated as "economic land concessions" for logging, plantation, mining, and other projects (Miller, 2012). Indeed, the international literature on forced evictions in rural Cambodia is quite extensive, in part because of the additional environmental concerns, and also as a reflection that the population is only 20% urban (Taylor, 2011).

The 2008 publication of a widely-read newspaper article in *The Guardian* entitled "Country for Sale" brought the topic to international attention. It documented that in the prior 18 months, 45% of all the land in Cambodia had been sold or leased in the form of logging, mining, or other natural resource "concessions" (Levy & Scott-Clark, 2008). In many cases, the property was inhabited or otherwise in use by local populations. They reported that 150,000 people were facing eviction nationwide, and over 40,000 Phnom Penh residents had already lost their homes. Levy and Scott-Clark built on momentum from influential publications in other forums. These included Hughes's (2008) prescient article in an academic journal on "development and dispossession" in Cambodia, the broadcast of a hard-hitting (2006)

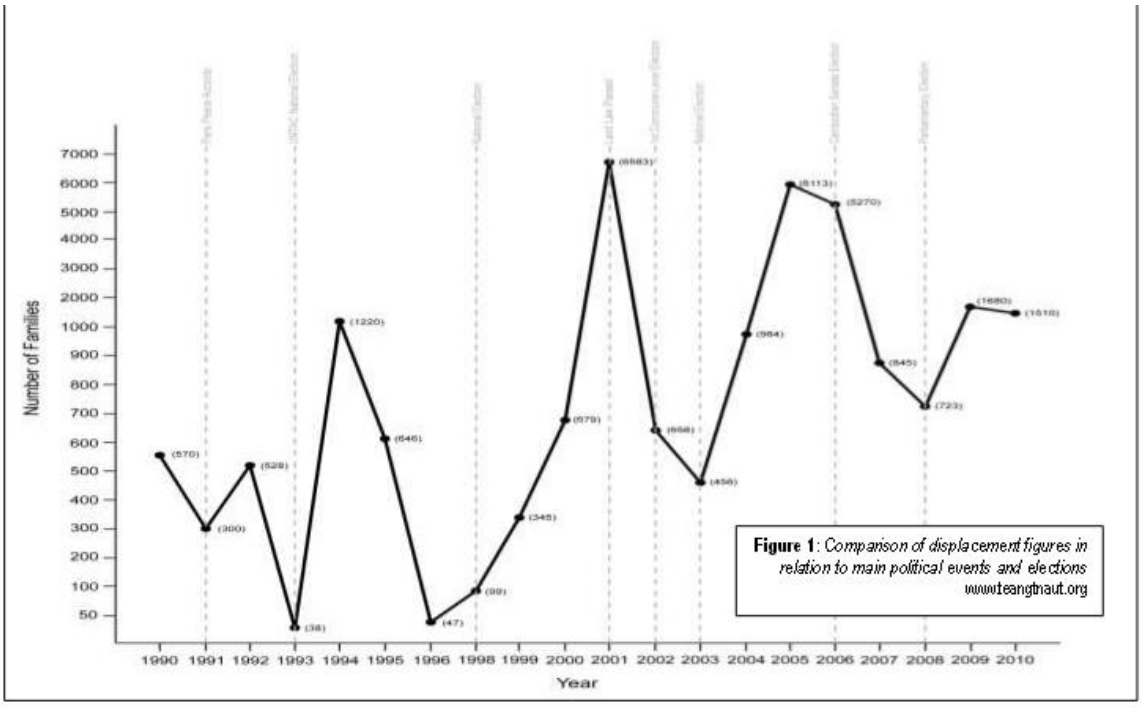

Figure 4: Number of families displaced by forced eviction in Phnom Penh, 1990-2010. (STT, 2001, p. 3)

Australian Broadcasting Corporation documentary, and a major (2007) report by the environmental NGO Global Witness. The latter asserted that a "kleptocratic elite" (p. 6) was responsible for decimating 29% of Cambodia's forest cover during the previous 5 years through various natural resource concessions, which also effectively displaced local populations en masse. Global Witness (2007) further charged that "Cambodia's shadow state generates much of its illicit wealth via the expropriation of public assets, particularly natural resources, as well as through institutionalised corruption" (p. 10). After the report was published, the organization was ordered to leave the country.

The pace of forced evictions in Phnom Penh has continued unabated as property prices have soared. According to a 2009 estimate by Human Rights Watch, over the previous decade 85,000 Cambodians had been evicted. In the city, ;and value estimates from 2006 -2007 show remarkable increases ranging from 39% to 92% in the city's 9 zones, while the overall value of construction approvals between 2000 and 2006 increased from US$205 to US$323 million (Ballard & Runsinarith, 2007, p. 34). Meanwhile, the year 2011 was described as having a "record increase" (LICADHO & The Cambodia Daily 2012, p. 6) in economic land concessions nationwide. A temporary moratorium on new economic land concessions was announced by Prime Minister Hun Sen in May 2012, although some new ones have reportedly been approved (Naren & Seiff, 2012), and it is unclear whether the moratorium would also apply to urban areas. The scale of the evictions resulting from these concessions has been extensively documented by human rights NGOs. It is estimated that around 10% of the population of

Phnom Penh has faced eviction over the past decade (Gorvett, 2011; Amnesty International, 2011). According to LICADHO and *The Cambodia Daily* (2012), nationwide some 22% of Cambodia's land surface has been designated as a land concession (see Figure 5); the government has challenged this figure, but LICADHO indicates that it was derived from official government documents. Government officials also emphasize the net positive effect of large-scale development projects, and maintain that necessary steps are taken to minimize unfavorable social and environmental impacts (LICADHO & The Cambodia Daily, 2012). Data from independent sources are not available; however, the figures gathered by NGOs are commonly cited in respected international publications.

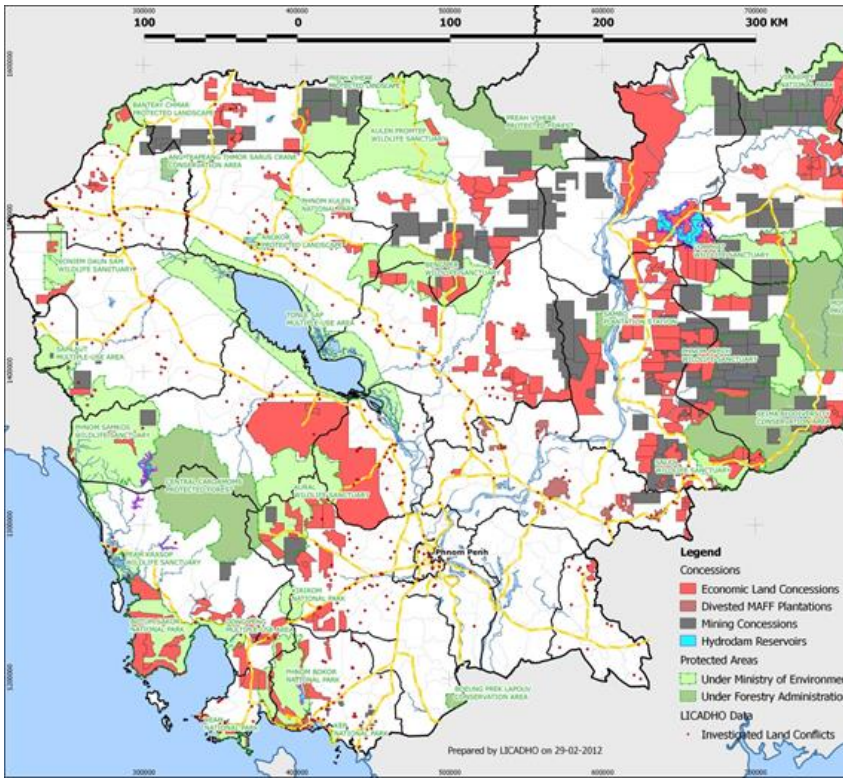

Figure 5: Map showing land concessions in Cambodia. (LICADHO & The Cambodia Daily, 2012.)

The literature on forced evictions in Phnom Penh is overwhelmingly written from legal, shelter, and urban/regional planning perspectives. There has been a flurry of

such publications over the past decade, primarily reports by NGOs and, to a lesser extent, UN agencies. Land conflicts are also attracting student researchers. The quality of agency and student papers is variable; some are simple descriptions, polemic with unsupported findings, and/or exhibit methodological problems. Some, however, are excellent. Articles on land issues in Cambodia are also increasingly appearing in peer-reviewed academic journals (e.g., So, 2010; Murray, 2012; Hughes, 2008; Thiel, 2010; Un & So, 2011; Un & So, 2009). It is notable that the academic articles do not particularly challenge the general thrust of the other papers; as Bugalski and Pred (2009) stated, "illegal land grabbing by powerful actors is unexceptional in Cambodia, where forced evictions and confiscation of land rank among the country's most pervasive human rights problems" (p. 1). Rather, the academic articles offer more nuanced and sophisticated analyses of the political economy of land use and management in Cambodia.

Since the war years, various legal and official mechanisms have been put in place to regularize property records and ownership. The most important is the 2001 Land Law, which includes critical provisions to improve tenure security and enable land ownership: any household that could demonstrate at least five years of continuous, unchallenged residency of a property up to 2001 has exclusive rights to ownership of it (So, 2010). Any informal occupation of land after 31 August 2001, however, would be deemed illegal (Bugalski & Pred, 2009). But considerable problems remain concerning land tenure, particularly in Phnom Penh's approximately 500 informal settlements (Ballard & Runsinarith, 2007; see also Figure 6).

Many of those eligible for land title have failed to go through the processes necessary to get full documents. As Bristol (2007) has explained, "many residents – particularly the poor – may qualify for title under the law but are unaware both of their status and of the procedures for requesting title" (p. 4). Education levels are low across Cambodia – 22.4% of the adult population is illiterate (UNDP, 2011) – and many have not pursued full formal title, perhaps out of ignorance or uncertainty. Other documents (e.g., voter registration cards) are commonly recognized for official purposes, so holding deeds per se may seem unnecessary, and those who do want full land-title documents often cannot afford the associated fees. Others live on land that is officially classified as public. There is also considerable inconsistency between formal and de facto land tenure mechanisms. Documents other than land titles and deeds are routinely used for official purposes and are recognized as such by authorities, at least at the local level, and there is considerable confusion at the community level as to how land is officially classified. As Bristol (2007) has commented, "two streams run in parallel – law on the one hand and land use development on the other" (p. 13).

Some efforts have been underway to bring de facto land tenure into alignment with official documents. These efforts range from small-scale NGO initiatives to ambitious projects in partnership with major funders, such as the 2002-2009 Land Management and Administration Project (LMAP), funded by the World Bank and other major donors. Approaches to regularizing title in Phnom Penh's 500 informal settlements have been controversial (Ballard & Runsinarith, 2007). While these efforts have facilitated the land registration of many poor,

especially in rural, areas, they have also been criticized for "design problems a . . . poor execution . . . [as a] result of both bureaucratic weakness and the implementation . . . by a politicized and personalized bureaucracy" (So, 2010, p. 1). Critics of the land title regularization processes in the city charge that some valid applicants have been arbitrarily denied title that they were entitled to, and to such an extent that Bugalski and Pred (2009) have charged that land titling processes constitute "formalizing inequality" insofar as the poor have been effectively – and, moreover, illegally – excluded from claiming their rights. They argue that the problems surrounding the sale and ongoing forced eviction of the Boeung Kak Lake area "exemplifies how, by excising certain areas from the registration process, authorities arbitrarily classify land as State property . . . The exclusion of vulnerable households from the donor-funded titling program amounts to systematic unequal treatment within Cambodia's land rights protection regime" (p. 4-5). On the day that community and NGO advocates filed a formal legal complaint with the World Bank, the government canceled its remaining funding for the LMAP, citing burdensome conditions attached to the funds. Problems were so rife that in 2011 the World Bank suspended new lending to Cambodia altogether, citing serious pervasive problems plaguing a land-titling program funded by the bank (Tran, 2011).

Critical though land titling may be, however, it is not a guaranteed protection against forced eviction. Those who do have full and incontrovertible legal possession of their property are also subject to forced evictions in Phnom Penh. Residents of Koh Pich, an island in the Tonlé Sap River near central Phnom Penh, demonstrated in court to have valid possession of

their land, but were evicted anyway. Williams (2008) documented this and other "apparent and even blatant violations [of] the 2001 Land Law" (p. 14). Not all of those affected by forced evictions in the city are "squatters," nor or are those with full legal title necessarily treated differently over the course of an eviction than those without such status. Mgbako et al. (2010) make the important point that international law protects the right to tenure security and compensation for all of those affected by evictions, not only homeowners. They assert that:

> The Cambodian Constitution incorporates international law, which requires that the government provide alternative housing and compensation for all those affected by forcible eviction, regardless of whether they rent, own, or occupy their homes on the land at issue. The Cambodian government's resettlement practices following forced evictions have not conformed with its obligations under international law; after forced eviction, the government resettles residents in relocation sites located on the periphery of Phnom Penh, far from resources and jos in the capital. While the conditions of resettlement sites vary, the sites are frequently an inadequate substitute for prio homes and are sometimes uninhabitable. Most lack basic infrastructure and services, such as running water, sanitation systems, and access to education and healthcare. Due to the long distances between resettlement sites and Phnom Penh, most resettled residents are unable to keep their old jobs in the city, resulting in drastic reductions in income. With no opportunities to earn a living in

> resettlement sites, it is not uncommon for many families to abandon resettlement sites and return to Phnom Penh and live in precarious conditions (p. 3).

As Bristol (2007) concludes, "Security of tenure continues to deteriorate in Phnom Penh and throughout the country and does so largely because of land grabs motivated by development pressures, gentrification and beautification – most of which are motivated by money" (p. 15). This conclusion is echoed throughout the literature. There is also something of a consensus that, in Bettini's (2010) words, "legal empowerment [of those facing eviction] has been limited in achieving its goals" (p. 35), because authorities clearly and incontrovertibly act outside the law. In the absence of good governance, well-functioning institutions, and an independent judiciary, legal appeals and land titling efforts are likely to continue to have unsatisfactory impact in Cambodia.

Strident, confrontational anti-eviction stands have also been ineffective to date. This represents a difficult conundrum for NGO and community advocates who are active in this arena in Phnom Penh: when and whether to pursue a "hard" approach, that is, high-profile anti-eviction advocacy, including direct action, civil disobedience, formal complaints in the courts and with international donors, international human rights appeals, and so forth; versus less confrontational "soft" approaches to work in partnership with both communities and authorities to improve formal and informal recognition to strengthen tenure security. While these two approaches can be complementary, in fact there are important divisions among key

stakeholders in Phnom Penh as to which emphasis is the most effective, and which may risk exacerbating the harm accruing to the communities they are seeking to help. Thorny problems include whether confrontational advocacy may trigger backlash against community members (e.g., violence, refused compensations, criminal arrests – all of which have happened), and whether softer approaches constitute complicity with large-scale human rights violations and invite further evictions elsewhere. Hirsch (2011) observes that "lines of argument . . . talk past each other as often as they engage with one another. Underlying this rather unsatisfactory way in which an important policy arena is discussed . . . is a set of conundrums based as much in internal contradictions and dilemmas as in clear alternatives between different land policy approaches" (p. 1) in Southeast Asia. There are no simple answers or solutions.

Full discussion of the legal land use and titling issues is outside the scope of this dissertation and have been detailed elsewhere (e.g., Payne, 2004; Ballard & Runsinarith, 2007; Bristol, 2007; Williams, 2008; Bugalski & Pred, 2009; Grimsditch & Henderson, 2009; Rabé, 2009; So, 2009; So, 2010; Un & So, 2011). Indeed, publications on forced evictions in Phnom Penh focus overwhelmingly on these perspectives; this dissertation seeks to complement these works by exploring forced evictions from a social work perspective, rather than adding nuance to a lively but well-trod discussion in the legal, shelter, and urban planning literature. I specifically aim to advance depth of understanding in the field through a "bottom up" approach (narratives) and through contextualizing these stories historically and culturally.

Papers focusing on the socio-economic impact of the evictions are less common, but have begun to appear in academic sources. Hunleng (2009) and Mgbako et al. (2010) make important and similar findings concerning the impact on the urban poor. In separate papers they discuss how resettlement sites for the urban poor are unacceptable in multiple respects, including geographic isolation, lack of basic services, and the livelihoods. Other academic writings with more traditional urban planning and legal orientations also discuss deleterious impacts on affected families. There is a consensus across the publications that the impact is highly damaging to those affected. Many of the non-academic publications concerning forced evictions in Phnom Penh specifically address or include psychosocial impact, and are often compelling. These include several collections of testimonials and vignettes of affected individuals (e.g., Tyskerud, 2012; AI, 2011; CHRAC 2009), Soto's (2011) findings from a quantitative survey of women threatened with eviction, HRTF's (2012) survey of the socioeconomic aspects of the eviction in threatened and relocated communities, and a handful of assessments of living conditions in resettlement sites (Caritas et al., 2009; URC, 2002; and McGinn, 2006), as well as several student master's theses. The local NGO Strey Khmer very recently (2013) prepared a paper with a similar topic as this dissertation, but with a different population, method, and approach. They found that evicted women in four provinces experienced deepened poverty, as well as generalized anxiety disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, and depression. The humanitarian needs assessment for Dey Krahom evictees by Caritas et al. (2009) also includes a specific mental health component. Focus group participants

in a relocation site reported high prevalence of complaints including body pain, anxiety, headaches, rumination, and sleep problems which "can be considered the somatization phenomena which is indicative of depression, particularly in Asian and Southeast Asian cultures" (p. 16). The authors conclude that "the community's mental health problems can be directly attributed to basic needs not being met such as the community's need for food, shelter and water" (p. 17), as their pleas were not for counseling or other mental health services per se, but poverty alleviation. The mental health of the evictees was inextricably grounded in the misery of extreme hardship.

Overall the papers on social impact tend to be descriptive, with the damaging impact of the eviction being used to contextualize other issues, for example, flawed land registration processes. These are nevertheless important contributions to the field. However, the body of literature is limited. There are no studies that explore resilience factors, for example, probably out of reluctance to diminish advocacy against forced evictions. Government statements, meanwhile, assert that those who are relocated are happy with the process and satisfied with their outcome. One statement by the Municipality of Phnom Penh (2012), for example, dismissed eviction opponents as being "misled for so long by those foreigners and NGOs" and insisted that:

> Former residents of Boeung Kak Lake give voluntary testimony that… they have more than decent place to live and to make a living, near the market place, near the schools for their children, near health centers. Many other families that

> received the plot of land and land title found that the government and the municipality policy is fair and compassionate [*sic*] (para. 5).

A common flaw in the literature on eviction impact is to lump together a diverse population's characteristics and interests, and conflate forms of vulnerability and harm. As is discussed more fully in Chapter 4, in fact, forced evictions in Phnom Penh displace a diverse population, with differential impacts. For example, the NGO literature tends to emphasize both the poorest, *and* those with the most rock-solid legal claims to their property. These tend to be two very different populations. Similarly, there is an emphasis on slums and informal settlements which echoes the global literature. However, central Phnom Penh is dotted with such settlements; informal settlements are often tucked into alleyways interspersed with more improved housing (see Figure 7), and very different from the sprawling shantytowns of Rio de Janeiro, Mumbai, and Nairobi that are so prevalent in international literature concerning slums in the Global South. In Phnom Penh, people are evicted because they live on prime real estate, and some are well-to-do. Nevertheless, it is undeniable that the burden falls heavily on the poor.

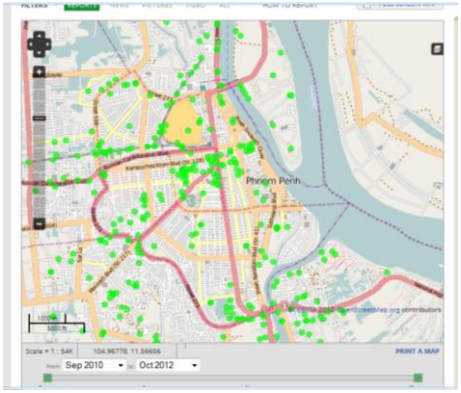

Figure 6: Map of Informal Settlements (marked with green dots) in Phnom Penh. (Urban Voice, 2012)

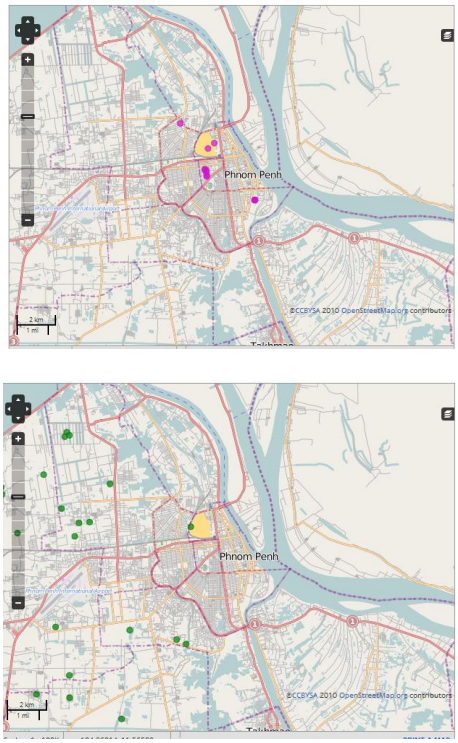

Figure 7: Maps showing Phnom Penh neighborhoods displaced 2010-2012 (upper map, marked with purple dots), and relocation sites (lower map, marked with green dots). (Urban Voice, 2012)

Issues and experiences surrounding housing, tenure, and displacement are not gender-neutral: they affect men and women differently. Although the social impact literature is limited in scope, it does place considerable emphasis on the interests of women and children. For example, Amnesty International (2011) published a major report on women's eviction testimonials from across Cambodia, and Soto (2011) authored a paper on the findings of a survey of urban women living in informal settlements threatened with eviction. Both discuss barriers to women's political organizing and advocacy, as well as thoughtfully explore the issues they face as women in supporting their families within a context of numerous disadvantages, including lower levels of education, heightened safety concerns, and social norms, such as those enshrined in the *Chbap Srey*, a traditional code of conduct for women. This moral text emphasizes women's inferior social status and glorifies an ideal Khmer woman who is gentle, deferential, and obedient (see Ledgerwood, 1995; Krayanski, 2007; Chhay, 2011). At the same time, it is generally acknowledged that women have a relatively strong position in Southeast Asian cultures – in Cambodia they control the family purse strings, for example (Ledgerwood, 1995), and they

routinely fully own and inherit property. Indeed, prominent among the gendered difficulties that face women in Cambodia is being over-burdened with family and household responsibilities to both raise children and contribute to family income. In the public sphere, however, they are expected to "walk quietly" (Krayanski, 2007). Soto (2011), meanwhile, found that only 6% of urban women respondents were able to answer a question as to what the community could do to stop forced evictions (p. 29), and most were poorly informed of the status of their communities.

Some women have nevertheless been very prominent in anti-eviction political advocacy efforts, including at the community level. Indeed, HRTF (2012) observed that "forced eviction has contributed to [political] empowerment of women, as leadership by community has increased. Women have become more vocal and are at the forefront in peaceful demonstrations for adequate housing rights" (p. 6). Indeed, in 2012 thirteen Boeung Kak Lake anti-eviction women activists were imprisoned, and have become prominent nationally and internationally. Amnesty International declared them Prisoners of Conscience, and Brickell (2013) has reported on how they "are using their positions as wives and mothers to co-opt riot police through their songs of suffering and to morally shame them when they are publicly beaten" (para. 3). It is also notable that they have been singled out for criticism by the government specifically for being bad mothers: "They abandoned and provide minimal love and care for their children to serve those foreigners and NGOs. Sadly, their children missed them

more since they are in jail, because they were listening to and following the orders of those foreigners and NGOs [*sic*]" (Municipality of Phnom Penh, 2012, para. 5).

The literature that does specifically touch on women and tenure security in Cambodia indicates that the barriers are socio-economic more than official, and rooted in poverty and its disproportionate impact on women (see for example, Williams, 2008; Soto, 2011). Women have full legal rights to own and inherit property in their own names, and many do. However, it is also the case that female heads of households own less land than their male counterparts, are at greater risk of landlessness, and have fewer opportunities to acquire more land. They are also disadvantaged in terms of having fewer opportunities for formal education. Most are engaged in some sort of income generation, but tend to earn less than men on average. They also shoulder almost all domestic responsibilities (Williams, 2008). Women are also a majority of the population[6], contribute more than half of average household income, and on average spend a greater proportion of their earnings on their children (Soto, 2011).

In terms of forced evictions, women's experiences are nested within their gender roles as both disadvantaged family earners and as caregivers. Their vulnerability to both poverty and physical safety is heightened when families are separated as a result of eviction. Relocation sites are routinely situated at a distance from the city (see Figure 7), and the absence of

[6] The war and genocide in Cambodia especially claimed the lives of men; in the 1980s women constituted 60-65% of the total population. While this imbalance has become more normal, the gender ratio among the Pol Pot generation remains highly skewed (de Walque, 2006).

livelihood opportunities often leads to family separation with magnified impact on the poverty of women, children, and the elderly (McGinn, 2006). This is because family members who are most able to earn wages return to the city in search of work, leaving those left behind in relocation sites dependent on them to return with saved earnings. Children, the elderly, and their caregivers are thus left in a highly precarious situation, especially given the fact that transportation to the outskirts of the city itself consumes much of anything saved by day-laborers. HRTF (2012) argues that the disintegration of community ties especially affects women both socially and economically:

> The families build not only their homes, but also a social network of friends and families that ensures their survival. These networks are important to people, especially women, as they can rely on them to support them in their social and economic activities . . . These relationships are non-quantifiable and carefully interwoven into the fabric of the life of the urban poor and assist greatly in their survival and development. Forced evictions destroy these crucial networks (p. 8).

This section has discussed the historical background and current context of forced evictions and land tenure security in Cambodia, and what is known about the repercussions on those affected. Forced evictions have become widespread across Cambodia, displacing tens of thousands of people. There is a considerable body of literature discussing them and the many problems of land tenure security in this country. It is widely acknowledged that the impact on

those affected is grievous indeed, including landlessness, separation of families, and loss of livelihood. However, analyses concerning social impact are fewer and less nuanced.

2.4 Mental Health and Coping in Cambodia.

There has been considerable investigation into the mental and psychosocial health of Cambodians since the war years, particularly among the diaspora. In the 1980s and 1990s this research largely constituted what Miller, Kulkarni, and Kushner (2006) have termed *trauma-focused psychiatric epidemiology* (TFPE), that is, research "focused on assessing the prevalence of psychiatric symptomatology, primarily symptoms of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and to a lesser extent, other disorders of Western psychiatry" (p. 409). They go on to criticize this focus insofar as "research with war-affected populations has too often failed to provide practitioners with the sort of useful information that could support the development of culturally appropriate, empirically sound mental health interventions"(p. 409). Trauma has become the central conceptual framework for defining and responding to psychosocial health in contexts of forced migration. Herman (1992) introduces her seminal book *Trauma and Recovery* by asserting that "the study of psychological trauma has a curious history – one of episodic amnesia….[and] when the traumatic events are of human design, those who bear witness are caught in the conflict between victim and perpetrator" (p. 1). The 1990s was not such an era: in the West, psychological research on trauma proliferated, and with it

sophistication of treatment interventions. Trauma research also expanded to diverse populations and subgroups, and within Western countries, considerable energies were expended on researching and treating refugee populations. For example, refugees in Australia have been routinely assigned to trauma treatment as a matter of policy, without first assessing for the presence of trauma syndromes (Schweitzer, Melville, Steel, & Lacherez, 2006).

This period coincided with large numbers of Indochinese refugees being resettled in North America, France, Australia, and elsewhere in the Western world. Not surprisingly, there was a flurry of research into their mental health needs, conditions, and barriers to treatment. These studies usually focused on identifying the existence and prevalence of *post-traumatic stress disorder* (PTSD), and sometimes anxiety, depression, *complicated grief*, and other psychiatric conditions among Cambodian refugees in the West (e.g., Blair, 2001; Carlson & Rosser-Hogan, 1991, 1993, and 1994; Chung & Kagawa-Singer, 1993; Marshall, Schell, Elliott, Berthold, & Chun, 2005; Sack et al., 1994 and 1995; Sack, Seeley, & Clarke, 1997; de Jong et al., 2001; Kinzie et al., 1998; Mollica, Wyshak, & Lavelle, 1987); there were also some efforts to validate and adapt existing psychiatric assessment instruments for this population (e.g., Mollica et al., 1987). Far fewer studies were conducted in Cambodia (Dubois, Tonglet, Hoyois, Roussaux, & Hauff, 2004 is one notable exception). The significance of much of this research is now dated: it is widely recognized that PTSD does have cross-cultural validity across the world, and there are compelling neurological explanations as to why this might be the case (Middleton, 2009). Findings from these studies include very high, albeit varying, rates of PTSD, depression, and, to

some extent, other psychiatric disorders among Cambodian refugees in the West at the time of research. Some diagnoses, including substance abuse, were relatively rare; exposure to trauma among war survivors was virtually universal; and the extent of war-time trauma was a significant predictor of long-term psychopathology. However, as one mental health article commented about refugees from Cambodia, Vietnam, and Laos, "current research supports hypotheses of post-traumatic stress disorder diagnoses in [Southeast Asian] refugees . . . but omits pertinent cultural factors" (Davis, Kennedy, & Austin, 2000, p. 144). Overall this body of literature is out of date, both in approach and because of the passage of time since the war and the genocide. For many survivors and their descendants, wartime trauma has not faded, but instead festers; it is not, however, proximate.

Forty years after Pol Pot's *Killing Fields* claimed the lives of 2 million people, Cambodians have largely fallen off the radar of trauma researchers and those interested in humanitarian affairs. Contemporary research on mental health, stress, and coping among Khmers both in Cambodia and in the diaspora has become less common, although it is a good deal more culturally-informed. Recent literature also includes important qualitative studies, as well as the voices of Khmer scholars. The next section of this literature review summarizes the findings from some key studies.

Somasundaram, Kall, van de Put, Eisenbruch, & Thomassen et al.'s (1997) book *Community Mental Health in Cambodia* remains one of the most important works concerning mental health care and treatment among Khmers. Written in a manual format for non-specialist audiences

(NGO workers, monks, lay counselors, and so forth) in both English and Khmer, it remains influential in Cambodia, and is regarded as an excellent field guide to community mental health programs in post-conflict contexts in general. It particularly emphasizes traditional forms of healing and healers, and includes extensive discussion of Khmer ways of expressing emotions as well as cultural syndromes and other idioms of distress, including various conduct disorders, "nervous system" disorders, rumination disorders, relationship disorders, and other syndromes that had been observed. While it was written specifically for a highly-traumatized post-conflict context, the book also helpfully transcends the trauma "box" to include considerable emphasis on stress and coping, as well as such issues as depression, anxiety, somatization, substance abuse, gender-based violence, child development, and strengths-based approaches to overcoming adversity. Concepts and practices grounded in Theravada Buddhism (particularly meditation) and nurturing health and social supports are also cornerstones of the approach.

Australian psychiatrist Maurice Eisenbruch's (1991) pioneering research stands out as a culturally-competent approach to the mental health of Cambodians (and other refugee and immigrant populations) since 1983. Seeking to avoid "pitfalls in the singular application of western categories in diagnosing psychiatric disorders and distress among refugees" (p. 673), Eisenbruch challenged the conventions of trauma-focused psychiatric epidemiology and instead sought to identify indigenous expressions of mental health risk and resilience. He has also been a strong advocate for approaches that are complementary to traditional modes of coping and recovery in order to "design meaningful and effective interventions that can help people help

themselves" (Eisenbruch, de Jong, & van de Put, 2004, p. 133). One of his most influential contributions has been codifying the concept of "cultural bereavement" as a condition affecting Southeast Asian and other refugees. He described it as:

> The experience of the uprooted person or group resulting from loss of social structures, cultural values and self-identity: the person or group continues to live in the past, is visited by supernatural forces from the past while asleep or awake, suffers feelings of guilt over abandoning culture and homeland, feels pain if memories of the past begin to fade, but finds constant images of the past (including traumatic images) intruding into daily life, yearns to complete obligations to the dead, and feels stricken by anxieties, morbid thoughts, and anger that mar the ability to get on with daily life. It is not of itself a disease but an understandable response to the catastrophic loss of social structure and culture (1991, p.674).

Eisenbruch has also participated in efforts to identify various Khmer cultural idioms of distress, including "madness of the *dhamma"* (Buddhist teachings) "thinking too much," "sorcery madness," "broken down heart-mind" and other syndromes that are more consistent with "Cambodians' larger cosmology and taxonomy of suffering" (Eisenbruch et al., 2004, p. 139).

Eisenbruch (2003) recognizes that "Cambodia's rich religious and cultural traditions are at the same time victims of the war" (p. 1), and has made considerable efforts to develop

culturally-grounded approaches to mental health and healing both within Cambodia and among the Khmer diaspora. He has argued that community-based approaches are more effective than individual approaches, and he has strongly argued for coordination with Buddhist monks and other traditional healers who represent the foundation of adaptation mechanisms, particularly in the absence of a viable public health system. He has also found that traditional healers were particularly effective in addressing disruptive or antisocial conduct, which has particular significance for a context of community-level breakdown.

