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Migration as Distinction?

Class, consumption and rural-urban migration in contemporary Cambodia

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A thesis submitted to King's College London in
accordance with the requirements for the degree
of Doctor of Philosophy in Geography

by Sabina Lawreniuk

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This PhD thesis explores the effects of shifting bases of production and consumption in the global South, examining the interrelated roles of changing patterns of labour migration and everyday consumption practices in the reproduction and transformation of class structures in contemporary Cambodia. The ‘miracle’ of Cambodia’s recent development, a decade of rapid economic growth, has been driven by the movement of labour. However, the narrative of success is challenged by vast inequalities of wealth and opportunity. With class a (re-)emergent theme of analysis in the social science literature, this study adapts the theory and methods of Pierre Bourdieu to present a novel account of how processes of economic development in the South shape the life chances of individuals. Employing multivariate statistical analysis in conjunction with detailed ethnographic data, this study illustrates the development trajectories of individuals and households in one village community in Kandal province and interrogates their interaction with broader economic change, as revealed through the experiences of its habitually resident and urban migrant populations. The research emphasises the heterogeneous experience of development at household level, considering both material and discursive differences that construct and contrast competing classes within village society. Though rural-urban migration is pursued by individuals as a means of transcending social position within this local class system, the general effect of such movement is to translocate difference from village to city and reproduce social divisions. The study offers to the literature a deeper appreciation of unfolding class processes in the industrialising global South by analysing the complex ways in which labour migration entrenches inequality.

Despite the efforts of the Khmer Rouge to forcibly dismantle several millennia of Cambodian culture with the introduction of the revolutionary Year Zero, the discourse surrounding development in the contemporary era suggests that the customary hallmarks of Khmer social organisation have not merely survived but are thriving. In many accounts, 'Cambodia's modern tragedy' (Deac 1997:234) is regarded as a blip, an aberration, in the otherwise sanguine history of a static and 'gentle land' (Vickery 1984), where the glory of Angkor, rather than the horror of the 1970s, 'still defines the Cambodian soul' (Mehmet 1997:677): rice, rurality and a devout yet humble religious observance comprising the staple organisation of a society in which 'little seems to have changed' (Mehmet 1997:677) over several hundred years.

In Twenty-First Century Cambodia, the underlying premise of these perceptions appears to retain some truth. Despite formidable economic growth, Cambodia remains 'a largely agrarian country' (Scheidel, Farrell, Ramos-Martin, Giampietro and Mayumi 2014) where the majority of the population resides in rural areas, 'poor and dependent on subsistence agriculture' (Davies 2010:164). Moreover, such growth has occurred in a highly uneven manner, resulting in an inequality of land and income distribution that ranks 'among the worst in the region' (Davies 2010:163). The endurance of these 'conservative and elitist' (Mehmet 1997:676) tendencies suggests to some that the 'seemingly fixed structure of Cambodian inequality' (Mehmet 1997:677), having endured the efforts of 'many besides Pol Pot' (Mehmet 1997:677) to dismantle it, represents a 'divinely sanctioned' (Mehmet 1997:676) monument that is invulnerable to change.

The continuities are such that, for others, the years of conflict represent not merely an aberration but the underlying darker reality of Khmer culture. Praso (1994:71) has argued, for instance, that Cambodia is bound by a 'heritage of violence'; a 'master of façade' that has 'never been a country at peace' but is 'burdened with a brutal history of fratricide, medieval-style torture, summary justice, banditry, decapitation and human-liver eating'. Indeed, if anything, 'Cambodia's modern tragedy' has tended to be understated: years of instability, foreign oppression and revolt preceded the civil war of 1970-75, which gave way, under the assaults of the US's 'secret war', to a revolution described as 'the bloodiest of our century' (Ponchaud in Deac 1997:234) and the onslaught of the 'killing fields'.

Nor did 'liberation', in 1979, from the tyranny of Pol Pot end Cambodia's suffering. Instead, the decade of Vietnamese control began with famine and active insurgency from the Khmer Rouge, still in command of the Western edge of the country, remained a persistent threat even after the signing of the Paris Peace Accords and UN intervention that occurred at the close of 1991. Today, nearly twenty years on from the 1997 coup that finally brought an end to the civil war, Cambodia is still regarded as having attained only a 'violent peace' (Brickell 2008:1), in which 'systematic state violence and politically-motivated killings' are endemic and instances of gender-based and other criminal violence remain commonplace (Brickell 2008, Hinton 2006, Broadhurst 2002).

As Springer (2010) has found cause to reflect, however, to isolate the barbarity of these historic events to a deficiency of Khmer culture is to deal a further blow to a nation and people still fragile from the legacies of conflict, yet on a firm path to recovery and development. The 'culture of violence' thesis reflects no social reality other than a 'violent Orientalism' (Springer 2010:305) within such imaginations: an essentialist caricature of a society that is 'neither mad, destroyed, nor returning to a nostalgic past' (Ledgerwood and Vijghen 2002:109) but, rather, 'is constantly being re-created, re-imagined and negotiated through the everyday actions of people going about their lives' (Ledgerwood and Vijghen 2002:109-110).

The background to this process of renegotiation in Cambodia today is a context of rapid economic dynamism, where new ways of working and living reflect shifting bases of production and consumption within the Kingdom and across the globe. A fervent period of economic growth, at peak reaching double-digit returns (Davies 2010:153), has been driven by foreign investment and the hurried expansion of the industrial sector, whereby a nation only recently regarded as a 'fourth-world' straggler of 'structural irrelevance' (Shatkin 1998:378) to the world economy has found itself propelled to the vanguard of global commodity production.

This 'miracle' (World Bank 2009) of economic development has been driven by the movement of labour. Beginning in the 1990s, when the first factories opened their doors in Phnom Penh, a trickle of workers from rural villages to the capital's nascent export industry soon became a flood, amounting to what is presently more than 300 000 people employed in the garment sector alone (Cambodian Centre for Human Rights 2015). Taking account of the construction industry and the various other migrant employers, almost one million of

Cambodia's total labour force of seven million are now urban migrant workers (National Institute of Statistics 2010).

Research into the everyday mechanics of such mobility and its broad transformative potential in Southeast Asia is relatively sparse in the human geography literature compared to accounts of transnational migration, which often involves lesser volume of movement (Elmhirst 2012; Rigg 2013; King 2012). This PhD thesis thus aims, at a general level, to redress this deficit within the literature, offering a novel account of the recursive relation between processes of migration and social change in Cambodia in the Twenty-First Century.

Those studies of labour movement in Cambodia that do exist reproduce a tendency that distorts the broader literature on migration, invoking and reinforcing an artificial divide by centring research on either the rural or urban space. As Rigg, Salamanca and Parnwell (2012:1471) note, 'while rural people in Asia are becoming ever more agile in their ability to cross spaces, sectors and occupations, by comparison scholarly endeavour and policy interventions have remained leaden-footed.' Thus, for example, Derks (2008), who has published the most comprehensive study of Cambodian migration yet, an anthropological account of female migrants in Phnom Penh, offers a highly nuanced account of the varied strategies and successes of women in life and work in the city but neglects to consider the rural aspect of migratory culture beyond allusion from informants. Bylander (2015), conversely, situates migration in relation to the changing ecological context of migrant-sending villages but collects no data in migrant destinations to lend a formative or even corroborative perspective to her account. Such limitations of scope both reflect and result in a persistent elision of the depth and extent of feedbacks and linkages between actors and structures at each end of the migrant continuum, the the face of work that emphasises the fundamental importance of these mechanisms (Bakewell et al. 2015; Jolivet 2015; Vertovec 2004).

Indeed, the outcome of this foreclosure is a necessarily limited understanding of migration as a series of discrete causes and effects. This, as scholars of migration have increasingly come to recognise (see Bakewell 2013; De Haas 2010a), not only presents an incomplete picture but a distorted one, which fails to capture the dynamic and systematic relation of the actions, attitudes, and institutions that comprise the process of migration. More specifically, then, this PhD aims not only to address the lack of migration research in Cambodia, but to do so in a way that build upon a (re-)emergent body of wider literature

that argues for a rehabilitation of migration systems thinking (De Haas 2010b; Bakewell 2013; Parsons and Lawreniuk 2015).

In particular, this study designs to contribute to such literature an understanding of how and where the sphere of consumption sits within the mechanics of this migration system. Attention within the migration systems literature to date has focused on population movement within the South as a process associated with changing global and local production systems but has been less explicitly concerned with linking such patterns of migration to shifting consumption and lifestyle preferences. This reflects a broader scarcity of studies of consumption in the South in the human geography literature, as relative Northern scholarship, evidencing a lingering geographic binary (Brooks and Bryant 2013): a preference toward a view of inhabitants of the South as workers rather than consumers, which neglects the dyadic relation between these two facets of Southern economic and social life.

Slowly, this is changing, as consumption emerges as nascent research agenda in Southeast Asia and beyond (Kleinen 2013). The discipline of anthropology has been particularly astute in developing this theme. To date, however, those studies that do exist of consumption practices in the South (e.g. Beazley and Miller 2015; Hoefinger 2013; Martin-Iverson 2012; Czymoniewicz-Klippel 2013; Derks 2008) are typically culturalist appraisals, which, though they have served a useful purpose in lending toward the conceptual restoration of agency to Southern inhabitants and providing interesting consideration of the cultural impetus of migratory decisions, have for the most part divorced the symbolic aspect of consumption from the material. Drawing, therefore, on the arguments of authors like Miller (2012), Goss (2004, 2006) and Wilk (2014, 2001), it appears necessary that a conceptual approach to consumption in the South that reconciles sign and social values is required. Highlighting the embeddedness of consumption in the wider structures of Southern migration systems can, it is argued, achieve the twofold effect of transcending both these dualisms; elucidating the interrelationships of production and consumption at a range of scales and as manifest through the interaction of symbolic and material exchange.

In order to facilitate this more holistic approach to the study of migration systems, which rejoins and relates the shifting bases of production and consumption in the South, migration must be understood as more than merely the movement of labour. Rather, as Bourdieu and Wacquant (2000:176) explain, it must be viewed as a 'total social fact', in which the conditions and structures of sender and receiver locations form part of a wider

phenomenon simultaneously responsive to and transformative of all facets of culture, economy and society. In order to bring together these diverse elements, an overarching framework is necessary that can lend to a complex yet cohesive account of migration in Twenty-First Century Cambodia. In this respect, Bourdieu's conception of class – a conception at once structured, diverse and fluid – has been selected. As the following will show, Bourdieu's ideas provide a bridge between the worlds of production and consumption, which can shed new light on a country churning with the mobility of people, ideas and resources.

As such the aims of this PhD thesis and its contribution to the literature may be summarised in a four-fold manner. First, it aims to address the relative deficit of empirical work on the themes of rural-urban migration, consumption and class in contemporary Cambodia that also reverberates in the human geography literature elsewhere in Southeast Asia and the global South more generally. Second, to do so in a way that furthers a (re-)emergent body of literature on migration systems theory, joining up understandings of rural and urban locations and the linkages and feedbacks that exist between them. Third, by highlighting the role of consumption in this migration system, to contribute to a fuller conception of consumption, re-embedded in the social and economic milieu from which it originates. Fourth, in using Bourdieu's class theory as framework to facilitate this reunion of production and consumption systems, to illustrate the role that critical geographies of class can play in understanding development and change in the South and examining an alternative means of class analysis in rural Southern societies, where the hybridity and fluidity of lives and identities wrought by development has challenged the concepts and categories used in traditional agrarian political economy.

In pursuit of these objectives, this PhD thesis will seek to answer the following core research questions to draw out the linkages between class, consumption and rural-urban migration in contemporary Cambodia. First, to what extent can the class theory of Pierre Bourdieu (1984, 1985, 1986, 1987, 1991, and 1996) contribute to a clearer understanding of the structures of inequality in contemporary Cambodia? Second, building on this, what is the role of consumption practices in realising the divisions between different class groups in Cambodian society? Finally, how do patterns of rural-urban labour migration interact with inequality to reproduce or transform local class structures?

In addressing the themes introduced above, this thesis articulates the response to these research questions thus: Chapter Two, which follows, sketches the theoretical framework

that underpins the study. Presented in three parts, it first traces the development of the 'migration systems' approach pioneered by Mabogunje (1970) and explores the impetus behind recent calls for its reformulation and reintegration into the contemporary migration literature by such as De Haas (2010b) and Bakewell (2013). The chapter then considers the understated role of consumption in current understandings of economic and social life in the global South. It concludes by illustrating how the class theory of Pierre Bourdieu (1984) can be integrated into the migration systems perspective outlined by Mabogunje (1970) in order to draw out the linkages between consumption and production and, thus, capture the nuances of social reproduction and change that as occur in contemporary Cambodia against a backdrop of rapid economic growth and industrialisation.

Chapter Three turns attention to the research methodology employed throughout the course of the study. Arguing that Bourdieu's theoretical propositions may be most usefully employed embedded in his epistemological and methodological contributions to critical social scientific thought, the chapter advocates for a mixed methods approach to analysis that uses quantitative techniques to delineate patterns of practice and qualitative tools to uncover the logic that underwrites and articulates these dynamics. Following this, the chapter describes the specific techniques and tools used in the fieldwork stages of the research for this PhD thesis, considering the ethical concerns raised in this endeavour and the means of their mitigation.

With the theoretical and methodological approach undergirding the research presented herein thus elaborated, Chapter Four first provides a background to the study before the rest of the text proceeds to the presentation of empirical data and analysis. This background chapter outlines the historical and contextual detail required to understand the nuances of both the research approach and findings in the setting of contemporary Cambodia. The opening sections of the chapter trace the lineage and evolution of this PhD's core themes of inequality and mobility, illustrating the interaction of Theravada Buddhist norms of hierarchy and a gradual process of economic opening through centuries of Cambodian history in the creation of a contemporary society cleaved by marked inequality and profound rural-urban development divide. The final section of the chapter reflects on the local experience of these national trends, introducing the primary study site of Veal Rien and the broad pattern of change and development that has occurred therein through the contemporary era.