Devon Hinton is a Harvard-affiliated Khmer-speaking American clinical psychiatrist (also trained in cultural anthropology) based in Lowell, Massachusetts, which is home to a large concentration of Cambodians. Over the past decade he has authored and co-authored numerous publications pertaining to the mental health of Cambodian refugees, including a series of articles on the Khmer panic disorder *kyol geou* ("wind overload") (Hinton, Um, & Ba, 2001a, 2001b; Hinton 2002) as well as clinical management and manifestations of PTSD among Cambodians in the United States (including Hinton, Hsiad, Um, & Otto, 2003; Hinton et al., 2005; Otto et al., 2003). In one article Hinton, Rasmussen, Nou, Pollack, & Good (2009) profiled and documented a very high prevalence (48%) of family-directed anger affecting traumatized Cambodian refugees among a convenience sample of 143 Khmer patients in treatment for PTSD. This study highlighted that this problem is both major and common among Cambodian refugees. It also demonstrated how to profile anger in trauma-affected international populations, and suggested channels of family-related anger in such populations. Overall, the

work of Hinton and his colleagues extends the scope of Maurice Eisenbruch's research: sensitive to and grounded in the worldviews and experiences of Cambodians, but still focused on issues pertaining to clinical populations and largely concerning the Khmer diaspora.

In sharp contrast to the clinical psychiatric studies, Edwina Uehara, a professor of social work at the University of Washington, took a different approach. In a series of phenomenology articles (e.g., Uehara, Morelli, & Abe-Kim 2000; Uehara, 2001; Uehara, Farris, Morelli, & Ishisaka, 2001; Uehara, 2007) concerning survivors of Cambodia's Killing Fields, Uehara explored the "eloquent chaos" (Uehara et al., 2001) of trauma, elucidating the fragmented narratives of the Killing Fields and the way they resist coherent story-telling and meaning making, and how "anti-narrative patterns vividly express and reveal a survivor's complex and continuing experience of atrocity" (p.29). Uehara, Morelli, and Abe-Kim (2000) also investigated how American medical and mental health professionals "see somatic complaints as psychopathology, while Cambodian survivors see it as authentic embodied pain" (2000, p. 243). The conceptual chasm between Cambodian refugees' illness narratives and health treatment providers' approaches to anguish helps explain the enormous disconnect separating help-seeking behaviors, treatment fidelity, and established therapies, all of which have failed to bring relief to the survivors of Cambodia's Killing Fields.

Leakhena Nou, a Khmer-American sociology professor at California State University at Long Beach, has extensively researched stress and coping behaviors among Khmers both in Cambodia and in the diaspora. Nou's work (including 2002, 2006, and 2008) has broadly

adapted and applied the overall stress and coping process model of Pearlin, Morton, Menaghan, and Mullan (1981) and Pearlin (1989), which rests on the roles and interrelationships of stressors (life events and "daily hassles"), mediators (particularly coping style and social support), and psychological health outcomes. One of Nou's particular contributions has been to identify components that are particular to Khmers, with implications for other populations. Importantly, her work is highly cognizant of the traumatic scars of war, genocide, and displacement, but also explores culturally-grounded modalities of adaptation and resilience.

Against a backdrop of "lingering, historical, and painful memories" (Nou, 2006, p. 2) from the war era and other factors that "subject the Cambodian people to pathology and adjustment difficulties" (p. 19), Nou has explored the specificities of experience that are most pertinent to Khmers today. For example, she has emphasized the paramount importance of social support within this collectivist culture. While this observation in itself may seem straightforward, Nou emphasized that "when the Khmer Rouge attempted to systematically tear Cambodian society apart, the traditional support systems of the Khmer were irretrievably lost. The mass exterminations and systematic separation of children and families severed the linkages that defined the place of the individual in Cambodian society" (Nou 2002, p. 79). How social support is experienced, understood, and nurtured among Khmers, and the processes by which it mediates people's hardships, thus has particular resonance and specificity. Nou has made important contributions to quantitative research, including adaptations of standardized

measurement instruments (e.g., Ways of Coping Checklist, Life Events Questionnaire, Social Readjustment Rating Scale, Inventory of College Students' Recent Life Events Scale, Instrumental-Expressive Social Support Scale) to investigate coping behaviors and strategies among Khmers (Nou, 2002).

Other more recent research on mental and psychosocial health shows some welcome trends. There is a broader inter-disciplinary strategy beyond earlier psychiatric research, and much of it concerned with populations within Cambodia itself rather than with the diaspora. While epidemiological studies still show high rates of depression, anxiety, and PTSD across Cambodia (several recent studies are cited and summarized by Simcox & Strasser, 2010), researchers are increasingly approaching the topic of mental and psychosocial health from broader sociological, anthropological, and other angles. The 1975-1979 genocide continues to haunt contemporary Cambodia, cleaving its generations into "before" and "after." Individual, collective, and historical trauma are threaded throughout. However, there is more attention to other strands as well, including research into immediate issues such as domestic violence, trafficking, HIV, and substance abuse. There is also a helpful sensitivity to issues surrounding resilience, adjustment, and coping (e.g., Nou, 2010; Gray, Luna, & Seebogen, 2012; Freed, 2004).

Unfortunately, there continues to be few Khmer voices as lead authors in academic literature published in English. Papers from a 2009 conference on mental health in Cambodia, for example, primarily featured foreign authors and concluding discussions focused on how to

correct this. Simcox (2010) commented on the "many teething problems" (p. 33) facing mental health services, research, and awareness in Cambodia, "including funding deficits, poor retention of qualified staff, and a lack of quality education to enable Cambodians to take this work forward" (p. 33), leaving it dependent on international support. However, it is notable that Khmers seem to be more prevalent in community-based mental health endeavors within Cambodia itself. The Trans-Cultural Psychiatric Organization which pioneered mental health services in Cambodia in the aftermath of the Khmer Rouge is under Khmer directorship in both clinical practice and research endeavors. Cambodians are emerging as lead authors in papers documenting these community-based mental health projects (e.g., Sareth et al., 2012). There are also efforts underway to train Cambodians in social work: for example, the Royal University of Phnom Penh now has an MSW program, and small cohorts of Cambodian students are being funded annually to pursue MSWs at the University of Washington in Seattle.

There are several broad themes and areas of consensus in the literature on mental / psychosocial health, adjustment and coping among Khmers, both in Cambodia and across the diaspora. It has been widely confirmed that post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), as well as anxiety and depression, is not only present but is also prevalent and at high rates in Cambodia, both among Killing Fields survivors (14.9%) and those in subsequent generations (12.6%) (Pham, as cited in Simcox, 2010). Gender-based violence, including trafficking and coerced commercial sex, is prevalent (e.g., Brickell, 2008; Gray, Seegobin, 2012; Freed, 2004; Wong et al., 2003), as are many social problems associated with widespread poverty and

unemployment. The fractures of the war years continue to collectively haunt post-conflict Cambodia, even as other issues have become more immediate.

Nearly all authors discuss – usually at length – how Cambodians express pain somatically. Somasundaram et al. (1997) have explained that in Cambodia "it is not simple to separate mental illness disease . . . There is no clear distinction between physical, mental or spiritual problems" (p. 43). This has important implications for help-seeking behaviors and treatments: headaches, for example, constitute a "constellation of chronic symptoms including lethargy, headache and worrying about problems" (Somasundaram et al., 1997, p. 90). Unfortunately, there persists a situation in Cambodia in which "doctors in the biomedical tradition generally seek to cure the physical body, while indigenous medical practitioners seek to heal the social person. Ideally, both strategies for regaining health should be complementary, but medical doctors and indigenous healers have rarely collaborated" (Ovesen & Trinkell 2010, p. 1). This division has been widely criticized as being artificial to the Khmer worldview, and the marginalization of traditional practitioners (e.g., Buddhist monks and *kru khmae*) widely regretted. Health workers have been criticized for being insensitive to the nature and treatment of somatic complaints (which in turn may become a source of further suffering, according to Uehara, Morelli, & Abe-Kim, 2000).

There is also general consensus behind Somasundaram et al.'s (1997) observation that among Khmers, "revealing personal problems to others is not thought to be good at all . . . It seems as if our culture inhibits us from talking about psychological distress, but allows us to

express our problems through bodily complaints" (p. 94). Criticisms of Western-style talk therapy and psychopharmacology also abound, particularly if it is not performed in a way that is sensitive to Khmer culture. A growing body of work concerning Buddhist principles, meditative practices, and psychotherapy has been welcomed (see papers from a 2012 international conference in Ayutthaya, Thailand, on this topic) and the Cambodian experience has contributed to that (e.g., Sareth et al. 2012; Strasser, Chhim, & Taing 2012). Sareth et al. (2012) demonstrated how Buddhist monks and Theravada meditation practices can be successfully utilized in a Khmer context. Given the lack of available and affordable services, especially in rural areas, there is a consensus that community-based programming in partnership with communities, families, and traditional providers is the most appropriate approach.

2.5 Conclusion.

This literature review has focused on three areas pertinent to this dissertation: the global literature on forced evictions; forced evictions in Cambodia with special reference to women, and the overall literature on mental and psychosocial health, coping, and adaptation among Khmers. This third topic is an entirely separate body of work. The literature on forced evictions in Cambodia (as in much of the world) is overwhelmingly written from legal, urban planning, and human rights perspectives; psychosocial impact per se has been touched upon, but is only beginning to be rigorously explored.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1. Introduction.

The purpose of this narrative analysis is to explore the risk and resilience of a sample of women in the capital city of Phnom Penh, Cambodia, who were displaced by forced evictions. A better understanding of the psychosocial impact of forced evictions in Phnom Penh complements the current knowledge base (which focuses on housing, shelter, urban planning, and human/legal rights) and more fully informs scholars, advocates, and policy-makers about the full impact of these evictions. For communities, better knowledge of what kinds of families have better or worse outcomes – and why – can also help those affected make more informed choices, including when people are able to choose between various compensation packages. This study also contributes to the body of culturally-grounded studies of coping and adaptation in contemporary Cambodia.

This chapter explains the research methods used to explore the study's research question – *How do forced evictions impact the psychosocial health of displaced women in Phnom Penh, and what sources of risk and resilience frame how they manage the exigencies of displacement*? To this end, this chapter describes the research method and design; the research sample; the site, data collection, analysis, and synthesis; data integrity; and limitations of the data.

3.2. Overview of Methodology

Qualitative methods are especially suited for "identifying and understanding . . . social processes" (Locke, Spirduso, & Silverman, 2000, p. 99). Grounded in constructivist and inductive enquiry, qualitative methods explore and interpret phenomena and experience in a nuanced and complex way. As Marshall (1996) explained, "qualitative studies aim to provide illumination and understanding of complex psychosocial issues and are most useful for answering humanistic 'why?' and 'how?' questions" (p. 522), and apply rigorous analytical techniques to unstructured material (QSR International, 2012). In doing so, the researcher seeks to "enter the world of others and attempt[s] to achieve a holistic rather than reductionist understanding [of it] . . . Qualitative methodology implies an emphasis on discovery and description, and the objectives are generally focused on extracting and interpreting the meanings of experience" (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008, p. 80). By contrast, quantitative methods are better suited to deductive approaches to inquiry, testing hypotheses and establishing facts and statistical specifics that can be generalized to a population at large.

Qualitative methods are the most appropriate approach to this study because they are best suited to an in-depth exploration of human phenomena, capturing the world-views of those involved and the complexity and contexts of participants' lived experiences. The research question is also an exploratory one that concerns how displaced women are coping and adapting, how they are interacting with their post-displacement environment, and the meanings they attach to their experiences. Stress and Coping Theory proposes a transactional

model that considers how cognitive appraisal processes, personal characteristics, and situation conditions interact to frame an individual's stress response and their strategies to cope with a given stressor and, ultimately, frame their responses and outcomes (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). For reasons described below, all of these processes lend themselves to narrative understanding and expression.

The data for this study were collected almost entirely in the form of in-depth interviews, supplemented by field notes written by my Research Assistants and me. Charmaz (2006) described such interviews as "a directed conversation . . . [that] permits an in-depth exploration of a particular topic or experience and, thus, is a useful method for interpretive inquiry" (p. 25). The interview approach prompted participants to tell their own stories about their experiences of eviction and its aftermath, in their own words and choosing their own emphasis.

Amongst the spectrum of possible approaches to collect and analyze the interview data, this dissertation specifically utilized narrative analysis, which is a "family of methods for interpreting texts that have in common a storied form" (Riessman, 2008, p. 11). Story-telling is universal. It constitutes the first form of discourse that children in all cultures learn to organize and explain events, and represents a developmental milestone (Stern, 1992). As Geertz (1997) explained, "telling stories, about ourselves and about others to ourselves and to others, is the most natural and earliest way in which we organize our experience and knowledge" (p. 23). Narratives can be understood as stories that "include a temporal ordering of events and an effort to make something out of those events" (Sandelowski, as cited in Rubenson, Hanh,

Höjer, & Johansson, 2005, p. 393) and are a means through which individuals describe and give meaning to their experiences, choices, and actions (Rubenson et al., 2005). They are "sense-making tools" (Freeman, 2002, p. 9) and how "individuals excavate and reassess memories" (Riessman, 2008, p. 8).

Narratives may be especially useful for studies of resilience, insofar as they both reflect capacity to handle adversity, and the act of formulating a coherent narrative can actually influence adaptive responses (Hauser et al., 2006). Narrative analysis is particularly suited to this study because stories are used universally to define and express experiences and perspectives (Riessman, 1993), and because the research concerns retrospective interpretation of past events by those who experienced them. Moreover, a key component of Stress and Coping Theory is how cognitive appraisals of situations frame individual emotions, choices, and ultimately response actions. This methodology and theory are highly complementary, as both lend themselves to capturing essential aspects of how these forced evictions have affected the lives of women in Phnom Penh.

3.3. Research Design.

This study utilized narrative analysis to examine the experience of forced evictions on displaced women in Phnom Penh, with a particular focus on the dynamics that underpin their risk and resilience. Twenty-two women displaced within two years prior to their first interview

were invited to share their experiences of forced eviction and its aftermath. They were prompted with open-ended questions designed to prompt a narrative, supported by guiding research questions and probes concerning key themes and issues. I returned to five of the women for a second life history interview, to more fully frame and nest the eviction experience within the broader course of their lives. (The Interview Guides are included in Appendix B.) The following sections discuss components of the research design in more detail.

3.4. Research Site.

Research fieldwork was conducted in 2009-2010 in the greater Phnom Penh area. All participants had lived in one of five evicted central-city neighborhoods: Boeung Kak Lake, Borei Keila, Dey Krahom, Group 78, and Reak Reay. More detailed profiles of these communities, and the participants from them, are presented in Appendix D. I conducted the interviews in or near the participants' homes (except for one who was interviewed at her workplace). Eight remained living in the city, whereas the others were on the outskirts of the capital, or in neighboring provinces. The sample included women in relocation camps, newly-built townhouses and flats that companies had provided as compensation, and locations they had found for themselves. One woman was homeless and living under a tree.

3.5. Research Sample.

Sample size and variability in qualitative research vary considerably (Sobal, 2001), and data were collected until the point of saturation, that is, when new conversations became repetitive rather than revelatory. In the end, I collected 22 eviction narratives and 5 life histories. Sampling for the interviews was purposive, and based on both judgment and theoretical considerations. In purposive sampling, "group participants [are chosen] according to preselected criteria relevant to a particular research question" (Mack et al., 2005, p. 5). This contrasts sharply with quantitative sampling methods, which aim to achieve a broad representative cross-section of a population. In purposive sampling, "the researcher actively selects the most productive sample to answer the research questions . . . [Meanwhile] . . . the iterative process of qualitative study design means that samples are usually theory driven to a greater or lesser extent" (Marshall, 1996, p. 523).

I sought to identify a diverse group of women with different backgrounds, experiences, and characteristics that were salient to the issues at hand. All had been residents of five selected Phnom Penh neighborhoods and had been evicted less than two years prior to their first interview.[7] This allowed for investigation of coping strategies and experiences at various short- and medium-term stages following displacement. As stated above, these neighborhoods are profiled in more detail in Appendix D. Further criteria for selection of participants were:

[7] In two cases, the women reported that they left their neighborhoods slightly more than two years earlier. In both cases, they had chosen to leave prior to the final eviction of the neighborhood.

- Representatives from different sectors of employment and socioeconomic status.
- A mix of current residents of relocation camps, occupants of new company-built residences, and those who had moved to new locations on their own.
- Diverse demographic characteristics, including age, ethnicity, religious affiliation, marital status, household composition, and health status. (One of the neighborhoods, Borei Keila, was home to a large concentration of HIV affected families supported with free medical care and other services by an NGO.)

For the life history narratives, one articulate informant was selected from each of the five neighborhoods. The five participants were selected because they were especially forthcoming, and together they represented a diversity of life circumstances.

Given that this study is of persons who *previously* lived in a geographic community that no longer exists, locating informants was a logistical challenge. "Snowball" or chain-referral techniques were used to identify potential participants. In other words, "participants or informants with whom contact has already been made use their social networks to refer the researcher to other people who could potentially participate in or contribute to the study" (Mack et al., 2005, p. 5-6). My Research Assistants and I usually first conducted direct outreach in relocation sites and/or made contacts with NGO personnel who could facilitate introductions. We then asked for referrals to former friends and neighbors, with an aim toward

selecting a cohort of women diverse in eviction experience, location, and other factors outlined above. Women were generally very willing to participate, with only one who refused.

This study focused on women because they are able to provide rich insight into the interaction between impact on earnings and psychological distress. Moreover, women's voices are under-represented in the public sphere in Cambodia; while there are important exceptions, authorities and those engaged in policy discourse are overwhelmingly men. Women, meanwhile, tend to shoulder a double burden of income generation and family caretaking responsibilities, and female-headed households are common and especially poor. There is also evidence that the evictions are exacerbating these circumstances, in part because they lead to separation of households: women, children, and the elderly on the margins of the city, unable to support themselves and dependent on remittances from men earning a livelihood elsewhere. The focus on women thus captures the overall impact of eviction on a family functioning as a whole, including composition of household, livelihood strategies, and interpersonal relationships.

3.6. Data Collection Methods.

In-depth interviews are "guided conversations" (Gubrium & Holstein, 2002) designed to elicit individuals' eviction experiences, and the meanings they attribute to the event (or process) and its outcomes. Interviews are often used over ethnographic methods when "topics

of interest do not center on particular settings but . . . on establishing common patterns or themes" (Gubrium & Holstein, 2002, p. 85). Open-ended questions invited them to tell their story of displacement, and how they managed the multiple losses associated with forced eviction and its aftermath. Probes were utilized to bring out certain themes in more detail, for example, post-eviction changes in family structure, roles, composition, and functioning; individual expressions of distress and adaptation; impact on household income and livelihood strategies; and impact on social networks and social capital.

I utilized two approaches to the interviews. The first round focused specifically on experiences of forced eviction and its aftermath. From the pool of interviews, five especially informative narrators were identified and invited for life history interviews. These life history narratives facilitated analysis and framing of forced eviction experiences within the participants' life courses. Life history narratives lend themselves to in-depth exploration of the overall course of a life, framing its trajectories, role transitions, and turning points within broader contexts of self and society, and meanings attached to those over time. These interviews included a thematic emphasis on experiences of migration during the life course, including rural-to-urban movements (such as those analyzed at length by Derks, 2008) and previous experiences of forced migration during the Cambodian genocide and civil war.

3.7. Staffing.

I specifically recruited Research Assistants with skills and experience in qualitative interviewing, as well as transcription and translation. I also provided considerable training and supervision of the team. There are significant advantages to having interviewers who share a common ethnicity and gender with participants (Hiller & Diluzio, 2004; Kvale, 2006). The important benefits of having local Research Assistants include that they serve as cultural interlocutors and mediators, and facilitate the endorsement of gatekeepers and community leaders that is essential for a foreign researcher (Pinto, Schmidt, Rodriguez, & Solano, 2006). Six Research Assistants were involved in conducting interviews, and in transcribing and translating them. This research would not have been possible without the excellent work of Chandara Gnim, Morina Heak, Sophal Heang, Pisey Seang, Chariya Oum, and Kalyan Sann. Sok Udom Deth and Kalyan Sann were also invaluable as Senior Translators.

3.8. Language and Translation Considerations.

At the outset of data collection, I spoke very limited Khmer. Lack of language skills poses challenges in terms of methodology, feasibility, and cultural competency. Nevertheless, lack of fluency does not represent an insurmountable barrier, and I did have extensive experience utilizing and supervising interpreters/translators while working for humanitarian aid programs worldwide, including for conducting assessments, evaluations, and empirical

research. I trained and supervised university-educated Cambodians to assist with data collection, and to transcribe and translate it. I was present at each interview to gauge the interaction between Research Assistant and interviewee, and to respond to any questions by either party. The stamp of the Research Assistants' subjectivities has inevitably infused the research, as has, indeed, my own. Nevertheless, we invested considerable effort to ensure that the voices of marginalized women were effectively elicited and represented.

Interviews were audio recorded with permission and transcribed in Khmer verbatim. A written English translation was then prepared, guided by translation protocols outlined by Baker (1992); these protocols can be found in Appendix C. Culture is inextricably embedded in language. Any translation is of course an approximation (as, indeed, is any text of a spoken narrative or dialogue). The ways that translations typically vary from original text include "that translators are more conservative in their use of language; that they tend to prefer more standard forms of the language; that there tends to be a raising of the level of formality in translation; that translated text is sanitized . . . and that translators tend to produce more 'uniform' texts" (Baker, 2004, p. 172).

Khmer is structured differently from English in ways that affect meaning, including lack of tense and use of varying titles and pronouns that capture relationships between individuals. Nevertheless, in translation "equivalence can usually be obtained" (Baker, 1992, p. 6), and every effort was made to capture not only the content but the essential voice and worldview of

each narrator. Translation of an interview or narrative is thus not simply a matter of mechanics but must capture the essence of an individual's perspective and worldview. Key concepts which did not directly lend themselves to English translation were preserved in Khmer and defined in brackets. For example, culture-bound mental health idioms were utilized rather than forced into a Western psychiatric diagnosis. The translators also left Khmer titles and pronouns intact, because they communicate status and relationships that are lost when translated into English.

After a Research Assistant finished a written translation of an interview transcript, I proofread it closely, correcting English as a second language (ESL) errors. I then reviewed it together with the Research Assistant, and any passages that were unclear or needed cultural elaboration were discussed. The corrected translation was then verified by a Senior Translator. (One of the Senior Translators also did some direct translations herself; a selection of those were sent to the other Senior Translator for verification.)

3.9. Data Analysis.

"Like weight bearing walls, personal narratives depend on certain structures to hold them together" (Riessman, 1993, p. 18), and should be analyzed in terms of overall arc and content as well as what is revealed in particular fragments of monologue and dialogue. After an initial close reading, I meticulously coded and analyzed the transcripts using ATLAS software.

Grounded theory conventions were used to identify, develop, and code passages from the texts; thematic anchors were then grouped into broad categories. Modalities of coping and sources of risk and resilience within and across narratives were identified through an iterative process of inductively-generated explanatory frameworks together with application of core theoretical constructs.

Charmaz (2006) described grounded theory methods as:

> Systematic, yet flexible guidelines for collecting and analyzing qualitative data to construct theories 'grounded' in the data themselves. The guidelines offer a set of general principles and heuristic devices rather than formulaic rules . . . Coding means that we attach labels to segments of data that depict what each segment is about. Coding distills data, sorts them, and gives us a handle for making comparisons with other segments of data (p. 2-3).

It is important to recognize that in this approach to coding, the codes themselves are emergent and inductive; this contrasts sharply with more deductive methods defined to test hypotheses, or even content analysis approaches, where a relatively limited number of specific codes are pre-determined and clearly defined early on in the analysis. In grounded theory, "coding generates the bones of your analysis… it shapes an analytical frame . . . [and] fosters studying action and processes . . . [in order to formulate] generalizable theoretical statements that

transcend specific times and places and contextual analyses of actions and events" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 45-46).

There are a large number of approaches to coding used by grounded theorists; I primarily utilized *focused* and *axial* coding in this study. Focused coding is "directed, selective, and conceptual . . . [and is used] to synthesize and explain larger segments of data" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 57), while axial coding refers to categories and subcategories and the relationships between them. The coding was conducted in two discreet waves; during the initial phase of coding, short passages were tagged to identify key actions, issues, concepts, and emotions that were embedded in the text itself; broad over-arching categories (e.g., coping, livelihoods, health) were also defined. Memos were written to capture key ideas that emerged during the course of analysis. Given well over a thousand pages of text, this initial phase of coding was very time-consuming.

During the second phase, queries were run on selected codes across various interviews; these were printed, and further coding using colored pens was conducted by hand as needed, in order to further analyze and develop more abstract constructs and patterns across a certain topic. During both stages, *in vivo* coding was incorporated, that is, using codes that highlighted participants' verbatim words and phrases. This often was used to preserve culture-bound words, phrases, and concepts in the original Khmer that have no direct translation into English (e.g., *sorsay prawsat,* which literally translates as "brain nerves," but could perhaps be

translated in English as “stress-induced brain damage” or more loosely as “lost their mind,” but carries connotations, implications, and meanings that are unique to, and thus best left in, Khmer).

3.10. Limitations of the Data.

No study, however exhaustive, is ever complete; nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge the inherent limitations in this (or any) study. Some of the limiting conditions in this dissertation are common to qualitative research in general. For example, I make no claims to having achieved a sample that is generalizable to a broader population, nor that the range or concentration of any opinions or experiences can be quantified. Indeed, there are inherent dangers in doing so. Perhaps a quarter of the participants in this study reported positive or neutral outcomes, or only temporary difficulties relating to their evictions. However, it must be borne in mind that I specifically sought out such examples to see what lessons could be learned from them, and how these factors could inform policy and social work programming strategies. It should *not* be inferred that a similar proportion of evicted women are largely unharmed; indeed they may well be positive outliers. For quantitative assessment of outcomes, a survey utilizing respondent-driven sampling would be the most appropriate course of inquiry.

Within qualitative research, this dissertation is based strictly on the narratives of evicted women. It is not an ethnography of an extant community, nor does it answer the questions

that are better addressed by ethnographic methods. Instead, it seeks to explore how displaced women express their own experiences of forced eviction, and how this has formed their present circumstances. Narrative analysis is the better fit for the central research question.

Overall, data collection went smoothly, and there was good rapport between the team and the interviewees. Nevertheless, three important limitations stand out:

- The quality of the interviews varied considerably. Some participants were more forthcoming than others, and a few were very carefully guarded. The less frank narratives do not constitute a data problem per se, however. Participants have every right to tell the story that they want to tell. Furthermore, a great deal can be both learned and gleaned from the more restricted narratives. Participants who were genuinely satisfied with post-eviction lives, for example, told very different stories than those who avoided any criticism or questioning of authority with extreme care, and expressed their satisfaction (perhaps better termed as resignation, at least for some) with little emotion, detail, or personal idiosyncrasy. Moreover, the guarded narratives were more than balanced by rich, expressive ones.
- As has already been discussed above, language is profoundly cultural, and no translation is ever perfect. My lack of fluency posed further challenges. Nevertheless, considerable and appropriate efforts were put in place to minimize and manage language barriers

and translation issues. The approach used in this dissertation meets acceptable standards and practices for international research.

- In the field, lack of privacy posed a problem in some cases, although perhaps more from my own perspective than the participants'. None of the participants wanted to leave their own environments in favor of "somewhere quieter," and in most of the interviews one or two friends or relatives were nearby. (In one memorable instance, we asked to go to a more private place and the participant immediately and graciously led us to another room – with two female relatives in tow.) The presence or absence of others almost certainly influenced what was said and how, but there was no obvious pattern. Lack of privacy was also not always a negative. One participant, Maly, exhibited more confidence and expressiveness in her eviction interview when she was amongst friends; by contrast, in her life history interview she was alone, and noticeably more shy, evasive, and subdued. The comfort level of participants was deemed to be the most important factor from an ethical standpoint, and every participant had the option of choosing both the place of the interview and whether and by whom she wanted to be accompanied.

Summary and Conclusion.

This study utilizes narrative analysis to examine the experience of forced evictions on displaced women in Phnom Penh, with a particular focus on the dynamics that underpin their

risk and resilience. Twenty-two women displaced within 2.5 years prior to their first interview were invited to share their experiences of forced eviction and its aftermath, prompted by open-ended questions designed to prompt a narrative, supported by guiding research questions and probes concerning key themes and issues. Of this pool of informants, five were asked to share their life history narratives, to more fully frame and nest the eviction experience within the broader course of their lives.

Purposive sampling was used to select participants, who were located through snowball techniques. I recruited and trained bilingual university-educated Research Assistants to conduct, transcribe, and translate the interviews. I then reviewed each manuscript closely, and any passages requiring clarification or cultural elaboration were discussed together with the Research Assistant. Edited manuscripts were then checked by a Senior Translator. Transcripts were then coded by the researcher to identify and elucidate coping strategies and modalities of risk and resilience.

Chapter 4: Findings – Socioeconomic Trajectories

4.1 Introduction and Overview.

The women who participated in this study embody disparate experiences, with highly varying attitudes, outcomes, and explanations for their experiences. There is no uniform eviction experience, but rather a multiplicity of circumstances as varied as the population of Phnom Penh itself. If "narrative reconstruction is an attempt to reconstitute and repair ruptures between body, self, and world" (Williams, as cited in Riessman, 2008, p. 23), then the women in this study mobilized different resources – material and otherwise – to cope and adapt, including constructing different kinds of narratives to understand their experiences and rebuild their lives and livelihoods. As Borden (1992) commented, "narrative processes can be understood as reflective efforts to cope with negative life outcomes and to deal with the impact of change and loss" (p. 135). Despite a common neighborhood, and often similar compensation packages, outcomes and responses were highly differentiated, which poses challenges for social service agencies, policymakers, and advocates. Nevertheless, some clear patterns did emerge, largely following socioeconomic axes. These trajectories are the focus of this chapter.

This chapter presents a typology of the ways that the eviction affected participants, with a focus on economic circumstances. I specifically seek to present a nuanced portrait of the nature and extent of economic harm that befell the participants. Given a context of

widespread poverty in Cambodia, participants' well-being was profoundly grounded in their economic circumstances; an attempt to separate psychological from economic aspects of their well-being would be artificial, especially as this is not how the participants themselves communicated their experiences of these events. Thus, this chapter documents and describes trajectories of harm, with an emphasis on economic circumstances. The folowing chapter applies Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) stress and coping model to describe how participants experienced and adapted to their eviction.

4.2 Variable Socioeconomic Outcomes

Socioeconomic outcomes for families affected by forced evictions are highly variable. Harm, that is, "physical or psychological injury or damage" (AH, 2009, para. 1) was not universal, and moreover, different families were harmed in different ways. Some told narratives that emphasized continuity and even improvement in their lives after eviction. Nevertheless, there was a distinct and consistent pattern in who was harmed and how. Ultimately, this dissertation concerns stress, coping, and psychosocial well-being, and these were found to be inextricably interlinked with poverty and economic decline. Narratives of forced eviction, and the risk and resilience experiences embedded within them, showed themselves to be framed by the nature and degree of socioeconomic harm. While the overall outcomes were highly consistent with post-eviction livelihood capacity, many of those with

higher socioeconomic status (SES) also experienced grievous harm. Exploring the processes through which people are materially harmed is a helpful and appropriate starting point for understanding the processes through which urban Cambodian women adapt to the exigencies of displacement.

A simplified typology of socioeconomic impacts is outlined below. Sections §4.2.1 – §4.2.4 constitute more detailed discussions and extended excerpts from an exemplar narrative from each category.

- *High levels of livelihood harm* are found among those whose ability to earn was tied to a particular locale (whether a particular neighborhood or the city center in general). While this includes small business owners, this category is especially characteristic of those who worked in the informal sector prior to eviction. Unable to find affordable housing in downtown Phnom Penh, they are pushed into destitution after their eviction, because of an inability to find work or income-generating opportunities in new locations. (See §4.2.1)
- *High levels of asset harm* are concentrated among those of higher SES. While these people usually have the resources to keep the family out of deep poverty, for these people, compensation packages are far below market values for their properties. They also tend to be long-term community residents with strong and meaningful ties to their neighborhoods. Eviction thus represents an enormous loss of the family's (often

extended family's) savings and net worth, even when livelihoods are left intact. (See §4.2.2)

- *High levels of both livelihood and asset harm* are found among more successful entrepreneurs with businesses operating from or near their homes.[8] These families simultaneously lose both properties. Once-prosperous (or at least secure) families thus tumble into poverty. (See §4.2.3)
- *Neutral or Improved Impact*. Some are, in fact, not particularly harmed by their forced eviction, and a few actually come out ahead. It is notable that the pathways within this category are far less consistent than for the others in this typology; many of the narratives are highly idiosyncratic. Nevertheless, there are some factors that do emerge that help explain why and how some of those affected by evictions are so resilient. (See §4.2.4)

4.2.1. High Levels of Livelihood Harm.

For some evictees, the impact was not just loss of home and community, but a plunge into terrible poverty. This tended to especially affect those who were already poor; however, nearly all did report some sort of income, adequate shelter, and food security prior to eviction. In short, they could be termed "working poor." Lives that were described as *pibaak* (difficult)

[8] Cambodian entrepreneurs typically operate businesses out of the ground floor of their homes, and live in apartments upstairs.

before eviction became *yaab* (very difficult) or *vithania* (wretchedly difficult). Only two described their original circumstances in terms of outright destitution (a middle-aged HIV+ sex worker, and an elderly widow neglected by her family), whereas afterwards there were many in dire circumstances, without adequate food or other basic necessities.

The process through which livelihoods were so affected – even among those with regular salaries – was much the same as the impetus behind the evictions themselves: soaring property values (and rents) in central Phnom Penh and a lack of affordable transportation. Research participants clearly articulated how they were unable to afford to buy – and sometimes even rent – new homes in the vicinity of their previous ones, which were prized precisely because of access to income-generating opportunities, including wage labor (e.g., construction), petty trade (i.e., informal-sector self-employment such as selling fruit from pushcarts), services (e.g., laundry, manicures, driving motorcycle taxis), small businesses (e.g., market stalls, coffee shops), or office jobs. As Naree explained, Group 78 "was a very easy place [to earn money], but they didn't want us live there; they wanted us to live where we can't earn money." Reachny further elaborated:

> It's much more difficult than before because we can't earn money here, it's very far, we have to spend a lot of money and time go to Phnom Penh and even though we have our own motorbike, it's very difficult . . . and it's very quiet even though we would like to set up a business [there are no customers] . . . I think

> that the compensation [for my house in Boeung Kak Lake] wasn't fair enough for me, because I couldn't buy a house in the city or closer to the city, it wasn't enough, and that's why I had to buy a house here . . . I couldn't afford to buy a house in Phnom Penh, that would have cost nearly twenty or thirty thousand dollars, the compensation wasn't fair enough for us, but we had to accept it . . . We were threatened . . . If we didn't accept the compensation and move, the company would tear down our houses and we wouldn't get any compensation . . . People felt afraid because we heard about Dey Krahom.[9]

Location-dependent earning potential crosses socioeconomic lines; the poor, professionals, and everyone in between benefits from living near the city center. Those with white-collar jobs were usually able to maintain their livelihoods despite expensive and inconvenient commutes. As Kanya explained, "there is no change in earning, yeah. It is just more difficult… because of expenses for traveling, gasoline! Yes! And the time." Many of the poor, by contrast, ended up destitute because their livelihoods collapsed altogether. It should be understood that there is no public transportation system in Phnom Penh at all, and one may not be in place until 2035 (Di Certo & Channyda, 2012). It is very expensive to make trips back and forth between new locations and the city, and modest earnings are swallowed up by transport costs. As Vanna explained:

[9] Many residents of Dey Krahom refused to cooperate with the eviction of their neighborhood. It was eventually cleared under violent conditions, and hold-outs – including Sorya in this study – were denied compensation altogether. See Appendix D for more details about this neighborhood.

> [My husband] goes and comes back every day. It is not the same as when we lived in Phnom Penh. He needs to pay for one liter of gasoline to come back home. [He can't profit] after paying for the gasoline . . . There is no hope at all! . . . [In Dey Krahom] I could sell meatballs and fertilized duck eggs on Saturdays and Sundays . . . What about here? There is no Saturday or Sunday… There is nothing.

Vanna's poignant despair and hopelessness is grounded in her family's inability to make a living. Camped out on a roadside, she was surrounded by other poor people. There were no customers for any goods or services that she could sell; nobody in this remote location had extra time and income to enjoy. When she declares that here "there is no Saturday or Sunday," Vanna is not referencing her own leisure. This comment encapsulates how poor people like her are dependent on *neak mien* ("people who have," i.e., those who are not poor). It is not a weekend for herself that she needs, but to be amidst those who do. Her follow-up comment that "there is nothing" indicates that there is nothing left over from others' disposable income for her and her family. Living amidst a concentration of poverty, there is no way for Vanna to earn a living.

Those who received compensation in the form of a replacement property or a small plot in a relocation camp found themselves at a considerable distance from the city.[10] Many were

[10] There were two exceptions in my sample, both of whom had been given units in a new apartment building very near their former homes in Borei Keila.

relocated to Damnak Troyeung, which is more than 20 kilometers away. While there are many garment factories in this area, families without young unmarried women may not be able to benefit from available employment opportunities.[11] The Dey Krahom renters eventually found themselves in a barren encampment in a neighboring province. However, even those who rented or purchased new homes almost always found themselves far away from their former neighborhoods. What they could afford was usually far beyond the city center, away from both jobs and customers. The result was an abrupt, sometimes catastrophic drop in income.[12] As one housewife (Sina) explained,

> [My household's income] is less than before! . . . It's decreased by about 50 percent… When we lived [at Boeung Kak Lake], every Sunday, my husband could be a motorcycle taxi driver whenever we ran out of money . . . In his free time, he could work at night and could earn some money. There is no night time work here; he does not know where to be a driver here [because there are no customers]; there are only robbers.

Sina's observation conflates poverty and safety. She is, of course, making a literal observation that it is not safe to be out at night in her new location. Her comment, however, also

[11] Garment factory wages are very low; the minimum wage is $61 per month (Kunthear & Worrell, 2012).

[12] There is no concomitant drop in expenses in these peri-urban areas. Electricity, water, and food are all *more* expensive, and education and health expenses also increase due to transportation costs. The only thing cheaper is, typically, the land itself.

underscores how violent crime further undermines the livelihood capacity of families like her own. Her family's income has been cut in half, not only because he "does not know where" to find customers but also because it is unsafe for him to pursue this option. Insecurity in remote locations, away from the hustle and bustle of downtown Phnom Penh, further compromises livelihood capacities.

Phun, who had previously enjoyed a modest but stable livelihood in Group 78 selling coconuts, echoed these points:

> Here, it is ten times more difficult than there. Ten times more difficult than in Phnom Penh . . . Business doesn't earn; selling this and selling that doesn't work. It is difficult: I have a business; I sell Chinese noodles in the market, but it is not going well . . . Moving here, it is just difficult to make money. It is so difficult; nowhere could be more difficult than living here. I am almost crying these days. I used to make a lot of money, and now I don't know what I can do to make money.

Phun is a woman who had endured repeated hardship over her life course: she had repeatedly been forced out of her home under adverse circumstances, ranging from marital dissolution to communist "liberation" of her prosperous farming family's lands in Vietnam's Mekong Delta. And yet, "nowhere could be more difficult" than her current location. Perhaps, of course, she is being rhetorical. She had endured hunger before. However, the effects of poverty were being

felt in new and different ways than she felt in her difficult youth. By the time of her life history interview, her youngest daughter had dropped out of school, the family had exhausted assistance from extended family, and a lack of livelihood opportunity had forced her household to scatter. It was this that pained her more than hunger:

> Even when I was renting a place to live before, I had never been in tears; I'm telling you the truth, I had never been separated from my family with one living here and one living there. We always lived together, even when we were *pibaak kraw vethania* ["difficult poor wretched"] all my children and grandchildren were living together, not husband lives here and wife lives there, never. After the eviction, we separated, husband is there, and wife is here.

One of the most striking characteristics of the data is the uniformity of responses about being unable to earn a living on the outskirts of the city. Most participants had assumed that they would continue their usual means of income in the new place and indicated that they were taken aback by the lack of customers. They did not anticipate that it would be so difficult to support themselves. A contrasting example can be found in Maly, a middle-aged sex worker.[13] After being evicted from the Boeung Kak Lake neighborhood she had rented in, she was homeless and living under a nearby tree simply because she had nowhere else to go. Her

[13] During the interview, Maly denied being currently involved in the commercial sex trade, saying "I don't have money since I got sick" (i.e., that she quit when she was diagnosed with HIV), but there were several indirect indications in her interviews that she did continue on some level.

existence was extremely marginal, and she was terrified of losing her husband's income unloading cement trucks. "I don't know where I should go, it's only here that he can make some money to put food on the table, 3,000 to 4,000 Riel [≈ US$0.75 – US$1], 2,000 to 3,000 Riel," she explained. If she moved away, she would lose access to the NGO that provided her with free anti-retroviral medication.

Chanthon is an exemplar narrator of the process by which eviction from the city center harms a family's livelihood. When interviewed, Chanthon was in her early 50s, married, with three sons in their late teens and twenties. A former renter at Dey Krahom, the family had first been transported with other former renters ineligible for compensation by the 7NG company to Damnak Troyeung, some 20 kilometers away. They initially built a shanty settlement along the roadside, for lack of anywhere else to go. After many months, the company moved them to a relocation camp in a neighboring province, where she was interviewed. She had set up a small business selling produce in the camp, where she lived with her chronically-ill husband, and one adolescent son. Conditions in the camp were abominable: people had been allocated 4 x 6 meter land plots, on which they had constructed flimsy makeshift shelters. There were inadequate water and sanitation facilities, and no meaningful livelihood opportunities. Residents were desperate and destitute. Of Chanthon's two older boys, one was in prison and the other had been trafficked to Thailand to work on fishing boats after the eviction;[14]

[14] Conditions on Thai fishing vessels are notorious. Cambodian men are often trafficked and sold to deep-sea trawlers, where they work under slave-like conditions (Winn, 2012).

"brokers" had come through the camp recruiting young men. (A second interviewee in this camp had also had sons trafficked to Thailand.)

Chanthon gave a striking narrative detailing her struggles to sustain herself and her family following their eviction from Dey Krahorn. These passages paint sharp contrasts between their lives before and after, and lay out the burdens she has endured and the feelings that they have evoked. Chanthon describes numerous strategies for managing her situation, including a highly exploitative underground economy that operates in the camp, including "loan sharks" and human traffickers. An extended excerpt of her narrative can be found in Appendix E; I draw out some of the most key moments below.

Chanthon began by describing her family's livelihood in Dey Krahom: "The most convenient place to live in was Dey Krahom because it was near a business area . . . It was in the city, it was convenient for our businesses, even though we sold only small things, we could get enough profit to eat with." This is a typical description of how Phnom Penh's poor evaluate their circumstances: food security. It contrasts with efforts by external agencies and advocates concerning the forced evictions, which almost always take a stand concerning adequate housing.

Chanthon describes her struggles to keep her family fed, first squatting along the roadside:

> After the eviction I moved from Dey Krahom to Damnak Troyeung . . . We didn't have anything to do [to earn money], we went to *bach trey* ["scatter fish," a

> technique to catch fish in shallow water without equipment] . . . We didn't have anything to do for nearly a year . . . [We] sold an old motorbike for $160 . . . It helped us eat but by the time we arrived here, we were really completely out of cash . . . [The money from selling that motorbike] helped us for a very long time, nearly one year.

After they were moved to the relocation camp mentioned above, their circumstances hardly improved. Conditions in the camp were abominable; while they now had possession documents for tiny land plots, there was no food. Chanthon clarifies that her neighbors were in similar circumstances, both before and after the eviction:

> Everyone lived as I did in Dey Krahom, to sum up, nobody was idle . . . It was very easy to make money there because it is in the city . . . [People in Phnom Penh can] spend money and buy things without feeling bad . . . We don't have anything here, and we have to be thrifty . . . Nobody buys our things.

Chanthon highlights the past industriousness of herself and her neighbors, as well as the fundamental dilemma of their new lives: a lack of customers. In this comment, she emphasizes that they are hardworking people; they are not poor because they are lazy, but because there is not enough money circulating in the local economy. If everyone is "thrifty" then nothing is exchanged and commerce has ground to a halt. This comment highlights the intrinsic dilemma of life in peri-urban areas. In a truly rural location, there would be a farming economy of sorts, and the possibility of wild foods or a small garden.

In the city, there is business. But on the outskirts of the city, there is no viable livelihood at all.

Chanthon and her family became dependent on handouts from NGOs and relatives, but those had been exhausted. The next step was to borrow from moneylenders: “Two days after we arrived here [in the relocation camp, an NGO] gave us rice. My cousin saw that I had nothing so he gave me capital to start up my business but now I lost that $20 of start-up capital [short laugh], and then I put my document possession into pawn for $20, and don’t know when I can pay it and the interest back yet.”

The consequences of this desperation were deeply felt as Chanthon and her family spiraled into desperation. “I never have any tasty food to eat, nothing, and no one dares to eat anything . . . How can I save money . . . besides, I lost all my start-up capital . . . I can’t find a solution . . . I’ve [discussed with others] but we don’t know how to manage.” Again, we see an emphasis on food security as the measure by which the poor evaluate the depth of their own poverty. Chanthon was arguably in a better position than many, insofar as she had a small stall in the camp’s market area, from which she sold produce. But, since her customers themselves could not afford to pay, this business was unsustainable, and she was on the brink of losing her last asset. “Talking about, talking about this selling, [here in the camp] there are always people buying on credit . . .They owed me for long time like this, and so I had to pawn my possession document for $20 . . . If we lose our property, we have to walk out . . . There are a lot of

households who have lost their property . . . Poor people become poor because of this . . . Because poor people are trapped."

Chanthon describes the harshest consequence of that entrapment: Her middle son had gone off to work on one of the Thai-owned fishing boats, which are notorious for their barbaric treatment of workers. She despaired, "Maybe when he makes some money [my son can come home], if he doesn't have money how can he come back, it's so far . . . If I want to call my son, I don't know where to call to because he went on a fishing boat, I don't know where he went." She was also now too far away to visit her oldest son, who was in prison; previously she had often visited him.

Deepened poverty was also taking its toll on relations within the household, and on her health: "When we don't have [anything, my husband] feels frustrated so he curses his wife and child . . . I don't know what to do here, I don't have any idea, I don't know what I should sell, I have become old now, my eyes aren't so good, my eyes hurt and are always teary . . . I don't know what to do since I can't make money, so I just persevere in pain." In this passage, Chanthon collapses deteriorating family relations, physical health, and poverty, moving fluidly back and forth between the pillars of her despair. The arc of Chanthon's narrative emphasizes a life of hard work, a progressive series of ever-more desperate strategies to feed her family since their eviction from Dey Krahom. She then concludes with a statement of hopeless suffering. Without any viable livelihood, there is nothing left that can be done but "persevere in pain."

Chanthon's narrative presents a typical downward spiral toward greater poverty among the working poor. Other socioeconomic groups were also affected, however. Several participants who were better off also absorbed serious blows to their livelihoods, but managed to avoid slipping into dire poverty. Dina's family is a case in point. Dina was from a relatively comfortable background, a graduate student who had been living with her elder brother and his family at the time of their eviction from Boeung Kak Lake. They had accepted a replacement flat some 15 kilometers from the city, while Dina herself chose to move into a small apartment near her university campus. Although her brother continued to work as a police officer, his mother-in-law's income had been consumed by commuting expenses, and his wife quit her job outright due to the distance. She instead tried to set up a small business, but it was failing. As Dina explained:

> It is an area that is difficult to run a business in . . . About [the new] place, there is no problem [about the house]. The problem is about business. Because at first, when [my brother's family] had just moved there, [his wife's] selling went very well, but now it is quiet, people are gone, like it or not there aren't any people now [because the other residents left the new homes due to lack of work] . . . At Boeung Kak, the husband and wife and mother-in-law all worked; their income was big. In the new place, the mother-in-law still works but she pays more for a motorcycle taxi, and [my brother] travels back and forth, and his wife opened a shop, but now it doesn't go well. Right after they moved into [the new flat], they

> spent lots of their savings, not a little. They had to fix up the house, spent at least $4,000 - $5000, we couldn't just move in and live in it.

Again, we see that the greatest predicament is not the house itself. "The problem is about business." Although this family is middle-class, they echo Chanthon's dilemma of not having enough customers. We can see that this condition worsened over time; at first many people were living in the new replacement flats, but they left due to lack of income. Dina also makes some other important comments. Although she indicates that the new home was "no problem," a moment later she explains how much money it had cost before it was habitable. While we did not see her brother's new house ourselves – the interview was conducted in Dina's campus apartment – it is typical that new homes that are built as compensation have unfinished interiors. It can also be very expensive to connect water and electricity. While it might be "no problem" for a middle-class family like Dina's brother's to finish the home, for those with less means, this can be deeply problematic indeed, and helps explain why so many families over-extend themselves financially even when they are "given" a new house.

Naree's family was in similar straits. Her family had remained in the city and had avoided slipping into desperate poverty. Nevertheless, they found themselves in extremely difficult circumstances, mired in debt and struggling to make ends meet. Her narrative nevertheless makes it very clear that her feelings of loss go well beyond money matters:

> Nobody's happy . . . At first I cried, I always cried because I remembered, and felt so sorrowful when I remembered my house [that I had lived in for 20 years] .

> . . I still remember my old house, never, I never forget it…. I feel more broken-hearted, that's why I don't want to remember it . . . I don't have any way [to forget it], only if we had money, if we could make as much money as when we lived there, then maybe we could forget what happened.

Naree expresses intense grief in this passage. We also see how Naree conflates financial concerns with overall feelings of loss, powerlessness, and injustice. The implication is that with money, she could rebuild a life comparable to the one that had been taken from her. The question of livelihood capacity following eviction is thus weighted with emotional meaning and significance.

Regardless of socioeconomic status prior to eviction, every research participant engaged in entrepreneurial activity who went to a location far from the city faced serious difficulties, and usually crisis. It is well documented that "most Cambodians are self-employed or work in family businesses in the informal sector" (EIC, 2008, p. 12). In Phnom Penh, 50.0% of workers are self-employed or unpaid family labor, and 85.3% work in services (EIC, 2008), a category that encompasses the informal sector. To these people, the greatest threat posed by forced evictions is thus usually not to their homes, but to their livelihood capacities.

4.2.2 High Levels of Asset Harm

It is something of a myth that those who are displaced in Phnom Penh's forced evictions are necessarily low-income squatters and slum-dwellers. While many have been – by 2020 it is

estimated that only 100,000 of Phnom Penh's 1 million poor will be left in the city's four central districts (Heinonen, 2008) – "upper poor," middle class, and professional families are also affected, many of whom assert that they already hold or are eligible for full legal title.[15] In some cases, the chief wage-earners in these families held office jobs, and owned vehicles so that a new extended commute was problematic rather than completely catastrophic. However, these families too experienced significant financial harm as a result of their forced eviction, although in a different way: loss of assets rather than livelihood.

The compensation packages that are offered (typically, US$8-10,000 or a new rowhouse in a distant location) are uniform within a given neighborhood, i.e., all those who are eligible receive the same compensation.[16] When there are two houses within a single compound, or multiple households (as demonstrated by possession of multiple "family books"[17]), the family should be eligible for extra compensation packages, although study participants indicated that this process is fraught with problems. The amount of financial compensation is invariably not anywhere near enough to purchase any but the most marginal property in Phnom Penh. The

[15] As discussed in Chapter 2, this study does not purport to evaluate the legality of any individual family's ownership claim. This is a complicated topic, and one that has already been written about at length elsewhere. In this study, many participants claimed to hold full legal title, but some did not. Homeowners of higher SES did tend to assert that they had legally owned their property (and often fetched and displayed various documents).

[16] There is no specified government policy that specifies certain compensation packages, but this is typically what is offered in the city.

[17] Family books are key government-issued documents that identify the members of the family and their residence. This document is necessary for voting, school enrollment, and other official purposes.

compensation packages thus disenfranchise – sometimes massively –homeowners, who also tend to assert that they are not squatters, but rather hold full legal title. As Naree explained:

> We didn't have any choice, they gave only $8,000 to the people . . . Some people were smarter than us so that they got two compensations, but I who am married with children and so ignorant, we had a big house, but we got only $9,500 . . . We got as same as those who had a small cottage, because we were honest . . . My house was very big, twice or three times bigger than other households, but they gave me only a small amount.

Here, Naree expresses her anger at how unfair the compensation process was. She asserts that there was no opportunity to negotiate a fair price, but then she emphasizes that those with savvy dishonesty did succeed in securing more. The implication is that the company could have – and indeed did – pay more but refused to. This exacerbates the injustice of the situation and demonstrates the amorality of the Sour Srun company itself. Naree paints the compensation process as deeply corrupt and unfair, disenfranchising those who deserved to be treated fairly, while rewarding others who cheated.

Cambodians typically live in extended family units, and there are often a multitude of relatives living together in a large home or compound. Living amongst those who are financially secure may be "country cousins" pursuing better education or employment opportunities, and they may have few resources of their own to fall back on. A home may also represent years (if

not decades) of the entire savings/investment of an extended family. The loss of this home represents a financial crisis, even when livelihoods remain largely intact. This group also tends to be especially attached to their homes and communities in other ways.

The exemplar narrative for this process is Dawy's, a woman with a remarkable life course: a thirty-six-year-old who grew up amidst genocide and war, which claimed the lives of her parents. Dawy spent much of her youth in an orphanage and then a Thai refugee camp, which she describes as "a kind of prison" where she was forced into an arranged marriage while still a teenager. (They are still married, albeit unhappily.) Despite little formal education and no family support, she had managed through a combination of luck and pluck to get ahead, learn some English, and secure a white-collar office job that paid her a decent income. She had also been actively involved in anti-eviction efforts in her former community, Reak Reay. At the time of her interview, she was also in medical treatment for an anxiety disorder that she attributed to her forced eviction. An extended excerpt from her narrative is included in Appendix E.

Dawy began by explaining her early years in Reak Reay, where she had lived since 1997. "I bought that land for $400, and then I built the house." She emphasized how she and her neighbors had physically created their community together: "At first, we didn't have a proper road going to the house. [Access] was too difficult so my group [i.e., neighbors] needed to raise some money, and we also got some support from an NGO to build a road so we could easily get around there." She goes on to describe how it came to be under threat of eviction. She asserts

that “the authorities and [Canadia] company started to *samleung* [greedily gaze at] my community after they bought Koh Pich,” a nearby island in the river. Here, Dawy has emphasized herself and her neighbors’ rights to their land, both because of fair acquisition (i.e., she bought it) and because they had physically improved it (built roads) with their own money and labor. The company, by contrast, is characterized as greedy. She goes on to give further details about how the compensation she was offered was unfair, especially since her house was of superior quality. “My house had tile floors, a zinc roof, and walls. We could say that my house had a better look than others’ . . . So I couldn’t accept the price.” We can implicitly see here that uniform compensation packages are divisive in the community. The better-off had much more at stake when it came to asserting rights to more compensation.

Dawy had been very involved in community mobilization to oppose the eviction. She details this struggle, emphasizing that the company was intransigent and greedy. Appeals to the city government were met with ominous responses. “One day the city governor came to my community. I asked him directly, I said “Please, Uncle! I can’t accept this price because my house is big and the other houses are small. Why do big and small houses get the same price?” . . . He answered me, he said ‘Be careful, eating big food can choke you’… It was hard to solve, after he said like this.”

Dawy goes on to describe how she gave up her struggle, because “it was not easy,” “we were afraid of them,” “I felt tired” and “I needed to work at my office.” This was a bitter pill for her to swallow indeed. She asserted that “I did the math. I had more than 100 square

meters so how much money should I get? That's $70 - 80,000 dollars! We tried to the best of our ability but we got only $23,000." Dawy regretted how difficult it had been to leave her home and community. "I knew that when I moved here it would have a big impact on my feelings . . . It was really hard for me to accept my own decision . . . And I also felt afraid that if I bought a new house on [city] land that I might be evicted again. Oh what would I do? . . . It would hurt again." She continued to exhibit internal conflict about leaving Reak Reay. On the one hand, she tries to focus on positive points, explaining that "when I moved here it was voluntary," i.e., she had not been physically forced out, and that "it was our good luck that they gave money to us, better than people in Dey Krahom and Sambok Chap" who had been denied any compensation. She then promptly lost her temper again.

> But we still think, are we animals or human beings? Are we Khmers or foreigners living on this land? . . . My parents died in the Pol Pot regime… I am 100 percent Khmer! So I should have the same rights as others! But I had no rights as a human being, we got nothing from the authorities or company . . . They evicted us and they gave only that amount of money . . . And they thought that they were being good because they gave money to us. But the truth is, we think that we were in the most *cheu jap* ["pain catch," i.e., emotional hurt] that they classified us as poor and powerless people that they must *keap sangkawt* ("squeeze oppress", i.e., control by force or power) by all means.

In this striking passage, Dawy asserts her rights as a person and as a Cambodian, contrasting her own worthiness with the actions of the Canadia Company. One of the most interesting points she makes, however, is how deeply pained she was by her treatment by powerful agents. She emphasizes that it is they, not she, who are greedy. Dawy asserts her own financial rights of course, but also makes it crystal clear that other principles are at stake. She is further humiliated by being treated as a poor and powerless person who must be controlled. She is also proud of all that she had achieved in her life against all odds, and her unfair treatment challenges her sense of self-worth.

Dawy concludes more quietly, and with comments that stand in stark contrast with Chanthon and the others discussed in section §4.2.1. "We weren't happy because the original value of our house was 2 or 3 times more . . . I think it didn't affect my livelihood much because I have a job and my husband also has a job . . . It is not affected, but I am far from my work place . . . In short, I am not how things would be if I didn't have a job." Dawy does not share the livelihood crisis described in the previous section. Nevertheless, we see here how even when a forced eviction does not threaten livelihoods, financial effects can be very serious, and very deeply felt. The eviction was financially harmful to Dawy and her family despite the fact that she and her husband both had held onto their jobs, as their compensation was far less than the value of their home.

One of the key points that Dawy highlights is her experiences during Cambodia's protracted war, and how very hard she had worked to overcome the suffering and poverty that

characterized her childhood and youth. Her home and property represented all that she had achieved since then. As Dawy more explicitly discussed in her later life history interview:

> When I had my own house, even though it was not very nice, it was a shelter that I had for my children's warmth . . . It was a small house, but it was our property. And when [the eviction] happened like that, if it were you, wouldn't you be *cheu jab* ["pain catch," i.e., hurt emotionally]? We worked very hard, saved money to build a proper house to live in; finally, they came to scream that it was their land and we had to leave. At that time, we were very *cheu jab* because I am a Khmer and I had - I said at the Phnom Penh Municipality that, I am a Khmer just like you are, we have had the same fortune. For example, during the Pol Pot regime, you were forced to leave your house, like my family. But now, why is it that I am living in a small community, a small neighborhood, why is it like that again? . . . This is very important, more important than our property. I have a right to dignity, to live in dignity, but they came to force us like animals . . . We worked until our backs sweat to earn money to buy that house to live in, then they came to say that we had no right to live on that land!

Despite her realism and savvy about what compensation she could realistically expect from the Canadia company, Dawy remains outraged at the injustice of her loss. All this is made more difficult because of her own personal history of grief, loss, desperate poverty, and helplessness during the war and its aftermath. The eviction had badly disrupted a life course

characterized by overcoming the trauma of the war years. She feels the injustice very deeply and personally. Dawy is particularly indignant that she was not treated as an equal by authorities despite the fact that they were all Khmers, who had shared the same "fortune" during the Pol Pot regime. She also repeatedly evokes the language of human rights, declaring that "this is very important, more important than our property," and her speech is full of emotional resonance. Dawy is not parroting language learned in an NGO workshop; she speaks from her heart. Although she and her family remained financially secure following their eviction, the loss of their home was a terrible blow indeed.

Other middle-class and "upper-poor" participants' families had also been left with nothing after the war, and had struggled enormously from dire poverty to reach a basic level of financial security. The material expression of this security after so many years of struggle was her physical home. Phenomenal amounts of work and care had gone into building or purchasing homes ("we worked until our backs sweat") which, even when very modest, symbolized what had been overcome. Phun remembered:

> When I came to live in Group 78, it was almost nothing. There were only a few tiny houses located on very low land like a basin . . . We built houses at the bottom of the basin, tiny houses just to stay there . . . We could see the stars through our roof [because it was full of holes] . . . [We lived in a] wooden house with small stilts. It was roofed with palm branches, palm leaves.

Years of backbreaking work had financed the building of a solid wooden home. This group of people also tended to be very attached to their neighborhoods as communities (Kanya: "Reak Reay was a poor community . . . [But] living there was always, we could call it vibrant").

We also see in Dawy's narrative interesting hints of how social stratification and power hierarchies divide communities. Dawy is rightfully proud of her professional success despite her difficult and disadvantaged upbringing; throughout both interviews she voiced her strong commitment to justice, equity, and fairness for all. Yet, she compares the treatment of herself and her neighbors to that experienced by animals, farmers, and foreigners; it should be noted that ethnic Vietnamese and rural people are themselves highly vulnerable to forced evictions.

We also see divisions among neighborhood residents regarding offered compensation, particularly between those who stand to lose more (have a "big house"), compared to those who do not (i.e., a "small house"). Echoes of this are found throughout the narratives: those with more at stake in terms of absolute levels are more prosperous and have stronger legal claims, whereas those who are poorer tend to be disengaged from legal proceedings and community action, instead emphasizing the need for alleviation from poverty in general, even to the point of glossing over the eviction itself. Moreover, the social networks of these two groups do not overlap, and they describe their neighborhoods in rather contrasting ways. While there were expressions of solidarity, on the whole there tended to be considerable disconnect between these two groups on many levels. Some were even dismissive of the others. Sina was satisfied with the compensation she received for her meager dwelling at

Boeung Kak Lake, and she was unconcerned about the disenfranchisement of wealthier neighbors, characterizing them in unflattering terms. "Some people who are greedy, they may think that [the compensation] is small for them, but for my group, [our houses] were only 5 or 6 meters [long] anyway, we don't want more." Meanwhile, the homeowners were often dismissive or critical of neighborhood renters and other poor as troublemakers: "They drank and fought with each other . . . They[18] made noise, they never thought about their futures" (Naree). The interests, attitudes, and social networks of those harmed in terms of livelihoods versus assets are thus very different.

4.2.3. High levels of Both Livelihood and Asset Harm.

High levels of both livelihood and asset harm were especially found among more successful entrepreneurs with businesses operating from or near their homes.[19] These families thus simultaneously lost both properties (some of which were quite valuable), as well as their businesses. Once-prosperous (or at least secure) families thus tumble into poverty. Most had virtually no family resources in the post-war period, and many have limited formal education or skills that would be attractive to employers. The double loss of home and livelihood represents

[18] Naree used the pronoun *via,* which is reserved for animals; using this term to refer to people is very insulting.

[19] By contrast, those discussed in section 4.2.1 ("livelihoods harm") worked in the informal sector at a more basic level, often selling from pushcarts or giving manicures in a neighboring market and so forth. This section concerns more prosperous small business rather than petty trade.

a catastrophic loss and a return to poverty, sometimes for an entire extended family that had been deeply embedded in their geographic community.

The exemplar narrative of this trajectory is Sorya, a young unmarried former resident of Dey Krahom. Prior to her forced eviction, she lived with her extended family in a large home that served as a base for multiple businesses, including renting out pushcarts to snack vendors, moneylending, and running a small coffee shop and convenience store on the premises. They were denied any compensation at all and left in a state of destitution. The family physically scattered; Sorya herself was left to support her aging mother on marginal earnings, first as a domestic housecleaner and then as a community outreach worker for an NGO. She was also homeless for a time, before finding a place she could afford to rent ($30 per month), in a slum, alongside an open sewer. Twenty-three at the time of her interview, Sorya was one of the only participants who had actually been born and raised in Phnom Penh. She exhibited especially strong emotional ties to her former home and community. The condition she was left in was exacerbated by the violent nature of the forced eviction from Dey Krahom; her family lost all their valuables and possessions in the process. Again, an extended excerpt from Sorya's interview is included in Appendix E.

Sorya paints a stark portrait of her life before and after her forced eviction, emphasizing the toll that had been taken on "my body and my heart", that is, both physically and emotionally.

> Comparing my situation now with one in Dey Krahom, every day is difficult for my body and my heart. Before, I had a business, a house and enough utilities . . . But, now I rent a house, I do have a job but it's not permanent . . . After I left [Dey Krahom], I worked at the Korean's house [as a housecleaner] for only $60 per month, and that money was for everyday expenses, including food, and it was not enough . . . So, my living is not like it was before. Before, when I opened my eyes in the morning, I saw money coming in, because I had a shop. Now, when I open my eyes, I don't know where the money is . . . After the eviction, I lost my money, because we never thought that our house would be dug up by the company . . . We were not prepared to take money or anything out, nothing. My house, the tractor dug up my house . . . The thing that affects [my family] the most is . . . it has affected the children's education, my mother's health and everything. We were successful in our business, it was growing, suddenly everything was destroyed. That made our lives *don daap* [in terrible, hopeless conditions, everything lost].

Sorya's house and all of her family's possessions had been destroyed when her neighborhood had been bulldozed under violent conditions, and it is clear that this was a traumatic event for her. In the above passage, we see Sorya struggling with the enormity of what she had experienced and how it had swept away her entire life. She continued to struggle with how to manage her newly-impoverished state:

> At Dey Krahom . . . we could earn over 100,000 [Riel per day, ≈US$25] . . . Before we used to sleep on a mattress, we used to have an air conditioner and fans. If we still had our dignity, if we had money, we couldn't live in a poor people's place, but these days we have to be poor people, so we have to adapt . . . I look around and see [I have] nothing; I feel pity for myself when I look around and have nothing . . . I cannot [solve] because I don't know how to think to do another way . . . I am alone, I cannot depend on others, I depend only on myself.

Sorya struggles with managing poverty and the indignity of life in this condition. She also expresses an association between having nothing and being alone, moving fluidly from poverty to isolation. She is unable to solve her problems, unsure how to exist in her newly-impoverished state, and deeply mistrustful. Sorya's example also underscores that there is overlap between the livelihood-harm and asset-harm groups. It is also a reminder that some households are denied any compensation whatsoever. Sorya's circumstances represent a "perfect storm" of risk factors despite her being quite prosperous and having strong social networks prior to her eviction. All were grounded in Dey Krahom, however. Sorya's extended family all lived there, and all of their livelihoods were tied to it. Their assets were entirely within the form of local property and businesses. Even their possessions were destroyed with their homes. Sorya's entire extended family lost everything that they had, including each other. They had to separate and scatter across Phnom Penh.

4.2.4. Neutral or Improved Impact of Forced Eviction.

Some families were, in fact, not particularly harmed by their forced eviction, or managed to recover fairly quickly. A few actually came out ahead. It is notable that the trajectories of those who did well after their eviction are far less internally consistent; many of the narratives are highly idiosyncratic, and offer little for policymakers and practitioners to work with. Sina's story may offer the best example of this situation. The chief reason why "I am not angry that they evicted me and I am also happy to live here" is that "when we lived [at Boeung Kak Lake, my husband] picked fights the same as now . . . and he had girls, he's a womanizer . . . But now it seems less . . . I don't know why, maybe he doesn't have a lot of money anymore so he doesn't have many girls." The participants' explanations and interpretations of the more positive eviction experiences are quite varied.[20] Nevertheless, there are some factors that help explain why and how some of those affected by evictions "landed on their feet." These include:

[20] While some participants expressed satisfaction with their eviction experience, not all did so convincingly. These "bland satisfaction" narratives carefully avoided any criticism of authorities or other powerful figures, but lacked richness and nuance, and some adopted this discourse despite obvious harm. These narratives differed remarkably from frank narratives where participants explained their more positive pathway with energy and detail. There were similarly flat narratives with other viewpoints, including politicized ones and ones that were clearly pitched toward persuading me to provide assistance personally or via an NGO. However, it is undeniable that the bland, unconvincing narratives tended to express positive outcomes. The quotes in this section are largely from participants who seemed to be genuinely satisfied with their eviction experience.