Having provided the information required to understand the context of the study, Chapters Five through Seven proceed to present empirical data and analysis. Each of these three empirical chapters responds, in turn, to one of the three research questions of this PhD thesis, outlined above. Chapter Five, which initiates the presentation of data, addresses the first of these questions, enquiring how the class theory of Pierre Bourdieu can illuminate the study of inequality in contemporary Cambodia. The chapter, thus, builds on the introduction to contemporary societal relations in the primary study site of Veal Rien provided in Chapter Four, by emphasising the heterogeneous experience of recent development and the increasing diversity and differentiation both within and between households that has resulted. It proceeds to evaluate these disparities by analysing the variant capital endowments of households. Thereafter, the class theory of Bourdieu and the technique of multiple correspondence analysis favoured in his work, as explored in Chapters Two and Three, are employed to inform a model of the class structure of the village.

Chapter Six, which follows, adds to this theoretical mapping of the class structure of the primary study site of Veal Rien with a constructivist moment of enquiry designed to elaborate processes of class-making that occur in the village. Following the theoretical and methodological concerns of Bourdieu outlined in Chapters Two and Three, it examines the material and discursive differences that separate classes in society: classified and classifying dispositions reared from position, which contribute to a lay sense of class unconsciousness in the village. This class unconsciousness reifies the division of village society and brings the classes-on-paper that were identified in Chapter Five to life as bonded social groups. In doing so, it furthers the rejoinder to the first research question of this PhD thesis. Moreover, by considering consumption practices as core element in the genesis of habitus, this sense of class unconsciousness, it notably turns attention to the second research question identified herein, which asks how consumption practices might realise the differences between competing class groups in Cambodian society.

The third and final research question is examined in Chapter Seven of the thesis, where the interaction of labour migration with these class structures is considered in order to show how and why patterns of rural-urban mobility can transform or reproduce inequality. To do so, the chapter presents data collected from Veal Rien's urban migrants, each of whom was visited at their place of work or residence in the city. Applying the broad analytical framework developed through Chapters Five and Six, Chapter Seven first examines the form and properties of inequality in urban migrant society before reflecting on the

production of the sense of class unconsciousness in the city, revisiting the sites of conflict and contest that gave rise to social groups in rural society and questioning their salience in the urban context.

Finally, Chapter Eight concludes the thesis, pulling together the findings from Chapters Five, Six and Seven and appraising them in light of the original contributions they make to the academic literature. It also offers prospective avenues for future research, which build upon the themes and methodologies presented herein.

Cambodia is a land increasingly defined by movement. In the space of a generation, a near failed state has metamorphosed into one of the world's fastest growing economies. This growth has been made possible through the industry of many millions of Cambodians who have extended their rural livelihoods to enter the booming sectors at the heart of this recovery, the majority finding roles in the manufacturing, construction and service industries concentrated in capital of Phnom Penh. In doing so, they have uprooted their rural lives to make the journey to work and live in the city for sometimes short or, otherwise, more extended periods of time.

The traffic of labour from country to city is more than an economic phenomenon, however. Migration on such a scale is an exceedingly complex process that both responds to and meanwhile reshapes the known contours of Cambodian economic, social and cultural life. The decision to migrate, for example, is not a mere question of sectoral wage differentials or (un)employment opportunities. Rather, it may be conditioned by a whole host of other factors including, but not limited to, financial freedom and constraint, household power dynamics, gender and lifecycle norms, and known mobility pathways, each to which individual preferences may conform or resist. This muddle of contributory factors is tangled further when the notion of feedbacks is considered, introducing the possibility that the very act of migration may shuffle the distribution of economic resources, household responsibilities and roles, norms and aspirations, knowledge and ideas; unceasingly adjusting the variables upon which the outcome rests.

Though a considerable body of work has explored the notion of migratory feedbacks (Bakewell et al. 2015; Jolivet 2015; Vertovec 2004), particularly in relation to transnational movements, few existing theories of migration have succeeded in linking the influence of such diverse origins, linkages and effects in rural-urban streams. Nonetheless, as will be illustrated herein, the systems framework pioneered by Mabogunje (1970) boasts fitting potential, drawing attention to the dynamic interactions of different actors, contexts and institutions at a range of scales and locations. To expose the intricate and vast operations of an entire migration system is undoubtedly implausible within the limitations of a PhD investigation. Instead, therefore, this thesis attempts only to unpick certain aspects of the integral mechanisms of the system, drawing attention to and inviting fresh perspective upon some of the relations and processes inherent.

The theoretical framework of this PhD thesis, presented over the following pages, is thus divided into three parts: the first concerned with the migration literature itself; following which, the remaining two each examine a theme to be explored towards uncovering particular patterns and processes associated with rural-urban mobility in contemporary Cambodia.

The opening section of the chapter, on the theme of migration, begins with a brief introduction to the background and development of migration theory. It explores the myriad, mirrored failings of many prominent migration models towards capturing the complexity that characterises the form and function of human mobility in the South today. To do so, it draws from empirical studies of Cambodia and elsewhere in Southeast Asia to highlight inconsistencies between observable practice and theory. The systems approach of Mabogunje (1970) is then acknowledged as a fruitful prospect, which bridges some of the binaries and elisions inherent in some older and more contemporary models, alike. Though Mabogunje's work is often highlighted as possessing potential to enhance the study of migration, this promise has not yet been fully realised. As such, a number of authors (De Haas 2010b; Bakewell 2013) have appealed for a return to the systems approach, whilst simultaneously highlighting areas of the framework that require reformulation or greater elaboration in light of Twenty-First Century concerns.

One such area might be the sphere of consumption and its role in migratory mechanics, to which the second section of the chapter attunes focus. Though some of the relation between consumption and migration practices has been uncovered in the literature, particularly in the discipline of anthropology (Mapril 2014; Sharma 2013; Osella and Osella 2006, 2000, 1999; Mills 1999, 1997), understanding is incomplete. In particular, studies emerging on this theme in the South tend to originate from a methodological individualist perspective that obfuscates the depth of the ties between consumption practices and wider society. This section proposes, therefore, that a renewed focus on the material and social relations of consumption might contribute to a fuller understanding of how consumption both shapes and reacts to migration system patterns and processes.

This PhD thesis aims, therefore, to bring together the analysis of changing production and consumption practices in Cambodia, thereby drawing attention to the recursive linkages between the two. In order to achieve this reconciliation, however, an overarching framework capable of synthesising the two is required. The third and final section of the theoretical framework explores the class theory of Pierre Bourdieu (1984) as a tool for this

purpose. Bourdieu's ideas, it will illustrate, can provide a bridge between the worlds of production and consumption, conferring a semantic unity to the meta-narrative of this PhD's theoretical framework. As such, an adaptation of Bourdieu's theory applied in Cambodia can shed new light on a nation churning with the movement of people, resources and ideas: allowing for the elaboration of the dynamic relation between class, consumption, and migration; and, in doing so, outline instances of social reproduction and transformation wrought by this mobility.

2.1. Migration

Cambodia is a nation 'on the move' (Derks 2008:1). Echoing the contemporary experience of the Southeast Asian region (Rigg 2013), which is further reflected in other areas of the global South, rising trends of population mobility have been a core dynamic of the Kingdom's economic 'miracle' of recent decades. Today, for example, the National Institute of Statistics counts more than one third of Cambodia's labour force as internal migrants: those who have 'moved residence for employment from one geographical location to another' (National Institute of Statistics 2010:26). Setting aside, for a moment, the problems with such measurements and their definition (see e.g. Rigg 2013), it is nonetheless instructive to note the scale of movement being described here. This category of 'internal migrant' numbers two and a half million people: the greatest number, one million, having moved to the capital of Phnom Penh, with others having moved to locations that span the country. Adding to these waves of intra-national human mobility are those who have moved further, beyond Cambodia's borders. There are, for example, an additional 600 000 Cambodians living and working in neighbouring Thailand alone, with smaller numbers in more distant locations like Korea, Malaysia, and Singapore (York 2014).

Though important works have considered the nature and meanings of internal mobility (Bylander 2014; Derks 2008; Rigg 2004), within studies of Southeast Asia, it is these latter, transnational types of movement that have, to date, garnered most attention in the human geography literature. This 'striking dominance', which is 'at odds with its numerical importance' (Elmhirst 2012:275), is seen by many migration geographers (e.g. Rigg 2013, Elmhirst 2012, King 2010) as reflective of a lingering Eurocentric bias in the literature: reflecting the political sensitivities that such migration streams tend to tickle, and intrigue about their possibility for promoting development – or, as another side of the debate would have it, enforcing dependency (Elmhirst 2012). Thus, argues King (2010:148), 'with so much of their intellectual and research capital invested in the West, population and migration geographers (and migration scholars more generally) have been slow to pick up on these new [internal] mass movements of the current era' that increasingly contribute to the shape of the human landscape in many parts of the global South.

'Acknowledging this disidentification is', asserts Elmhirst (2012:276), 'an important step towards placing sub-national forms of mobility back on international research agendas'. The challenge in doing so, however, is locating apt theories or models from within the wider migration literature that can help inform the approach to internal population

movement in Southeast Asia, frequently hampered by the Eurocentric assumptions which underwrite them. In doing so, this PhD intends to draw from and build upon a substantial body of work on rural-urban labour migration that has been developed in South Asia (Rogaly and Thieme 2012; Gardner 2009; Gardner and Osella 2004; Rogaly and Rafique 2003; Mosse et al. 2005; Mosse et al. 2002; Rogaly et al. 2002), East Asia (Mallee and Pieke 2014; Fan 2008) and elsewhere (Alexiades 2013; Potts 2015, 2008).

The opening section of the theoretical framework for this PhD, which follows below, is tasked with this problem. It will begin with a brief history of the development of migration theories, delineating popular approaches and highlighting the mirrored shortcomings they exhibit in regard to shaping an adequate conception of patterns and processes of rural-urban labour mobility in contemporary Southeast Asia, a core theme of this PhD thesis. The section acknowledges that many of the major theories have merit, each making a contribution to furthering the analysis of population movement generally. For the purposes of this PhD, however, which seeks to assimilate analysis of the shifting bases of production and consumption in the South, none are quite sufficient. Instead, a more integrated framework is required. The migration systems approach pioneered by Mabogunje in the 1970s and enjoying a renaissance in the contemporary literature (see Bakewell 2013, de Haas 2010b) is explored as a fruitful alternative upon which to ground a holistic – multi-faceted, multi-scalar and dynamic – account of contemporary trends and transformations associated with rural-urban movement in the South.

Classic models of migration

Theorising on migration has a lengthy history, with decades and even centuries of cross-disciplinary debate yet to advance consensus. For the most part, the conversation has ‘not been cumulative’ (Arango 2000:283), leaving instead ‘a fragmented set of theories that have developed largely in isolation from one another’ (Massey et al. 1993: 17). Indeed, rather than approximating a scientific process of testing and refinement, developments in migration theory have been more likely precipitated by broader discursive shifts, reflecting the changing economic paradigms that have underwritten development models through the Twentieth Century (Skeldon 1997, De Haas 2010a). In this way, neoclassical theory, modernization (e.g. Rostow 1960), and dependency (e.g. Frank 1966, 1969) have all left their mark in the field of migration and scholars continue to draw upon these influential models to the present day.

The longevity of neoclassical approaches can perhaps be explained by their appealing simplicity (Boyle, Halfacre and Robinson 1998). The earliest models like Lewis' (1954) two-sector typology envisioned movement responsive to basic sectoral imbalances: people would move from areas of low income to high income, with the resultant redistribution of labour resources leading to 'factor price equalisation', or the homogenisation of wages and population across a given country. Once this equalisation occurs, there is no longer any incentive for mobility and movement thus ceases. Yet such unilinear approaches to migration – typified by Lewis' model being based on 'infinite' labour supply, for instance – were, from the start, at odds with the nuances of empirically observed reality. Nevertheless, they remained appealingly intuitive, encouraging scholars to add to rather than abandon their premises.

Of such adaptations, among the most influential is the Todaro model (Todaro 1969; Harris and Todaro 1970), which attempts to deal with a problematic 'anomaly' (Skeldon 1997:21) observed in the South: continued high rates of urban migration despite conditions of high urban unemployment (Potts 2015). Todaro added a temporal dynamic to the wage differential calculation that underwrote early neoclassical models deriving from Lewis' dual sector theory, postulating that migration occurs when the expected returns of urban migration over a given time period exceed those anticipated in the rural sector over the same period. Though Todaro's model has proven enduringly popular, it retains many of the problems associated with earlier neoclassical thought: not least that it reduces human agency to economic rationality and reproduces the unilinear and ahistoric tendencies evident in Lewis' earlier work. These failings have likely rendered the Todaro model similarly susceptible to empirically illustrated shortcomings, where it has proved unable to account for differences in patterns of human mobility within and between regions, for example, or to explain the apparent evolution of such patterns over time.

Both Lewis and Todaro's work emanates from the school of modernization theory, a paradigm gaining momentum in Western thought on economic development in the post-War era. A more sophisticated variant to emerge from this canon was Zelinsky's (1971) notion of the 'mobility transition'. Building on Rostow's (1960) 'stages-of-growth' model, Zelinsky identified five phases of societal development, from 'pre-modern traditional' to the 'superadvanced', and described the shifting patterns of human mobility shaped within each. The strength of Zelinsky's work was perhaps his inductive approach, with the stages of society and mobility that he depicted devised from the study of empirical data from developed nations. However, Zelinsky did not account for the limitations of such analysis

and insisted on the universality of his model, which he maintained would diffuse to represent the experience of the whole of the world. Despite adding evolutionary nuance, then, Zelinsky's account of the mobility transition remained, ultimately, as unilinear and fundamentally ahistoric as the work of earlier modernization theorists.