- Livelihoods were unaffected, or they were able to quickly find new jobs. (Konthy: "What is better [here than at Boeung Kak Lake] is having a factory near the house."]
- Solid social support and/or benefactors in the new location. (Bopha: "I live nowadays thanks to that old woman, I tell you the truth… [The family living next door] gives me soup every day").
- Limited personal or financial investment in the house or community. (Sokhan: "I heard that somebody bought the land [where we rented a house] and whatever, but I didn't pay it any attention . . . I thought, why ask about other people's matters? I care only about our business, our family . . . I don't care [about anything else].")
- Availability of new housing nearby. (Pola: "Oh there were some [difficulties], like moving, and I was tired, moving around it was tiring, but I am happier [now]." Pola was living only a few blocks from her former residence in Borei Keila.)
- New housing is of equal or superior quality. (Bopha: "Yes, [this house is] more developed than before. I got a cement house; it's more developed but I myself have not developed." [laugh])
- Matter-of-fact attitude: (Sokhan: "Of course I [lost money], but what could I do; when it's lost it is my money, but when I earn profit it is also my money; that's what I think.")
- Presence of other more salient/pressing issues in their lives. (Pola: "It is very difficult eh, my problem, it is so difficult, that's why I wander around these days, don't want to work

anymore… I always go out wandering, my family, it's like a violent family… I do not want to talk [to my husband], I never stay at home.")

- Miscellaneous idiosyncratic reasons (Dina: "Now that we live only just three people, me with my younger brothers, it is another way of life. Because at Boeung Kak, I was under my older brother's supervision whether I liked it or not, I got pressure from my big brother. Living here, I am the biggest").

It is difficult to select a single exemplar narrative from among those who expressed more positive, or at least neutral, experiences with forced eviction, because these narratives are so thematically diverse. It is important to acknowledge that forced evictions in Phnom Penh do not affect everyone adversely. However, the chief lesson might be that while some do not experience more than temporary disruption of their lives, the reasons and pathways are disparate. Regardless of circumstance, however, maintaining livelihood capacity is essential. To some extent, people are being relocated to areas where there are garment factories. However, the minimum wage for garment factory workers in Cambodia is only $61 per month (Kunthear & Worrell, 2012), and they typically only hire young single women (although supplemental income can be earned by others doing piecework at home). Some families like Konthy's may be able to get by, but most cannot, and it will never be a pathway out of poverty. Proximity to garment factories does not solve the problem of livelihoods for the displaced.

I chose Sokhan to represent the group of neutral/improved outcomes *not* because her narrative encapsulates this group's pathway – this group is too diverse and idiosyncratic for that. Indeed, Sokhan's narrative stands out as unique in several respects. I have chosen it because she best represents a model of resilience, and because she had specific decisions and characteristics that cushioned her family from the crisis their forced eviction could have become. Her example is thus the one that best presents a model that is of relevance to policymakers and social work practitioners.

Sokhan was a middle-aged married woman with children, some of whom had grown and others were still studying. The entire household worked in the family business of roasting and selling bananas and yams; they also had two renters living with them. At the time of her interview, they netted up to $10 per day after expenses, 6 days per week. On Sundays, she diligently attended church services and rested; she had converted to Christianity a decade before because "I was mad that the ghost made my daughter sick very often . . . Then we joined [the Mormon Church], and I gave up all my ancestor incense sticks and until today, and there is no ghost or phantom harming [my family] anymore . . . I would not have joined, but I had to."

Sokhan was a no-nonsense woman with a keen eye for business and a strict policy of staying out of other people's trouble. In fact, she denied that she had been evicted from Reak Reay at all, instead explaining that her landlord had sold the house to the Canadia company. As

a renter, she had not been eligible for any compensation, although she had received $80 to help with moving expenses. Like most participants, she had initially moved to an area where she felt she could afford the rent, and then set about re-starting her family business. Like many others, she discovered that her business was not viable in the new location. "After moving [from Reak Reay, it] was expensive . . . and as for earning money, we couldn't sell or do anything, so I looked for a new way." The difference is that she had not over-extended herself in setting up a new household and was able to 'cut her losses.' Having avoided getting trapped in debt, Sokhan made a careful and strategic decision to move again to a location where she felt confident it would be "easy to earn money" even though the rent was several times higher. She proudly concludes that "since [we moved a second time], my business has done very well."

Sokhan does acknowledge difficulties – "No one helped [us move twice]; we came by ourselves and it cost a lot, but that is okay." She emphasizes that she and her family are happy and well, and she expresses thankfulness for all that they have. "We were tired [from moving], but we didn't argue; my family didn't do that. Because, I tell you the truth, my family believes in Christianity . . . My children are doing fine, my business is going well, God blesses me and provides me with enough to eat, little by little." Sokhan acknowledged that in the past she endured abject poverty, but had left that behind in the countryside and did not want to dwell on this period in her life ("about that difficult time before . . . no need to talk about that now"). Rather, she focused on hard work and satisfaction with what she had.

> Things are okay. It is normal to be tired; in everyone's life, we always feel tired, because we lack [something], we need to struggle. Sometimes we are short of cash, but just lack some little things; it is not so bad like having no food. We have never not had food . . . [Compared to before the eviction] incomes and expenses are different but, like this, we work very hard so we will always have something to spend. If we don't work hard, we won't have [money] to spend, that's how it is.

Several points stand out in Sokhan's account. Probably the most important is that she prioritized her business over comfortable housing for her family. Among my entire sample, Sokhan is the only one who did so. Although the rent in this second location was substantially higher than it had been at Reak Reay, business was thriving and so, therefore, was her family. This is perhaps the most important lesson that can be learned from Sokhan's narrative. If business prospers, housing can be improved at a later time. The reverse approach did not succeed for other participants. Most had over-extended themselves in sorting out their housing in the aftermath of the eviction, and then were caught by surprise when their livelihoods failed. However, Sokhan's economic strategy is not necessarily an easy fix. As basic housing in Phnom Penh disappears, it may become more and more difficult to pursue this route.

A second critical factor that may explain Sokhan's resilience is that her social network also remained exceptionally intact after the eviction. She did have close ties, but they were not

within her geographic neighborhood. Her network of both moral and material support was concentrated elsewhere. She was also extremely strategic in her social relations, which appeared to be small but reliable and never threatened to drain her resources or energy. Sokhan repeatedly emphasized staying out of other people's affairs, even within her own extended family. Her sister, for example, owned a home in Reak Reay, but she said, "I don't know what went on with her, it wasn't my business . . . For me, I didn't own a house, I didn't care, I was on my own." She steadfastly avoided getting too involved with other people's problems. It is notable that at one point she spontaneously gave a short speech about giving to beggars ("I spend 2,000 - 3,000 riel [US$0.50 - $0.75] per day giving to beggars, sometimes I spend 3, 000 – 4,000 riel . . . I just do good deeds. I think, they beg because they are hungry"). Perhaps this was to emphasize her moral worth and goodness despite her steadfast avoidance of entangling social alliances. Giving to beggars represents an act of kindness that does not come with expectations or obligations for future assistance. Sokhan gives generously, but impersonally.

The social network that Sokhan does engage in is the Mormon Church. While Sokhan did express spiritual dedication, she also highlighted the many practical benefits of membership, namely that the Mormon Church pays for all hospital and funeral expenses for its members. Sokhan is thus embedded narrowly and carefully within a social network that extends emotional resources as well as a financial safety and that does not risk taxing her own family's poor but stable existence, which is very different from the obligations of reciprocity

and exchange that other participants used to describe their social ties. This social network is also unique insofar as it operates entirely independent of her geographic neighborhood. While this hardly represents a "model" to follow, it is a notable characteristic. By contrast, those whose support systems were deeply embedded in their geographic communities had no one, as well as nowhere, to turn to.

4.3. Conclusion.

In this chapter, I have documented and described a typology of outcomes, with a strong emphasis on the impact of forced evictions on livelihoods and shelter. Given a context of widespread poverty in Cambodia, the participants' approaches to coping and adaptation were inextricably interwoven within the nature and extent of material loss. The typology of outcomes presented here includes: livelihood harm, asset harm, loss of both livelihood and assets, and neutral/improved outcomes. Each was described, and an extended passage from an exemplar narrative from each group was presented and discussed. The next chapter explores stress, coping, and adaptation in more detail.

Chapter 5. Findings – Stress, Coping, and Adaptation.

5.1 Overview of Stress and Coping Theory.

The over-arching theoretical framework that guided this research is Stress and Coping Theory, as developed by Lazarus and Folkman (1984) and since elaborated and refined by numerous scholars. This theory highlights transactions between an individual and his/her environmental context and events, and it holds that emotional response is mediated by such factors as commitments, beliefs, cognitive appraisals, relationships, resources, and problem-solving strategies. Thus, stress responses – which encompass physiological, emotional, cognitive, and behavioral components (Vingerhoets, 2004) – are transactional and embedded within both environmental and personal characteristics. Stress and Coping Theory often informs analyses of risk and resilience, and is particularly suited to identifying strengths and protective factors that enable individuals to effectively manage adversity. Van de Put and Eisenbruch (2006) comment that "much has been written about mental health problems [of Cambodians but] . . . less is known about how the people in Cambodia cope" (p. 94). My study, using this framework, contributes to the literature on stress and adaptation among Cambodians in general, as well as documenting the impact of forced evictions in Phnom Penh.

Stress is a central focus of study in the biological and human sciences today, despite fairly recent formulation of the concept itself. The concept is now so widespread that

systematic investigation must confront conflicting definitions of key concepts, and conflation of stress stimuli and responses. It is thus critical to clarify these at the outset. *Stress* has been understood as "a particular relationship between the person and the environment that is appraised by the person as taxing or exceeding his or her resources and endangering his or her well-being" (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984, p. 19). It should be noted that this definition is inherently dynamic: stress is an interaction between person and circumstance, that is, a stressor.

A *stressor* can be defined as "a cause or source of psychological distress [and] refer to the issues and events that individuals in the situation perceive to actually or potentially threaten normal functioning and resources" (Schneiderman, Ironson, & Siegel, as cited in Im, 2011, p. 42). A stressor is not necessarily noxious or distressing; events such as family holidays or getting married are usually welcome but are also experienced as stressful, and the latter in particular is accompanied by significant adaptation. *Daily hassles*, meanwhile, are defined as the "experiences and conditions of daily living that have been appraised as salient and harmful or threatening to the endorser's well-being" (Vingerhoets, 2004, p. 9). It is now also widely agreed that although daily hassles "are far less dramatic than major changes in life, such as divorce or bereavement, they may be even more important in adaptation and health" (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984, p. 13). There are also large bodies of literature on role stress (i.e., stress that is associated with particular roles one plays in life, e.g., parent, entrepreneur, student) and social stratification. Those in disadvantaged and stigmatized conditions tend to have a

heightened stress load, including more exposure to stressors and fewer resources with which to cope. The result is often a sense of powerlessness and "multiplication of despair" (Mirowsky & Ross, as cited in Nou, 2002, p. 38).

Stress responses are moderated and mediated by a host of individual and environmental factors. Individual factors include cognitive appraisal processes, commitments, and beliefs. *Cognitive appraisal* consists of "evaluative cognitive processes that intervene between the encounter and the reaction" (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984, p. 52). In other words, how one judges an encounter or situation – and secondarily what can or cannot be done about it – plays a critical role in one's emotional and behavioral response. For example, whether a given event – for example, a high-stakes exam – is perceived as a challenge or threat greatly influences an individual's response, and two students facing the same exam may have very different stress responses. These appraisal processes are often unconscious, and influenced by numerous other factors. Among the most important are commitments, that is, "what is important to people, and underlie[s] the choices they make" (p. 80) and, on a more subtle level, existential beliefs which frame worldviews and "create meaning and maintain hope in difficult circumstances" (p. 80). Situational factors (e.g., whether a difficulty is temporary or familiar) are also critical.

According to Lazarus and Folkman (1984), *coping* refers to the "constantly changing cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage specific external and/or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of the person" (p. 141), with the aim of

"managing or altering the problem… and regulat[ing] the emotional response" (p. 179). They distinguish between *problem-focused coping* and *emotion-focused coping*, a distinction that is widely utilized throughout the stress and coping literature. Vingerhoets (2004) described the former as "efforts to remove or eliminate stressors or to reduce their intensity" (p. 12), that is, problem-solving. An example might be to reduce an overwhelmed staffer's workload. Emotion-focused coping, on the other hand aims "to diminish the emotional impact of a stressor" (Vingerhoets, 2004, p. 13), for example by meditation or distracting entertainment. Either approach may be adaptive or maladaptive. However, there is some agreement in the literature that problem-focused coping is often more constructive and may be associated with a better sense of power, control, and outcome, including with regard to physical health. Some problems cannot be solved, however. After all, one cannot bring back the dead, and so much of a healthy bereavement process involves emotion-focused coping. Moreover, expending energy trying to "fix" an intractable problem can exacerbate distress. It must be emphasized that different forms of coping are adaptive for different people and situations, and one should be cautious not to over-generalize. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) identify several components to adaptation outcomes, including social functioning, morale, and somatic health.

There is a consensus that social support is a critical factor in stress responses. As Vingerhoets (2004) wrote, "the availability of an adequate social network that offers informational, instrumental, and emotional support is considered an important buffer against

the… stressor exposure" (p. 14). Nou (2002) provided an excellent summary of the literature on stress in general, including theory, evidence, and components of social support.

*Resilience "*has been defined as the capacity of an individual, household or community to adjust to threats, to avoid or mitigate harm, as well as to recover from risky events or shocks" (UN-Habitat, 2008, p. 4), and it has become a major focus of attention in social work scholarship. Why do some people recover and adapt despite immense adversity, and how can this capacity be nurtured? What can be learned from resilient individuals to reduce vulnerability to poor outcomes? Vingerhoets (2004) summarized the literature identifying key resilience factors, including personality characteristics; "hardiness" (which includes commitment, sense of control, and ability to appraise events as challenging rather than threatening); a sense of coherence (i.e., ability to find meaning in adversity); optimism; ability to verbalize and otherwise express emotions; and ability to maintain a healthy overall lifestyle and adequate social supports.

As a qualitative narrative study, this dissertation is not intended to test a theoretical model in the way that quantitative studies attempt to do. Rather, I seek to explore the lived experiences of individual women displaced by forced evictions in Phnom Penh, utilizing components of the broad framework outlined above.

5.2 Assessment of the Stressor

It would be easy to assume that forced eviction represents a "natural experiment" in stress and coping, given that a group of people are simultaneously facing a common threat. However, as shown in Chapter 4, forced eviction has diverse and differential impacts. For most – including those working in the informal sector who are poor – the threat to livelihood may represent the graver crisis. For others, it may be loss of a lifetime's worth of assets for an entire extended family. Some may experience little harm at all. The nature and intensity of the stressor itself thus varies enormously. All of these circumstances influenced perceptions and courses of action by those facing displacement. Thus, both the nature of the threat and the way it was appraised varied enormously in the sample.

Lazarus and Folkman (1984) identified three stages of cognitive appraisal: primary, secondary, and reappraisal. *Primary appraisal* "consists of the judgment that an encounter is irrelevant, benign-positive, or stressful" (p. 53); whereas *secondary appraisal* "is a judgment concerning what might and can be done" (p.53) and an evaluation of the effectiveness of various coping strategies and courses of action. *Reappraisal* simply "refers to a changed appraisal based on new information" (p.53). In this research, although nobody welcomed news of eviction, many had initially disregarded the possibility of forced eviction as a rumor; after all, such rumors had sometimes circulated before but were never carried through (Sorya: "we never thought that our house would be dug up"). The most typical response was some

degree of concern, but not enough to strongly influence emotions or actions until the eviction was certain (Dina: "I knew from the beginning that they wanted us to move, but I wasn't sure when the move would be. And I felt normal"). Pheary admitted that she had known about and had accepted the risk of eviction from the outset: "I would have bought a house long ago, but whenever we said we wanted to buy that land, they said that soon it would be evicted . . . I was afraid . . . to buy . . . [But in the end] I bought with a risk, everybody bought their house with that risk . . . Whenever they would evict us, we would think about it when the time came." In fact, she could only afford property that was at risk for eviction, which had deflated land value. Ironically, this threat enabled some poorer families like hers to purchase property in the first place. For others, however, the evictions came as a shock.

A few had participated in advocacy efforts to oppose their eviction, or at least to press for better compensation packages. This process was invariably described as intensely stressful. As time went on they eventually re-appraised the circumstances and capitulated. Stress was greatly magnified by two factors: hopelessness about the efficacy of these efforts (Thida: "We pressed our claims but we couldn't [win]"), and intimidation by authorities (Naree: "They threatened us"). Reachny, who had been very active in anti-eviction campaigns in Boeung Kak Lake, described her decision to relent for the sake of her family:

> My mother felt afraid; she was frightened, and she has a heart condition. She was frightened, she told me to take the compensation . . . I saw my mother frightened like this, she was ill and very old, so I just decided to accept what the

> authorities required [us to do] . . . I would have remained there until the end, but I thought about my mother.

Everyone evicted after Dey Krahom[21] eventually capitulated, accepted compensation offers, and moved. As eviction loomed various decisions had to be made, the most pressing concerned whether to accept or try to negotiate offers of compensation, and then to find new housing. Many sought to avoid any conflict or confrontation with authorities and accepted their fates quickly and quietly. Konthy's grandmother explained simply: "They announced and told us to move out . . . We moved here the day that they set for us to move;" she spoke with little emotion or commentary. These people focused on setting up a new household and tended to avoid expressions of anger or dissatisfaction, even in the face of considerable harm. For others, however, accepting the compensation was a bitter pill to swallow indeed. As Thida explained,

> I thought because in Group 78 we had land . . . had enough documents, like we had enough cards showing that it belonged to us . . . That's why we didn't go along with them because the land belonged to us. If I had continued to live there I could have been able to sell it by the square meter, I could have gotten paid per square meter, then we could have gotten more, we could have bought a

[21] Many residents of Dey Krahom refused to cooperate with eviction orders. The neighborhood was eventually razed under violent conditions, and many households – including Sorya in this sample – were refused compensation altogether.

> house in Phnom Penh . . . I was angry, so angry I cried, I was crying in city hall . . . When it was like this I thought that we couldn't win against them, we thought that we couldn't win so I went back home, went back in tears . . . We cried, we pitied ourselves.

We can see in this passage how the process of evaluating circumstances, and what to do about them, was immensely painful. This stress did not solely stem from the prospect of losing one's home and/or livelihood, but also in coming to terms with feelings of powerless and injustice. As Dawy asserted, "The truth is, I think that what hurt us most is that they classified us as poor and powerless people that they must oppress by all means."

5.3 Post-Eviction Coping Strategies.

Once the eviction was over, the women overwhelmingly focused on securing new housing, making it comfortable for their families, and easing any children or youths into schools. Household gender roles became especially pronounced in the immediate aftermath of the eviction. While normally urban Cambodian women both contribute to and manage household income, after eviction they focused overwhelmingly on housing and facilitating transitions for other members of the household as best they could. Often, this meant relying to an unusual extent on husbands and/or grown children to secure income while they were completely occupied with the logistics of setting up a new home. "No one went to work… until

this house was built . . . All of us, mother and children, helped until this house was built" (Thida).

Building and/or setting up a new home invariably involved considerable expense, including when families had accepted a new dwelling as compensation. Dina explained, "Right after [my brother and his family] moved into [the compensation flat], they spent lots of their savings, not a little. They had to fix up the house, spent at least four to five thousand dollars, we couldn't just move in and live there. We had to tile the floors, make a landing, connect water and electricity, it was not small change. Until we could live comfortably, it was not easy." Others unable to afford such expenses incurred considerable difficulty. Sina and her family were living in a rowhouse with an unfinished inside, including unguarded ledges and stairs that were extremely dangerous for her small children. Pola was simply unable to afford connecting water and electricity altogether, so she rented out the flat to tenants who were able to do so in lieu of the first six months' rent. The data strongly indicate that the costs of building or setting up a new house typically exceeded the means of those who were displaced. Participants ended up over-extended financially.

Women's coping strategies after leaving their former homes were especially grounded in their gender roles as mothers and wives, focusing on supporting the transition for others in their families. The women tended to emphasize that they care for other members of the family more than themselves – that they themselves are patient, stoic, and hard-working on behalf of others, and that their most intense struggles are for their families. As Kanya explained: "I am a

child of Pol Pot, I lived through the Pol Pot regime . . . So I am used to living in hardship . . . I am always patient but my children, they have difficulty."

Any obstacles to fulfilling roles as family caretakers were experienced as intensely stressful. Disruptions to the education of children especially seemed to trigger a crisis of confidence about being an effective woman and mother. Participants tended to emphasize that they did not care about how eviction impacted them so much as their children; they themselves coped by helping secure their children's futures. After housing, the next point of focus is ensuring smooth schooling transitions. Inability to do so, which affected several families, triggered sorrow and shame. Channa's narrative is especially poignant in this regard:

> I want my [two daughters] to be highly educated. If my children don't study, they will be ignorant like me, they will be like me and will not have work like me. They will be miserable and when they have a husband, their husband will look down on them and beat them, this is what I think about but I don't know what to do.

Sorya, whose once-prosperous extended family was plunged into destitution after they lost their property without any compensation, said that "the thing that affects us the most is . . . I am grown up and I no longer go to school. It is not important for me but my nieces and nephews, they are studying." Reachny fretted about how the host community resented the influx of Boeung Kak Lake evictees, and she worried how it would affect her son: "I want my

child to go to school, but I don't want my child to study here because it is very difficult. As for the newcomer kids in my neighborhood . . . they are bullied by the other kids, they 'lose' their pencils or money every day . . . The kids are scared of the others and don't want to study. What can [mothers] do?" Several of the participants' children or grandchildren had been forced out of school altogether. Over and over in the narratives, women expressed how being a good mother is inextricably linked to ability to educate their children.

Some women also experienced difficulty adjusting to changed income-generation roles within the family. Reachny's ability to earn collapsed after their move from Boeung Kak Lake, and she was left together with her parents and baby in a remote location, dependent on remissions from a husband who had been forced to move back in with his parents in Phnom Penh so that he could continue working. She explained:

> Everything needs money like the electricity bills, rice, and food. I don't have a job, but we need to spend money; now we depend on only one person. I feel very difficult. If we lived in Phnom Penh, we could help each other to earn money, we could spend and save some money, but now with only one person earning money, we have to spend it all, it is very difficult.

She struggled not only with loss of income, but being separated from her husband ("we live too far away from each other because he needs to work") and from change in activity and status. In Boeung Kak Lake she had had her own job and been a community activist. Now she was a

dependent housewife. By contrast, Sreymom's adult daughter found herself the only breadwinner in the family. Her husband was unable to work due to a chronic health condition, and none of the teenagers in the household had been able to find jobs. She interjected into the interview, explaining:

> My heart is very troubled. I want to ask him for a divorce . . . because if I play roles as both woman and man, with no one to depend on, then I get the idea that I want to get divorced. I want that, but then my mother says "oh don't do that, it doesn't look good" . . . When my heart is very troubled, like when I have to support the family alone, I want to get divorced because I don't have anyone to depend on. I have a husband but it's like I don't.

Men too struggle, of course, and this comment highlights that those who are unable to support their families may be considered a burden by them. Reachny further highlights how inactivity and hopelessness constitute a deadly combination for young men in particular:

> Young boys are jobless and stay home without doing anything, they hang out and cause troubles . . . Young people are hostile, they are still angry [about the eviction] . . . A funeral just finished . . . the last few days there was a group of delinquents "chopping" each other, young people have too much free time, they fight and chop each other.

Post-eviction transitions in household roles are thus very much grounded in gender roles, and often accompanied by personal hardship when a woman is unable to fulfill her domestic responsibilities, or is overwhelmed with double burdens. Men are hardly spared from household pressures that are both deeply gendered and exacerbated by forced eviction; joblessness clearly ushers in a bevy of stressors that take a very deep toll.

In the stress and coping literature, pro-active, problem-focused coping is generally seen as being associated with better and healthier outcomes (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Nou, 2002; Vingerhoets, 2004). The data in this study support this somewhat, particularly when participants actually had the material resources and social networks to smooth the transition for themselves and their families. Moreover, focusing on helping children adjust was an adaptive coping mechanism for those who had the resources to do so effectively. However, often those with problem-focused coping strategies had been involved in unsuccessful efforts to oppose the evictions, or at least to press for what they felt was fair compensation. The failure of these efforts compounded anger, grief, and helplessness, compared to those who simply accepted the eviction as inevitable, however unfair, and moved quickly, quietly, and stoically. It is notable that the more problem-focused coping styles were concentrated among those with more resources overall, perhaps because this fostered a sense of self-efficacy and confidence that individual efforts can and do make a difference, and that goals can be achieved, not just dreamed about. There were striking disparities between how those with more pro-active coping styles were able to envision and articulate what they wanted for their families'

futures, compared to the more passive ones who responded to questions about the future with comments like, “I don’t know what I can dream now that I am old; I don’t have any dreams. I would dream if I were young, like about having a house, motorbike, or car like others, but I don’t have any hope these days” (Maly, age 42).

Emotion-focused coping styles would be expected among those who have been overwhelmed by chronic stress (Middleton, 2009). However, it would be inaccurate to conclude that active coping is necessarily a function of socioeconomic status among this sample. Indeed, most had experienced extreme deprivation and hardship in the past; the tragedy of Cambodian history assures this. Danet, an HIV- homeless single mother who had attached herself to a relocation camp for HIV+ evictees from Borei Keila[22], is an example of a destitute and marginalized individual with a highly pro-active coping style. Her narrative shows exceptionally creative and active problem-solving and goal-setting. Meanwhile, Dawy’s life history narrative showed extraordinary resilience, overcoming extreme suffering during the war and its aftermath. Dawy exhibited an exceptional degree of personal competence, problem-solving ability, work ethic, and drive that helped her transform rare strokes of good luck into a better life for herself and her children. There are echoes of Danet in Dawy’s life narrative insofar as they both come across as exceptionally resourceful, proactive, and creative copers in

[22] Some NGOs were extending livelihood projects and other assistance in the camp. Danet was excluded from much of this because she is HIV-, but her former neighbors generously shared with her and her children.

the face of overwhelming odds. Danet, sadly, is completely illiterate and has been bereft of opportunities and social support, and remained in dire straits.

It is nevertheless undeniable that most who found themselves in difficult life circumstances had more passive and emotion-focused coping styles. They indicated directly and indirectly that they were overwhelmed by the burdens of poverty, and that hardship and adversity were pervasive and unrelenting features of their lives. Passive coping styles were not solely associated with the very poor, but they were most definitely concentrated there. Some narrators clearly collapsed stoic acceptance of circumstances *with* moral worth; the discourse among participants who delivered "bland satisfaction" narratives generally expressed a subtext of demonstrating their very "goodness" through uncomplaining obedience. Others who accepted compensation only to find themselves without a sustainable livelihood sought to express their compliance with the company and/or authorities, as if hoping that this would be recognized and rewarded. These women frequently expressed that being patient was their only option (Vanna: "I always know how to be patient . . . What else can we do if we are poor like this?"). These people also tended to avoid political confrontation or activism, while hoping – or appealing for – for assistance from NGOs, the government, or others who might help them. While they succeeded in avoiding the intense stress that surrounded failed efforts to prevent eviction, their narratives are expressions of hopeless resignation and powerlessness rather than healthy adaptation. The stress and coping literature usually suggests that problem-focused coping is associated with better outcomes; my findings are somewhat different. The data in

these narratives highlights that it is self-efficacy, rather than coping style itself, that is the critical factor. This is an important finding.

5.4 Social Support.

Social support is universally acknowledged to be a linchpin of stress management (Middleton, 2009), and the women in this study are no exception. Informants overwhelmingly reported that social networks were their chief source of material as well as emotional resources. Support primarily rested within family networks; those without strong family ties and extended families who were all evicted together thus found themselves in especially difficult circumstances. It is telling that the few informants for whom their eviction was a generally unimportant or positive experience tended to have significant social supports independent of their physical location, or they quickly found new benefactors. *Social capital* refers to "the ability of actors to secure benefits by virtue of membership in social networks or other social structures" (Portes, 1998, p. 6); this differs from most definitions of social support insofar as it is utilitarian and practical. However, the two frequently overlap. I use the term social network to describe ties to others that encompass both practical and emotional benefits. The extent to which participants actually had social capital and/or social (emotional) support, and whether or not these networks were embedded within their urban communities, guided individuals' specific coping strategies and framed their experiences and outcomes.

The overlap between social networks and urban neighborhoods was found to be highly variable. While some participants' social networks were geographic, others' were largely independent of their urban communities, centering instead on such disparate groups as family living elsewhere (e.g., home province), schools or professions, religious institutions, and health status (namely, other HIV affected families and the NGOs that supported them). There is some tendency for those with the stronger community ties to include an eclectic combination of the poor (who tended to have weak and very localized networks), and the relatively-wealthy property owners (who had relatively strong and localized social networks). The ties *between* those groups, however, appear almost nil beyond commercial interactions. In other words, there were few personal relationships between the poor and (relatively) rich; this may also explain some lack of political solidarity between groups in the face of a community eviction.

Coping strategies are profoundly grounded in participants' own social networks, but the degree to which those networks were either affected by the eviction or responsive to the person in need is disparate. This is not an entirely surprising finding; Cambodia today is both highly rural and highly mobile. There are many families in Phnom Penh without strong ties to it: the high rates of rural-to-urban migration, combined with the fact that Cambodia's urban residents were systematically exterminated during the Pol Pot regime have resulted in a very *new* urban society. It would be easy to read the data and write at length about participants' social networks being fractured and weak (which is certainly the case for some of them), but a closer reading suggests something more nascent and fluid. Participants did turn to their social

networks both for emotional sustenance and as sources of resources to manage the practical impacts of eviction, and having responsive social supports absolutely and profoundly mitigated the impact of evictions. How social networks function and who they are composed of, however, vary.

The poorest are found to be absolutely reliant on proximity to those who can afford to purchase the goods and services that make up their livelihoods. The very poor tend to get their emotional support from one another, but eviction cut them off from customers, sources of credit, and benefactors. In other words, after eviction, they found themselves with social support but not social capital. This left them economically adrift, sometimes desperately so, even when they retained strong social ties to one another. When Vanna was interviewed, she was living in a roadside encampment together with other former residents of Dey Krahom who had nowhere else to go. She explained that she was still close with her neighbors in the encampment, "but they are also poor, all of us are poor the same. We are friendly to each other but if we don't have rice we cannot go and ask from them because they also don't have enough for themselves. It is normal, there is no argument. We love each other." As for the former homeowner neighbors who had been eligible for new compensation housing nearby,

> Others are different from us . . . [That has] changed! We cannot be close like before . . . We are poor, they are rich. They only have enough for themselves; we cannot ask them for help . . . If they share with us, they don't have enough. It's

> like this. So we cannot hope to ask "Hey, do you have something to loan and I will pay it back later." We have no hope to pay it back, how can we ask them for help? . . . [In Dey Krahom] I could . . . because then I could pay them back . . . We do not dare [to contact them] . . . We are poor the same, no one is better than others. We cannot ask for help from each other.

Vanna's explanation highlights how eviction exaggerated social stratification between former neighbors. The poorest were left with intact relationships with one another, but cut off from ties with those with more resources. The result is nothing short of catastrophic in many cases.

It is notable that informants overwhelmingly described neighborhoods as being good or bad in terms of economic opportunity, and many did not comment on them in any other terms at all. The emotional expression embedded in these narratives is not insignificant, however, if one recognizes how deeply intertwined economic and psychological support are. Many participants' narratives move fluidly between the material and emotional aspects of relationships. Others tended to be far more articulate and detailed about the financial aspects, but then money is a subject that Khmers speak about very openly, whereas emotions are a more private matter. While participants were less likely to speak of loneliness, per se, they despaired of not having someone to depend on if necessary. These are twin pillars in what it meant to be *rowii rowol* and *khwaal* (cared about). The emotional resonance of speaking about unsupported in practical terms so should not be discounted. Moreover, many did speak nostalgically and longingly about friends, neighbors, and cool/fresh air in their former

neighborhoods. This loneliness was expressed by rich and poor alike, but for the poor, loneliness is compounded by loss of an economic safety net. As newly-impoverished Sorya explained, “every day is difficult for my body and my heart,” that is, both economically and emotionally.

Those with weak family ties often reported high levels of dependency on others that was often exploitative, but sometimes merciful, but usually lacking in emotional support. The narratives highlight a clear distinction between social ties among equals and those that are in a hierarchy. This distinction was most vividly articulated by Danet, a homeless single mother whose brothers “don’t care about me.” Although HIV-, she had managed to join a group of evicted HIV+ former neighbors who were receiving ongoing NGO support, and who shared theirs with her out of pity. She described her relationship with her neighbors as “close as if we are all a family” but moments later explained that “I have only neighbors, I don’t have any friends.” This is an illuminating contrast that encapsulates the difference between “friends” (i.e., equal peers) and beneficent unequal relationships that one can depend on “like family.” Numerous other participants similarly expressed non-kin relationships in which resources were exchanged “like family,” and those with relatives who did not share were not considered to be proper relatives. An extended excerpt from Danet’s interview that further highlights these points can be found in Appendix E. We see in it how resource exchanges are deeply rooted in interpersonal relationships. Emotional frames lie within conversations about material

assistance, and emotions are expressed and experienced through financial generosity or its absence.

Some participants found themselves quite isolated and cut off from both relatives and friends after eviction. The women whose social ties were deeply embedded in their neighborhoods found themselves unmoored after their eviction and had grave difficulty coping. Sorya despaired,

> I keep [the anger] in my heart and I can't show it . . . I don't have anyone to discuss with . . . I don't know who I can talk to . . . I want to find a quiet place for me, when I feel angry, I want to sit alone but now I can't find a place that I want to go to so I don't go out much . . . I don't know where to visit, don't know, and I've never been anywhere much so I don't know where I should go that can make me feel quiet, and feel happy. I don't know.

By contrast, when Sorya meets with her former neighbors, "we talk every time we meet. Nobody forgets." Sorya's sense of loss and being lost in her new environs was echoed by Kanya:

> Here people rarely know each other . . . This area is full of factories . . . so everybody, when their daughters grow up enough, they send them to work in a factory . . . so there's no one home, and all the houses are quiet… no, we don't communicate with each other much . . . Living there [in Reak Reay] we were

> always, you can call it vibrant, we always shared news with each other . . . We were near each other, yes! If someone was hungry, sick, or had something, everyone knew about them, there was almost nothing that we didn't know about . . . We helped each other.

Both women were having difficulty adjusting to new social circumstances, and expressed both loneliness and grief for their former communities.

A few participants seemed to shun getting involved with others – apparently reluctant to be weighed down by others' needs. Many of the poorer participants also indicated that they had "burned out" their networks, either prior to or in the aftermath of eviction, and thus were left adrift (Channa: "My brother-in-law sent rice to us, 2 or 3 kilos . . . but [my husband] does not allow me to call them again"). Scott (1976) wrote extensively how reciprocity is key to the "subsistence ethic" across rural Southeast Asia, "where shared values and social controls combine to reinforce mutual assistance" (p. 27). The very poorest in this study indicated that people they knew with more means, including their relatives, had limited both their social *and* economic ties to them. Desperate poverty and social isolation certainly tended to go hand in hand. The reasons were explained in terms that were emotional, but conflated with material ones (Danet: "My brothers . . . don't care about me, I cannot depend on them"); over and over, participants underscored how personal relationships and economic interdependence are knotted together. When individuals or households become a more or less permanent burden,

unable to return economic support or fulfill obligations, they may find themselves cast adrift in both aspects. Nobody whose family had cut them off financially indicated that had retained strong emotional bonds to them. Those with more resources, by contrast, more easily engage in reciprocal exchanges of both social and practical support. They also integrated into new communities more easily as a result. This explains why one of the most devastating risks of forced eviction is its simultaneous impact on a family's entire social network.

It remains difficult to generalize about the nature and extent of participants' social networks – even among those in comparable socioeconomic circumstances. The data offer a snapshot of a society in transition: migrants forging new ties (or not) in diverse ways. Nevertheless, when social networks are uprooted by forced eviction, consequences are deeply felt, both emotionally and materially. From an adaptive coping perspective, what we see is that both components are absolutely essential. Moreover, in contemporary urban Cambodia, they are deeply intertwined.

5.5 Expressions of Stress and Distress.

In this section, I will explore specific ways that participants who experienced high levels of eviction-related stress understood, expressed, and managed that distress. These findings may be of interest to social workers and others working with high-risk populations in Cambodia in general. Overall, distress over evictions spanned socioeconomic status, and was deeply

embedded in the degree of livelihood shock and disruption of social ties. Those with greatest distress tended to report:

- High levels of economic harm (whether in terms of livelihood or assets).
- Strong social ties within former neighborhoods; weak social networks in other locations.
- Weak or unhappy family relationships.
- Social marginalization in general.
- A strong sense of injustice about the eviction process.
- Participation in failed anti-eviction efforts.
- Painful past experiences with forced migration and loss of property.
- Poor health.
- Poverty.

This section begins by exploring the health impact of evictions, with a focus on psychosomatic ailments. It is widely recognized in the literature and confirmed in this sample that Cambodians commonly respond to and express emotional pain in this way. I next describe specific syndromes that are more recognizably "psychological." I go on to present cases of desperate and maladaptive coping strategies amongst the participants, and then turn to those who exhibit resilience. These topics should be of the most interest to those engaged in

formulating social work interventions to support eviction-affected women and other high-risk populations in Cambodia.

Many participants skirted direct discussion of emotional states. This was expected; Nou (2002) asserted that "the imperatives of Khmer culture require that individuals ritualize rather than verbalize their grief and emotional distress. The Western practice of '*talking out a problem*' goes against Khmer culture" (p. 25). Given this context, it is somewhat surprising that many participants were very frank with a strange foreign researcher. Nevertheless, the more typical response was not to discuss past or present feelings at length, but to describe the hardship of life circumstances (typically, *pibaak, yaab, or vithania*, i.e., difficult, very difficult, or wretchedly difficult) and then explain in sometimes exhausting detail the external aspects of their hardship, be it poverty, poor health, or other complaint. Thus, an impoverished participant might speak about money shortages in incredible detail, but say little or nothing that would be recognized as "psychological" by a Westerner. Rather, the rhetoric evokes sentiments of empathy or pity via the very power of many external attributes of the hardship, as opposed to sharing an emotional state.

Somatic symptoms certainly fall squarely within this discourse; a participant who might shy from speaking directly about her feelings might instead detail symptoms at length and the consequences of the illness for the family. There is a strong consensus in the mental health literature that Khmers tend to express distress somatically, and the participants in this study were no exception. It is clear that mental and physical health are deeply associated with one

another. As Sreymom explained, "I am sick. I get a bit chilly, and I always go to see the doctor. S/he said I have a heart problem . . . Because I think too much . . . The problem from Reak Reay Village gave us trouble . . . And during the past [i.e., the war] I was separated [from my family]." Even when a health problem is longstanding, the narratives highlight how the stress of hardship exacerbates it. In Sorya's words:

> [My mother's] leg, actually her body, when we see her it looks like she is not sick because she is plump but her bones are hot, as if covered with chilies . . . At night, when she sleeps, she always groans . . . After the company dug up [Dey Krahom], she felt even more pain than before.

Distress is routinely expressed through somatic complaints, including heart pain and palpitations, difficulty breathing, sleep disturbances, gastrointestinal problems, uncomfortable hot/cold sensations, headaches and other body pains, dizziness and fainting, blurry vision or watery eyes, and paralysis of limbs. The desperately poor Narun exemplified these complaints: "There is always pain inside my head, I cry because of my head . . . It is like it is pounding in my brain, it is hot like fire, the tears that fall are hot like fire." Participants often reported an array of symptoms, together with expressions of helplessness and hopelessness. Vanna explained, "Nowadays my backbone hurts, so do the veins in my legs and arms . . . I cannot do anything now . . . And now my eyes seem to be going blind because I did not get warm . . . or medicine . . . I cannot see things clearly."

One interesting corollary to the free expression of somatic complaints is the often lengthy emphasis on access to quality healthcare and medicines in new locations. Lack of facilities to adequately treat various complaints symbolizes the hopelessness and hardship of life on the margins of Phnom Penh. Of course much of the discussion of health and healthcare did pertain to specific family medical issues that could not be treated *in situ*, which represented extreme crisis that was in no way symbolic. Maly, an HIV+ woman who was living under a tree near her former rental house near Boeung Kak Lake, explained that she couldn't leave the immediate area because there was a free source of antiretroviral drugs nearby.

Ovesen and Trankell (2010) observed that modern biomedicine in Cambodia is often seen as unsatisfactory in part because its impersonal nature is incongruous with traditional Khmer approaches to health and healing. My data further suggest that the overarching discourse surrounding lack of access to healthcare expresses an overall sense of suffering, abandonment, and marginalization. As Reachny explained, "[Good] medicine is made in France and expensive. We need good medicine when we get seriously sick, but there isn't good medicine here . . . There is only one kind of medicine." Discussion of health services contrasts sharply with participants' complaints about other critical services (e.g., water/sanitation, electricity); these are certainly major concerns but are spoken of with a different tenor, more briefly, and more matter of fact. By contrast, discussions of health care often had echoes of catastrophe and abandonment that suggest a symbolic subtext. If lack of access to education

represents a threat to a woman's ability to be a good mother, lack of access to healthcare is a crisis of marginalization.

Several study participants reported not simply stress symptoms, but syndromes. The most common constellation of stress symptoms is *khit chraan* ("thinking a lot," although generally translated in the literature as "thinking too much.") Somasundaram et al. (1997) indicate that this happens when people "try to make sense of all the events in their lives, but sometimes they cannot understand why all this happened to them. They cannot stop thinking about it" (p. 46). In the more extreme cases, this rumination escalates into *khit awh jen* ("think not leave," or obsessively thinking in circles without any solution). Thinking too much imperils one's overall health (Sreymom: "I am sick . . . This is because I think too much.") Such rumination thus further compromises a family's finances, due to sickness-related disability and medical costs. Once physical illness descends, medicine must be taken and medicine is expensive. Emotion-focused coping strategies are thus often centered around cultivation of a stoic attitude and not thinking about problems. As Channa explained,

> If I think about everything in my mind [i.e., all my problems] then it would be so difficult for me. Every day will be hard for me if I think a lot . . . I think that if I have 10,000 riel [US$2.50], then I can eat that day. I will think about tomorrow when it comes. If I have to think how to spend this 10,000 riel for 2 days, I am overwhelmed, sick, [in need of] medicine. Sometimes I am sick when I think a lot. Sometimes I go to take medicine at the health center. Sometimes we don't have

> something to eat, don't have nourishment, don't have energy . . . I try to endure . . . Walk one step at a time, think one step at a time, and don't think too much in difficult times.

Thinking too much is also very much associated with being helpless in the face of problems. In Naree's words,

> I feel, I feel *pibaak jet* ["difficult heart," i.e., troubled], nothing makes me happy, I can't forget my old place, I feel sadly nostalgic when I sleep at night . . . We lived there for a long time and living here is more difficult than before . . . It has been incredibly difficult [since the eviction]. What is the problem? The problem is that we don't know what to think about and what we should do, it is like we are lost.

Thinking too much is thus not simply a way of ruminating about problems: it is a being at the very edge of one's problem-solving abilities.

Several participants also discussed the more serious stress-triggered illness *sorsay prawsat*. Somasundaram et al. (1997) describe it as "one of the most common idioms of distress in Cambodian culture… which literally translates as 'brain nerves' but means the person thinks their brain is damaged, perhaps from thinking too much or some other physically or socially traumatic event" (p. 94). *Sorsay prawsat* has similar symptoms and expressions to thinking too much, and appears to be the next stage of the condition, when rumination has gone on to the point of actually harming one's physical nervous system. Narun was one of several participants

who suffered from this condition. Her narrative was a long, circular performance that came across more as a dramatization of social suffering than as a factual account. She especially detailed her many incurable ailments against a context of extraordinary poverty as she and her family starved in an uninhabitable encampment for Dey Krahom renters. She explained:

> [An NGO gave me medicine,] but the medicines did not work on me…. [I need] medicine for *sorsay prawsat . . .* After taking those [pills] for a long time, I got a stomachache. Pain in my stomach and in my head. I was fat [i.e., healthy] before, now my body has fallen [i.e., hunger and/or illness has taken a physical toll] . . . I lie down and rub my head. I take a piece of ice and apply it [to cool my body]. I am wretched . . . I am troubled. I worry about starvation, shelter, I don't know what to do about anything. Ay! I think every day, I can't sleep. When I close my eyes, I see only poverty, I do not know what to do. I don't know what I can do, I am weak and sick, I can't work; that's all I think about every day.

This serious condition is presented as a response to extreme stress or trauma, but stops short of insanity. The account of it by several participants indicates that it encompasses a wide range of symptoms and expressions, including emotional dysfunction (particularly anger and anxiety), anti-social behavior, and irrational thinking or behavior. It is a dramatic and distressing emotional condition that may be accompanied by negative acting-out behavior. It may also have more extreme manifestations. Sorya explained that one of her relatives fell ill with this illness following their eviction from Dey Krahom:

> Since the company dug up our houses, [my sister's] father-in-law became *sorsay prawsat* . . . He does not allow anyone to live with him . . . He said this flat belongs to him . . . When he lived at Dey Krahom, he was normal. About three or four months after the company dug up his house, he felt like we didn't understand him, he felt like 'stress'[23]. When someone did something he didn't like, he kicked them out of the house . . . It's like this house is only for him, if he is happy then we can live with him, but if he is not happy, he will kick us out of the house . . . Nobody in his family dares live with him . . . He kicked everyone out of the house, except my brother-in-law lives with him, but he is busy and works a full day, he and his wife go to sleep there because they are afraid to let him live alone, he is old now . . . He says that he isn't sick . . . [and] we cannot bring him [to a doctor] because he is fine physically.

We can see that Sorya's description of *sorsay prawsat* is quite different: it manifested in anti-social and irrational behavior but without the physical illness described by Narun. It should be emphasized that Khmers do not like to live alone; this is considered both lonely and unsafe. This man's claiming the flat only for himself is rather bizarre behavior in the local context. Sorya also does not express the same need for medicine to treat the condition; instead she indicates that it is untreatable. Some of these differences may, of course, be accounted for by the fact that Sorya is speaking about someone else's behavior, rather than personal distress.

[23] Sorya used the English word "stress."

Class and age differences may also be coming into play: Sorya is a young educated woman whereas Narun is elderly and illiterate. These passages suggest that *sorsay prawsat* is broadly defined, understood, and experienced.

One participant, Dawy, also developed a serious stress-related illness that she attributed to her forced eviction. Notably, this illness descended *after* she left Reak Reay, where she had so struggled to meet responsibilities as wife, mother, professional, community leader, and anti-eviction activist. Dawy held herself together at the height of strain, but after giving in to the company and moving, cumulative grief and stress took their toll. Despite her intact family livelihood, once the family was re-settled, she developed an anxiety disorder that was diagnosed in biomedical rather than traditional terms. She had been diagnosed by her doctor with DNV, which apparently refers to the French acronym for neurovegetative dystonia, which Bombana (1997) described as "an obsolete diagnostic category which has no psychiatric currency" (p. 489). She described an intense set of symptoms:

> After I solved [the problem] about the house, I was ill and it is a DNV problem . . . This illness is a psychological problem. It is very serious for me. It is very hard for me to take a breath and I vomit . . . Yes, when I am sick it makes me nervous in the chest and it is difficult to breathe . . . The feeling is like I am almost dying . . . This illness, it is really frightening . . . When I am sick it makes my chest tremble like I have low blood sugar . . . Maybe only [I got sick] because at that time I was

> very "stress"[24] . . . I was so stressed and I was sleepless and had headaches . . . I did not know that I had DNV. I thought that I had a stomach problem. I always had headaches . . . I vomited a lot and had difficulty breathing. When I went to the hospital, the doctor told me that I had this sickness . . . I think about my family and also my work . . . I also think about community problems . . . Only I am sick."

Dawy had been prescribed a 6-month course of medication to treat the illness, and her symptoms were improving. However, she continued to express a strong phobia about being re-evicted. Dawy's description of DNV appears quite similar to *sorsey prawsat*, insofar as it is caused by intense stress and thinking too much, includes both physical and emotional symptoms, and compromises her ability to function normally. However, her medical doctor had used – ironically, misused – a Western biomedical term.

Syndromes related to spiritual and supernatural matters that appear in the literature (e.g., "magical action madness") were by and large *not* found in the contemporary urban sample in this study. Almost no one initiated discussion regarding mental health or illness in terms of karma, ghosts, spirits, or magic, all of which appear in the anthropological literature, and very few consulted traditional healers. There were important exceptions, but the typical response to being asked about these matters was laughter or derision (Pola: "I don't believe in that!"), or confusion as to why one would consult a monk for illness when the obvious need is

[24] Dawy used the English word "stress".

for a well-stocked pharmacy. There were also only a handful of unprompted comments that reflected explicitly Buddhist perspectives on health. Contemporary urban Cambodians come across as eminently practical and this-worldly. It should also be noted that even when symptoms are recognized as expressions of stress, they are addressed by taking medicine, although what kind is left vague. There was little demand for counseling services or modern mental health treatments.

5.6 Desperate Coping Strategies.

Overall, most participants sought to present themselves and their families in a positive light, and it is clear that many were exceptionally resilient in the face of trouble. As Kanya declared, "I am a child of the Pol Pot regime . . . and so I am used to living with hardship. Yes! I am always patient but my children, they have difficulty." Nevertheless, many reported more desperate economic coping strategies, including falling into severe debt, selling assets, and taking on risky work; some examples of this were discussed in Chapter 4. Those who relied on or were forced into desperate economic coping strategies risked long-term economic or psychosocial hardship. As Danet explained simply, "[My husband] went off to earn money then disappeared, and I have never seen him again . . . now he doesn't care about me, and I am raising his child on my own."

Most participants were eager to present themselves and their neighbors favorably. Nevertheless, the franker informants more freely admitted to more serious psychosocial problems that had erupted or been exacerbated in their own or in others' households after eviction, including domestic violence, substance abuse, and gambling. Channa, overwhelmed with poverty and stress since her eviction from Dey Krahom, was the most direct informant in this regard, admitting:

> When I feel tired, I hit my children . . . hit them hard, hard . . . When it's deplorable and I can't think of a way out, I just get 2,000 riel [US$0.50] and gamble . . . [When I play] I feel kind of happy . . . I think a lot, am sick a lot. So, then I never think, I play cards when I have 2,000 riel, and then I don't think or have a headache.

Domestic violence was a very serious problem for a number of participants (for a few, eclipsing the problems of eviction itself.) Channa was not the only one to talk about how the eviction had created or exacerbated this and other serious trouble within the family. While it is naïve to pin family trouble entirely on poverty or eviction, it is undeniable that major stressors take a toll on family functioning.

5.7 Structural Violence and Social Suffering.

The narratives of women in most marginal economic circumstances were quite distinctive. For them, even when eviction cast them into extremely dire situations, the stresses

of their experiences are presented as embedded within lives characterized by pervasive poverty, marginalization, suffering, and often exploitation. Tawney (as cited in Scott, 1976, p. 1) described Chinese peasants as being in circumstances akin to being "up to the neck in water, so that even a ripple is sufficient to drown him." This analogy applies well to the urban poor in Phnom Penh; all that may stand between a family and outright destitution is a ripple, and that ripple can come from many sources – eviction, medical emergency, job loss. Most of the very poor had been periodically swept by one ripple or another over time, and lived in fear and expectation of another. The impact of forced eviction is thus highly damaging, but not uniquely so.

Participants in better socioeconomic circumstances, by contrast, described their forced eviction as a catastrophic but singular event. Sorya, for example, said that "We were successful in our business, we were growing, and suddenly everything was destroyed. It devastated our lives." They also tended to report stress responses and syndromes that were more specifically related to the eviction. However, it should *not* be appropriate to say that they were more affected psychologically than the very poor. Rather, the very poor experienced the eviction as a major but not exceptional event. As such, it tended to compound rather than generate a state of crisis.

The contemporary clinical understanding of the term "trauma" has come under criticism for being too focused on specific violent or life-threatening events. Significantly, such events

were originally defined as being “outside the range of human experience” (DSM-III, as cited in Brown, 1995, p. 100). Numerous scholars and practitioners have argued that the contemporary trauma lens is inadequate to account for social or collective crises. Singling out specific traumatic events as if they are somehow separate from the environments in which they occur can be artificial and deeply problematic. A violent mugging represents a shock to personal safety and basic trust; living with chronic hunger represents something that may be altogether different, and may sometimes be more damaging. The concept of structural violence (or trauma) was first developed by Galtung (1969) to describe the cumulative toll of living a life characterized by pervasive suffering and insecurity. Farmer (as cited in Burtle, 2013) has described the concept this way:

> Structural violence is one way of describing social arrangements that put individuals and populations in harm’s way . . . The arrangements are structural because they are embedded in the political and economic organization of our social world; they are violent because they cause injury to people . . . neither culture nor pure individual will is at fault; rather, historically given (and often economically driven) processes and forces conspire to constrain individual agency (para. 1).

This concept is highly salient in interpreting the narratives of the very poor in this study. What stands out is not the shock of eviction – with attending symptoms of stress – but the

normalcy of it. These women did exhibit a wide range of stress-related physical and psychological problems, many of which preceded their eviction. Their narratives exhibit clear signs of chronic, unrelenting stress. Their worldviews are defeated and hopeless, and even when the eviction itself was catastrophic, their speech shifted fluidly between it and other tragedies in their lives, merging and blurring it with other hardships. In some narratives it seems that the participants were unable to separate the eviction experience from the overall desperate conditions of their lives. Rather, the eviction was almost a "normal" event embedded within crushing poverty and its revolving door of concomitant crises – illness, debt, dependence, abandonment, exploitation, betrayal, and violence. In these narratives, forced evictions were not viewed as a discreet experience. These women reported chronic ailments – physical and psychological – and seemed at best loosely connected to anti-eviction political efforts, which had been dominated by homeowners seeking fair compensation. They do not adopt human rights rhetoric, and explain their experiences differently from how the UN would define forced evictions. The discourse embedded within subtle or direct requests for assistance is distinctly different. Instead, they pleaded for relief from destitution rather than restitution for what had been unfairly taken from them. These narratives used forced eviction as an example of poverty and hardship rather than a cause, and pleas for assistance (whether from government, NGOs, evicting companies, relatives, or others) emphasize intrinsic needs, helplessness, and moral worthiness rather than justice or rights.

5.8 Conclusion.

The findings from this chapter demonstrate that forced eviction had diverse psychosocial effects on dislocated residents of urban Phnom Penh. This chapter utilizes a stress and coping framework to explore how participants interpreted, coped with, and adapted to their displacement. Stress tended to manifest in terms of somatic ailments and rumination. In some cases, participants or others they knew developed symptoms that could be clustered into culture-bound anxiety and depression syndromes, particularly "thinking too much" and "brain nerves." One participant developed an anxiety syndrome that was diagnosed by her medical doctor as having DNV, an obsolete psychiatric term. The better-off participants, for whom eviction tended to represent harm to assets, community, and aspirations, typically exhibited a great deal of anxiety, and they experienced forced eviction as a discreet, tragic, anger-provoking, even traumatic event. By contrast, those who lived in extreme poverty tended to manifest depression, hopelessness, and passive resignation; they spoke of their forced eviction as a terrible but somehow normal event within lives characterized by exploitation and suffering.

Chapter 6: Discussion and Conclusion.

6.1 Introduction.

This chapter explores the implications of the research findings for public policy and social work practice concerning the psychosocial impact of forced evictions in Cambodia. Although the focus of this dissertation is on psychosocial impact, coping, and adjustment, the topic at hand is a major and controversial public policy issue. How to help support those experiencing or at risk of forced eviction is also of key interest to social work practitioners. In this concluding chapter I address public policy and social work practice with regard to the concerns raised by the participants themselves in their narratives – what difficulties they had that would be of possible relevance to policymakers and social workers. I also suggest directions for future research. Disaster Risk Reduction is presented as a useful framework for practitioners. I then close with a brief summary and conclusion.

6.2 Implications for Public Policy, Social Work Practice, and Further Research.

This dissertation is a narrative study of how those affected by forced evictions in Phnom Penh manage adversity. However, given that forced evictions are one of the most controversial issues in Cambodia today, it would be an odd omission to not address public policy matters at all. This section consists of three parts: 1) an analysis of a few key issues that were repeated

themes in the data; and 2) a summary of an analytical framework – Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) – that may be useful to policymakers and social work practitioners engaged in efforts to assist those displaced by forced evictions in Cambodia; and finally a brief discussion of areas for further research.

Public policy research is often associated with quantitative methods. However, narrative research does and should have a place in policy analysis, particularly as it demonstrates the nuances of cases and illuminates processes and pathways. As Roe (2004) asserted:

> Stories commonly used in describing and analyzing policy issues are a force in themselves, and must be considered explicitly in assessing policy options . . . Many public policy issues have become so uncertain, complex, and polarized – their empirical, political, legal, and bureaucratic merits unknown, not agreed upon, or both – that the only things left to examine are the different stories policymakers and their critics use to articulate and make sense of that uncertainty, complexity, and polarization (Kindle edition, loc. 111-120).

This section highlights salient issues that emerged from the participants' narratives that should be of special interest to policymakers. Several excellent, nuanced policy papers have already been published that are based on a wider range of materials, stakeholders, and perspectives than is presented here. The focus here is on a range of policy recommendations,

some of which are broad and unsurprising. I reserve discussion for topics that are grounded in the data collected in this study, and offer original contributions to the policy debate. Those seeking a detailed analysis of other pertinent issues, for example, specific legal matters or land grabbing in rural areas, are advised to consult papers prepared by experts in those fields. Critical policy recommendations include:

- Full compliance with Cambodia's 2001 Land Law and other relevant Cambodian and international human rights and property laws.
- Measures to improve land tenure security, especially for women, the poor, and in areas vulnerable to property disputes. This includes improved land titling processes which are systematic and transparent.
- Clearance of urban neighborhoods should be reserved for *public goods*, that is, "a good or service that is provided without profit for society collectively" (Dictionary.com, 2013, para. 1). Luxury property developers should be purchasing land through normal sales processes rather than government "concessions." Similarly, government buildings, including ministries and foreign embassies, should be procuring land through normal means.
- Compensation of homeowners at full market value for their properties.
- Strategic assistance to renters. Renters are largely excluded from compensation packages. In some cases they may get some fees for moving expenses, or be allocated tiny parcels of land in remote locations. The data from this study show that renters are

a highly disparate group and include many of both the most and the least affected. This obviously poses challenges in terms of structuring policies and programs. Nevertheless, these issues need to be more strategically addressed. Conditions in the remote relocation camps are appalling and unacceptable by any humanitarian standard. It should also be recognized that efforts to improve titling and fair market compensation do not address renters' circumstances. Broad urban planning efforts need to be undertaken to maintain affordable rental housing and neighborhoods within the city.

- Establishing and subsidizing transportation. Moving evictees to the outskirts of the city undermines livelihoods because of commuting expenses. Some of this could be mitigated if Phnom Penh had affordable public transportation. In the absence of a city-wide system, if forced evictions continue, then perhaps companies benefiting from them should subsidize continuous and reliable bus services between the city center and areas where alternative housing has been built. Affordable transport between downtown Phnom Penh and peri-urban areas would mitigate some of the harm to livelihoods that so many experience.
- Broadening policy focus to address livelihood capacity. Above all, the participants' voices chorus around livelihood capacity. This indicates that the current policy and programming focus on housing and shelter is too narrow.

Many of these recommendations are not discussed at length here, for the reasons stated above. Instead, the next section will highlight certain key issues that emerged from the

women's narratives that add to, rather than repeat, ongoing policy debates. The focus is thus on topics that represent original contributions to policy discussions. My main recommendation is that policy should be more focused on post-eviction livelihood capacity, rather than housing quality. In addition, since the needs and interests of displaced families are diverse and divergent, more nuanced strategies would be beneficial. In support of both these points, I argue that Disaster Risk Reduction frameworks can be adapted and applied to Cambodian populations affected by forced evictions.

To date, many agencies and authors concerned with forced evictions in Cambodia have approached the issue from a "right to housing" perspective. Even those who do not adopt an explicit rights-based framework frequently focus on this issue. The evidence from this dissertation, however, suggests that post-eviction housing quality appears to be a poor indicator of well-being or positive outcome. Many of the women I interviewed had adequate homes, often superior in quality to their previous ones, but were in crisis due to insufficient income. My data suggest that livelihood capacity is the most critical factor in positive outcomes. When incomes are sufficient, housing can be improved, but the reverse is not the case, and some had become so crippled by debt that they risked losing new properties altogether. It is not uncommon for those living in peri-urban areas to be unable to afford basic necessities, utility connections, or school fees. The secondary loss of a "replacement" home that a family cannot afford to maintain or stay in all together compounds a sense of

rootlessness and crisis. Public discourse surrounding evictions in Cambodia often focuses on housing and land title, but the women's voices chorus around livelihoods.

Reframing resettlement options around livelihood capacity poses more difficult questions for how to better approach compensation packages. To date relocation areas have usually been close to garment factories. By and large, however, factories only extend jobs to young women who are single and poor, like Konthy in this study, and at $61/month, garment factory work is insufficient to make a living. Many families in peri-urban areas exist in a state of crisis, with no viable employment or entrepreneurial opportunities. Given that 77% of Phnom Penh residents support themselves in this way (Soto, 2011), the lack of business opportunities represents a serious predicament. Entrepreneurs and petty traders who end up on the outskirts of the city routinely see their livelihoods collapse due to lack of customers with disposable income, despite efforts such as construction of market areas, micro-lending schemes, and small-scale grants to assist the start-up of businesses. These consistently fail due to lack of customers.

Peri-urban areas around Phnom Penh lack diverse opportunities for poor Cambodians to earn a living. Adults in an urban household pursue different means of generating income, and often hold down more than one "job" at a time. For example, a night guard may work in his free time as a motorcycle taxi driver when the family is short of cash, while a laundress may "moonlight" selling coffee in the mornings. Livelihoods are stratified according to age and gender; a job that might be appropriate for one member of the family would not be open to

another, whereas the household overall depends on income pooled together by different workers. Access to a garment factory does not extend viable livelihood opportunities for a household. Economic diversity is thus critical to the livelihood capacity of a family as a whole. This observation should be of no surprise. Jane Jacobs, in her seminal (1961) critique of the failures of mid-century American urban planning strategies, demonstrated how urban neighborhoods wither if they do not conform to the diverse uses and needs of people, regardless of how attractively they are planned, and even when housing is of a high standard. She commented that "to hunt for city neighborhood touchstones of success in high standards of physical facilities . . . Evades the meat of the question, which is the problem of what city neighborhoods do, if anything, that may be socially and economically useful" (p. 114). Diversity in use, function, and source of livelihood is necessary for new neighborhoods to thrive. None of this characterizes the sites to which people are being relocated in Phnom Penh. Lack of economic diversity in a given locale is especially damaging to the poor and to entrepreneurs, who have neither customers nor employers available to them, and cannot afford transportation to areas with more opportunity for them.

Two of the study participants who were displaced to make way for the Ministry of Tourism building in Borei Keila were compensated with apartments in a newly-built nearby high-rise apartment building. This strategy has also been adopted in the case of some other forced evictions in Phnom Penh that were not included in this study. While both individuals in this study were satisfied with this arrangement, it is important to acknowledge that this model

is not without serious concerns and flaws. High-rise apartments are not consistent with urban Cambodians' use of space: they open shops and other small businesses on the ground floor of their home, which opens onto the street, and they live above or behind the shop or business area. This is especially important for families with small children, insofar as it enables women and other caretakers to mind children and tend to a business simultaneously. None of this is possible in apartment buildings. Moreover, the walk-up apartments are physically inaccessible to many. In this study, of the two who landed in apartments, one was an elderly woman who was automatically granted a ground-floor apartment due to her age, and the other went to a family (Pola's) with several members who could not manage five flights of stairs. Pola's family ended up keeping that apartment as a rental unit rather than as housing for themselves. Rabé's excellent (2009) dissertation discusses at length the flaws surrounding this model of apartment-block "land sharing" arrangements.[25] His critique focuses on the problem that families cannot operate businesses from apartment units, and so they move away. He demonstrates that this approach to compensation may be more acceptable to those affected, but it fails in terms of a goal of maintaining affordable and appropriate housing for the poor in the city center.

It is notable that those who "landed on their feet" economically tended to stay within the city center, or were able to afford long commutes (i.e., have stable jobs). The example of

[25] In this model, high-rise apartment buildings are constructed on the area that has been slated for commercial property development. Displaced families are allocated apartments in the new building.

Sokhan – the renter and entrepreneur who successfully used her displacement from Reak Reay as an opportunity to strategically improve her business – further suggests that those who invest in their businesses rather than in new housing are more likely to recover economically. This indicates that for those who work in the informal sector (i.e., most of those of poor or modest means), affordable basic housing *within* the city is preferable to quality housing on its outskirts. Phun had built a beautiful home with money sent by her daughter overseas, for example, but the family was unable to support themselves in the new location. Unfortunately, as property values in Phnom Penh climb and poorer neighborhoods are targeted for eviction, there is an acute lack of low-income housing for sale or for rent. This housing issue needs to be addressed within broad urban planning efforts; individual compensation packages will not achieve it. Moreover, affordable housing is the primary concern of poor renters who are normally ineligible for any compensation in the first place. Improving compensation packages is imperative, but it only benefits homeowners and is therefore not a comprehensive solution.

As already discussed, compensation packages in a given neighborhood are uniform, (e.g., US $8,000 and/or newly-built apartment or rowhouse). An obvious recommendation is that compensation packages should represent market value for property – not per household, but per size of land and adjusted for housing quality. This would require an impartial assessment of individual properties, which would in turn be deeply challenging in the Cambodian context. Nevertheless, it is possible to determine market values for recent land sales in a given geographic area (see Ballard & Runsinarith, 2007), and this could and should be

applied. There remain significant barriers to an open and transparent process for surveying land and allocating compensation. The problems surrounding land title and land tenure across Cambodia are exceptionally deep and pervasive, and well beyond the scope of any given compensation strategy. However, that should not serve as an excuse to systematically compensate the displaced at rates that are well below overall market values.