From the 1960s, the stage-based models associated with the modernization school came to be increasingly criticised for a Eurocentric, teleological outlook that failed to note the heterogeneity of experience being generated within the developing world. By then, the divergent trajectories of many countries in the global South put paid to such notions of universal paths to development. In this respect, one of the most notable oppositional views was the dependency school of development, associated with Frank (1966, 1969), which argued that Western and non-Western economies could not be treated in an analogous manner due to uneven power dynamics and the legacies of colonial arrangements within the latter. The need to take account of global heterogeneities would later underpin the World Systems framework of Wallerstein (1984).

The critiques offered by scholars from this emergent school of (neo-)Marxist political economy still centred the cause of migration upon sectoral imbalances. Yet where the modernization school took such differences to be natural or organic (Potts 2010), historical-structural accounts considered them the product of centuries of Western capitalist penetration: explaining how, for example, the colonial state used systems of taxation and markets to manipulate the twin forces of supply and demand in order to promote labour migration and thereby provide the state with the indigenous workforce required to further the colonial enterprise (Parnwell 1993). Despite these efforts to incorporate temporal conditions into understandings of migration and processes of national development, historical-structural explanations – and the dependency and world systems schools from which they draw – attracted criticism for failings which mirrored those of the modernization theorists they sought to discredit: becoming 'a grand historical generalisation' (Arango 2000:291) whose 'socioeconomic changes... have the same ruthless and pre-ordained character as do Zelinsky's "phases of mobility"' (Chapman and Prothero 1985:291).

Despite these broad issues associated with the classical models, they nonetheless continue to underpin much current thought on labour migration (Cassarino 2004; De Haas 2010a; Abreu 2012). The discussion which follows, therefore, will consider the heuristic use of such theories in the specific context of contemporary Southeast Asia, notably internal

labour migration within Cambodia. In doing so, it will therefore mull the relevance of such theories for the particular purposes of this PhD thesis. The section will identify a number of mirrored failings of the classical theories, which serve to undermine their application and discourage their employ for this particular study of contemporary Cambodian mobility.

Contemporary Cambodian migration and classic failings

The figures, cited in the introduction to this section, of nearly a million Cambodians leaving their village homes to find work in the city, certainly appear evocative of the earliest development models, such as W. Arthur Lewis' (1954) two-sector typology, wherein unemployed or underemployed rural dwellers flood inelastically to new urban opportunities, abandoning the fields for the modern sector. However, if such a conception has ever been applied accurately, it does not do so in contemporary Cambodia, where labour migration is not unilinear, but rather complex and churning. Like elsewhere in the region (Rigg 2013), migrants abandon neither the countryside, nor their engagement with agriculture, but utilise the urban sector to enhance their rural livelihoods via bi-directional remittance, which flow throughout Cambodia in vast sums (Derks 2008; Parsons, Lawreniuk and Pilgrim 2014).

This 'hybridity of everyday living', whereby migrants 'keep a foot on the land even when they step on to the factory floor' (Rigg 2013:12), and the complexity, often circularity, of patterns of contemporary labour mobility throughout Cambodia and Southeast Asia clearly illustrate the inadequacies of the narrow and reductionist frame of reference from which classical models of mobility draw. There is, evident in each, a resort to binary schemes; a 'bipolar' (Skeldon 2012:154) tendency to cleave and oppose the 'rural' and 'urban', 'agricultural' and 'industrial', when the reality of livelihoods and lifestyles in the contemporary South appears much more intricate: blurred, composite and dynamic.

This erroneous conception extends not only to their imaginings of contemporary society but beyond, to a flawed understanding of the nature of historical society across the South. There is manifest in each model a latent assumption of the passivity of early Southern societies (Skeldon 1997). The neo-classicists and (neo-)Marxist accounts, alike, root the causes of migration among Southern spaces in the insertion of Western actors into those societies at the beginning of the colonial era. They each rely, therefore, on a patronising logic that sees 'modern' influence diffuse from the West to the South, where, upon reach, it begins to rouse a lethargic peasant society to economic dynamism. The difference between

their accounts is merely the upshot of this new vitality: whether it is a path to progress or dependency.

The image of a past sedentary peasant world is likely romanticised, however, and finds little resonance in the historical record. As will be explored in Chapter Four of this PhD thesis, Southeast Asia and Cambodia, in particular, for more than millennia prior to the colonial incursion exhibited complex systems of trade and exchange, giving rise to a great traffic of human mobility (Skeldon 1997; Rigg 2013). Indeed, following extensive empirical research of Europe and Asia, contrary to these notions of peasant immobility, Skeldon (1990:43) has suggested that 'the evidence for continuous mobility' is instead 'substantial'. Scott, for example, locates migration – 'flight' – as a crucial strategy of peasant resistance and survival, 'one of the common man's most frequent and effective responses to oppression' (Moore in Scott 1976:245), and in his latest work (2009) has described how upland communities in the mountainous frontier regions of Indochina were formed by settlers fleeing nascent agricultural states.

This inability to conceptually account for the diverse and complex nature of both contemporary and historical Southeast Asian society is perhaps rooted in deeper, underlying binary assumptions and elisions evident in the classical models: problems of scale, stasis and disciplinary focus. First, each framework evades recognition of the problematic relation of structure and agency, appointing either one or the other as the dominant articulator of its propositions. Thus, whilst some 'some approaches lean towards a more determinist position and pay scant regard to the decisions and behaviour of individual actors' still others 'go in the other direction and focus on the agency of individuals... [and thereby] struggle to take account of the role of broader social structures in shaping migration patterns' (Bakewell 2010:1680).

Nonetheless, it is likely that recourse to the power of neither structure nor agency, alone, can illuminate patterns and processes of human mobility. As Skeldon (1990:130) has elsewhere noted, there are at least two causal levels at work here: 'the analysis of why a man joins the army will tell us little about why a nation has an army'. Indeed, there are likely far more: an array of individuals, households, communities, institutions, etc., may each have an interest in managing and (im)mobilising human labour movement. A more integrated analysis capable of reconciling structural factors with these intermediary and local (dis)incentives might better conceptualise the messy politics and dynamics that constitute flows of rural-urban labour migration in the contemporary world (Potts 2010).

It is perhaps more than a mere confederation of different levels of analysis that is required, however: a renewed conception of, not the simultaneous actions, but recursive interactions between the scales. As recent scholarship has evinced, the will to migrate on the part of individuals is constrained by structural factors such as imperfect labour information and power relations that operate from the household to global scale. Though the individual is thus beholden to his environment, it too is beholden to him, with a body of work now illustrating the 'feedback' effects of labour movement (e.g. Elmhirst 2002; Tacoli and Mabala 2010; Ge, Resurreccion and Elmhirst 2011).

The notion of feedback was introduced to the migration literature by Mabogunje in his 'Systems Approach' (1977), who borrowed the concept as a metaphor from general systems analysis. 'Feedbacks', as Mabogunje explains (1977: 12) is the effect of activity that arises from its undertaking, the subsequent modification of the parameters within which activity takes place. As he contests and later work has further expounded, the feedbacks that arise from migratory action may be positive or negative (Bakewell et al. 2015; Jolivet 2015; Vertovec 2004): serving either to promote further migration within the system or, otherwise, to slow or even halt it.

These 'feedback' effects highlight the problem of stasis inherent in the classical models, whereby the causal factors that weigh on migration are often presumed to be constant over time. Thus, though the factors that feed into Todaro's model are variables, the calculus of his equation itself is not thought to require any temporal adjustment. This literature on 'feedbacks', however, illustrates that labour migration and the associated mobility and transfer of resources, knowledge and ideas vastly transforms places of origin and destination through short- and long-term, reshaping the environment in which migratory decisions and movements are undertaken: the departure of a single 'pioneer' migrant (Bakewell, De Haas and Kubal 2012) forever changes the context in which subsequent migrations both from the sending area and to the destination will occur (Gmelch 1980).

A critical factor in this elision of feedback mechanisms in neo-classical understanding may be the staunch economic focus of such models, which in each case reduces migration to little more than a set of economic transactions (Abreu 2012; Elmhirst 2012; Rigg, Salamanca and Parnwell 2013). This elision obfuscates the wider social and cultural milieu that both shapes and is shaped by migratory processes. Of course, some of the important factors and feedbacks that characterise migration patterns in the South today are economic: much

human mobility in Southeast Asia does, indeed, involve movement from areas of relatively depressed income opportunity to areas of relative abundance, whether from rural villages to large cities, or across national borders, and vast remittance of money and goods occurs in both directions. Nonetheless, social institutions and cultural models play important roles in influencing migration too (Bakewell et al. 2015; Derks 2008) and, as scholars have highlighted, remittances are not only financial but may include the transfer of 'norms, skills, ideas, practices' that rework the array of 'social, economic and political institutions of sending areas' (Ge, Resurreccion and Elmhirst 2011: 134). Nor should economics be assumed to be the dominant motor of mobility, since certain contemporary processes like the frequent 'return' migration of married couples or women from periods of urban labour in Cambodia (Yagura 2012) appear counter to such prescriptions (Cassarino 2004).

Therefore it appears a model of migration able to inform a study of contemporary Cambodian labour movement and its interactions with consumption and class, as this PhD thesis investigates, must be much more inclusive than the classical theorisations elaborated above. In particular, the hybrid realities of patterns of movement in Cambodia, like elsewhere in the South, require a holistic model able to reconcile and synthesise the binaries and persistent elision undermining these approaches: a model that recognises the melding of sectors and spaces in contemporary society, the interaction of multiple scales of analysis, and the interrelation of economic, political, social, and cultural impulsion and effect. The subsequent section of this chapter, therefore, considers later influential approaches that have attempted to overcome these shortcomings: namely, the new economics of labour migration (Stark and Bloom 1985) and network theory, the latter with a focus on the cumulative causation hypothesis of Massey (Massey 1988, 1990). Whilst none yet have fully succeeded in this endeavour, the potential for a holistic framework based on Mabogunje's (1970) systems theory of migration is highlighted.

From households through networks to systems: towards a fuller conception of migration

Of the classic models, the Todaro model and historical-structural perspective proved most influential and, together, these two approaches largely dominated the study of migration until the late 1980s, effecting a field 'divided into two camps' (Abreu 2012). Through the latter half of that decade and beginning of the next, however, a wave of new ways of thinking about population mobility were popularised and began to challenge the hegemony of earlier theories. These new models were often presented as attempts to overcome the defective understandings of the former.

Thus, against the backdrop of this bifurcated field at a stage of impasse, the ‘new economics of labour migration’ (NELM) of Stark and Bloom (1985) emerged, positioning itself as a ‘theoretical “third way”’ (Abreu 2012:46) that reconciled and counterbalanced the structure and agency biases of the historical-structural and neoclassical approaches, respectively. As these models were, themselves, influenced by broader shifts within the social sciences, the NELM’s apparent concern to bridge the unsatisfactory opposition between structure and agency may be seen as representative of wider contemporary attempts along these lines occurring in the social sciences. In particular, the NELM has been noted to approximate or draw upon Giddens’ (1984) notion of ‘structuration’ (Abreu 2012; De Haas 2010a).

The NELM recalibrates migration decisions as a measure of household risk-aversion rather than individual profit-maximisation, thus building upon the work of such as Scott (1976) and his reconfiguration of peasant economic rationality as underwritten by a ‘subsistence ethic’. ‘In a world characterised by incompleteness of information and incomplete markets’ (Abreu 2012:58), irregularities that abound particularly in rural Southern spaces, the NELM proposes migration as a tool able to hedge against risk by permitting resource diversification in the face of uncertainty and provide capital for investment through financial remittance in order to overcome credit constraints.

This acknowledgement of the interrelated role of the household and remittance transfers in migration decisions indicates a welcome consideration of feedbacks and scales (Bakewell et al. 2015) in migration dynamics but these are incorporated with certain limitations. Notably, for example, in order to effect a reorientation of agency to the migrant household, the NELM must first strip such agency from the individual migrant. The confluence of competing household interests and power relations through which ‘household’ decisions are contested or negotiated, revealed by feminist critiques (Brickell 2014; Bylander 2014), is absent: the ‘black-box’ (Abreu 2012:58) of household dynamics unexposed. The veneer of sophistication that this reorientation of agency accords to the approach thus begins to appear deceptively thin.

Indeed, as Abreu has considered (2012:58), under close inspection the tenets of the NELM accord closely with those of the neoclassical paradigm such that it appears little more than ‘old wine in new bottles’: a refined rather than revolutionary approach to migration, in which optimization is not dropped as the principal driver of mobility but merely ‘constrained’ by information and market deficiencies. The promise of highlighting the

recursive interdependence of structure and action is unmet: beyond market and information irregularity, structural factors are not considered and how the actions of the individual migrant might shape either this broader context or more immediate one is, at best, only very loosely configured. The notion of correspondence with perspectives like Giddens' (1984) structuration appears unfounded and, more prudently, the NELM may be seen to reflect 'the art of paradigm maintenance' (Abreu 2012:48): enabling the methodologically-individualist, rational-choice stance 'to stay afloat in view of what seemed to be an irrevocably discredited position' (Abreu 2012:60) – although relevant 'individuals' are now 'households rather than persons' (Abreu 2012:59).