Compensating displaced families at market-value rates will not address the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable people, who rent or own properties of marginal value. The forced eviction literature usually overlooks the circumstances of displaced renters in favor of people with legal property titles, but this perspective overlooks those who have no ownership claims despite observations that "if there is any particular group of urban dwellers that is underprotected, underemphasized, and frequently misunderstood, it is definitely the world's *tenants*" (UN-Habitat, 2008, p. 14). In Phnom Penh, renters are certainly affected by community evictions, and so were included in this sample. Their narratives reflect a highly eclectic group that included both the most and the least harmed. Many evicted renters find themselves in the direst of straits. For others, however, eviction represents nothing more than the temporary hassle of moving. The needs and circumstances of eviction-affected renters should be considered by policy-makers and social work practitioners, but this would require a more nuanced approach to assistance than is the case to date. Ultimately, efforts could be directed to preserve rather than displace poor neighborhoods, and explicit urban planning policies should be designed to maintain the presence of low-income rental housing within the city.

Ideally such housing should be amenable to shopkeeping, rather than concentrating people in high-rise apartment blocks.

Finally, it should be noted that the legal aspects of eminent domain are inevitably thorny, and are generally considered to be a necessary evil, to be used sparingly as a matter of public good, for example, to widen a road. However, four of the eviction cases in this study were motivated for private profit. (The fifth was a government building expansion that opponents protested was unnecessary in an already-crowded city neighborhood.) In Dawy's words: "If they wanted that place to develop something for the public benefit, we wouldn't have been so hurt . . . [but] it was for personal [profit]." As defined by the UN, forced evictions are explicitly differentiated from strictly legal evictions. The current spate of evictions in Cambodia – both urban and rural – do not meet this standard.

Social workers and NGOs seeking to provide assistance are urged to take a nuanced approach, ideally from a case management perspective. There is occasional relief support in the relocation camps. This relief is both inadequate, and should be the responsibility of the government and/or companies. Moreover, the data from this dissertation suggest that those who stay in the city have better livelihood capacities and overall well-being. It would be especially concerning if the minimal and inadequate support services in relocation areas served to draw people away from more sustainable and self-sufficient options.

This dissertation has documented many individuals among the poor who have high levels of social support but whose needs have overwhelmed benefactors. This suggests that counseling services in the absence of practical assistance is unlikely to be effective, especially as the two are deeply intertwined in Khmer culture. While access to psychological treatment should ideally be made available, the data suggest that broad community-based social work interventions would be more beneficial for those struggling with issues around stress, coping, and adaptation. Specialized mental health treatment can and should be available, but it should complement broader social work programs. One important issue that should be further investigated is the widespread use of medication for stress-related illnesses. Many participants were taking medication for "brain nerves" and other conditions, some of which were prescribed by doctors, while but most were simply self-medicating. There are no controls over buying and selling medicines in Cambodia, and many drugstores are run by shopkeepers with no pharmaceutical training. Participants invariably described their medicines in terms of physical characteristics (e.g., size and color) rather than properties, and it is unclear whether they are taking anti-depressants, potentially addictive sedatives, or other drugs. It would be helpful to further investigate use and misuse of medications in this mental health context, although addressing this would be challenging given Cambodians' widespread propensity for both self-medication and over-medication for all manner of ailments.

A number of participants discussed various types of NGO assistance that they had benefitted from, including distributions of food and non-food items, support for shelter, and

livelihood projects, including micro-grants and a women's handicraft social enterprise. All of these were found solely in the relocation camps. There was no evidence that any were sustainable, nor adequate to address the appalling conditions in the camps. The small businesses started with micro-grants had all collapsed due to lack of customers. The handicraft endeavor was more successful, but required continuous support from a social enterprise that markets products made by HIV+ women, and so is neither sustainable nor amenable to replication on a large scale. Meanwhile, it is clear that many evictees are falling seriously into debt. Those who remained in the city center tended to be better off in terms of income generation, which suggests that it may be better to extend assistance to evictees to locate alternative housing within the city than to try to support livelihoods on its margins. Alternative housing may be of substandard quality; however, as the data from this dissertation indicate, when livelihoods are intact housing can and will be improved, whereas the reverse was not the case. Once again, a broad programmatic reorientation emphasizing livelihood capacity is indicated.

While there are a large number of published news media articles and agency reports on forced evictions in Cambodia, this dissertation is one of only a few social science studies that are detailed and nuanced. It also points to several obvious directions for further investigation, including expanding the scope to include men and/or rural populations, as well as follow-up of evictees over time. There is certainly is ample opportunity for expansion of the scope of this study. Longitudinal studies – whether qualitative, quantitative, or both – would also further

reveal the effects on the displaced over time. There are also many knowledge gaps surrounding the impact and outcomes that would be met with quantitative research. Residents of a *former* community are difficult to survey, but respondent-driven sampling (RDS) would be effective and appropriate. For example: the data presented here suggests that those who work in the informal sector are generally better off post-eviction if they remain in the city center rather than go to remote locations. However, this should be confirmed by analysis of quantitative data. Assuming that this finding holds, a further question would be how can policies or assistance programs enable this? The participants also reported scattered and unsatisfactory initiatives that often failed, and invariably were only available in the relocation areas where there is little sustainable means of self-support available. There has been no systematic research into what kinds of compensation or support programs would actually be more effective. Applied research into these critical issues is imperative.

Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR).

Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) is the dominant approach to disaster prevention, and preparedness today. DRR has been defined as "the broad development and application of policies, strategies and practices to minimize vulnerabilities and disaster risks throughout society, through prevention, mitigation and preparedness" (Mitchell & Aalst, 2008, p. 4). DRR is recommended as an operational framework for analysis and intervention surrounding crisis

events. The data collected for this dissertation suggest that this approach would be helpful to policymakers and social work practitioners concerned with populations at risk of eviction. It provides less a set of recommendations than an analytical framework that can be applied.

Clarification of key terms is helpful to understanding the fundamental approach of DRR. A *hazard* is understood as a "potentially damaging physical event, phenomenon, or human activity that may cause the loss of life or injury, property damage, social and economic disruption or environmental degradation" (UN/ISDR, as cited in Thwyssen, n.d., para. 1). Individuals and populations also have a certain *coping capacity*, that is, "the means by which people or organizations use available resources and abilities to face adverse consequences that could lead to a disaster" (UN/ISDR, as cited in Thwyssen, n.d., para. 3). If the impact of the hazard exceeds a population's coping capacity, it results in a *disaster*, that is, a "serious disruption of the functioning of a community or a society causing widespread human, material, economic or environmental losses which exceed the ability of the affected community or society to cope using its own resources" (UN/ISDR, as cited in Kelman & Pooley, 2004, p. 5). To apply these terms in an example, in 2005 Hurricane Katrina represented a hazard to the city of New Orleans, but only became a disaster when the city's levee system catastrophically failed because it was at that point that the city's coping capacity was exceeded. Similarly, while an earthquake hazard may be impossible to prevent per se, strong building codes can increase the population's coping capacity and prevent tremors from becoming a disaster.

DRR measures may focus on reducing the risk or magnitude of a hazard itself, for example, through improved infrastructure or policing. DRR efforts can and often do include "softer" programming, such as strengthening and supporting social networks or availability of economic assistance in the event of a crisis, through insurance systems, emergency micro-lending, seed banks, and so forth. It often consists of supporting community-based systems to sustain small-scale farmers in the event of poor harvests, and as such is often mainstreamed into general rural development initiatives. DRR for urban environments tends to be less common and more focused on "hard" infrastructure projects rather than "soft" social programming, but that is by no means always the case, and there is systematic research exploring how to better apply risk reduction in urban contexts (see Wamsler, 2007, for example). Very recently, there has also been a strong surge of interest in DRR programming as a means to mitigate the impact of global climate change (see Ireland, 2010; Mercer, 2010; Mitchell, 2008; Schipper, 2006; Thomalla, 2006). DRR programming, is based on population *vulnerability and capacity analysis,* which follows an assessment of the likelihood and magnitude of various hazards. This framework underscores that hazards and disasters do not have a uniform impact but rather are structured by various factors, including "hazard risk conditions, societal vulnerability, and the limited capacities of households or communities to reduce the potential negative impacts of the hazard" (Baas, Ramasamy, DePryck, & Battista, 2008, p. 4). While this approach often emphasizes livelihoods, it has applications in other sectors as well. Disaster risk reduction has important parallels with stress and coping theory,

but with an emphasis on securing physical needs (shelter, food, etc.) rather than on psychological adaptation. Social stratification, networks, and capital are, however, seen as key determinants of individual, household, and group coping capacities.

The evidence from this dissertation suggests that existent DRR frameworks may be well-suited to assist policymakers and agencies interested in assessing and mitigating the impact of forced evictions. Forced evictions have impacts resembling a disaster on affected communities. Mercer (2010) has directly explored "wheel reinvention" between DRR and climate change programming, and Wamsler (2006) has discussed opportunities to better mainstream DRR in urban planning and housing. To date, there is little evidence of systematic or explicit application of DRR approaches within the forced eviction literature. Vulnerability and coping analysis, however, provides a useful starting point to identify the nature and extent of material harm expected from a forced eviction, as well as potential areas for intervention. There are, of course, key and critical differences between forced evictions and general DRR approaches, including the role of the state. However, vulnerability and capacity analysis has also previously been applied to the contexts of armed conflict and state violence as well (e.g., PCSG, 2000), and there is no compelling reason why it could not be adapted to forced evictions.

I have documented post-eviction trajectories for different sub-populations affected by forced eviction, even within a given neighborhood. We have also seen how outcomes are deeply embedded in their social capital and networks, and that the individuals who most successfully weathered the impact often did so by utilizing pre-existing psychological, material,

and social resources. DRR approaches, when done well, are designed to identify both nature of harm and sources of resilience. While DRR is focused on material coping, this dissertation has shown that a viable household livelihood and adequate shelter are critical protective factors in psychological well-being. This is consistent with a growing consensus that socioeconomic hardship contributes to mental disorders found among refugee populations (Joop & de Jong, 2006).

There are numerous existent DRR toolkits and frameworks that might be adapted specifically for forced eviction contexts, whether in Cambodia or elsewhere (e.g., the many resources at UN/ISDR, 2013). A full discussion of them is outside the scope of this dissertation, which focuses on the lived experiences of evicted women in Phnom Penh. Nevertheless, DRR frameworks and approaches may provide a fruitful starting point for policymakers, advocates, and social work practitioners in designing appropriate interventions.

6.3 Conclusion: Risk, Resilience, and Adaptation.

In this dissertation, I have presented findings from a fieldwork investigation of the impact of forced evictions in Cambodia from a social work perspective. The displaced women and their families have widely varying outcomes and experiences managing the multiple losses associated with neighborhood eviction. The data demonstrate that forced eviction is far from a simple, shared experience, or even a common threat. Harm is unevenly distributed, and the

nature of that harm is also variable and closely tied to socioeconomic circumstances. Women from all socioeconomic strata are affected, but in very different ways. Relatively more prosperous landowners are typically more harmed in terms of absolute value of lost assets, whereas the poor tend to be more harmed by loss of livelihood capacity. Furthermore, there are women for whom eviction was incidental or even led to improved circumstances; in all such cases, however, they had been able to maintain their livelihood and housing quality, re-locate in desirable geographic locations, and recoup the value of their properties. Renters had the most mixed outcomes, encompassing both the most and the least harmed among all the informants. The diversity of issues and outcomes has important implications for policy and programming, and it is clear that the uniform compensation packages in Cambodia are often very poorly suited to individual circumstances.

Most of those affected by forced evictions are remarkably resilient in the face of considerable hardship and stress. Livelihood capacity and social networks that encompassed both material and emotional support emerged as foundations for resilience. Those who experienced considerable disruption to their livelihoods and/or social networks were highly vulnerable to psychological harm as well as deepened poverty. Coping strategies emphasized obtaining an attractive and comfortable home, establishing a new livelihood, ensuring smooth transitions for children, accessing medical care, keeping physically cool, and maintaining a calm, clear mind. Social networks were key elements in securing each of these. By contrast, those at most risk were those whose livelihoods and social networks were deeply embedded in their

neighborhoods. These two characteristics crossed socioeconomic lines, although it was noted that personal relationships between the poor and the (relatively) rich did not overlap, even when they lived side by side. However, the poor are especially reliant on living in proximity to those with more means, because they represent customers, clients, and sources of credit. The poor, when removed from diverse neighborhoods and concentrated together, find themselves destitute despite strong emotional support. After all, when there is not enough money circulating in the local economy, norms of reciprocity and mutual assistance are of little relevance: there are no resources to share. They need to live in diverse, mixed-income environments with diverse, livelihood opportunities in order to manage.

Some of those affected by forced eviction do indeed "land on their feet," and even come out with improved circumstances. The narratives of these "positive deviants" are eclectic and idiosyncratic. However, several factors did emerge that were characteristic of many in this group, including uninterrupted livelihoods; new employment or successful business in new neighborhoods; compensation exceeding the value of the former home; new residence being nearby the former one; matter-of-fact, stoic attitude; higher education and financial resources; and intact social and economic networks independent of former neighborhood.

Women's stress and coping strategies are grounded in the nature of the threat to their families. Given the depth and breadth of poverty in urban Cambodia, it is unsurprising that the aftermath of eviction is experienced in terms of impact on poverty itself; coping strategies are

ultimately economic in nature but infused throughout with psychosocial significance. In this dissertation, the coping strategies have focused on the practicalities of securing adequate income, shelter, schooling, and so forth. However, participants also experienced and expressed significant psychological distress, including loneliness, grief, anger, and anxiety. This was especially manifested in widespread somatic complaints, obsessive rumination, and anti-social and other maladaptive behaviors.

Policy and discourse surrounding forced evictions in Cambodia often focuses on shelter itself. However, livelihood capacity overwhelmingly emerged as the most salient issue, and loss of livelihood provoked intense crisis. The women's voices rise almost in unison surrounding income. The greatest harm for many was not loss of home but loss of jobs and businesses. This indicates that the best approach to compensation packages would be for homeowners to be awarded full current market value for their properties (thus enabling them to purchase new homes within the city), and for broad urban planning measures to protect and encourage affordable rental housing districts within the city. There was also a very high demand expressed for ongoing livelihood programming and, more indirectly, for subsidized public transportation. Sorya, however, best captured the sentiments of the evicted women: "My solution is that, I want other NGOs to help us. Actually, I don't have any solution to these problems. In my mind, I only want my house and land back."

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Appendix A: Definitions of Key Terms.

Axial coding "relates categories to subcategories, specifies the properties and dimensions of a category, and reassembles the data you have fractured during initial coding to give coherence to the emerging analysis" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 60).

Cognitive appraisal consists of "evaluative cognitive processes that intervene between the encounter and the reaction" (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984, p. 52).

Complicated grief (CG) is a "chronic debilitating condition characterized by symptoms of separation distress, traumatic distress, sadness and other dysphoric affects, and social withdrawal" (Shear and Frank, 2006, p. 290). Zhang et al. (2006) describe those who suffer from it as "essentially frozen or stuck in a state of chronic mourning" (p. 1191).

Coding is "the process of defining what the data are about. Unlike quantitative researchers, who apply *preconceived* categories or codes to the data, a grounded theorist creates qualitative codes by defining what he or she sees in the data. Thus, the codes are emergent" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 186).

Coping refers to the "constantly changing cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage specific external and/or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of the person" (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984, p. 141).

Coping capacity refers to "the means by which people or organizations use available resources and abilities to face adverse consequences that could lead to a disaster" (UN/ISDR, as cited in Thwyssen, n.d., para. 3).

Daily hassles, are "experiences and conditions of daily living that have been appraised as salient and harmful or threatening to the endorser's well-being" (Vingerhoets, 2004, p. 9).

Dependency theory "can be defined as an explanation of the economic development of a state in terms of the external influences – political, economic, and cultural – on national development policies…. There are three common features to these definitions which most dependency theorists share. First, dependency characterizes the international system as comprised of two sets of states, variously described as dominant/dependent, center/periphery or metropolitan/satellite. The dominant states are the advanced industrial nations . . . Second . . . the assumption that external forces are of singular importance to the economic activities within the dependent states. These external forces include multinational corporations, international commodity markets, foreign assistance, communications, and any other means by which the advanced industrialized

countries can represent their economic interests abroad. Third, the definitions of dependency all indicate that the relations between dominant and dependent states are dynamic because the interactions between the two sets of states tend to not only reinforce but also intensify the unequal patterns. Moreover, dependency is a very deep-seated historical process, rooted in the internationalization of capitalism . . . In short, dependency theory attempts to explain the present underdeveloped state of many nations in the world by examining the patterns of interactions among nations and by arguing that inequality among nations is an intrinsic part of those interactions" (Ferrarro, 2008, para. 6-10).

Dhamma (often spelled *dharma*) "in both Hinduism and Buddhism refers to the principle or law that orders the universe. In Buddhism, the word in particular points to the law of karma and rebirth. Because this law was recognized and formulated by the historical Buddha, *dharma* is most commonly used in Buddhism to mean 'the teachings of the Buddha'…. *Dharma* is also sometimes used to refer to ethical rules and to mental objects or thoughts." (O'Brien, 2013, para. 1-6)

Disaster is defined as "sudden misfortune that results in the loss of life or property or in other forms of great harm or damage [with] impact beyond just one person, affecting, devastating, and sometimes eradicating an entire community" (Halpern & Tramontin, 2007, p. 3). It should be emphasized that this term is not restricted to solely to natural disasters or contexts of generalized violence.

Economic, social and cultural rights (ESCR) "embody essential elements for a life of dignity and freedom, including work, health, education, food, water, housing, social security, healthy environment, and culture. Human rights provide a common framework of universally-recognized values and norms, both to hold state and increasingly non-state actors accountable for violations and to mobilize collective efforts for economic justice, political participation, and equality…. In 1948, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), establishing the vision and principles which recognize the interdependence and indivisibility of all human rights: a vision that guarantees people civil and political freedom as well as economic and social well-being. ESCR were embodied in international treaty law through the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), as well as through other universal treaties and regional mechanisms" (ESCR-Net, n.d., para. 2-3).

Eminent domain is the "power of government to seize private property for public use" (Flint, 2011, p. 52).

Emotion-focused coping aims "to diminish the emotional impact of a stressor" (Vingerhoets, 2004, p. 13) by managing one's feelings, for example by meditation, entertainment, or drinking alcohol.

Focused coding "means using the most significant and/or frequent earlier codes to sift through large amounts of data. Focused coding requires decisions about which . . . make the most analytic sense to categorize your data incisively and completely" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 57).

Forced evictions refer to "the involuntary removal of persons from their homes or land, directly or indirectly attributable to the State" (OHCHR, 1996, p. 3). The UN specifically distinguishes forced evictions from "legal evictions" which are consistent with international human rights standards.

Forced migration refers to "migration in which an element of coercion predominates . . . Forced migration can be conflict-induced, caused by persecution, torture or other human rights violations, poverty, natural or manmade disasters (non exhaustive listing)" (Boto and La Peccerella, 2008, p. 31).

Global North and South. "The Global North refers to the 57 countries with high human development that have a Human Development Index above .8 as reported in the United Nations Development Programme Report 2005. Most, but not all, of these countries are located in the Northern Hemisphere. The Global South refers to the countries of the rest of the world, most of which are located in the Southern Hemisphere." (Damerow, 2010, para. 1-2).

Globalization refers to "the multiplicity of linkages and interconnections between states and societies which make up the present world system. It describes the process by which events, decisions, and activities in one part of the world come to have significant consequences for individuals and communities in quite distant parts of the globe. Globalization has two dintinct phenomena: *scope* (or stretching) and *intensity* (or deepening). On the the one hand, it defines a set of processes which embrace most of the globe or which operate worldwide; the concept therefore has a spatial connotation…. On the other hand it also implies an intensification on the levels of interaction, interconnectedness or interdependence between the states and societies which constitute the world community. Accordingly, alongside the stretching goes a deepening of global processes" (McGrew, 1992, p. 23).

Grounded theory methods are "systematic, yet flexible guidelines for collecting and analyzing qualitative data to construct theories 'grounded' in the data themselves. The guidelines offer a set of general principles and heuristic devices rather than formulaic rules . . .

> Coding means that we attach labels to segments of data that depict what each segment is about. Coding distills data, sorts them, and gives us a handle for making comparisons with other segments of data (Charmaz, 2006, p. 2-3).

Hazards are the events (e.g., blizzards, epidemics, bombings) that may ultimately lead to a disaster *if* the coping capacities of the [population] are exceeded.

In vivo coding refers to grounded theory codes that utilize participants' own words, terms, and phrases. They "help us to preserve participants' meanings of their views and actions in the coding itself" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 55).

Killing Fields refer to a "site where large numbers of political opponents or victims of persecution are executed and/or buried. Such mass murder/grave sites were widely used under the genocidal Khmer Rouge regime in Cambodia, where the term originated" (PCSG, 2001, p. 43).

Kruu Khmer refer to traditional healers in Cambodia. They may also be "experts, such as astrologers, soothsayers, fortune tellers, and spirit mediums, who help individuals interpret and, if possible, [achieve] favorable outcomes" (CCHAP, 2011, para. 2).

Mental health is conceptualized as "a state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community" (WHO, 2007, para. 2).

Millenium Development Goals (MDGs) "are eight goals that all 191 UN Member States have agreed to try to achieve by the year 2015. The United Nations Millennium Declaration, signed in September 2000 commits world leaders to combat poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy, environmental degradation, and discrimination against women. The MDGs are derived from this Declaration, and all have specific targets and indicators" (WHO, 2013, para. 1).

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). "Diagnostic criteria for PTSD include a history of exposure to a traumatic event meeting two criteria and symptoms from each of three symptom clusters: intrusive recollections, avoidant/numbing symptoms, and hyper-arousal symptoms. A fifth criterion concerns duration of symptoms and a sixth assesses functioning" (DSM-IV-TR, as cited by USDVA, 2012, para 2).

Primary appraisal "consists of the judgment that an encounter is irrelevant, benign-positive, or stressful" (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984, p. 53).

Problem-focused coping are "efforts to remove or eliminate stressors or to reduce their intensity" (Vingerhoets, 2004, p. 12), that is, problem-solving.

Protective factors are those which "moderate the effects of exposure to risk (Rutter, 1990, Hawkins et al*.,* 1992)… Protective factors help to explain why some [people] exposed to clusters of the predictive risk factors [avoid expected negative outcomes] . . . Different protective factors may work in different ways. This might be by preventing risk factors from ever occurring… interacting with a risk factor to block its adverse effects, or by interrupting the mediational chain by which a risk factor influences behaviour (Coie et al., 1993). As with risk factors, some protective factors are individual characteristics that it may be difficult, if not impossible, to inculcate in [those] who lack them . . . But there are other protective factors and processes with a more obvious and important contribution to make in the design of preventive strategies" (YJB, 2005, p. 25-26).

Psychosocial health and mental health "are closely related and overlap . . . [but often] reflect different, yet complementary, approaches" (IASC, 2006, p. 1), and they are often used interchangeably. However, it is useful to distinguish them as "unspecified use of 'psychosocial' . . . is likely to degrade the usefulness of the term" (Martikainen, Bartley, & Lahelma, 2002, p. 1091). Psychosocial can be defined as "pertaining to the influence of social factors on an individual's mind or behavior, and to the interrelation of behavioural and social factors"(Oxford English Dictionary, as cited by Martikainen et al., 2002, p. 1091). While the term mental health is often associated with intra-psychic and functioning per se, psychosocial health is often favored by those taking a broader or ecological orientation.

Pull and push factors are the reasons that compel or attract migration. Pull factors refer to (perceived) opportunities elsewhere, for example improved employment prospects in a city. Push factors make it difficult or impossible to remain at "home," for example a farming family that loses its land.

Purposive sampling. In purposive sampling, "group participants [are chosen] according to preselected criteria relevant to a particular research question" (Mack et al., 2005, p. 5).

Reappraisal "refers to a changed appraisal based on new information" (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984, p.53).

Resilience refers to a "process of, capacity for, or outcome of successful adaptation despite challenging or threatening circumstances" (Masten, Best, and Garzemy, 1990, p. 425.)

Risk in social work "conveys the notion that an individual, family, group, school, neighborhood, or organization is likely to experience a negative outcome" (Fraser, Galinsky, and Richman, 1991, p. 131). In disaster management, it "refers to a known or unknown probability distribution of events – for example, natural hazards such as floods or earthquakes. The extent to which risks affect vulnerability is dependent on their size and spread (magnitude), as well as their frequency and duration (UN-Habitat, 2008, p. 4).

Risk factors are "any attribute, characteristic or exposure of an individual that increases the likelihood" (WHO, 2013, para. 1) of an adverse outcome.

Risk response "refers to the ways in which individuals, households, communities and cities respond to, or manage, risk. Risk management may be the form of *ante* or *ex post* actions – that is, preventive action taken *before* the risky event, and action taken to deal with experienced losses *after* the risky event." (UN-Habitat 2008, p. 4)

Slums are urban communities where "residents live in sub-standard housing conditions . . . [and] there is a noticeable lack of basic infrastructure [and] services" (Gómez et al. 2008, p. 10-11).

Snowball (or chain-referral) sampling is a process to identify potential study participants. In this process, individuals "with whom contact has already been made use their social networks to refer the researcher to other people who could potentially participate in or contribute to the study" (Mack et al., 2005, p. 5-6).

Secondary appraisal "is a judgment concerning what might and can be done" (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984, p.53) about a stressor, and an evaluation of the effectiveness of various coping strategies and courses of action.

Social capital refers to "the ability of actors to secure benefits by virtue of membership in social networks or other social structures" (Portes, 1998, p. 6).

Social constructivism "emphasizes the importance of culture and context in understanding what occurs in society and constructing knowledge based on this understanding (Derry, 1999; McMahon, 1997). This perspective is closely associated with many contemporary theories, most notably the developmental theories of Vygotsky and Bruner, and Bandura's social cognitive theory (Shunk, 2000). Social constructivism is based on specific assumptions about reality, knowledge, and learning…Social constructivists believe that reality is constructed through human activity . . . To social constructivists, knowledge is also a human product, and is socially and culturally

constructed…Intersubjectivity is a shared understanding among individuals . . . Construction of social meanings, therefore, involves intersubjectivity among individuals" (Kim, 2001, para. 6 - 11).

Social ecology, a concept explicated by Bronfenbrenner (1977, 1979), refers to "the study of the relationship between the . . . human being and the settings and contexts in which the person is actively involved. Four levels of 'nested concentric structures' — the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem — are proposed" (Kazak, 1986, p. 1). Bronfenbrenner (1977) defines a microsystem as "the complex of relations between the developing person and environment in an immediate setting containing that person (e.g., home, school, workplace, etc.) . . . A mesosystem comprises the interrelations among major settings containing the developing person at a particular point in his or her life . . . In sum, stated succinctly, a mesosystem is a system of microsystems. An exosystem is an extension of the meso system embracing other specific social structures, both formal and informal . . . These structures include the major institutions of the society, both deliberately structured and spontaneously evolving, as they operate at a concrete local level. They encompass, among other structures, the world of work, the neighborhood, the mass media, agencies of government . . . A macrosystem refers to the overarching institutional patterns of the culture or subculture . . . Macrosystems are conceived and examined not only in structural terms but as carriers of information and ideology that, both explicitly and implicitly, endow meaning and motivation to particular agencies, social networks, roles, activities, and their interrelations" (p. 514-515).

Stress has been understood as "a particular relationship between the person and the environment that is appraised by the person as taxing or exceeding his or her resources and endangering his or her well-being" (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984, p. 19).

Stressor can be defined as "a cause or source of psychological distress [and] refer to the issues and events that individuals in the situation perceive to actually or potentially threaten normal functioning and resources" (Schneiderman, Ironson, & Siegel, as cited in Im, 2011, p. 42). A stressor is not necessarily noxious or distressing; events such as family holidays or getting married are usually welcome but are also experienced as stressful, and may necessitate significant adaptation.

Structural violence "is one way of describing social arrangements that put individuals and populations in harm's way . . . The arrangements are structural because they are embedded in the political and economic organization of our social world; they are violent because they cause injury to people . . . neither culture nor pure individual will is at fault; rather, historically given (and often economically driven) processes and forces

conspire to constrain individual agency" (Farmer undated, as quoted by Burtle 2013, para. 1).

Tenure security. "There are at least three main definitions of tenure security. One broad definition includes both the absence of expropriation by others and the insulation from losing land due to the inability to cope with income flow in a market economy. Another definition can be defined as the absence of the possibility that land will be expropriated by people who have ability to do so. Lastly, it can also be defined in term of the land owners' perceived tenure situation, i.e. security as an assurance against and expectation of freedom from expropriation" (So, 2009, p. 47-48).

Trauma-focused psychiatric epidemiology refers to research "focused on assessing the prevalence of psychiatric symptomatology, primarily symptoms of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and to a lesser extent, other disorders of Western psychiatry" (Miller et al., 2006, p.409). TFPE has come under criticism as being too narrow a research focus among international and refugee populations.

Urban / regional planning "can be described as a technical and political process concerned with the welfare of people, control of the use of land, design of the urban environment including transportation and communication networks, and protection and enhancement of the natural environment" (MUSUP, 2011).

Urban renewal. "Following World War II, and continuing into the early 1970s [in the United States], 'urban renewal' referred primarily to public efforts to revitalize aging and decaying inner cities . . . including massive demolition, slum clearance, and rehabilitation . . . Urban renewal in this context too often meant, as contemporaries noted, 'Negro removal' . . . Rather than solve the urban crisis, urban renewal had set the stage for its next phase" (Hirsch, 2005, para. 1-8).

Vulnerability "may be defined as the probability of an individual, a household or a community falling below a minimum level of welfare (e.g. poverty line), or the probability of suffering physical and socioeconomic consequences (such as homelessness or physical injury) as a result of risky events and processes (such as forced eviction, crime or flood) and their inability to effectively cope with such risky events and processes." (UN-Habitat 2008, p. 4)

Vulnerability and capacity analysis "is concerned with collecting, analysing and systematising information on a given community's vulnerability to hazards in a structured and meaningful way. This information is then used to diagnose the key risks and existing capacities of the community, ultimately leading to activities aimed at reducing people's

vulnerability to potential disasters and increasing their capacity to survive them and resume their lives" (IFRC, 2006, p. 4-5).

Appendix B: Interview Guides.

Interview Guide 1 – Eviction Narratives.

Note to Interviewers: You may not have time to ask all of the questions if the participant is very talkative and involved, and this guide can (and should) be adapted according to the participant's perspective, circumstance, and direction. However, please do ensure that key themes are covered, including:

- Family livelihood sources and shortfalls
- Other stressors, in addition to poverty
- The way she thinks about (*appraises)* her problems
- Her feelings, emotions, psychological state, and her health.
- Her coping strategies - the things that she does to manage her problems and her feelings.
- What are her assets and sources of strength? Assets are not just money and possessions, but also things like social networks, skills, talents, etc. that help her be resilient.
- Family relationships, family separation
- Social networks beyond the family
    - Vertical social networks, i.e., people or organizations "above" her that are more powerful, such as authorities or NGOs. (Can also be ones "below" her, if there are any.)
    - Horizontal social networks. How does she interact with friends, neighbors, etc who are in similar condition to her? Does she have friends? Does she give and receive help from people who are similar to her?
- Whether and how religion helps her cope, both in terms of thinking, and how going to the *wat* (or mosque, church, etc) helps her.

Introductory Comments

This is an interview about the story of your life since the eviction. We are asking you to play the role of storyteller about your own life -- to construct for us the story of your own past, present, and what you see as your own future.

In telling us a story about your own life, you do not need to tell us everything that happened to you. A story is selective. It may focus on a few key events, a few key relationships, a few key themes which recur in the narrative. In telling your own life story, you should concentrate on material in your own life that you believe to be important in some fundamental way -- information about yourself and your life which says something significant about you and how you have come to be who you are. Your story should tell how you are similar to other people as well as how you are unique.

Our purpose in these interviews is to learn more about the lives of women who have been evicted in Phnom Penh, and how these evictions have fit into their overall life course. This interview is for research purposes only, and its sole purpose is the collection of data concerning people's life stories.

The interview should last around 45 minutes to an hour, and no more than an hour and a half. I will guide you through the interview so that we can finish it in good time.

<u>Main Questions</u>

- Basic demographics
    - Please ask about the participant's:
        - Age
        - Highest level of education
        - Single, married, widowed, divorced
        - Job, if she has one
        - Ages and jobs of other people in household
        - Whether children (up to 17 years) are going to school, and if not what are they doing
        - Major health problems of anyone in household

- Can you describe your old neighborhood to me? How about living there?
    - Describe a typical day in your evicted neighborhood.

- What about your new neighborhood?
    - Is a typical day different? How so? Why or why not?

- Can you describe to me in detail what your life has been like since you left <evicted neighborhood>?
    - What are the main events that have happened in your life since you left? How did they affect you? How did you respond?

- How did you first come here? What happened?

- What was your first month here like? How did you settle in to this new place? How did you adjust?

- How about your friends and neighbors?
    - Have you remained in contact with your former friends and neighbors? If so, how?
    - How are your relations with your neighbors now?
    - Do you have any friends here? Tell me a story about one of them.
    - Do you get any help from other people here? Tell me an example
    - Is there a good place for children to play here? If yes, tell me about it. If no, why not?

- Can you tell me about a time when people living here cooperated together about a problem?

- What do you think has been the biggest problem or challenge you have faced since the eviction? Tell me a story about it. How did you manage it? How did all this make you feel?

- Have there been any improvements in your life since you left <evicted neighborhood>? What is the most important? Can you tell me a story about that? How has it helped? How has it benefited you?

- How is your family doing now?
    - Is everyone who lived in your household in <evicted neighborhood> still living together? If anyone has left, can you tell me about what prompted this decision? Do you still see him/her?
    - Can you describe how the evictions have affected the children? What did you do to support one of them as a mother/grandmother/auntie?
    - How are you getting along with your husband (if she has one)
    - How have the evictions affected elderly (or any other people) in the household?

- How does your life now compare to what it was before?

- How has the eviction affected your household income? Do you have the same jobs as before? Has your income changed? How have you managed this change?

- What or who beyond your household has helped you most these past few months? What did they do to help you?
    - Ask follow-ups about people "above" and "below" her
    - Ask follow-ups about people equal to her, in similar condition/situation
    - Ask about community relations, and how she gets along with her neighbors.

- Did you get any compensation from the government or company? If so, what was the compensation? Did you have any choice about what you got? If so, how did you decide? What is your opinion about the compensation?

- Has anything happened here that made you feel unsafe? Can you tell me about it?
    - Do you think this is a safe place to live? Why or why not?

- Do you go to pagoda (or mosque, church etc?) Why or why not? What is the benefit? What about spirits or ancestors?
    - Do you ever go to fortune-tellers, *kruu Khmer*, etc? Who? Why? How does this help you?

- How do you feel about your life situation right now? What do you think your future will be? What do you hope for?

- Is there anything else you would like to add or say?

Other questions if there is any more time or the participant seems to know a lot about this….

- Can you tell me about someone you know from <evicted neighborhood> who has psychological problems now? Tell me about this person.

- Can you tell me about someone you know from <evicted neighborhood> who is doing very well? Why or how is this?

- Are there domestic violence problems here? What happens?

- Do you know if anyone from <evicted neighborhood> is now in risky work like commercial sex or child labor? Does that happen a lot? Can you tell me about him or her?

- Tell me the story about how you moved to Phnom Penh.

Follow-Up Questions

Follow-up questions are extremely important to this study. The main questions (above) will get a lot of information about events and situations, and are like the "skeleton" of the interview. But, we need to ask a lot of follow-up questions to get more details, examples, or ideas from them, so that we get more complete answers.

Follow-up questions depend on what the woman has already said, and so it is difficult to plan them early. However, it is important to think about follow-up questions.

This study is about stress and coping. The main questions help us understand a lot about the stress in her life. *We will need to ask follow-up questions to understand how she is coping*.

Coping includes:

- Ways that she understands and thinks about her stress. This is because the way we think about something affects our feelings and actions. Our mind affects our heart and our behavior.
- Her feelings and emotions. She might also talk about her health – for example, many people have health problems when they have stress ---- headache, stomach ache, sleeping problem, tired, etc.

- What she is doing (or not doing!) to solve her problems and manage her feelings. (Or, she may not be taking any actions – sometimes people with stress become very passive, helpless, or try to avoid or forget something. This is also a "coping strategy.")

Example follow-up questions:

- What happened after that?
- What did you think about when that happened?
- What is/was your opinion about that?
- So you thought that problem was too big for you? Why?
- Did you think that someone would help you?
- Why did you decide to do that?
- How did you feel when that happened?
- How did that make you feel?
- You seem very sad when you say that. Is that right? Is that how you felt then?
- So you were not worried about XXX because YYY? Can you tell me more about that?
- After you went to make merit at the *wat*, how did you feel?
- How do stay hopeful when you have too many problems?

- When you worry that much, what do you do to calm down?
- Is there anybody you go to for help when you have this feeling?
- When you realized XXX, what did you do?
- When you got angry, what do you do?
- How did you comfort your child after she XXX?

Probes

Probes are neutral questions, phrases, sounds, and even gestures interviewers use to encourage participants to say more.

Example Probes

- What do you mean when you say . . .?"
- "Why do you think . . .?"

- “How did this happen?”
- “How did you feel about . . .?”
- “What happened then?”
- “Can you tell me more?”
- “Can you please elaborate?”
- “I’m not sure I understand X. . . .Would you explain that to me?”
- “How did you handle X?”
- “How did X affect you?”
- “Can you give me an example of X?”
- Neutral verbal expressions such as “uh huh,” “interesting,” and “I see”
- Verbal expressions of empathy, such as,“I can see why you say that was difficult for you”
- Mirroring technique, or repeating what the participant said, such as, “So you were 19 when you had your first child . . .”
- Body language or gestures, such as nodding in acknowledgment

Interview Guide 2: The Life Story Interview

(Adapted from McAdams, 1995)

Introductory Comments

This is an interview about the story of your life. We are asking you to play the role of storyteller about your own life -- to construct for us the story of your own past, present, and what you see as your own future.

In telling us a story about your own life, you do not need to tell us everything that has ever happened to you. A story is selective. It may focus on a few key events, a few key relationships, a few key themes which recur in the narrative. In telling your own life story, you should concentrate on material in your own life that you believe to be important in some fundamental way – information about yourself and your life which says something significant about you and how you have come to be who you are. Your story should tell how you are similar to other people as well as how you are unique.

Our purpose in these interviews is to learn more about the lives of women who have been evicted in Phnom Penh, and how these evictions have fit into their overall life course. This interview is for research purposes only, and its sole purpose is the collection of data concerning people's life stories.

The interview is divided into a number of sections. In order to complete the interview within, say, an hour and a half or so, it is important that we not get bogged down in the early sections, especially the first one in which I will ask you to provide an overall outline of your story. The interview starts with general things and moves to the particular. Therefore, do not feel compelled to provide a lot of detail in the first section in which I ask for this outline. The detail will come later. I will guide you through the interview so that we can finish it in good time. I think that you will enjoy the interview. Most people do.

Questions?

I. Life Chapters

We would like you to begin by thinking about your life as a story. All stories have characters, scenes, plots, and so forth. There are high points and low points in the story, good times and bad times, heroes and villains, and so on. A long story may even have several parts. Think about

your life story as having at least a few different parts. What might those parts be? I would like you to describe for me each of these parts of your life story.

[The interviewer may wish to ask for clarifications and elaborations at any point in this section, though there is a significant danger of interrupting too much. If the subject finishes in under 30 minutes, then she has not said enough, and the interviewer should probe for more detail. If the subject looks as if she is going to continue much beyond an hour, then the interviewer should try (gently) to speed things along somewhat. Yet, you don't want the subject to feel "rushed." (It is inevitable, therefore, that some subjects will run on too long.) This is a very open-ended interview, and so has the most projective potential. Thus, we are quite interested in how the subject organizes the response on his or her own. Be careful not to organize it for the subject.]

II. Critical Events

If the participant has finished in less than an hour, please continue with one or more of these follow-up questions.

Now that you have given us an outline of the chapters in your story, we would like you to concentrate on a few key events that may stand out in bold print in the story. A key event should be a specific happening, a critical incident, a significant episode in your past set in a particular time and place. It is helpful to think of such an event as constituting a specific moment in your life story which stands out for some reason. Thus, a particular conversation you may have had with your mother when you were 12 years old, how you moved to Phnom Penh, or a particular decision you made one afternoon last year, might be a key event in your life story. These are particular moments set in a particular time and place, complete with particular characters, actions, thoughts, and feelings.

I am going to ask you about some specific life events. For each event, describe in detail what happened, where you were, who was involved, what you did, and what you were thinking and feeling in the event. Also, try to convey what impact this key event has had in your life story and what this event says about who you are or were as a person. Please be very specific here.

Questions?

Event #1: Migration Experiences

Please tell me about how your first came to Phnom Penh, and other times when you have moved? When did you move, and why? Whose decision was it? How did this make you feel? How did your life change for the better? For the worse? How about your family? Do you like

living in Phnom Penh? Why or why not? *How did the eviction last year compare to these other moves in your life?*

Event #2: Peak Experience

A peak experience would be a high point in your life story -- perhaps the high point. It would be a moment or episode in the story in which you experienced extremely positive emotions, like joy, excitement, great happiness, uplifiting, or even deep inner peace. Today, the episode would stand out in your memory as one of the best, highest, most wonderful scenes or moments in your life story. Please describe in some detail a peak experience, or something like it, that you have experienced some time in your past. Tell me exactly what happened, where it happened, who was involved, what you did, what you were thinking and feeling, what impact this experience may have had upon you, and what this experience says about who you were or who you are. [Interviewer should make sure that the subject addresses all of these questions, especially ones about impact and what the experience says about the person. Do not interrupt the description of the event. Rather ask for extra detail, if necessary, after the subject has finished initial description of the event.]

Event #3: Nadir Experience

A "nadir" is a low point. A nadir experience, therefore, is the opposite of a peak experience. It is a low point in your life story. Thinking back over your life, try to remember a specific experience in which you felt negative emotions. You should consider this experience to represent one of the "low points" in your life story. You do not have to pick the worst time, in your life, just a difficult one. What happened? When? Who was involved? What did you do? What were you thinking and feeling? What impact has the event had on you? What does the event say about who you are or who you were?

Event #4: Other Turning Point

In looking back on one's life, it is often possible to identify certain key "turning points" -- episodes through which a person undergoes substantial change. Turning points can occur in many different spheres of a person's life -- in relationships with other people, in work and school, in outside interests, etc. I am especially interested in a turning point in your understanding of yourself. Please identify a particular episode in your life story that you now see as a turning point. If you feel that your life story contains no turning points, then describe a particular episode in your life that comes closer than any other to qualifying as a turning point. [Note: If subject repeats an earlier event (e.g., peak experience, nadir) ask him or her to choose another one. Each of the 8 critical events in this section should be independent. We want 8 separate events. If the subject already mentioned an event under the section of "Life Chapters," it may be necessary to go over it again here. This kind of redundancy in inevitable.]

Event #5: Earliest Memory

Think back now to your childhood, as far back as you can go. Please choose a relatively clear memory from your earliest years and describe it in some detail. The memory need not seem especially significant in your life today. Rather what makes it significant is that it is the first or one of the first memories you have, one of the first scenes in your life story. The memory should be detailed enough to qualify as an "event." This is to say that you should choose the earliest (childhood) memory for which you are able to identify what happened, who was involved, and what you were thinking and feeling. Give us the best guess of your age at the time of the event.

Event #6: Important Childhood Scene
Now describe another memory from childhood, from later childhood, that stands out in your mind as especially important or significant. It may be a positive or negative memory. What happened? Who was involved? What did you do? What were you thinking and feeling? What impact has the event had on you? What does it say about who you are or who you were? Why is it important?

Event #7: Important Adolescent Scene
Describe a specific event from your teen-aged years that stands out as being especially important or significant.

Event #8: Important Adult Scene
Describe a specific event from your adult years (age 21 and beyond) that stands out as being especially important or significant.

Event #9: Love Story
Tell me about your husband or other men in your life. How did you meet them and how was/is your relationship?

Event #10: One Other Important Scene
Describe one more event, from any point in your life, that stands out in your memory as being especially important or significant.

IV. Influences on the Life Story: Positive and Negative

Positive
Looking back over your life story, please identify the single person, group of persons, or organization/institution that has or have had the greatest positive influence on your story. Please describe this person, group, or organization and the way in which he, she, it, or they have had a positive impact on your story.

Negative
Looking back over your life story, please identify the single person, group of persons, or organization/institution that has or have had the greatest negative influence on your story. Please describe this person, group, or organization and the way in which he, she, it, or they have had a negative impact on your story.

Family Stories, Friends: Stories Heard
Growing up, many of us hear stories in our families or from our friends that stick with us, stories that we remember. Family stories include things parents tell their children about "the old days," their family heritage, family legends, and so on. Children tell each other stories on the playground, in school, on the phone, and so on. Part of what makes life fun, even in adulthood, involves friends and family telling stories about themselves and about others. Try to identify one story like this that you remember, one that has stayed with you. Again, tell me a little bit about the story, why you like it or why you remember it, and what impact, if any, it has had on your life.

VI. Alternative Futures for the Life Story
Now that you have told me a little bit about your past, I would like you to consider the future. I would like you to imagine two different futures for your life story.

Positive Future
First, please describe a positive future. That is, please describe what you would like to happen in the future for your life story, including what goals and dreams you might accomplish or realize in the future. Please try to be realistic in doing this. In other words, I would like you to give me a picture of what you would realistically like to see happen in the future chapters and scenes of your life story.

Negative Future
Now, please describe a negative future. That is, please describe a highly undesirable future for yourself, one that you fear could happen to you but that you hope does not happen. Again, try to be pretty realistic. In other words, I would like you to give me a picture of a negative future for your life story that could possibly happen but that you hope will not happen. [Note to interviewers: Try to get as much concrete detail as possible.]

VII. Other
What else should I know to understand your life story?

Appendix C: Translation Protocols (based on Baker, 1992).

Translation is much more than finding the "right word." Words often have several meanings, and reflect cultural values. When we translate, we must find ways to express the meaning of the speaker – tone, style, attitude.

Most words have a simple, literal translation – "cat" is *chmaa*. However, there are some cases when translation is more subtle and nuanced. There are also things in Khmer that have no direct translation into English. Here are some guidelines about how to translate these more difficult things.

If you have any questions about anything, please ask Colleen.

Translating Words.

- What if there is a word in Khmer, but no equivalent in English? This sometimes happens when a word is part of Khmer culture, but not English.
    - Sometimes you can just explain the word if it is simple. Khmer has a word for "sell virginity." There is no word for that in English, but you can just write "sell virginity."
    - If something is not easily translated into English, you should write the Khmer word in both Khmer and English letters, and then explain it in brackets [= …..]. This is especially important if it is something that is specific to Cambodian culture. Example *kruu-khmer* [a kind of traditional healer who may use traditional medicine and/or spiritual or magical powers]. Another example is *baab*, which is usually translated as "sin." But, "sin" is very specific to Christianity, and *baab* shows Buddhist ideas. So, you would write "*Bong* does not want *baab* [= Buddhist "sin", demerit, bad karma"].

- Word shows opinion or value in Khmer, but not in English.
    - Sometimes there are several words that mean the same thing, but are used to show opinion about it, for example if it is bad, good, or neutral. For example, in English "cruel" and "unkind" are very similar, but cruel suggests bad intention but unkind might be accidental. Slang words often have value meanings embedded in them. "Stiletto shoes" and "FM shoes" mean the same thing. But, the first is neutral (no

opinion or value) but the second is a very rude slang word. Rude words are usually very different in different cultures. There might be a word in Khmer that is rude or polite, but the English one has no value. Or, maybe the English word shows a value but the Khmer one does not.

- If a word shows opinion or value in Khmer but this is not clear in English, you should translate it into English and then explain in brackets. Example: [rude word] or [very formal word] or [approving word] or [strong word].

- Many several words for something in Khmer, but only one in English
  - Sometimes, the different Khmer words show kind of meaning or use that is very important, but English has just one word.
    - For example, the Eskimos (indigenous tribal people who live in Alaska and Canada) have many different meanings for "snow" but English only has one. Similarly, Khmer has different words for "rice" but English has only one.
    - Cambodia also has many different kinds of ghosts/spirits but they are not the same kinds of ghosts/spirits as in English, and there are many more of them in Cambodia.
    - *Pibaak, yaab,* and *vittania* can all be translated as "difficult", but the 3 Khmer words show different degrees of difficulty, and it is important to capture these different emphases in the translation, for example as "difficult," "so very hard" and "suffering"
  - So, you should keep the Khmer and connect it to English translation with a -hyphen-, and then explain in brackets […..]. *Example: the XXX-Ghost [a kind of angry ghost who…..].*

- Translate the Khmer word to an English word that is vague or has many meanings.
  - Sometimes when you translate a word from Khmer into the correct English word, but the English word has many meanings or is vague, and so you might need to explain it.
    - Sometimes, it is not too confusing (e.g., *koun* means child as a relationship, while *khmen* means child as an age) and it is usually clear what the English "child" means in context. So, you can just write "child".

- Other times you might need to explain the word or situation more. For example, "camp" in English is very vague and confusing because it has so many different meanings. It can be a noun *or* a verb, and we use the same word for a place where homeless people stay and also for going on a picnic. It also has another meaning that is very different: a specific kind of joke or comedy! "Used to" can mean either *thloap* or *dae* depending on the situation. "Fight" in English can be for disagreement or shouting or violence. These are all very different!
    - In this happens, please explain in brackets [……]. *Example: Then my family went to a [refugee] camp.*

- Khmer word has many meanings, is vague, and/or is not exactly the same as the English word.
    - Normally if this happens, you should <u>*choose*</u> the correct English word, the one that fits the situation.
        - Example: *memaay* in Khmer can be used by a woman who is widowed, divorced, separated, or abandoned. These are all *different* words in English, and you have to choose the right one. If her husband is not dead then she is *not* a "widow."
        - Example: *baan* is a more general word than the English "can", and sometimes the correct translation is something else. *Mien* often means "there are" rather than "to have." And *jap* is used for many more different actions than the English word "catch." Nobody can "catch" a house in English! Sometimes the correct translation of *jap* is grab, take, get, keep, or hold onto.
    - If the Khmer word is too vague or the situation is not clear, we may need to leave it in Khmer and explain it. For example, *vaai* is usually translated at "beat" or "hit." But, in fact English has many words for *vaai*, depending on the amount of force or pain, and whether the object is an animal/person or an object. *Vai* can be translated as tap, knock, push, slap, smack, spank, hit, punch, beat, attack, pummel, bash, vandalize, knock down, try to destroy etc etc., but you have to know a lot about the situation to choose the right English word. If a lady says "*vaai"* and we actually don't know how strong, then we cannot translate it precisely into English.

- In this case, underline the Khmer word in the transcript, and in the translation write it in Khmer using English letters, and explain in brackets. *Example: "Sometimes when I am so tired I* vaai *["to hit" but a general word, not sure how strong] my children.*

- Sometimes a word has both an exact meaning and a **metaphor** meaning.
  - A metaphor is a word that uses the literal meaning as a symbol. English example: "landslide." If there is a typhoon sometimes the ground is so wet that it falls down the mountain. This is the exact meaning of the word "landslide." However, more often in English it is used to mean "overwhelming majority." Because metaphors can show a lot about culture, I want to keep them in the English translation but they need to be explained.
  - You should write the exact word "landslide" but then write in parentheses and (= overwhelming majority) to show that it is a metaphor. Example: *He won the election in a landslide (= overwhelming majority).*

Titles (Bong-Srey, Puu, etc).

- In Khmer, we usually use titles such as "Younger Sister" or "Uncle" before someone's name. These titles are ways to show age, status, and relationship. There is a lot of cultural meaning in these titles, *so please keep them in the English translation*. Write the title in Khmer language, but use English letters. For example, "Then I spoke to *Bong* Piseth about……"
  - If someone uses a "wrong" title to show anger, insult, etc., please note this is brackets […].

Pronouns.

- There are 2 big difficulties with translating pronouns:
  - Khmer and English have different kinds of pronouns. For example, English uses "he, she, or it" but Khmer has different ones (example: *koat* for people and *via* for animals) that have different meanings. There are a lot of different words for "you"

in Khmer that are used to show relationships and intimacy between people! Titles (*Bong, Min, Taa*, etc) are also used as pronouns.
    - It is very important to use pronouns in English grammar, but in Khmer it is not necessary. But, without them I am sometimes confused about who is being spoken about.
- I am studying Khmer, and I understand the pronouns. So, what I would like you to do is: *if there is a pronoun in the Khmer transcript, please write it in Khmer (using English letters, but in italics.) If there is no spoken pronoun/title in the Khmer speech, but it is necessary in English grammar to have a pronoun, please insert the appropriate English one.*
    - Example: "I went to *Puu's* house and asked him if I could borrow some money." In the Khmer transcript *Puu* is said only one time, but we put in 'I' and 'him' to make the English sentence clear.
- If someone changes or uses the "wrong" pronoun to show an important meaning (for example, insult someone by calling an adult *via),* please explain in brackets what is happening. Please be especially careful about doing this if the lady is using titles or pronouns that are not so commonly used, and / or have special meaning (e.g., shows intimacy, respect, etc.).
    - Example: "Then *Bong* Piseth said '*via* [very insulting to call an older man *via*] should do this instead….."

<u>Idioms and Fixed Expressions.</u>

- Idioms and fixed expressions are used a lot when we speak, but are difficult to translate because the literal meaning can be confusing. Idioms often show a lot about culture, however, so it is good to explain them in both English and Khmer. For a fixed expression, it is usually better to just explain in English.
- For **<u>idioms</u>** please write a literal translation inside quotation marks "….." and then explain in brackets.
    - For example: My neighbor decided the only thing she could do was "squeeze oranges" [= sell sex].
    - English idiom: "You can lead a horse to water but you can't make him drink" [= can offer a good thing to someone but sometimes they refuse].
- **<u>Fixed expressions</u>** are phrases that mean something altogether, but translating individual words does not give the real meaning. Example from English is a "dry cow." A dry cow

means a cow that cannot give any milk. Another example from English is "cold feet," which really means someone has suddenly become nervous and hesitating.

- If something like this happens in Khmer, you can just explain in English "The cow has no milk." An example from Khmer is *kaa neuw pii dout* which means, "when I was a kid." You can just paraphrase (translation of the meaning, but is not literal) into English as "when I was a kid…." Or, you can translate from Khmer exactly and then explain [=when I was a kid].

Tense.

- One of the most important ways that Khmer and English are different is tense. You will have to decide what is the best tense to use for the English translation, which tense best fits the context. If something is unclear, please explain in brackets. Khmers use a lot of words like already, next, before etc. when speaking to show the time. Please keep these words in the English translation.

Style and Tone.

- People usually speak in a way that is different from writing, and so when we write a conversation it might seem strange or awkward when we read it. That is okay. Do not change her speech so that it seems to be a more "correct" writing style.
- Do not "correct" her language, for example make it more polite. If she says a bad word, write a bad word!
- If she says something really confusing (for example, stop in the middle of a sentence and change to something else suddenly), translate but write **(sic)** after.
- If she uses strange grammar, formal language, impolite language, show respect, etc. and cannot easily be translated into English, you can just explain this in brackets. […..]
- If she uses slang, then just show that in brackets [slang word]

If any word is difficult in English, underline it on the Khmer transcript, write the Khmer word in English letters, and then explain in brackets [……..]

If any phrase is difficult to express in English, translate it directly in quotes "……" and then explain in brackets [……..].

If you have any question, please just ask Colleen!

Appendix D: Profiles of the Five Evicted Neighborhoods and Participants.

Boeung Kak Lake.

Boeung Kak Lake was a large (90 hectares), scenic lake situated in north-central Phnom Penh. The area surrounding the lake was densely populated and included popular waterfront restaurants, boat launching sites, other recreation facilities, the city's backpacker tourist quarter, and crowded neighborhoods that housed some 4,250 families. The lake also absorbed considerable water in the rainy system, which made it critical to flood management in that part of the city. It also sustained the livelihoods of many families, who harvested fish, aquatic vegetables, and snails. In February 2007, the municipality and a company called Shikaku, which was affiliated with a ruling-party Senator, finalized a US$79 million 99-year lease to develop the 133-hectare site (lake and surrounding communities) – a contract that has been challenged as being illegal under Cambodian law (ABC News, 2008).[26] The land was sold for $0.60 per square meter in a city where prime real estate was valued at $700-$1,000 per square meter (Hughes, 2008). Shikaku began filling in the lake in August 2008; it was completely gone by 2012.

[26] Those interested in more detailed papers concerning the egregious legal issues concerning the Boeung Kak Lake lease are encouraged to consult Bugalski and Pred (2009), Amnesty International (2012), and Grimsditch and Henderson (2009); the latter paper argues that "the Boeung Kak case serves as a pertinent example of the dangers of uneven implementation of the existing regulatory framework, and apparent manipulation of the land classification system in order to serve powerful interests" (p. 61).

1997 aerial view of Phnom Penh's Royal Palace compound, with Boeung Kak Lake in the background. (Nelson, 1997).

Aerial view of Boeung Kak Lake in 2008 (Klein, 2011).

Aerial view of the filled-in Boeung Kak Lake site (Mai, 2012, reproduced in KI-Media, 2012).

Shikaku's business plan was not to develop the waterfront, but rather to fill in the entire lake area, raze the surrounding neighborhoods, and then build a new upscale 'satellite city' on the site. According to Bugalski and Pred (2009), the long-term lease contract "blatantly violates the Cambodian Land Law" (p. 1) on several grounds, including that lakes are State public property that cannot be sold or leased; that the lessee of State public land cannot damage the property or change its public function; and that many of the residents of the surrounding area have legal rights to the property they inhabited under Cambodian Land Law. Indeed, Bugalski and Pred argued that "the Boeung Kak case exemplifies how, by excising certain areas from the registration process, authorities arbitrarily classify land as State property, without regard to its characteristics or the

legitimate rights of those residing there" (p. 4).

Boeung Kak Lake has become "one of the most high-profile land conflicts in Cambodia" (Strangio, 2012, para. 3) in no small part because with some 4,250 families affected, it constitutes the "largest forced displacement of Cambodians since the Khmer Rouge" (BIC, 2009, para. 1). As of early 2013, the case continues to garner international attention. The egregious legal problems surrounding the lease have been well-documented, and ultimately led to a suspension of new lending to Cambodia by the World Bank (Tran, 2011), and there are numerous ongoing human rights concerns. Amnesty International (2012) declared thirteen women anti-eviction community activists who were sentenced to jail terms in May 2012 to be "prisoners of conscience and human rights defenders, imprisoned solely for the peaceful exercise of their right to freedom of expression" (p. 4). They catapulted to international prominence, with widespread campaigning on their behalf both within Cambodia and abroad. Their prison sentences were reduced and they have now been released[27], but they remain very prominent activists.

Nearly all of the residents who had been living near the former lake have been evicted from their properties. Homeowners were offered compensation options: a cash settlement of US$8,500, or a rowhouse more than 20 km away in Damnak Troyeung. Some were also later deemed eligible for a third option: temporary housing (for four years) at another site some 20

[27] One remains imprisoned for "intentional violence."

kilometers away, and then a new apartment unit that would be built near the former lake. Axelrod (2012) asserted that "none of the compensation offers meet the obligations of international laws regarding evictions and have been roundly condemned by civil society and deemed inadequate by those facing eviction" (para. 4).

This dissertation includes interviews with four women evicted from Boeung Kak Lake:

- Dina[28] was a twenty-something university graduate student who had been living with her homeowner elder brother and his family near Boeung Kak Lake while pursuing her studies. Dina was unable to continue living with them post-eviction due to the distance from the university, and so had moved into a small rental unit near campus where she was quite thoroughly enjoying her newfound freedom. She was very open, however, about the effect of the eviction on her brother's family. They had moved to a new company-built rowhouse, and were struggling with several serious difficulties related to their eviction, particularly loss of income by both his wife and mother-in-law.
- Konthy was a young, orphaned factory worker living in a rowhouse at the new Damnak Troyeung site. Her poor family had experienced multiple losses and difficulties related to the eviction, including inferior housing and loss of livelihood, although she carefully avoided criticism of the company or authorities. After nearly two years, they were managing with

[28] Pseudonyms are used throughout, and identifying details masked.

the income she and her sister earned from their jobs in a garment factory, while their grandmother did sewing piecework at home.

- Reachny was a young mother and had been an anti-eviction community activist at Boeung Kak Lake. Eventually, however, her family conceded and accepted the cash settlement. Unable to find a new house to buy closer to the city, they ironically ended up purchasing a new rowhouse in the same compound that other Boeung Kak families had been relocated to, because they had friends in the community who had told her about a unit that was up for sale at a low price. Reachny and her family had been considerably harmed by the eviction. Without any viable livelihood opportunities nearby, and too far away to affordably commute on a daily basis, they had suffered an enormous loss of income. Reachny and her parents were now all unemployed and dependent on the earnings of her husband, who had moved out of their home to live with his parents in the city center, which was closer to his job.
- Sina was a housewife in her early 30s who had relocated to a new rowhouse in Damnak Troyeung. Her husband kept the same job he had prior to the eviction, doing electrical maintenance and repairs in a factory, although the family lost secondary income that he had brought home as a motorcycle taxi driver evenings and weekends. Although their income had been detrimentally affected, Sina's new house was superior in quality to her former house near the lake, and she was relieved by not having drowning risks so near her children. Sina had also been experiencing very serious marital difficulties and regarded it as

an extra benefit that her husband had been removed from the bars and brothels around Boeung Kak Lake that he used to frequent. She was very satisfied with the relocation and believed the eviction had a positive impact on her family.

Borei Keila.

Borei Keila, a 14-hectare site in central Phnom Penh, has been characterized as having both "some of the highest [land values] in the city" (Rabé, 2009, p. 149) and "a crowded slum with almost every square meter of the original landscaped grounds taken over by migrants and transformed into informal housing" (p. 152). Some 1,800 families were tucked into this space. It was especially well-known for having a large concentration of people living with HIV and AIDS (PLWHA), because an NGO extended free social services and medical treatment to them.

Map of Phnom Penh showing Borei Keila. The large teardrop-shaped area shaded darker grey at the top-center of the map is the former Boeung Kak Lake. (Source: Google Maps)

Borei Keila (literally, "sports complex") was built up in the 1960s to house athletes training at the nearby Olympic Stadium. Following the collapse of the Pol Pot regime, the available housing was largely distributed to police officers. Meanwhile, as the city became

resettled with rural migrants and repatriated refugees, the grounds became densely crowded with informal settlements and eventually became "one of the most populous and conspicuous slum areas in central Phnom Penh" (Rabé, 2009, p. 154).

Forced evictions have loomed over Borei Keila for many years, dating back to 1993. Since then there have been regular efforts to replace informal settlements with commercial development projects. As Rabé (2009) comments, "given the site's large size and its strategic location, the Municipality faced no difficulties trying to interest private developers" (p. 154). Areas of Borei Keila have periodically been slated for development, accompanied by a series of forced evictions under varying circumstances. Some have been forced out under threatening circumstances, and it has been well documented that some people – particularly families affected by HIV/AIDS – have been excluded from promised compensation, and that agreements have been reneged upon (LaRocco, 2012; LICADHO, 2009). For example, a "land sharing" agreement that was approved in 2003 underpinning re-development in Borei Keila required new apartment blocks to be built on-site for homeowners and long-term renters displaced by the project (HRW, 2009). Although "hailed… as a victory for the poor, and an example of slum improvement for other poor settlements in the city" (Rabé, 2009, p. 157), the success of this land sharing endeavor was mixed at best.[29] There were numerous problems surrounding the implementation of the agreement. Chief among these was reducing the number of apartment

[29] Those who are keenly interested in a more detailed discussion of evictions in Borei Keila over the last 20 years are encouraged to consult Rabé's excellent (2009) dissertation.

buildings that would be built in 2007, leaving many eligible families uncompensated. There have been widespread allegations that HIV-affected families were excluded for compensation outright "because they were deemed by the Phnom Penh Municipality to be in a different category, due to their HIV/AIDS status" (LICADHO, 2009, p. 1). The "temporary solution" for these families was to be moved into "The Green Buildings," which are hot, over-crowded, squalid metal sheds originally built to accommodate construction workers. These families were evicted again in June and July 2009 and moved to a relocation camp in Tuol Sambo, Prey Veng commune – an "isolated, semi-rural area… far from their jobs and support services in the city, and even more exposed to stigmatization" (LICADHO, 2009, p. 3). Conditions in the camp were appalling: metal shacks that were uninhabitable due to heat, no utilities, and lacking access to medical care and sufficient water/sanitation facilities. After an outcry by human rights and AIDS advocates, commitments were made to construct cement rowhouses. While these were being built, residents were moved into a large, open-sided communal tent usually used for outdoor wedding banquets.

Four women interviewed for this dissertation were among those evicted from Borei Keila during the summer of 2009, to make way for an expansion of the Ministry of Tourism. Two had been given apartments in the new building in Borei Keila itself. The other two were in the relocation camp in Tuol Sambo, living in a large, open-sided communal tent. The participants were:

- Bopha, an elderly HIV- woman whose husband perished during the Pol Pot regime; she never remarried. Her only son had also died as an adult, and she lived alone – an extremely unusual and unhappy circumstance for an elderly person in Cambodia. Bopha was neglected by her daughter-in-law, her grandchildren were minors, and she had no other living relatives. Regarding the July 2009 eviction, she was allocated a flat in a new building constructed near her former home, which she had bought in 1993. She reported that her new accommodation was superior to her original home, and the eviction had an overall positive outcome for her. At the time of the interview, she was destitute and dependent on the generosity of a neighbor family who included her in their meals. She otherwise had nothing to eat. Bopha was originally selected for a follow-up life history interview, but when we returned to her apartment, neighbors reported that she had fallen gravely ill. The interviewer and I visited her in the hospital, where she appeared near death and deeply grateful that we had come to see her. The nurse reported that she had had no other visitors.
- Danet was an illiterate, resourceful single mother with three small children who lived in the relocation camp and had no support from her family or their fathers. A former renter in Borei Keila, she had been excluded from post-eviction support that had been extended to HIV+ renters. Homeless and destitute, she had managed to travel to the relocation camp separately to join her HIV+ former neighbors. Danet and her children were denied most relief distributions – including eligibility for one of the new rowhouses being built – because

they were HIV-. The HIV+ neighbors nevertheless allowed her to live together with them, sharing their food and tent accommodation. A social enterprise operating in the community had however reluctantly allowed her to participate in their handicrafts project, despite her HIV- status. Danet earned a basic income knitting toy animals for it.

- Metta lived in a tent at the relocation camp that had been built in Tuol Sambo; at the time of the interview she had been there for seven months with inadequate housing. New rowhouses were being built on the site, which she and her family were eligible for. Meanwhile, she was selling basic goods from a platform and knitting toys for a social enterprise. She and her husband were both HIV+, otherwise healthy, and parents. She carefully avoided criticizing authorities or the company, instead focusing on her and her community's need and worthiness for further NGO assistance.
- Pola was an HIV+ but otherwise healthy woman in her mid-thirties, married with young children. Her family moved to Borei Keila from elsewhere in the city after she and her husband were diagnosed with HIV, because they needed the free services available in the neighborhood. An NGO provided them with free local housing until they were able to support themselves, in addition to ongoing medicine and services. Although originally a renter, her family was given a new apartment nearby their former neighborhood because they were considered to be "permanent residents," since they had lived there since 2000.