At around the same time as the NELM was introduced to the literature, however, a theoretical perspective with greater promise was also gathering interest. Building on earlier studies that emphasised the importance of migrant networks and associated informational and financial feedbacks for both encouraging and facilitating patterns of migration activity, Massey (1988, 1990) advanced the hypothesis of 'cumulative causation' initially proposed by Myrdal (1956). The central premise of which, distilled, is that the maintenance of migrant networks – 'sets of interpersonal ties that connect migrants, former migrants, and non-migrants in origin and destination through ties of kinship, friendship and shared community origin' (Massey et al. 1993:448) – entails that initial migration from a particular place makes subsequent migration more likely.

In this conception, migrant networks are vehicles for the transfer of feedback effects, which induce changes in social and economic structures at both origin and destination. At destination, for example, labour migration can stimulate the growth of labour opportunity, particularly in sectors responding to the needs of the new migrant population: thus, a factory opening in Phnom Penh may not only directly provide jobs on the factory floor and offices but support, indirectly, a host of (particularly informal) industry, from food sellers, to construction workers, to motorcycle taxi drivers (Parsons, Lawreniuk and Pilgrim 2014). The migrant network channels information about these opportunities back to the origin, along with other crucial ideas and resources that facilitate uptake.

Flows of ideas and resources in the network carry more than practical information, however. More than merely 'instrumental' (De Haas 2010b:1593) in facilitating further migration, such networks may also promote aspirations to migrate, where exposure to new means of livelihood and – particularly relevant for the purposes of the PhD thesis, as the following section in the current chapter on the theme of consumption will consider –

lifestyle may interact with and renegotiate behavioural norms and processes of identity formation. As such, explains De Haas (2010b:1595), 'if migration becomes strongly associated with social and material success, migrating can become the norm rather than the exception, and staying at home can be associated with failure' leading to what Massey termed a 'culture of migration' (Massey et al.1993).

In Cambodia, the twinned enabling and encouraging facets of such feedbacks have been alluded to by authors such as Derks (2008), who details exchanges with experienced migrants as a contributory factor towards both the formation of urban ambitions among young rural women and the simultaneous loosening of parental attitudes to the prospect of daughters' urban work. More recent scholarship has paid attention to the changing discourse and reception that surround the prospect of migration among sending communities and households. Bylander (2014), for example, explores the suggestion that international migration has become a normative impulse for young people in Cambodia's northern provinces, which border Thailand, examining the nascent stigma attached to those excluded from migrant work by looking at the gendered pressures on, particularly, young rural males in areas of high migratory incidence who face resistance and derision from households and peers when they express preferences to 'stay put' rather than undertake movement.

As such, the notion of cumulative causation furthers the conception of migration thus far advanced, drawing attention to the 'close links between migration-affected social, economic and cultural change' (De Haas 2010b:1595) and providing a more sophisticated account of apparent temporal dynamics in the migration process, as well as the recursive relation between structure and agency. Whilst more comprehensive than some of the other approaches discussed above, however, its premises are not fully cohesive, which limits its potential for use as a theoretical anchor in the account put forward through the course of this PhD thesis. Some of these limitations stem from 'logical inconsistencies' (De Haas 2010b:1596) that undermine the model's more detailed hypotheses. Whilst it is not fully relevant to discuss all of these details or inconsistencies here at length here, briefly they can be summarised as relating to assumptions of migration-induced 'pauperisation' at sending end. These assumptions have since been undermined further by empirical evidence that stresses that heterogeneous nature of the development impacts of migration.

This disjuncture between the sometimes conflicted theoretical tenets of the model, on the one hand, and between these tenets and observed patterns and processes of migration, on the other, indicates an overstatement of the importance and operation of its mechanisms. In the first place, by ‘almost invariably’ drawing upon the concept of the migrant network as ‘the feedback mechanism of choice’, there is obfuscation of other relevant feedback mechanisms and, as such, ‘cumulative causation’ can be regarded, at best, as ‘only a partial account’ (Bakewell 2013:5; see also Bakewell et al. 2015).

Moreover, most notably, it elides recognition of ‘migration-undermining feedback mechanisms [which] may counteract migration-facilitating dynamics’ (De Haas 2010b:1587) – of which the migrant network, in certain circumstances, may be itself one (Bakewell, De Haas and Kubal 2012; Skeldon 1990). Without such recognition, the cumulative causation thesis is unable to account for the decline or contraction of migration over time. Indeed, Massey’s assertion that there is a ‘critical threshold’ (Massey et al. 1993:449) beyond which migration creates the social and economic structures necessary to sustain itself, becoming self-perpetuating, clearly counters observed instances of well-established migration channels diminishing over time (Bakewell, De Haas and Kubal 2012) and imbues the ‘cumulative causation’ thesis with a similar determinist and unilinear bent as hampered earlier theorisations.

Though the NELM promised to provide a fresh perspective to capture the intricacies of migration processes in Southern societies, it failed to live up to its own hype, rehashing many of the problems inherent of earlier models of migration. In this respect, Massey’s emphasis on migration feedbacks is a welcome advance, which paints a fuller picture of migration processes than the earlier economic models that dominated the field and helps to overcome some of the associated problems of reconciling structure and agency identified in earlier theorisations. Nonetheless, it remains incomplete, unable to account for feedback processes that occur beyond the narrow limit of the migrant network and largely ignorant of mechanisms that may obstruct or impede mobility, rather than encourage it. Both theorisations are, thus, more limited than required for the purposes of this PhD thesis, which seeks a holistic conception of migration capable of grounding the proposed exploration of the linkages between internal labour mobility, class and consumption in the dynamic economic and social environment of the South. In what follows, the systems approach, most commonly associated with the work of Mabogunje (1970), is considered as an alternative, which retains an emphasis on feedbacks but embeds

these mechanisms in a more comprehensive, and potentially less prescriptive, social and economic environment.

Migration systems – retrospect and prospect

The systems approach to migration has sustained a recurrent appeal in the conceptual literature (Bakewell 2013; King 2012). Yet though its theoretical premises have been widely recognised, ‘especially by geographers’ (King 2012:140), it has been less frequently applied in empirical analyses. Likely, the breadth of scope that underscores its theoretical advantage is what has proven difficult to incorporate in practical implementations. Resultantly, there is a lingering dissatisfaction with the way the model has been employed to date, producing ‘truncated versions’ in which the system is ‘cast adrift from its conceptual moorings’: ‘conflated with migrant networks or elevated to heights of macro-level abstraction which divorces them from any empirical basis’ (Bakewell 2013:1).

Most contemporary scholars who employ the systems approach to the study of mobility do so with reference to the work of Mabogunje (1970). Mabogunje was not the first to apply general systems theory to migration but his work is typically invoked because the elaborations he sketched are often regarded as the most lucid (Bakewell 2013). Succinctly, Mabogunje (1970:5) explains the main premise of the model thus:

‘Within the systems framework, attention is focused not only on the migrant but also on the various institutions (sub-systems) and the social, economic, and other relationships (adjustment mechanisms) which are an integral part of the process’.

Put simply, the systems framework considers labour migration to be related in a persistent and dynamic manner to the wider social and economic environment within which it operates and forms part.

One of the foremost advantages of the systems approach is that, as Bakewell (2013:6) explains, ‘simply by describing a system, the approach immediately draws attention to its constituent parts’. In his exposition of the Nigerian mid-century rural-urban migration system, for example, Mabogunje (1970:5-6) articulates the operative ‘sub-systems’ – intervening structures that may impede or encourage movement – to include institutions like the family and community norms in the sending area, and labour and housing market in the urban space. In doing so, he draws attention to the importance of understanding prevalent context at both ends of the migrant continuum.

Indeed, much of the literature on migration introduces a scientific bias, often unacknowledged, by focussing on either the destination or sending location, with studies of the former predominating (Bakewell 2013). Thus, in Cambodia, for example, Derks (2008) has provided a highly nuanced anthropological account of the strategies and ambitions of migrant women at work in Phnom Penh. Concentrating on urban people and practices as Derks does, however, effectively constitutes sampling on the dependent variable: obfuscating the insight that the inclusion of non-migrants may contribute. Bylander (2015), on the other hand, has explored the changing rural ecological context and how this factors into international migration decisions but, without following up with those who have actually undertaken movement, formative or corroborative perspectives from migrants themselves are omitted. The systems approach, concerned with the whole 'universe' (Mabogunje 1970:5) of migration, by contrast, 'demands the analysis of both origin and destination areas' (Bakewell 2013:6) and thereby mitigates such hazardous foreclosure.

What is absent from studies that focus on sending or destination location, to the exclusion of the other, is more than simply the inverse 'push' or 'pull' factors of migration (Lee 1966). Such limitations of scope both reflect and result in a persistent elision of the depth and extent of feedbacks and linkages between actors and structures at each end of the migrant continuum, that scholars have identified as critical determinants of migration processes and change (Bakewell et al. 2015; Jolivet 2015; Vertovec 2004). This recursive relation between sending and destination context is what Mabogunje (1970:12-13) attempts to capture with the notion of 'adjustment mechanisms' and 'feedbacks', which explain why 'the experience of migration in one period may shape the conditions for future movement'. (Bakewell 2013:6).

For Mabogunje, thus, labour mobility is an inherently dynamic social process. Both the departure of an individual from a village and his arrival in the city may trigger a range of responses from different institutions, which condition the likelihood of further migration. Crucially, these responses – or 'adjustment mechanisms' – may work to both promote or inhibit further flows: in the Nigerian context, for example, Mabogunje (1970:7-8) considers a likely increase in per capita rural productive resources as an example of the latter, and the integrative role of social groups in the city, like religious organisations and trade unions, an example of the former.

Equally important for understanding the dynamics of the system, however, is an appreciation of the volume of informational 'feedbacks' that perpetually flow through it.

As Mabogunje explains (1970:12), migrants are rarely 'lost' to their home communities but remain linked through a reciprocal traffic of money, goods, knowledge, and ideas. Where positive, such feedbacks can prove both instrumental and inspirational in encouraging further migration from origin to destination, but Mabogunje also attests that negative feedback may occur and serve to inhibit further flows. In either case, 'the existence of information in the system encourages greater deviations from the "most probable or random state"' (Mabogunje 1970:13) and, instead, forges distinctive, regular patterns of subsequent migration. In the case of rural-urban migration in Cambodia, these regular, structured flows, which are the very 'hallmarks of a system' (Bakewell, De Haas and Kubal 2012:415), are indicated by the clustering of individuals from certain rural villages in specific urban residential enclaves, occupations or workplaces (Parsons, Lawreniuk and Pilgrim 2014).

The heed that Mabogunje affords to adjustments and feedbacks does not merely draw attention to the interactions of different spaces in migration processes, but also to the dynamic relationships between multiple levels of social analysis: 'linking micro and macro elements, allowing sub-systems to nest within larger systems' (King 2012:140). Nonetheless, though the systems approach suggests the prospect of linking the practices of individual migrant to transformations in the wider system, 'for the most part this promise has not been realised yet' (Bakewell 2013:7) and therefore understanding of the 'internal mechanisms – the drivers of the migration system' (Bakewell, De Haas and Kubal 2012:418) – remains somewhat incomplete.

At least in part, these problems are likely to reflect the genealogy of Mabogunje's approach. Mabogunje largely borrowed the systems framework from general social theory and applied it to the study of migration. Since Mabogunje's efforts, however, many important contributions have advanced and enhanced broader social theory, yet there have been few attempts to rework migration systems theory in light of these developments. As such, the migration systems approach remains somewhat mired in the functionalist propositions of the post-war period, lending an undue emphasis on structure and inability to explain social change (Bakewell, De Haas and Kubal 2012:419).

Bakewell, De Haas and Kubal (2012:423) argue, therefore, that there is a need to reintegrate, or perhaps reinvigorate, understandings of migrant agency and its interactions with other elements of the migration system:

‘People are not passive recipients of the opportunity structure presented to them by the origin and destination countries respectively, but – in making their decisions to migrate or assisting others to follow in their footsteps – they exercise a certain degree of agency and choice... bearing in mind agency is exercised within the conditions created by structures’.

In particular, they call for greater attention to the ‘contextual impacts’ of migration in reshaping society in both sending and destination locations (Bakewell, De Haas and Kubal 2012:418).

This PhD thesis attempts to enhance the study of migration systems theory by working towards these twinned appeals. First, it endeavours to examine the recursive relation of changing consumption and lifestyle practices to patterns of labour migration, drawing attention to the shifting social and cultural context in which migration both takes place and, subsequently, reorders. To date, the migration systems literature has focused on human mobility in the South as a process associated with changing production systems – both at global and local level – but has been less explicitly concerned with exploring the relationship between migration and the permutation of consumption practices (King 2012:142). There are, of course, notable exceptions (Yeoh 2016; Mapril 2014; Vann 2012; Osella and Osella 2000; Mills 1997, 1999), though largely outside the discipline of human geography: these are considered in the next section of the current chapter, which follows shortly, tasked with outlining an approach to consumption that is able to capture interactions with shifting production systems and processes of social transformation underway in the South.

Relating the shifting bases of production and consumption in the South, in such a manner, can facilitate a more holistic approach to the study of migration, in which migration is conceived as more than the movement of labour but a ‘total social fact’ (Bourdieu and Wacquant 2000:176) that both reacts to and propels transformation across economy, culture and society at origin and destination. To synthesise these diverse elements, however, requires an overarching framework that lends cohesion yet does not inhibit the necessary dynamism of the model. The third section of this theoretical framework will illustrate why the class theory of Pierre Bourdieu is best suited to bridge the mechanics of consumption and production: providing a model that is, at once, structured, complex and fluid. Moreover, as this section will contend, locating migrants in the rural-urban system in respect of Bourdieu’s class framework and, in particular, drawing upon Bourdieu’s conceptual trinity of capital, habitus and field provides a useful way of conceptualising the

mutual construction of structure and agency, which has been thus far been a problematic aspect of the migration systems framework.

Conclusion

Rural-urban migration is a phenomenon of increasing magnitude in contemporary Cambodia, where already some one million people have left their rural family homes in search of work in the capital, Phnom Penh. Though such flows of movements are common throughout Southeast Asia, often overshadowing international migration in terms of scale, the human geography literature to date has tended to focus attention on forms and processes of this latter type of mobility. Research into the associated mechanics of intra-national movement is thus relatively sparse, despite its wide transformative potential (Rigg 2013; Elmhirst 2012; King 2010). This PhD thesis thus aims, at the broadest level, to redress this deficit and capture some of the relations between processes of migration and social change in Cambodia in the Twenty-First Century, an era marked by the churning mobility of people, ideas and resources.

As this opening section of the theoretical framework for this PhD has illustrated, however, one of the challenges of studying rural-urban migration in the South is identifying a theoretical base upon which to ground and inform such investigation. Many conceptual approaches embody distinct Eurocentric biases that hamper their utility in the Southern contexts: romanticising a sedentary peasant past, drawing on notions of universal pathways to development or dependency, or reducing mobility to economic calculus are each recurrent, mirrored shortcomings. The complexity, fluidity and heterogeneity that characterise observable patterns and practices of migration in the South, however, warrants a more holistic approach, where human movement is considered more than merely a simple and singular redistribution of labour resource but a dynamic process that variably responds to and reshapes all facets and levels of society.

In the search for such an approach, this section has highlighted the potential utility of the migration systems framework. Pioneered by Mabogunje in the 1970s, migration systems theory has retained a steady, often appreciated, presence in the theoretical literature, even if its promise has not always been fulfilled by empirical applications. As such, contemporary migration scholars have advocated revisiting and revitalising the systems approach (Bakewell 2013; De Haas 2010b). Mabogunje's emphasis on the importance of feedbacks in creating structured, regular flows of movement resonates with previous

research on mobility in Cambodia and it therefore appears advantageous to build on this systems foundation.

As discussed herein, this PhD thesis aims to contribute to the revitalisation of systems theory in two ways, responding to noted deficiencies (Bakewell, De Haas and Kubal 2012) in the current framing of the model. First, to flesh out the 'contextual impacts' of mobility by developing understanding of the role of consumption in the operation and permutation of the system. Second, to employ the class theory of Pierre Bourdieu as a means of reconciling a recursive analysis of the worlds of consumption and production and thereby, drawing upon his conceptual trinity of capital, habitus and field in particular, provide new means of examining the articulation of migrant agency and social structure within the migration system. The remaining two sections of this PhD's tripartite theoretical framework consider each of these imperatives in turn. Thus, what follows first examines current scholarship on consumption, seeking a conceptual approach able to expose the location and relations of consumption in Southern migration systems. The concluding section explores the class theory of Pierre Bourdieu in order to illustrate its utility and significance in lending coherence to the conceptual approach of this PhD thesis.

2.2. Consumption

Changing patterns and styles of consumption are perhaps one of the most obvious illustrations of the effect of migration on the distribution of resources in village society. The influx of new commodities and global brands and fashions appear in striking juxtaposition to the more traditional or local objects and elements that too comprise the material culture of village life. Consumption is not merely a consequence of migration, however. Rather, it is also part of its impetus since the need and desire for certain commodities is a staple factor in most migratory decision-making and, moreover, the very production of such commodities might often be what provides labour opportunities for migrants. Thus, commodities and their consumption are linked reciprocally and dynamically to migration as both cause and effect. This recursive relation of migration and consumption has not always come to the fore in the literature, however, and the aim of this section of the theoretical framework for this PhD is to explore how and where the sphere of consumption might sit within the mechanics of the migration systems framework discussed above.

This second section of the theoretical framework begins examining work that situates consumption in relation to reflexive identity construction. This approach predominates among studies of consumption in the South and the accounts examined here sketch this creative agency as a driver of human mobility. As will be illustrated, however, this approach tends to divorce consumption from the wider social milieu from which it originates, obfuscating the social and material relations of consumption practices. For the purposes of this PhD, these relations must be brought back into focus, in order to more fully expose the depth and scope of the recursive interactions of migration and consumption.

The symbolic value of goods in migratory decisions: resistance, social change and distinction

Kothari and Laurie (2005:224) have noted that studies of the clothing industry (and arguably this criticism may be extended to studies of economic relations in the South in general) have demonstrated a pervasive tendency to focus on the 'globalisation of production', thereby largely ignoring the consumerist facet of social relations that affect and are, indeed, effected by and within the South. 'People in local spaces', they argue, 'tend to be categorized primarily as "workers" and "producers" who are affected by, and respond to the exigencies of Western capital and international production' (Kothari and

Laurie 2005:224). It seems, therefore, that there is a need to 'disrupt the dualism' (Kothari and Laurie 2005:224) that persists in this dichotomous presentation of Western consumer and Southern producer.

Authors like Skoggard (1998:63) have argued to the contrary that, for example, 'the Taiwanese do not... consume the products that they make, but just labour in their manufacture'. However, as Kothari and Laurie emphasise (2005:224), there are, in fact, many global products produced in the South for the attention of Southern consumers. Focusing on the clothing industry, they identify surplus export stock and fake brands as two typical avenues for local consumption at sites of production. Other industries, however, engage local workforces to produce for the local market with rather more direct intent: for example, global brand beverage companies like Coca-Cola typically bottle at a national level for national consumption (Miller 1998). Certainly here, workers do 'consume the products they make' rather than merely 'labour in their manufacture'.

Mills (1997:40) concurs that there is a 'general absence of sustained attention to consumption as a social practice in the wider literature [on the South]' and suggests that the reason for this paucity of studies might rest with unease on the part of researchers and academics to confront the disconcerting notion that:

'[C]ommodity consumption by working class actors, however necessary for the daily reproduction of their labour power, entails a kind of complicity in their exploitation, for they are consuming the products of their own alienated labour for the profit of capital' (Mills 1997:40).

Thus she argues, 'the pursuit of commodities as marker of symbolic value or social status appears as a particularly insidious form of false consciousness in the face of capitalist hegemony' (Mills 1997:40). Yet she maintains that there is a strict necessity to forge a place for studies of consumption in the documentation of experiences of proletarianization in the developing world. Indeed, this necessity arises from this very contradiction that the conceptualisation of the Southern worker-consumer – complicit in her own exploitation – entails. She contends:

'Their experiences as workers do not provide the only or even the most compelling framework through which many migrant women assess their time in the city. Rather it is in new forms of urban consumption... that the tensions and contradictions of the migration experience are most keenly felt. Viewing migrants as consumers, rather than solely as producers, reveals more complex dimensions of women's urban employment and highlights a powerful avenue by which labour

migrants may pursue new forms of autonomy and agency and the construction of socially satisfying identities' (Mills 1997:21).

Since Mills' writing, treatment of migration in the literature (Hoefinger 2013; Derks 2008; Busza 2004) has made some effort towards overcoming this productivist bias that is perceived to dominate studies of the South, by emphasising aspirations of modernity and consumer lifestyle that underwrite migratory decisions, particularly among the young, in this region (Mapril 2014; Sharma 2013; Vann 2012; Osella and Osella 2006, 2000, 1999). As Mills (1997:39) describes, 'labour mobility is embedded in social and cultural tensions within households and within the individual herself'. It 'reflects not just dominant ideals of filial obligation' but 'equally powerful perceptions of status lost already to mobile peers and desires for "beautiful clothes" and other commodified signifiers of urban glamour and sophistication' and, thus, 'the movement of young women into Bangkok has as much to do with aspirations for particular kinds of personhood as with specific material goals' (Mills 1997:39).

Gidwani and Sivaramakrishnan (2003:205) have described these aspirations as part of what they term the 'cultural logic of migration':

'Once the cultural logic of migration is taken into account, the frequently invoked link between declining livelihood security and increasing proclivity to migrate seems increasingly harder to sustain. In the evolving world of rural cosmopolitanism, livelihood security may no longer be the overarching factor in determining migration. In fact, we go as far to suggest that migration may be undertaken, even if it sometimes compromises the livelihood security and the working conditions of the migrant – provided it contains the promise to positively transform place-based identities and relations of subjugation'.

The necessity of reconciling this 'cultural logic' into understandings of migration patterns and practice is, as discussed in the previous section of this theoretical framework, one of the factors that implores the employ of a more holistic framework for the study of migration, emphasising that economic concerns are not always the sole impetus of movement.

In Mills' account, and others like it, 'economic liberalisation' (Osella and Osella 1999:989), the 'spread of communication technology' (Mills 1997:42), the 'globalisation of mass media' (Ger and Belk 1996:279) and 'the export of popular culture' (Ger and Belk 1996:279; see also Walsh 2003:290), 'international tourism' (Ger and Belk 1996:280), not to mention migrant networks themselves (Busza 2004; Osella and Osella 1999; Mills 1997; Ger and Belk

1996), are identified as factors that work to generate powerful discourses of modernity that become significant mechanisms within migration 'systems', as described prior: mechanisms that serve to induce flows of workers to urban areas, where they hope to partake in or witness these new cultural forms.

As Mills describes of Thai migrants:

'Just as powerful [as filial obligation] in shaping migration decisions is an explicit desire to be "up-to-date" (*than samay*) and to participate in Thai modernity. Let me be clear here the term modernity refers not to an objective social reality but to a powerful field of popular discourse and cultural production... To rural producers the images of urban wealth and commodified progress that pervade Thai popular culture pose models of consumption that, however, difficult to achieve, are impossible to ignore. In particular, the ownership and display of new technologies and consumer commodities are increasingly valued as symbols of modern success and social status throughout Thailand' (Mills 1997:42).

Mills thus draws on the work of authors like Daniel Miller (1998, 2005) and Jean Comaroff (1996), who have utilised cultural perspectives of consumption to emphasise its 'transformative power' (Gidwani and Sivaramakrishnan 2003:190); its potential to reconfigure space and, most importantly for purposes here, individual and collective identity, understood in Giddens' (1991) sense as a 'reflexive process of self-actualisation' (Jackson and Thrift 1995:227). Simply put, 'our identities are affirmed and contested through specific acts of consumption: we define ourselves by what we buy and by the meaning we give to the goods and services that we acquire' (Jackson and Thrift 1995:227). As Osella and Osella have demonstrated similarly in the context of Gulf migrants in Kerala, 'the adoption of specific consumption practices' upon return enables said migrants to 'objectify and redefine both their self-perceived and other-perceived position' and, importantly for our purposes, 'to concretize and make sense of their attempts to achieve generalized upwards social mobility' (Osella and Osella 1999:989).

Indeed, at the extreme, this 'transformative power' is said to be actively harnessed by consumers, so that the very act of consumption becomes a form of resistance to economic, social and cultural subjugation on a range of scales, from global to local: 'consumption is a symbol or declaration of autonomy' (Rothstein 2005:298). For Walsh (2003:298; see also Mills 1997; Rothstein 2005), the conspicuous and transient patterns of consumption practiced by young male sapphire miners in Madagascar is rendered an act of defiance to subjugation experienced in accordance with traditional social relations:

‘Rather than channel the value of their efforts into the support and reproduction of enduring kin- and place-based social networks – networks in which young men, it should be noted, are likely to occupy subordinate positions – Ambondromifehy’s conspicuous consumers spend on themselves’.

In addition to an act of resistance against social relations of subjugation, Walsh (2003:298) suggests that, moreover, the ‘daring’ consumption patterns of the young men represent acts of defiance against economic relations of subjugation; their refusal to acknowledge and live within the confines of ‘risk’: ‘a means by which people allotted the essentially passive role of dealing with uncertainty exert control and demonstrate agency’.

Walsh thus evidences ‘the possibility that the cosmopolitan world of goods and significations can have emancipatory potential for groups subordinated by “traditional”, place-specific relations of hierarchy’ (Gidwani and Sivaramakrishnan 2003:205). Through acts of consumption, Walsh’s miners are afforded the ability to self-construct identities and become, in opposition to their traditional social role, ‘powerful, attractive and even charismatic men’ (Walsh 2003:299) – literally rather than figuratively: ‘their consumption is not so much “akin” to fantasy as it is the means to the momentary realization of fantasy’ (Walsh 2003:299).

Gell (1986) argued similarly of the intriguing case of Jock Stiratt’s Sri Lankan fishermen – low-waged and isolated until the local availability of ice began to bring high returns from inland markets, they used this new-found wealth to build and purchase garages, televisions, refrigerators for island homes without roads, cars, or electricity – that consumer goods could incorporate “into the personal and social identity of the consumer” , “dialectically negate the conditions under which the ... wealth was actually obtained” and “objectify and transform” a productive career’ (Gell 1986 cited in Osella and Osella 1999:1011).

Osella and Osella (1999), however, offer a more modest appraisal of the ‘transformative power’ of consumption. In their study of Gulf migrants in Kerala, acts of consumption are not a means to circumvent traditional place-specific relations of hierarchy but, rather, are located precisely within this niche. Consumption, as they describe, is ‘located within individual, familial and group mobility strategies and developmental cycles’ and ‘assumes a long-term dimension orientated towards present and future’ (Osella and Osella 1999:989). Moreover, ‘from this long-term perspective, consumption practices take on a normative aspect’ by which ‘consumption and mobility trajectories are clearly articulated within the cycle’: i.e. ‘people’s spending patterns are expected to change over time’ (Osella and Osella 1999:990). Thus, whilst transient consumption of the type identified by Walsh, above, is

perfectly legitimate among the young, over time this immature demeanour must be displaced by 'values of permanency' (Osella and Osella 1999:990); consumption must be channelled into strategic purchase of household goods and housing itself to meet ideals of householder status. Acts of consumption hardly represent resistance to traditional hierarchy, instead, the very means of conformity; even such 'daring' acts as Walsh identifies are anticipated and sanctioned by the shifting norms that apply throughout the stages of the individual's life cycle.