They were unable to live in the new apartment, however[30], so rented it out and meanwhile rented an extremely basic wooden shack elsewhere in the neighborhood. Pola was satisfied with the arrangement and considered the eviction to have had a positive outcome for her because her housing was similar to before, her livelihood was unchanged, and she had the additional benefit of rental income.

Dey Krahom.[31]

Dey Krahom ("Red Soil") was a densely-populated 3.6-hectare neighborhood strategically situated in the city center, in the Tonlé Bassac district near Phnom Penh's riverfront, which provided ample employment and income-generating opportunities for the nearly 1,500[32] families living there. As in much of the city, the area was informally resettled in the early 1980s, and its population mushroomed through the 1990s. The legal status of many of the properties became murky, however. The land was originally registered as state land belonging to the Municipality of Phnom Penh and the Ministry of Culture. However, over time residents were issued family books and other government documents; this "soft title" was

[30] Apartments were allocated on a lottery basis, and Pola's family was given an apartment on an upper floor. They could not live in it because there were too many stairs for her small children or AIDS-stricken husband to manage, and they could not afford the fees to connect water and electricity services to the apartment.

[31] Those interested in more detailed accounts of Dey Krahom are encouraged to consult Rabé (2009) and LICADHO (2008).

[32] This number has been challenged as being inflated.

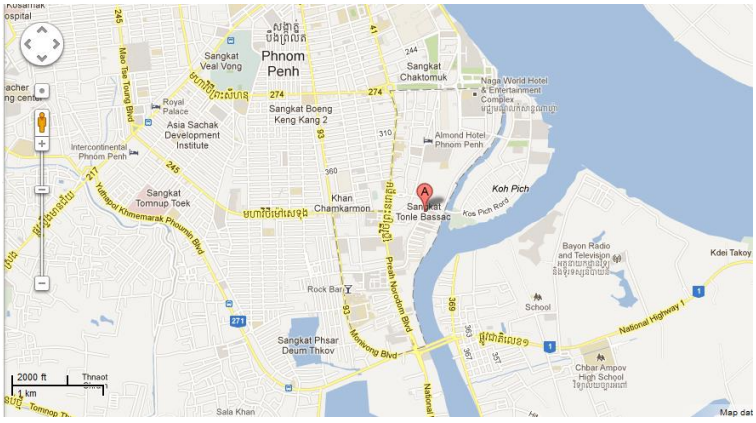
interpreted by many as state recognition of their ownership. Although titles were never issued, many residents were eligible for them under the 2001 Cambodian Land Law (Amnesty International, 2011). Despite this, however, eviction remained a constant threat.

As business opportunities along the riverfront soared, Dey Krahom and other lower-income communities in the area became extremely attractive to commercial developers. In 2003, a "land sharing" plan was proposed, very similar to the one described in the profile of Borei Keila. This plan was intended to accommodate both commercial development and community housing; apartment buildings would be built on-site and distributed to displaced community members. For a variety of reasons, however, it was not possible to do so in a way that satisfied both interest groups, and the land sharing negotiations broke down. The leaders of the Dey Krahom neighborhoods then entered into secret meetings with the 7NG company to pursue another strategy: 7NG would assume ownership of all of Dey Krahom, while in exchange homeowners[33] would be given newly-built rowhouses on a 50-hectare site in Damnak Troyeung, some 20 kilometers away. Homeowners would also have the option of choosing a cash settlement instead of a new house, although it should be understood that the settlement was typically below market value for their property. (According to LICADHO, 2009b, the cash settlement option was later rescinded; as in the other communities, the specificities of compensation packages offered shifted constantly and were at best inconsistently applied.) A

[33] The company's compensation offer applied only to homeowners; however elsewhere it referred to new apartments for "1,465 families" which would have included renters (LICADHO, 2008), or perhaps their landlords. The status of renters vis-à-vis compensation was never clarified.

contract that was binding on all residents of Dey Krahom – but unknown to them - was signed in January 2005. According to LICADHO (2008), "the story of Dey Krahom is a sad but not uncommon example of how, in Cambodia's epidemic of land-grabbing, powerful individuals and companies trample upon the housing and property rights of the poor with the complicity of government and state authorities" (p. 5).

Published reports as well as the interviews conducted for this dissertation indicate a dizzying array of problems regarding inclusion and exclusion for compensation from Dey Krahorn. Corrupt practices included "ghost names" (i.e., non-residents) receiving new rowhouses; anti-eviction protestors having their names stricken from the lists of those eligible for compensation; internal contradictions concerning eligibility of renters for compensation; the necessity of bribes to maintain eligibility for compensation; and arbitrary exclusions. Some ended up disenfranchised altogether. Renters who were physically forced out in January 2009 ended up homeless and camped out on a roadside in Damnak Troyeung, only to be transferred nearly a year later to a barren relocation site some 40



Map showing Phnom Penh's Tonlé Bassac district, which included the Dey Krahom, Reak Reay, and Group 78 neighborhoods. Source: Google Maps.

kilometers further in a neighboring province, where they lacked shelter, water / sanitation, and livelihood opportunities. When the research team visited the camp, conditions were abominable, and the people were living in absolute poverty.

The negotiations, contract terms, and signing were conducted in secret, without any notification, much less participation, of community residents themselves. Many families refused to abide by its terms. All of the community leaders were eventually unseated, and legal proceedings challenging the contract were supported by a majority of residents. The community's mobilization in opposition to forced eviction became the central issue in a campaign by the Cambodian human rights NGO LICADHO, with further support from Amnesty International and other international agencies. None of these efforts were successful. 7NG and the municipality sought to enforce the terms of the January 2005 contract and embarked on what one prominent human rights agency termed a "campaign of coercion" (LICADHO, 2008, p. 14). Fifty police officers were deployed full-time to the community, local commerce was disrupted by the authorities, and there were "occasional violent eviction attempts" (Rabé, 2009, p. 177). More and more residents accepted the company's compensation packages; Rabé (2009) concluded that "a majority of families was reluctantly acknowledging that the land swap was really going to take place" (p. 178) and capitulated. As LICADHO (2008) echoed: "Over time, hundreds of families at Dey Krahorm have accepted 7NG's terms and agreed to move out. Some of them may genuinely have been satisfied with the deal offered to them by the

company, but for others the campaign of intimidation was likely a critical factor in their decision to leave" (p. 8). However, there were an important number of holdouts as well.

The final forced eviction of Dey Krahom, carried out under violent conditions, was conducted on 24 January 2009. Several hundred police "in full riot gear . . . armed with electric and steel batons, wooden sticks, tear gas, water cannons and guns" (LICADHO, 2009b, para. 1-2) broke through barricades that had been built by residents and demolished the remaining homes and market stalls. At least 18 people were injured, 5 of them seriously (LICADHO, 2009b). Many of the remaining residents were renters who were excluded from any compensation at all; they were trucked to the Damnak Troyeung relocation site, but, without any claim to housing, they ended up camped along a roadside under makeshift shelters built from scrap materials and plastic sheeting distributed by an NGO.

Within the Damnak Troyeung settlement itself, Rabé (2009) estimated that only about half of the families were actually staying on-site, presumably due to a lack of job opportunities. About a third sold their new units immediately; others moved elsewhere but held their rowhouses in reserve, perhaps until property values rose. There was also reportedly a large number of "ghost names" – people who had never lived in Dey Krahom but had paid bribes to get their names on the list of those to be given a new house. Meanwhile, the renters who had been dumped on the roadside in Damnak Troyeung remained camped there for nearly a year before being transported to a distant, barren field 40 kilometers away in a nearby province,

where they were allocated small land plots that lacked basic services, transportation, or livelihood opportunities.

This study includes five women forcibly evicted from Dey Krahom:

- Channa was a married woman in her thirties with two small children; when we returned for a life history interview, she was pregnant with a third. She is illiterate and had always worked in the informal sector. Prior to the eviction the family had been poor but getting by; afterwards, they were left completely destitute. She and her family had been renters in Dey Krahom. When we interviewed her nearly a year later she was living along the roadside in Damnak Troyeung. She gave a life history narrative five months later at the relocation camp, where her family was in even more desperate circumstances.
- Chanthon was a former renter, in her late 40s at the time of the interview. Married with adult children, she had been among the working poor prior to the eviction, and destitute after. She was living in the relocation camp for renters when interviewed 13 months after her eviction from Dey Krahom.
- Narun was also destitute and living in the relocation camp for renters when interviewed 13 months after her eviction. She was a widow, in extremely poor health, with both adolescent and adult children. She had had a son recruited by a trafficker to work illegally in Thailand.
- Sorya was a young, single woman in her early 20s who had lived in Dey Krahom her whole life. Her family had been prosperous shopkeepers. They had refused to accept the 7NG

compensation package because it was far below the market value of their property; they were forced out in January 2009 and denied any compensation. The household lost their source of livelihood as well as property of considerable value; they next had to separate and take menial jobs. Sorya initially worked as a domestic servant. At the time of the interview, a year after the eviction, she was living with her elderly mother next to an open sewage canal, eking out a living on a minimal salary doing community outreach for a local NGO.

- Vanna was in her 40s, a married renter with children at home, when she was evicted from Dey Krahom in January 2009. Nearly a year later her family was destitute and homeless, living along a roadside in Damnak Troyeung in an encampment with other former Dey Krahom renters. She was illiterate and, like Channa and Chanthon, had been working poor in Dey Krahom and destitute after the eviction.

Group 78.

Group 78 was situated in central Phnom Penh along the riverside near the bridge to Koh Pich ("Diamond Island"[34]), and was home to 146 largely lower-income families. This community had been re-settled in the early 1980s, and included a large number of *Kampuchea Krom* migrants (i.e., ethnic Khmers from Vietnam's Mekong Delta). According to Bristol (2007), "in many cases [Group 78 residents had] documents issued by the local authorities recognizing

[34] Koh Pich was also the site of a forced eviction; residents were displaced to make way for luxury commercial development. However, Koh Pich is most known for a November 2010 tragedy, in which 347 were killed in a stampede on the densely overcrowded bridge during Phnom Penh's annual Water Festival.

their legal occupation of the land. They clearly met the requirements of the Land Law, though inexplicably they had been refused title by the authorities when they applied for it in 2004" (p. 7). The land was valued by Bonna Realty at US$10 million (STT and HRTF, 2008), but families were originally offered $500 and 5 x 12 meter plots of land at a site 20 kilometers outside the city. This offer was later raised to $5,000 and a plot of land, or else $8,000.[35] Residents of Group 78, supported by NGOs and land rights advocates, launched a series of legal actions to have their property rights recognized and refute the transfer of their land to the Sour Srun company. Indeed, this community is especially known for its strong, well-documented, and tenacious efforts to overturn the eviction orders through court action, or at least to agitate for better compensation. For example, community representatives at one point formally offered to accept 85% of market value for their properties, but this was rejected (BABC, n.d.). Although residents' claims were widely considered to be valid by legal observers, their lawsuits ultimately failed, and the land was transferred to the Sour Srun Company.

On 15 July 2009, a municipal order forced out the remaining families and the properties were demolished. The site and surrounding area now includes a number of prominent buildings, including luxury hotels and the Australian Embassy. One describes the area as "strategically located in the heart of Phnom Penh… a walk away from landmarks such as Independence Monument and the Royal Palace. Visit the local tourist attractions including Wat Phnom, the city's museums and the beautiful Riverside along the Tonle Sap and Mekong rivers.

[35] In the end, there was some variability with compensation packages that were actually distributed. At least one family was excluded altogether for refusal to cooperate (BABC, n.d.).

The hotel suits business travellers as well as pleasure travellers [*sic*]. The hotel enables our corporate clients to conduct business seamlessly in a comfortable surrounding" (Almond Hotel, n.d., para. 1-2).

Four women from Group 78 were interviewed for this dissertation:

- Naree was a middle-aged woman who expressed great difficulty adapting to her new life circumstances. She lived with her husband, along with two of her adult children and their own spouses and children. She was very angry about the eviction, and being forced to accept a $9,500 compensation package, which was far below market value for her property. It had cost over $30,000 to buy a new home elsewhere within the city, but the new area was not good for business, the shop they had opened on their ground floor was failing, and the family was heavily in debt.
- Pheary was in her mid-thirties, and earned a very basic living selling coconuts. She and her children had been living in Trapeang Anh Chan since leaving Group 78, and her husband was a construction worker in another province. Pheary's family was one of the first to accept offered compensation and leave the community, rather than participate in court actions against it. She very carefully avoided any criticism of the authorities, company, or eviction process, and expressed satisfaction with her life circumstances. However, her voice throughout the interview was flat and guarded.
- Phun was a 48-year-old woman who had migrated from Vietnam in the early 1990s and settled in Group 78. She had been married several times, and had adult children and

numerous grandchildren. Her family had been involved in the court cases opposing the eviction, but when those efforts failed, they accepted a US$10,000 settlement. Unable to purchase land in the city, they purchased a plot in the area where former neighbors who had accepted a land swap had been transferred to, some 20 kilometers away. Phun actually lived in a very attractive home, which had been financed with money sent by relatives abroad. However, it was something of a "white elephant" – the family had incurred considerable debt to finish it, and found themselves unable to earn a living at their new location. At the time of her second life-history interview, the family had scattered. Phun and some of her children were living in substandard rental units in the city center, while grandchildren were left at the new house with adults who were too old or ill to work. Phun especially regretted that she was unable to continue living with her husband, to whom she was very devoted.

- Thida was in her early 50s, and lived in Trapeang Anh Chan, where she had bought a small parcel of land with the $8,000 she had received as compensation. She was a widow and lived in a household composed of many members of her extended family. Since her eviction from Group 78, she had struggled immensely to cope with poverty, debt, poor housing, and health problems that had all been worsened by the eviction.

Reak Reay.

Reak Reay ("Happy") was a 4-hectare area situated along Phnom Penh's riverside, in the Tonlé Bassac area, and was largely settled during the early 1990s. Some bought land from soldiers who had been living there in the immediate postwar period. Over two hundred families were living in the community when the land dispute emerged in 2005. In late 2006, the community was formally informed that the land belonged to Bassac Garden City / Canadia Bank. Residents were initially informed that they would be compensated with a plot of land at a relocation site and US$800 (HIC, n.d.). Community protests erupted, and the usual back-and-forth of lawsuits, negotiations (transparent and otherwise), anti-eviction NGO advocacy efforts, official intimidation, instances of violence, and shifting compensation offers followed, although this case has not been as well-represented in published reports as the others in this study. Final demolition of the site was carried out in late 2009, and a luxury gated community has been built that is very popular with diplomats and wealthy expatriates.

Four women from Real Reay were interviewed:

- Dawy had a remarkable life history. Despite being left orphaned and destitute during the war, she had managed with a combination of luck and pluck to get ahead, and at the time of her interview, she held a secure white-collar job despite her limited formal education. Married with young children, she had been deeply involved in anti-eviction efforts on behalf of Reak Reay, which she found immensely stressful. She eventually accepted a $23,000

buyout for her home and moved to a distant location, where she immediately was stricken with a stress-related illness.

- Kanya was a middle-aged, middle-class professional who, after the eviction, had moved out with her family to a neighboring province, from where she commuted to her job in Phnom Penh. She was well-educated, articulate, and angry about the loss of her valuable home and a community she had lived in for years. She received a cash settlement of $23,000.
- Sokhan was a remarkably industrious former renter in Reak Reay. As such, she had received no compensation other than a token sum to help with moving expenses. A no-nonsense woman with a keen eye for business, she had been careful to dissociate herself from any perceived trouble (eviction-related or otherwise) involving her neighbors. Among the entire sample, she alone focused on improving her business (roasting bananas and sweet potatoes) rather than securing new property, and had used the eviction as an opportunity to strategically improve it. This had been very successful, and despite a transitional period of difficulty, the family had come out ahead.
- Sreymom was an older woman who lived with an adult daughter and the daughter's husband and children. The entire family was dependent upon the daughter's earnings from a job as a housekeeper for an expatriate family. This family also received $23,000, with which they bought a new house elsewhere in the city. However, they had become deeply indebted to do so.

Appendix E: Extended Excerpts from Selected Narratives.

1. Chanthon: "I don't know what to do since I can't make money, so I just persevere in pain."[36]

The most convenient place to live in was Dey Krahom because it was near a business area… It was in the city, it was convenient for our businesses, even though we sold only small things we could get enough profit to eat with . . . [My income has been] very affected . . . When I lived at Dey Krahom, I could earn at least 70,000 to 80,000 riel (≈US$17.50 – 20.00) per week in profit . . . We didn't sell only one thing, we sold drinking water and other drinks like orange juice, beer, Khmer energy drinks, meatballs, and eggs . . . I could get 70,000 to 80,000 Riel in profit in one night [in a weekend] . . . Sometimes, I could profit up to 100,000 Riel (≈US$25) . . . But on weekdays, I could get only enough to eat with . . .

After the eviction I moved from Dey Krahom to Damnak Troyeung… We didn't have anything to do [to earn money], we went to *bach trey* ["scatter fish," a technique to catch fish in shallow water without equipment] . . . We didn't have anything to do for nearly a year . . . [We] sold an old motorbike for $160 . . . We had this money, it included a little money that we could earn, it helped us eat but by the time we arrived here, we were really completely out of cash . . . [The money from selling that motorbike] helped us for a very long time, nearly one year . . . We dared not to eat anything [much or special] because we didn't have jobs . . . We caught fish and found things so we could save the money . . . Hmm, hmm, one day, one day,

[36] Some parts of this narrative have been re-ordered to improve coherency and flow.

hmm one day, if I include the cost of water, gas, charcoal, firewood, ice, and light, I spent nearly 7,000 to 8,000 Riel [≈US$1.75 - $2] per day, and we already had rice [from an NGO donation] . . . but I didn't have any income . . .

Two days after we arrived here [in the relocation camp, an NGO] gave us rice. My cousin saw that I had nothing so he gave me capital to start up my business but now I lost that $20 of start-up capital [short laugh], and then I put my document possession into pawn for $20, and don't know when I can pay it and the interest back yet . . .

Since I have lived at Damnak Troyeung, I have never had any tasty food to eat, nothing, and no one dares to eat anything . . . [In this relocation camp] it is worse, we don't even have money to build a house . . . We make money just enough for food and give a little to the children. That's it . . . How can I save money, Younger Sister, besides, I lost all my start-up capital . . . I can't find a solution… I've [discussed with others] but we don't know how to manage . . .

Talking about, talking about this selling, [here in the camp] there are always people buying on credit . . . Sometimes they owe me for two or three days and sometimes some people owe me for a long time . . . They owed me for long time like this, and so I had to pawn my possession document for $20 . . . When we, when we lose our start-up capital, we have nothing to do so we have to pawn our possession documents to get more money to restart the business again . . . like a $20 loan plus they charge $5 interest, so total of interest and capital is $25 . . . [Those who couldn't pay this back] give the land plot to the pawnbroker . . . Hmm,

normally if we lose our property, we have to walk out . . . There are a lot of households who have lost their property . . . Poor people become poor because of this . . . Because poor people are trapped, they don't know what they should do so they pawn their property, pawn it for only $100, the moneylender doesn't give more than $100 . . . $100 charges $20 [in interest], if we don't have money to pay the interest from month to month, in the third month, they will not return our possession document . . . They will take our possession document and the land plot . . .

[My son has been in Thailand] for nearly a month . . . *si chhnuol* ("eat[37] coolie," i.e., unskilled hand-to-mouth labor) . . . Three, four, five people, they went together, gone, went to work. "We live in Cambodia and we don't know what to do here, if we lived in Phnom Penh, we could work as construction workers" they said . . . We don't know what to do, we sleep without eating, humans are very hungry [i.e., people need to eat] . . . We can't keep going if we don't eat, so we have to find a job even though it's far away, maybe we can make money or something when we work out there . . . Living here, we don't know what to do . . . Maybe when he makes some money [my son can come home], if he doesn't have money how can he come back, it's so far . . . I can't phone him, but he can [call my neighbor, who has a telephone]. If I want to call my son, I don't know where to call to because he went on a fishing boat, I don't know where he went.

[37] The verb *si* means eat, but is used for animals, not people (who would instead *nyam*). The use of the word *si* implies that the worker's life is like that of an animal rather than a human.

I have problems Younger Sister, problems like . . . When we don't have [anything, my husband] feels frustrated so he curses his wife and child . . . I don't know what to do here, I don't have any idea, I don't know what I should sell, I have become old now, my eyes aren't so good, my eyes hurt and are always teary . . . But I haven't gone [to an optometrist] yet because the transportation from here is nearly 20,000 Riel (≈US$5), not nearly, it *is* 20,000 Riel, Younger Sister . . . I think that the transportation is very expensive and I don't know what to do since I can't make money, so I just persevere in pain . . .

Everyone here was moved from Dey Krahom . . . Everyone lived as I did in Dey Krahom, to sum up, nobody was idle . . . Everyone sold along the riverside . . . Everybody had a job, some people sold dried snails, some people sold boiled snails, some people sold meatballs and eggs, some people sold boiled corn, some people sold lotuses or something else, everybody had their own job… Nobody lacked money, it was very easy to make money at Dey Krahom, it means that it was very easy to make money there because it is in the city… Near the city, near Phnom Penh, I think that people in Phnom Penh can make more money than people in the countryside . . . [People in Phnom Penh can] spend money and buy things without feeling bad… And Phnom Penh is easy for sellers, because the selling is good. We don't have anything here, and we have to be thrifty… Living here is too far from the city, here is a rural area, really a rural area, nobody buys our things.

2. Dawy: "Are we animals or human beings?"

I had lived in Reak Reay since 1997 . . . I bought that land for $400 and then I built the house. My land was only 4m [wide] but it was maybe 30m long . . . At first, we didn't have a proper road going to the house. [Access] was too difficult so my group [i.e., neighbors] needed to raise some money and we also got some support from an NGO to build a road so we could easily get around there . . . Then the authorities and company started to *samleung* (greedily gaze at) my community after they bought Koh Pich [a nearby island in the river] . . . At first they threatened to evict us . . . They told us to move away, move from our houses and agree to take a flat in Damnak Troyeung . . . But we all protested at the *sangkat* [commune] office. We told them that we could not accept it because the place is too far, it would be too difficult for our children to go to school and for us to go to work . . . So they postponed the eviction and so we also postponed [our complaints].

At last, they offered us $20,000 dollars in restitution for each house . . . They pressured us. But my group had big houses because our houses were 16m long . . . My house had tile floors, a zinc roof, and walls. We could say that my house had a better look than others' . . . So I couldn't accept the price of $20,000. One day the city governor came to my community. I asked him directly, I said "Please Uncle! I can't accept this price because my house is big and the other houses are small. Why do big and small houses get the same price?" . . . He answered me, he said "Be careful, eating big food can choke you" . . . It was hard to solve, after he said like this . . . [In the end] I got only 23,000 dollars and I tried very hard [to get more], you know? I was

working [to mobilize] the community, it was not easy . . . We were afraid of them [i.e., the company/authorities] . . . I decided [to accept] because I felt tired of the situation. I needed to work at my office and I was also working for the community without benefit . . . even though we knew that for our house, one square meter was worth $600-700 but that couldn't be [realistically expected from the company]. Yes, if I did the math, I had more than 100 square meters so how much money should I get? That's $70 - 80,000 dollars! We tried to the best of our ability but we got only $23,000 . . . Yes at last we got that price, but when I moved here it was voluntary [i.e., they did have to physically force her]. I knew that when I moved here it would have a big impact on my feelings . . . It is far from the city. From my house to my work place is 18 kilometers . . . At first, it was really hard for me to accept my own decision . . . Because, first: I wanted good air, and second: I had only a little money, so I couldn't buy a house with good air in the city… And I also felt afraid that if I bought a new house on [city] land that I might be evicted again. Oh what would I do? . . . It would hurt again . . .

It was our good luck that they gave money to us, better than people in Dey Krahom and Sambok Chap [who were denied compensation] . . . But we still think, are we animals or human beings? Are we Khmers or foreigners living on this land? . . . The truth is that I am 100 percent Khmer! My parents died in the Pol Pot regime . . . I am 100 percent Khmer! So I should have the same rights as others! But I had no rights as a human being, we got nothing from the authorities or company . . . It meant they evicted us and they gave only that amount of money . . . And they thought that they were being good because they gave money to us. But the truth is,

we think that we were in the most *cheu jap* ["pain catch," i.e., emotional hurt] that they classified us as poor and powerless people that they must *keap sangkawt* ("squeeze oppress", i.e., control by force or power) by all means.

We weren't happy because the original price of our house was 2 or 3 times more than this . . . but we got only this and it wasn't possible for us to claim more . . . not possible at all… I think it didn't affect my livelihood much because I have a job and my husband also has a job . . . It is not affected, but I am far from my work place . . . In short, I am not how things would be if I didn't have a job.

3. Dawy: "When I had my own house, even though it was not very nice, it was a shelter that I had for my children's warmth." [38]

When I had my own house, even though it was not very nice, it was a shelter that I had for my children's warmth that we didn't have to pay rent for or to live in a filthy place. It was a small house, but it was our property. And when [the eviction] happened like that, if it were you, wouldn't you be *cheu jab* ["pain catch," i.e., hurt emotionally]? We worked very hard, saved money to build a proper house to live in; finally, they came to scream that it was their land and we had to leave.

At that time, we were very *cheu jab* because I am a Khmer and I had - I said at the Phnom Penh Municipality that, I am a Khmer just like you are, we have had the

[38] This passage is from her life history interview.

same fortune. For example during the Pol Pot regime, you were forced to leave your house, like my family. But now, why is it that I am living in a small community, a small village, why it is like that again? In other places, they can live legally, they have the right to live there, why does my group who are living here, living in a place that we have the right to live in, that we had spent money to buy, that we hadn't taken over illegally, I spent my money to buy it, then they said that we lived there illegally . . . This is very important, more important than our property. I have a right to dignity, to live in dignity, but they came to force us like animals; like we were a kind of people, if compared to farmers, we were less than farmers. They came to force us violently, and they screamed that it was not our property even if we spent money from our own pockets, from our ability. We worked until our backs sweat to earn money to buy that house to live in, then they came to say that we had no right to live on that land!

One more thing, when we were struggling . . . we were trying to tell national and international communities that they were abusing our rights, the company screamed loudly that it was their land and they had already gotten a land certificate. I asked [Phnom Penh Municipal Governor] Man Cheun the day he went to Group 78; he couldn't answer to my question. I asked him, "Uncle, I applied for a land certificate for my house that is along the riverside. The officers . . . said that I had no right to get a land certificate because I am living on the riverbank which is public land." Okay, I admit that I was living on public land and it was illegal. But I asked Mr. Man Cheoun, "Why does the

Borey Othiean Bassac Company have the right to get a land certificate that covers my whole village, but I can't apply for a land certificate for my own land?"… We felt that it was weird, wasn't it? Now I'm asking you, isn't it weird? When I applied for my land certificate, the authorities said that we had no right to make any land certificate because we were living on the riverbank. But why could the Canadia Company show up and say that this was their land because they had a land certificate? What right did Canadia have to get a land certificate that covered the riverbank? Why couldn't I have one made, but Canadia could?

4. Sorya: "Every day is difficult for my body and my heart."

Comparing my situation now with one in Dey Krahom, every day is difficult for my body and my heart [i.e., both physically and emotionally]. Before, I had a business, a house and enough utilities… But, now I rent a house, I do have a job but it's not permanent like our business . . . To set up a business, I need to a rent a place, I need to borrow some money. And it is difficult because we don't have our own start-up capital . . .

After I left [Dey Krahom], I worked at the Korean's house [as a housecleaner] for only $60 per month, and that money was for everyday expenses including food, and it was not enough . . . So, my living is not like it was before. Before, when I opened my eyes in the morning, I saw money coming in, because I had a shop. Now, when I open my eyes, I don't know where the money is . . . After the eviction, I lost my money, because we never thought

that our house would be dug up by the company . . . We were not prepared to take money or anything out, nothing. My house, the tractor dug up my house . . .

The thing that affects [my family] the most is . . . I am grown up and I no longer go to school. It is not important for me but my cousins, they are studying . . . It has affected the children's education, my mother's health and everything. We were successful in our business, it was growing, suddenly everything was destroyed. That made our lives *don daap* [in terrible, hopeless conditions, everything lost] . . .

At Dey Krahom . . . we could earn over 100,000 [riel per day, or US$25] . . . Before we used to sleep on a mattress, we used to have an air conditioner and fans. If we still had our dignity, if we had money, we couldn't live in a poor people's place, but these days we have to be poor people, so we have to adapt to the situation now . . . These days we don't have beds or anything, we have only a pillow, blanket and normal mosquito net, and we cannot have an air conditioner like before. Yeah, and we don't have television either . . . Speaking of all this, I look around and see [I have] nothing; I feel pity for myself when I look around and have nothing. I don't know when I can buy things again because every day, my situation is just hand to mouth… I cannot [solve] because I don't know how to think to do another way . . . If I had siblings who were single like me, one or two siblings more, we could help each other but I am alone, I cannot depend on others, I depend only on myself.

5. Sokhan: “My children are doing fine, my business is going well, God blesses me and provides me with enough to eat.”

After moving [from Reak Reay, it] was expensive. I spent almost 200,000 riel [US$50] per month for water and electricity. The electricity cost a lot. Because the electricity cost so much, water also cost a lot, we couldn’t live there. It was difficult with water, electricity, and earning money, we couldn’t sell or do anything, I looked for a new way. I wasn’t sure where to go, and while I was thinking about it, my child heard about this house… Yes, [it’s already been] one year. Since then, my business has done very well . . . I heard that [a company] bought the land and whatever, but I didn’t pay attention. I only paid my attention to my business . . . Like I said, [my landlord told me], “uh, I sold that house to someone already, Auntie, look for a new place.” I said, “That’s okay. When would you like me to move out?” “Uh, Auntie, move this day, this day.” Then I moved as [the house owner] asked . . . [Living here is] more expensive, it costs $100 [per month in rent]. But here is easy to earn money . . . Here, my kids can sell 200 skewers of bananas per day . . . [Moving twice] cost a lot of money . . .

No one helped, we came by ourselves it cost a lot, but that is okay, I wanted a place that is easy to make money in . . . Of course I [lost money as a result of the eviction], but what could I do; when it lose it is my money, when I earn profit it is also my money; that’s what I think . . . Of course we were tired, moving stuff was tiring, but what could we do (laughing). We were

tired, but we didn't argue, my family didn't do that. Because, I tell you the truth, my family believes in Christianity . . .

My children are doing fine, my business is going well, God blesses me and provides me with enough to eat, little by little. Yes, my family is not very exhausted, we do not worry too much, God provides little by little, just enough to live. And I am not a greedy person, yes, I just want enough to live . . . I want just enough, and there is money to pay the $100 rent, to pay the electricity bill by the end of the month, that's it, thank God, I don't want anything more . . .

Things are okay. It is normal to be tired; in everyone's life, we always feel tired, because we lack [something], we need to struggle. In the past I didn't have anything at all, [all that I have, I have gained] from struggling. I moved from [the countryside], my husband and I worked in construction sites under the hot sun to make money to raise our children. After working in construction, we sold bananas. It's all been a struggle. But if we don't struggle how can we live? . . . . It is not much, but it is like—sometimes we are short of cash, but just lack some little things, it is not so bad like having no food. We have never not had food….

[Compared to before the eviction] incomes and expenses are different but, like this, we work very hard so we will always have something to spend. If we don't work hard, we won't have [money] to spend, that's how it is….. No better life or anything for me [here], I have nothing but selling grilled bananas . . . About my difficult life before [when I worked on rubber

plantations], uh, I'm lazy to talk about it, why should we talk about it, we are at this stage now, no need to talk about that . . .

For me, I didn't own a house [in Reak Reay], I didn't care, I was on my own. Normally, if we live in a rented house, we move when we are asked to move. Like that house owner, s/he said, "Auntie, aha, I sold the house, will you please look for another place" so I just looked for another place.

6. Danet: "But I only have neighbors and um, I don't have any friends."

I met [my second husband], and now he doesn't care about me and I am raising his child on my own . . . He does not help . . . [The others here] are [HIV] patients but I am not. But I am affected [by the forced eviction], also affected. We cannot stay in Borei Keila, the last ones all alone. [The company/authorities] do not solve anything for me [because I do not have HIV] . . . But the [HIV] patients let us stay, they help and pity us . . .

I own nothing but have a lot of children and no one to help earn or raise them, I am the only earner so they let us stay here and always give us rice to eat . . . [I have] no hope [to receive any compensation housing] . . . When the houses are finished[39], I will not have any place to stay. So, I will look for a house in the village to rent very cheap, cheap, 20,000 riel

[39] At the time of the interview, townhouses were being built for displaced HIV+ renters.

[US$5] , I will rent it for me and my children, the four of us . . . I cannot go back to Phnom Penh because we don't have any siblings to depend on . . .

Since I was there [in Borei Keila], my relationship with my neighbors has been normal, we are still as close as if we are all a family . . . But I only have neighbors and um, I don't have any friends here. I didn't have any friends there [in Borei Keila], either . . . Only neighbors . . . Every day when I feel sad I want to go back to Phnom Penh, but then I think about how I have no money to pay for a house. If I go back, my children would not have good futures, if we don't try [pause], we are poor and if I keep moving like this, there won't be a good future so I have to endure staying here . . .

When I talk to the neighbors, the neighbors say don't go back and forth because your children won't be able to study, just endure living here and wait for someone, if there is any organization that comes to help, they will ask them to help or they will give me something to eat . . . Sometimes [the neighbors] help, when we don't have money to buy food to eat, they bring soup for me . . . These days, it is so difficult to live, Teacher, it is really difficult but I have them [neighbors] to help me . . . They are kinder than, to be honest, they are kinder than our relatives . . . I think that I cannot go back . . . because now houses in Phnom Penh are expensive . . . And I don't know how I could earn money to feed my children . . . And I have neighbors, uh, they give me advice . . . and they cheer me up . . . So I just keep living here.