Alfred Gell, in an earlier (1986) study of consumption among the newly rich of the Muria, a tribal group in India, has similarly suggested that patterns of consumption, rather than formed outside or in opposition to traditional norms, are mediated by and subject to them. In his study, those who had newly acquired wealth in what was, 'historically, a homogeneous, clan-based' and 'egalitarian' society (Gell 1986:111) were prohibited from engaging in acts of conspicuous consumption by 'social pressures' that labelled such activity 'egotistical and anti-social' (Gell 1986:111) as it threatened to undermine the traditional 'collectivist' ethos (Gell 1986:123) that Gell described as characterising the community. Thus a situation arose in which 'rich Muria accumulate wealth they dare not spend... [They] are forced to consume as if they were poor' (Gell 1986:111). The subsequent perverse irony of the situation is that 'the rich', of course, 'got still richer' (Gell 1986:111) as their wealth was channelled into '*practical*' uses – land, additional houses – and simple accumulation, none of which carried the connotations of '*playing* with money' (Gell 1986:133; emphases added) that might have shattered the external appearance of equality, but which did far more structural damage; thus, the 'unintended consequence' of this 'pattern of restraints on consumption geared to the maintenance of egalitarian norms has been the undermining of the economic basis for the traditional egalitarian ethos of Muria society', asserts Gell (1986:111).

Gidwani and Sivaramakrishnan (2003:205) offer a cautionary note regarding the 'celebrationist narratives' of 'subculture theorists' who 'anoint consumerism as a new diffuse form of resistance' and, in doing so, 'offer a mythologized consumer as agent of history'. Clearly – as shown most overtly by Osella and Osella's (1999) contributions above and Mills (1997), yet also by the wealth of literature stressing the significance of sustained rural-urban migratory linkages - the typical 'migrant as consumer' is 'a creature of more modest aspirations, prescience and agency':

'Like Gramsci's peasant, he or she exhibits a streak of conservatism and realises his or her agency in unlikely rather than articulated ways. More often than not, migrants continue to retain attachment to their home villages, and successful migrants utilize their new found wealth to upgrade social and political status at home. In this respect, they are circumspect rebels who seek to ascend or modify a given hierarchy rather than to dismantle it' (Gidwani and Sivaramakrishnan 2003:205).

Though both Gell and the Osellas agree that consumption patterns typically bow to traditional pressures and represent conformity rather than resistance, their accounts do present a strong degree of dissonance. For Gell (1986:123), the Muria's repression of acts of conspicuous consumption evidences that 'consumption is not associated with competition, but with the demonstration of adequacy, the ability to come up to the collective mark'. Dutton (1998 in Jackson 2004:176) notes similarly of consumption patterns in China:

'Many consumers in China do not operate with the notion of individuality that underpins even the most mass-produced of fashion products in the West. For these Chinese... fashion is not constructed to mark out one's individuality, but to mark out one's success. Success [in this context] means choosing a coat that everyone else is wearing for, to see others in the same coat... is not a sign of social disgrace, but a mark of wisdom and affluence'.

Yet the Osellas, on the other hand, demonstrate keenly that consumption among the Izhavas of Kerala is very much motivated by its potential to lever return migrants into new social rankings above that of their peers. Consumption here is strongly associated with competition, as suggested by Veblen (1899), and is employed as a strategy to achieve upwards social mobility: 'consumption practices are an opportunity to display knowledge, taste and discrimination... Class status is increasingly being shown by careful, knowing consumption, taking on an air of distinction' (Osella and Osella 1999:1006).

The accounts above emphasise that consumption is not merely about the fulfilment of a set of physical or material needs; 'the nature of commodities is such that they can be invested with symbolic meaning and thus the possessor, by possessing the object, can appropriate the meaning' (Rothstein 2005:292). Again employing the terminology of Bourdieu (1985), Osella and Osella argue that 'consumption offers the chance to make money work twice: in the act of spending, economic capital is simultaneously publicly displayed and converted into symbolic capital' (Osella and Osella 1999:1003). Testament to the symbolic value of even the smallest of consumer goods, they observe that 'sometimes people leave the labels on consumer durables to emphasise their origins; likewise, empty tins and packets from

imported sweets or perfume are left on display around the house' (Osella and Osella 1999:1006). Observations such as these evidence that this symbolic value of goods rather than outright utility is often the real aim of such consumption: 'the prestige brought by possession of consumer goods is just as important as, sometimes exceeding, any specific use or financial value' (Osella and Osella 1999:1010).

Nonetheless, this emphasis in the literature on the symbolic value of consumption has had the effect of overlooking both the very materiality of consumption and, further, the important consequences and contradictions that consideration of this materiality presents. Indeed, 'the symbolic aspect of consumption... is only part of the context of contemporary capitalist consumption' (Rothstein 2005:202), a part whose externalities number, if not none, then relatively few. Miller (2001:227) notes that 'we live in a time when most human suffering is the direct result of the lack of goods. What most of humanity desperately needs is more consumption, more housing, more transport, more books, more computers'. Here Miller reminds us that whilst consumption may have a certain 'cultural logic', it has a practical logic too – people do not consume merely for the signifiers attached to goods but have need of their material properties.

However, though Miller reminds us of the materiality of consumption, he neglects what presents coincidentally an opportunity to illustrate some of its ironies, contradictions and effects. He fails to note that the 'lack of goods' that constitutes the 'suffering' of 'most' is directly attributable to the pursuit of an abundance of goods by the few; a symptom of poverty, not a cause, that reflects the historic, systematic and violent expropriation of the South's human and natural resources to fuel the expansion of consumption in the North.

The aim of the subsequent section, then, is to attempt to redress this imbalance between the material and symbolic nature of consumption. Once the material nature of consumption is reintegrated into analysis, a number of clear moral and political problems, so far obfuscated, are thrown into contrast. These issues suggest that a structural understanding of consumption is necessary to capture a deeper and truer understanding of its cause and effect.

Postmoral economies?

In studies, like those above, that have emphasised the creative and active use of consumption toward the self-reflexive fashioning of identity (an approach that has somewhat dominated the landscape of consumption literature for the past decade) there is

a notable lack of direct engagement with the moral and political ambiguities that these new modes of consuming identity entail (Wilk 2001:246). The discipline of geography has tended, writes Goss (2006:238), towards a 'postmoralist position': a position that celebrates 'the pleasurable appropriation of commodified meanings in different cultural contexts'. Such a position tends to laud the creativity of consumers but, in doing so, obfuscates the darker side of its reality: the control of producers over the process of consumption; the social and economic inequalities and conflicts associated with consumption practices.

A malcontent with the 'political complacency of consumption studies', as Jackson describes (2002:15), has filtered into the literature, however, led by authors such as Wilk (2001), Hartwick (2000), and McRobbie (1997), who, for instance, have criticised the current focus, 'where questions of social exclusion (poverty and hardship) are, at best, marginalised in an overwhelming emphasis on pleasure and desire' (Jackson 2002:15). Though many are sympathetic to the preliminary objectives of these cultural champions of consumption – e.g. McRobbie conceding 'such emphasis may have been justifiable... in order to reclaim the agency of 'ordinary consumers' whose skills and investments (both economic and emotional) had been derided by an over-emphasis on the power of (apparently ungendered and disembodied) 'market forces' (Jackson 2002:15) – there is growing disquiet surrounding the notion that endorsements of consumption may have exaggerated the importance of consumer agency to the neglect of consumption's broader cause and consequence (Miller 2012).

Hartwick levels complaint particularly to the postmodern obsession with sign that underpins these analyses, in which the physical and material reality of the object is replaced by simulation and image until 'what is consumed is not a thing, laden with materiality and the complex cycle that finally derives from labour and nature, but purely and simply an element in a code' (Poster 1975 in Hartwick 2000:1179). This separation of object from sign has, however, 'the effect of hiding the workers who make the commodities onto which the illusion is later grafted' and 'the still-existing connections with production are lost in imagistic reverie' (Hartwick 2000:1179). Such approaches, rather than critically engage, revel in this reverie, and disregard the implications of its existence and its origin in the system of needs. 'Liberation at one end entails exploitation at the other' explains Hartwick (2000:1177): a neglected dilemma; the connection between consumer and producer, though obfuscated by the realm of sign, continues to exist.

The connection between consumer and producer is not the only relationship concealed by the elevation of sign over the physical and material properties of objects, or neglected by the continued limiting emphasis on the benefit the consumed brings to its consumer. We lose sight, alongside, of a myriad of other ways that the materiality and hyper-reality of objects affects objective and subjective reality. For indeed, there are facets of consumption that are, most unarguably, 'socially, ecologically and personally destructive' (Wilk 2001:246), whatever other constructive or productive functions consumption may have.

Wilk (2001:254) outlines a consideration of some of these facets concisely:

'In any social setting people confront a series of basic problems over the implications of consumption. These issues revolve around problems of distributive justice, balancing the goals and desires of people, the ownership and control of objects and resources and the problem that consumption can destroy or deplete common resources. Because each person's consumption affects others the issue of the common good can never be escaped. There is also the issue of sustainability and balancing immediate gratification with the longer-term requirements of the future, including the needs of future generations'.

What can be extrapolated from Wilk's exposition is the neglect in consumption studies, broadly, of society: a methodological individualism reigns that sees considers consumption from the narrow perspective of the consumer. The effects of consumption on political, social, economic and environmental circumstances are simply muted.

Though generally these themes are only weakly voiced within the wide literature on consumption, there are some studies that do make reference to such concerns. Of those studies referenced so far, Osella and Osella (1999:991) do take time to (briefly) note that 'consumption works to the advantage of those who have cash to spend' but 'largely excludes those living at or below subsistence levels'. This sets in motion a downward spiral of negative causality as 'participating in certain consumption arena and specific style(s) also allows consumers eventually to gain further economic benefits, simultaneously penalising and excluding non-consumers' (Osella and Osella 1999:991). This, they assert, means 'the politics of consumption are not exclusively the politics of identity, but also of inequality' (Osella and Osella 1999:991-2).

Ger and Belk (1996:283), too, hypothesise that the growth of consumption culture in Southern societies will likely result in social inequality, 'threatening the integrated social fabric of the LAW': 'marketization and newfound consumption serves the elite but not the majority. Nonconsumption is experienced as a lack of control and an exclusion that

perpetuates poverty and creates withdrawal'. The unmatched expectations of consumers then lead to alienation, frustration, social strife and crime, to which they reference the case of post-Soviet Russia.

There is, then, at least some recognition in the consumption-as-identity literature that, as Douglas and Isherwood (1979) noted at the inauguration of the resurgent interest in the subject: 'consumption can build bridges as well as fences' (Rothstein 2005:295).

Indeed, further back in time the morality of consumption was a 'central issue' for theorists: Wilk (2001:246-247) explains that early economists like Smith and Ricardo, social scientists like Veblen, and, of course, Marx, regarded consumption with a greater level of critical circumspection. In Marx, we perhaps find the apex of these critiques. Rooted in his broader critique of capitalism and its alienation of labour, Marx's perspective on consumerism 'links the social, personal and political together with a persuasive moral vision and a hardheaded politics', encapsulated in his recognition that fetishism is a key dynamic in the operation of 'an economic system that rewards some and exploits others' (Wilk 2001:248). Its primary weakness, (evident too in much the work of his predecessors, contemporaries and successors) is the supposition of the preponderance of 'false needs' as the motivation for consumption in modern society, when at least some genuine needs must exist alongside, and the corresponding lack of any 'criteria for telling us which kinds of consumption are productive and authentic, and which are wasteful and fake' (Wilk 2001:247); where does one draw the line?

That question aside, there is a strand of the current consumption literature that has attempted to 'follow Marx' (Rothstein 2005:281) and 'unravel the magic of the commodity rather than revelling in its seductive delights' (Hartwick 2001:1177) – or, as more commonly put, to 'get with the fetish' (Taussig 1992 in Cook and Crang 1996) or 'get behind the veil' (Harvey 1990:422) – essentially, focusing on the exploitative dynamic of consumption by exploring its connection to production. The connections are explored through the tracing of commodity chains, or more recently circuits (see Jackson 2002), 'trac[ing] connections across the globe, linking groups of people who may not even know of each other's existence' (Wilk 2001:256) in an attempt to 'tell fuller stories of social reproduction' (Cook 2004:642), '[b]ecause affluent people are so far removed from the consequences of their consumption... [that] even with the best intentions, most people simply have no access to the information they would need to make moral choices about their own consumption' (Wilk 2001:256).

This literature demonstrates emphatically that relations of consumption are structured by relations of production: contrary to Miller's (1995) assertions that consumption has become the 'vanguard of history', the 'new motor of the global economy' (Rothstein 2005:281), the commodity chains/circuits literature shows it is the structure, especially the transnationalism, of production in late capitalism that facilitates the continued fetishism of commodities and therefore the mass consumption that characterises contemporary cultures.

The limitations of the commodity chains/circuits approach lie, however, in its limited appreciation of Marx's concept of fetishism. As Goss (2004:374) explains, 'fetishism in the Marxist sense does not merely refer', as the chains/circuits approach assumes, 'to the intentional "masking" or "veiling" of the production of particular commodities'. Thus he suggests that 'we ought to be 'critical of the conception of fetishism only in the sense of the "veiling" of the real relations of production and distribution, as if it is merely a matter of "seeing through" to what the surface of the commodity obscures' as it results in 'a signal unwillingness in the new consumption literature to engage with the "complexity" of Marx's concept of fetishism as a reified relationship with things – that is with the "*calculus* of objects" and the chains of signifiers that construct the world of commodities' (Goss 2004:374, emphasis in original). This unwillingness, he reflects, is symptomatic of a general 'hostility towards theory *per se*' (Goss 2004:374, emphasis in original): not merely a latent effect of what Goss terms the 'empirical turn', but an outright 'suspicion of structural models of society and consciousness: of the idea of a consumer society in which subjects are compelled to consume beyond any reasonable conception of basic needs and, in which consumers are able to deny or repress their knowledge of the system, to suspend disbelief and enjoy 'having it both ways' (Goss 2004:374). Thus:

'A proper concern of consumption studies includes not only the detailed study of individual motivations and the choices that consumers make in their everyday practice but also the generalised compulsion to consume... [A compulsion that] has its origins in the general alienation of labour and the complex phenomenon of the fetishism of commodities under contemporary capitalism' (Goss 2004:374).

Miller and Jackson attract particular ire in Goss's review of the consumption literature: two authors at the fore of the 'new consumption studies' who have explicitly attacked (see Miller 2001 and Jackson 2002) the 'hollowness' (Jackson 2002:8) of the political-moralist strand of thought encapsulated in the chains/circuits literature. Their critique centres upon the 'tendency to straw person' (Goss 2006:239) within such literature, which they observe

effects the construct of a binary between ‘two camps’: on the one hand, ‘those schooled in the arts of certain forms of critical theory [whose] central purpose... is to expose the regime of consuming subjectivities as a fraud and to highlight the contradictions, inconsistencies and costs of its surface pleasures’ and, on the other, ‘those schooled in the arts of active interpretation [who]point to the human creativity and innovation inherent in practices of consumption, and highlight ways in which these resist dominant producer meanings’.

Goss is, in fact, sensitive to the manufacture of this dualism and concurs that it contributes towards the rendering of the current Marxist structuralist perspectives ensconced within the chains/circuits literature as, employing Jackson and Thrift’s (1995) own label, a ‘caricature’ (Goss 2004:376). Yet he refutes their corresponding derision in denouncing the chains/circuits project’s broader aims, in the guise of the re-connection of consumption to the wider structures of society:

‘It seems to me that the new consumption studies risks throwing out the baby with the bathwater: rejecting a caricature of commodity fetishism they lose a concept that provides insight into the relationship between the material and symbolic; and rejecting a caricature of the Frankfurt School they lose an insight into the tendencies toward the total organisation of everyday life under capitalism’ (Goss 2004:376).

Having demonstrated the need for contemporary studies of consumption practices to integrate a reappraisal of the moral-political aspect of consumption, the final section of this chapter will consider the interaction of changing structures of consumption with broader social structures. This interactivity forms a central theme of this PhD, which seeks to analyse the interrelations between systems of migration, consumption and social class.

The production of consumption

It follows from Goss’s argument then, that if we wish to capture a fuller picture of consumption, we must seek to revise and renew the structural focus of studies. Thus, in line with Rothstein, herself following the neglected exhortations of Douglas and Isherwood, we have to seek to understand consumption in the context of the structures that govern it: ‘consumption has to be set back into the social process’ (Douglas and Isherwood 1979:4 in Rothstein 2005:298). Though there is an interesting and important mutually affective relationship between consumption and identity, ‘the heavy focus in much of the literature on consumption and identity, often also with particular attention to “modern” identity, has led to a stress on the subjective aspects of consumption and isolated consumption from

other aspects of life' (Rothstein 2005:298). Indeed, Rothstein (2005:281) notes it is interesting that in the study of consumption and identity, it is a peculiar anomaly that class identity is 'rarely' discussed: 'too often postmodernists and poststructuralists have been concerned exclusively with identity and "jettison[ed] the ballast of structural representation"' still vital because 'today's identities, like those of the past are rooted in today's changed structural conditions' (Rothstein 2005:280). 'The boom in consumption' in the South, it is argued, 'cannot be understood apart from changes in production' (Rothstein 2005:285).

Of course, 'the most important factor influencing consumption is the decline of subsistence production and the growth of wage labour, that is, proletarianization', and Rothstein (2005:280-281) proceeds to trace this growth in waged labour back, via the work of Harvey and Nash, through the rise in off-shore production promoted by the privatisation and liberalisation policies of SAPs; driven by the Washington Consensus with an ideology extolling the virtue of neoliberal 'economic restructuring' that had infiltrated public policy circles since its conception in the boardrooms of American companies, struggling after the demise of the 1970s post-war boom. Thus, 'the problems capitalists in the North faced in production and profits...set the stage for 1990s and turn-of-the-century globalisation and consumption' (Rothstein 2005:283). Rothstein thereby illustrates the dialectical relationship between production and consumption that, such as, Miller (1995) misrepresents when he anoints consumption as the new 'vanguard of history' and maintains that consumers 'vote for neoliberalism' in their pursuit of the lowest price (Rothstein 2005:280).

Proletarianization contributes to the growth in consumption in a number of ways, foremost of which must, of course, be considered the introduction of cash wages. Yet alongside, important structural changes are typically wrought to traditional economic relations that facilitate new forms of consumption. For example, Rothstein (2005) and Nash (1985; 2001) have both investigated attitudes to consumption that have occurred in specific South American localities since the onset of integration into the global economy; attitudes characterised by a remarkable shift from a situation in which production and consumption activity are constrained and muted, 'from fear of inducing envy' (Rothstein 2005:291), to one in which these behaviours are sanctioned and embraced. Though many studies have noted similar effects (see for example Gell 1985 above), most have analysed this 'at the level of ideology', whereas Nash and Rothstein posit structural manipulations at the base of

this change. In short, the switch to waged labour redistributes the control of economic resources from the old (who own land and livestock under subsistence production) to the young (who form the mainstay of the industrial workforce). The relative importance of community and kinship norms to the young is then diminished by their periods of work outside the community – this is compounded by the increased importance of extra-local ties forged through work associations – to the effect that community norms no longer have the power to ‘censor’ (Rothstein 2005:292) economic activity.

Moreover, as Nash has demonstrated (1985; 2001), this decline in the relative importance of community and kinship has the simultaneous effect of depriving the young of an important source of identity. This, Rothstein asserts, highlights yet another structural element that must be considered in the analysis of consumption: ‘how changing structures eliminate alternative identity constructions’ (Rothstein 2005:290). She adds, further, that the establishment of industrial class identities in industrialising areas of the South, which might be supposed to replace community and kinship-orientated practices, are too obfuscated by certain peculiarities of post-Fordist flexible accumulation strategies and other ‘capitalist practices..used to undermine the importance and awareness of class among workers’ (Rothstein 2005:284), such as the repression of labour movements, which serves to ensure that ‘while residents... are showered with “modern images” and consumer items... there is, silence about working class identity’ (Rothstein 2005:290). These are the structural causes, she suggests, that underpin ‘why identity and not class is a problem today’ (Rothstein 2005:285).

Nonetheless, Rothstein makes clear, structural cleavages like class do continue exist: their overt role in the construction of identity may have diminished but their continued significance, in this respect, is that they serve to structure relations of consumption. Indeed, Rothstein (2005:298) depicts how ‘consuming identities... are often subsumed by other principles... Consuming to be modern takes many forms and these forms are influenced by class (especially class limitations and disposable income), gender, age and changing patterns of community control and authority’. Osella and Osella (1999) note, for example, that in Kerala, consumption is structured by caste status. Indeed, although ‘[people do] consume in part to establish particularly identities, what identities they aim for and the extent to which consumption is identity-orientated (that is, ‘only the signs attached to the goods are consumed’) is influenced by the structural conditions in which people find themselves’ (Rothstein 2005:285). In Rothstein’s (2005:285) study, then, ‘the continuation

of some subsistence cultivation and multiple livelihood strategies allows young workers to use low wages to establish new identities and to assert their independence through consumption... At one level, new patterns of consumption appear to be a way to co-opt workers as Ford intended... At the same time, however, their families, whether workers or not are more constrained and need to consume for survival and reproduction rather than identity...’ Thus, Rothstein (2005:294) argues, whilst it remains true that consumption can build bridges or fences, these ‘divisions and distancing whilst elaborated in consumption style, are created outside of consumption, that is, in production’. The subsequent section of this theory framework will draw on the work of Bourdieu (1984) to examine how this link between consumption and class can be systematically elaborated.

For now, these considerations suffice to make clear that current approaches stressing consumption as a source of identity have over-emphasised the relative importance of consumer agency, at the expense of structural factors. Hartwick (2000) and Goss (2006) share these concerns over the misrepresentation of agency: Goss (2006:238) noting the weakness of Jackson’s argument that localisation strategies of multinationals demonstrate the strength of consumer power – ‘surely, this example hardly even dents the most monolithic accounts of globalization and employs rather a diminished notion of agency’; and Hartwick (2000:1180) questioning similarly the literature’s stress on the ‘role of the consumer as an active agent... [who] play[s] an active role in shaping the consumption landscape... [I]s this where geographers should be focusing their understanding of the agency of consumption? Does this kind of practice constitute real agency, or agency that has already been massaged into active compliance? Are we fooling ourselves about whose power of consumption it is that creates agency?’.

Rothstein (2005:290) argues that the current consumption studies is blighted by two key assumptions that ‘prevail in most discussions of consumerism’, each assumption flawed through its ignorance of structure: ‘first, the assumption that because commodities have symbolic value, consumption is primarily the appropriation of these symbolic values; and second, that selecting, for example, Pepsi over Coke is a choice’. Instead, the objects that people consume are material as well as symbolic: their production, use, discard – the entire of their process of consumption – have implications for society, economy and environment. Further, market ‘choice’ is overstated: consumers possess free choice neither if nor how to consume; the need to consume is, in some part, produced and its practice constrained by structural forces (see Wilk 2014).

Whilst it is true that 'condemning third world consumption as imitation and domination denigrates people's creative, resistant and expressive capabilities, and ignores the way they take and use foreign goods for their own purpose' (Wilk 2001:252) – and, thus, the efforts within the literature to recapture the agency of South consumers are in some ways commendable – '[a]t the same time, it is clear that people in developing countries cannot make free choices about goods' (Wilk 2001:252). This means that 'we have to do more than testify to the active agency of the poor, for their ability to take the foreign and incorporate it into new kinds of authentic local culture' (Wilk 2001:253). Indeed, to understand fully the social life of commodities requires an appreciation of the 'intersection of spaces of consumption and production' (Bryant 2012:239) and an acknowledgement that 'all forms of consumption are morally ambiguous and problematic whatever one's social role or position in the world system' (Wilk 2001:252-253). Without this, the study of consumption becomes, as Goss warns (2004:371), merely a 'legitimation of commercial culture and apology for neoliberal markets'.

The 'celebrationist' perspectives that dominate the literature on consumerism in the South have, in this understanding, stood too far in explicit opposition or else neglect of the political economy approach, which, as has been emphasised here, is a necessary facet of any exploration of consumption. Instead, what is required is, as argued by Mills (1997:41), 'a contextual and contingent analysis, a middle ground between assumptions that commodities are "fetishistic vehicles of false consciousness"... and overly "romanticised" views in which commodity consumption by subaltern groups is read as everyday resistance'.

Conclusion

The opening section of the theoretical framework for this PhD thesis explored the theme of migration. It iterated the deficiencies of more traditional frameworks in making sense of the complex realities of labour movement in the contemporary South, where mobility has rarely fitted the conventional account of one-time transfers from rural family farms to urban factory floors but, rather, appears more circuitous: a constant churning and exchange of people, knowledge, ideals and resources. To facilitate the full capture of this mosaic of practices, a more holistic model is needed.

As such, migration systems theory, associated with Mabogunje (1970), was explored as an alternative model, capable of synthesising the analysis of the various actors, scales, locations and dynamics involved in the process of rural-urban migration. Yet though the

potential of Mabogunje's model is readily acknowledged in the literature, it has not yet been fully realised. In particular, where the sphere of consumption might sit within the framework has not yet been fully explored and how consumption draws upon and feeds into the mechanics of migration thereby likely understated. To build upon this model, therefore, the second section of the theoretical framework of this PhD has examined how understandings of consumption might be reconciled with the migration systems literature to shed new light on the operations of its machinery.

As this section has illustrated, many accounts of consumption in the South emanate from a methodological individualist perspective, demonstrating instances where consumption is used in the creative construction of reflexive identity. How consumption might recursively relate to wider material and social processes is, however, somewhat obfuscated by the focus of such studies. For the purposes of this PhD, therefore, which seeks to examine the interactions of migration and consumption, a framework that emphasises the moral-political evolution and repercussion of consumption is likely more capable of bringing such relations into sharp relief.

The third and final section of this theoretical framework, which follows, thus considers how the analysis of shifting production and consumption practices might be reconciled. It does so by introducing the class theory of Pierre Bourdieu as a means to join and relate the mechanics of livelihoods and lifestyles in the South. The work of Bourdieu, it will be illustrated, emphasises the co-constitutive relationship of labour, lifestyle and class. An adaptation of Bourdieu's class theory therefore promises to provide a useful framework upon which to ground and cohere the empirical study of this PhD thesis. At once structured and fluid, it can help elaborate both patterns and mechanics of social reproduction and transformation underway in the industrialising South.

2.3. Class

Two decades after the 'death of class' was proclaimed by Pakulski and Waters (1996), 'there have recently been signs of a revival of interest' in the concept (Sayer 2005:15; for a review of contributions to the geographic literature see Dowling 2009), suggesting that reports of its demise have been somewhat exaggerated. Despite this broader resurgence of interest, however, 'most of this literature theorises class from predominantly Western, and indeed urban locations' (Stenning 2008:9) and the concept remains for the most part eerily estranged from studies of rural development in Southeast Asia and the global South more broadly (Agarwala and Herring 2008).

This omission is beguiling since the social sciences have traditionally had a rich tradition of scholarship investigating local class processes in societies experiencing economic change (e.g. Wolf 1969, Scott 1985, Kerkvliet 2002). Such work has demonstrated that 'the constant political struggles between different social classes and groups within the state and society that largely determine the nature, scope and pace of agrarian change' (Borras Jr 2009:17). That class has been largely 'dropped from (dominant) rural development studies as well as policy and political practice' (Borras Jr 2009:17) is, thus, problematic given its proven explanatory potential.

Recognising this, there has been renewed call for a thorough reintegration of critical theory and structural perspectives to the field of rural development (Scoones 2009; Bernstein 2010; Kay 2008). Scoones (2009) and Bernstein (2010), for example, have criticised the 'sustainable rural livelihoods' paradigm, a dominant rural development approach for a decade, for failing to more explicitly link issues like the diversification and delocalisation of livelihoods with critical concepts such as politics, power and class. The effect is that the livelihoods paradigm tends to accord undue weight to 'locality and agency' in its analyses, 'black-boxing wider structural features' and ignoring 'recursive links across scales and between structural conditions and human action' (Scoones 2009:186). Greater insight is required to appreciate 'how livelihoods are structured by relations of class, caste, gender, ethnicity, religion and cultural identity' (Scoones 2009:186): a feat which requires us to ask 'who owns what, who does what, who gets what and what do they do with it?' (Bernstein 1992, cited in Scoones 2009:186) in order to address the broader issue of what (re-)produces the poverty that development academics and practitioners design to overcome.

The opening sections of the theoretical framework of this PhD thesis, above, considered the themes of migration and consumption, exploring ways to relate the analysis of new modes

of production and consumption, which are both core facets of social change in the contemporary South. The third and final section of this tripartite theoretical framework, which follows, explores how class may be (re)integrated into studies of development and change in the South, in order to further understandings of the dynamics of social reproduction and transformation that occur therein: mechanics that are both shaped by and responsive to these shifting global and local bases of production and consumption.

This final section, first, acknowledges the existence and validity of a plenitude of theoretical understandings of class. Nonetheless, it is reasoned that Pierre Bourdieu's approach to class boasts potential to offer a fresh perspective to the literature on migration and development, an arena in which the study of class has typically been reduced to structuralist concerns with production systems and occupation. By contrast, Bourdieu's insistence on the inseparability of subjective and objective inquiry, his sketch of class as more reflexive, fluid and everyday, affords him to accord a centrality to the arena of consumption in the 'making' of bounded practical classes. In this way, Bourdieu's work, it is argued, holds potential to confer a semantic unity to the meta-narrative of this PhD's theoretical framework, allowing for the analysis and elaboration of the co-constitutive and dynamic linkages between consumption, class and mobility and, in doing so, posit the processes and consequences of social reproduction and change that accompany the unfolding of economic development in the South.

'Depeasantization': class and the legacy of the peasant studies tradition

The discussion of class must begin with consideration of which particular breed of the concept to adopt and apply: the sociological cannon contains a wealth of variant concepts as contenders for a starting point. In order, then, to better mitigate the pitfalls of ambiguity, it is important to acknowledge and negotiate this plurality of perspectives and establish firmly from the outset what the usage of the term class will refer to. Stenning (2008:9) observes that one of the problems with the resurgent interest in class in the geographical literature is that the 'engagement with class can be abstract, even ungrounded, and often hidden within discussions of power, inequality and difference'. It is important for the purposes of this PhD to lay plain the engagement with class, to bring it out into the open, and so the discussion will now turn to a conceptual clarification in line with this objective.

There is an emergent consensus within the academic literature on class towards recognising the validity of a plurality of perspectives and approaches (see e.g. Sayer 2005;

Wright 2005; Crompton 2008). This entails that any theoretical wrangling over the subject should not focus on which of the many conceptions of class is 'correct', per se, but rather which one (or combination) is suitable for the purpose at hand. Indeed, Sayer (2005:72, emphasis added) explains that to presuppose there is somewhere – whether already elaborated or waiting to be uncovered – an objective or definitive version of the concept of class is to misunderstand the nature of this theoretical multiplicity, which is underwritten by a cacophony of variable and nuanced sets of 'referents and explanatory ambitions':

'There is a common failure to recognise that there are not only many different conceptions of what 'it' [class] is (which would imply that the debate was between different concepts of the same, single object, as it is when someone asks what I have in my hand), but also different concepts referring to different objects or referents (so that there is *more than one 'it'*).

This implies, further, that since the variant conceptualisations of class are not necessarily in direct competition with one another they need not be mutually exclusive: 'particular approaches to class may be very different from one another, but if they have a focus on different things, then they are not necessarily incompatible...' (Crompton 2008:93). Thus, for example, 'a Marxist concept of class is certainly different from Bourdieu's concept of class, but they refer to different aspects of the social world and are used for different, but possibly compatible, explanatory purposes' (Sayer 2005:72).

It is useful, Sayer (Sayer 2005:72) contends, to think of different theories of class as discrepant in terms of 'how abstract or concrete they are'. In this usage, 'abstract' is not intended to mean 'vague' but '*one-sided* or selective'; an 'abstract' conception of class is one that 'focus[es] on a particular aspect of the social world, abstracting from others which may coexist with it (Sayer 2005:72; emphasis in original). Thus, 'Marx's conception of classes in capitalism, anchored in relations of production, is... relatively abstract because it leaves off account and makes no judgement on forms of variation and differentiation which are held to be capable of operating independently of the aspect being abstracted (e.g. gender, skill levels, status)' (Sayer 2005:72). By contrast, 'concrete' conceptions are '*many sided*... they attempt, more ambitiously to synthesise diverse forms of differentiation' (Sayer 2005:73; emphasis in original).

Thus the concrete and the abstract each have their own ambitions and, accordingly, their own merits and applications: problems arise when this detail is neglected, when 'an abstract concept of class is expected to do the same work as a concrete concept, or vice versa' (Sayer 2005:73). Abstract concepts enable us to 'focus on the workings of influences

that may be separable from (i.e. only contingently related to) other phenomenon of interest, so that we can isolate what is due to any particular source' (Sayer 2005:73). For example, the Marxist concept of class is:

'Primarily designed to explain the necessary conditions for the existence and functioning of capitalist economic mechanisms... [As such, it] *should not be expected* to function on its own as a predictor of life chances... [because abstract concepts] *inevitably fail to acknowledge* those things from which they abstract, such as gender, which also affect life-chances' (Sayer 2005:73, emphasis added).

'A more concrete concept of class', on the other hand, '*would be expected* to say more about life chances, lifestyle and experience, but to do so it *would have to acknowledge* interactions with other axes of inequality' (Sayer 2005:73, emphasis added).

This distinction and its implications are useful for the purposes of this PhD investigation. Typically, studies of labour migration in the South that have incorporated (whether explicitly or implicitly) a consideration of the class transformations that both provoke and result from it have employed abstract, materialist, broadly Marxist interpretations of the concept. Both the migration literature and wider rural development literature are, in this way, traditionally informed by the dominant thematic movements in the agrarian or peasant studies literature which predate and underwrite their development as sub-disciplines. Thus, geographers like Bryceson (2002) and Rigg (Rigg and Nattapoolwat 2001), respectively, view rural-urban labour migration in the context of rural development as essentially symptomatic of a more comprehensive trend of 'depeasantization' or 'deagrarianisation'; the crux of these theses, imbued with the teleological and developmentalist logic of early 19th Century Marxist writings (see Araghi 1995), being that rural-urban labour migration is a by-product of the articulation of modes of production occurring in developing economies; the assiduous advance of capitalism reducing the future of the peasantry to the fate of disappearance as they are transformed – whether 'sooner or later, rapidly or slowly, directly or indirectly' (Araghi 1995:338) – into wage workers or capitalist farmers, and necessarily so since the very development of capitalism both requires and causes free labour.

The assumption of depeasantization is, however, presented with a strong empirical challenge by the endurance of peasant forms of society and their sheer scale in contemporary areas of the global South. On the one hand, depeasantization advocates may cite the recently inaugurated and rising incidence of rural-urban wage labour migration as evidence of the veracity of their propositions. Yet closer examination suggests that it

cannot, in fact, be so readily assumed that the advent of rural-urban labour migration has necessarily wrought profound or historical ruptures to the structure of peasant society. It would do here to illustrate this point with a specific example; thus, to examine briefly Cambodia, where (on- and off-farm) diversification and migration form an important part of household income strategies.

Within the Kingdom, the establishment of industrial labour force participation as a livelihoods option for rural households may be a recent phenomenon but both non-farm work and migration, as is liable to be overlooked, pre-date modernization. Kalab (1968:525), writing in 1968, for example, speaks of the 'great mobility of the Cambodian peasant... people shift between agriculture and other employment as easily as they move from place to place.' In this context, modern wage labour to the city seems less a shift away from traditional livelihoods activity and more a reinforcement of it. For many rural households, migration to the modern industrial sector may be embraced as a means of enhancing the viability and sustainability of traditional subsistence or small scale market oriented agriculture: as Rigg (2004:223) writes, 'in large part, the emergence of occupational diversity has put off the displacement of people from the land and has, perversely, helped to sustain 'traditional' rural economies by allowing farm production to maintain an image of centrality'. Migration, far from a threat to the survival of the peasant household and mode of production, thus becomes a very part of its innate resilience.

Further, studies of urban migrants in Cambodia have found that many come from still-farming households (Bylander 2015), undertaking migration to support the rural household by providing a source of cash income (Parsons, Lawreniuk and Pilgrim 2014). In the city, migrants engage in continuous communication and social exchange with members of the rural household and, moreover, are reliant upon reciprocal provisions, in the form of agricultural produce from the household farm, in order to provide this financial lifeline (Parsons, Lawreniuk and Pilgrim 2014). Like elsewhere in the region, some migrants do not see their urban relocation as a permanent move, instead harbouring intent to return one day to the rural village and way of life: a desire not only voiced but visible in the efforts most make, in terms of investment of time and resources, to remain enmeshed in the social fabric of the village they continue to consider 'home' (Derks 2008). Thus a blurred, multiplex distinction between 'proletarian' and 'peasant' emerges that makes it difficult to posit the real extent and durability of change to the structure and nature of the local economy as migration from the villages of Cambodia to the cities gets rapidly underway.

In short, the abstracting logic of the Marxist frame of reference does not facilitate the capture of the fine level of nuance required to understand life chances and trajectories of individuals, as well as wider societal changes, that are bound up with the practise of labour migration in the global South. To be clear, in light of Sayer's concerns above, this is not a criticism of the Marxist approach, per se, but an assessment that it would not befit the aims of the study to employ it here – or, rather, it would not befit the aims of the study to employ it exclusively: for whilst the explanatory potential of ownership/non-ownership of the means of production is not total, nor does it have no bearing on the life chances of individuals and broader societal development trajectories. Instead ownership/non-ownership of the means of production is recognised here as one influence (albeit of many) on, for example, economic power and security, which in turn is one influence (albeit of many) on the experiences and positional trajectory of individuals.

Thus, rather than reject the Marxist approach outright, it serves the purpose at hand better to retain it but embedded as one abstracted element in a fuller – more inclusive and more concrete – conception of class that is able to provide a more holistic, vivid and nuanced account of migration and class transformations; a conception that is able to tease out the fine threads of the everyday politics of class and the experience of it at micro level, as well as lend comment on the implications at scales beyond. The next section will therefore elucidate how it is possible to draw on Bourdieu's theory of concrete classes to accomplish this and tender a fresh, multi-dimensional perspective of differentiation and domination to the literature on migration and rural development.

Bourdieu's theory of class

One of the central concerns of Bourdieu's work is 'the attempt to overcome dualism: of structure and action; materialism and idealism; objectivism and subjectivism' (Oliver and O'Reilly 2010:51) in the belief that the indolent reliance on such 'epistemological couples' stands as 'one of the main oppositions' to a scientific mode of social inquiry (Bourdieu 1987:1). This is evident in his work on class, which takes as its starting point an explicit 'endeavour to rethink Max Weber's opposition between class and Stand [status]' (Bourdieu 1984:xii). Bourdieu interprets this separation of 'class' and 'status groups' in terms of 'a distinction between the material (or 'economic') and symbolic' and refutes this distinction as an 'analytical convenience' (Weininger 2005:84): rather than discrete, the material and symbolic are understood to be intertwined. The defining premise of Bourdieu's theory of class is, therefore, that 'class analysis cannot be reduced to the analysis of economic

relations' but must 'simultaneously entail an analysis of symbolic relations' (Weininger 2005:84).

The result is a complex and layered conception that 'fuses the Marxian insistence of economic determinism with the Weberian recognition of the distinctiveness of the cultural order' (Wacquant 2007:270). Bourdieu develops a model of the class structure as a system in which locations are 'differentiated from – and thus related to – one another in terms of... factors [that] derive from the distributions of "capital"' (Weininger 2005:87). Capital is defined as 'the set of actually useable' (i.e. efficacious) 'resources and powers' (Bourdieu 1984:114), of which there are 'three principal species – economic (material and financial assets), cultural (scarce symbolic goods, skills, and titles), and social (resources accrued by virtue of membership in a group' (Wacquant 2007:268). Sayer's efforts in developing Bourdieu's concept of economic capital (work left 'to others' by Bourdieu, at his own admission (Bourdieu 1993 cited in Sayer 2005:83)), illustrates that Bourdieu's approach is compatible with, indeed may be 'illuminated' by, Marxist theory insofar as 'one of the determinants of economic capital lies... in the ownership and non-ownership of the means of production' (Sayer 2005:85).

As such, though Bourdieu's employ of the term 'social capital' is among the earliest contemporary usages, Bourdieu's conception of social capital differs from the widely recognised tradition that arose in the 1980s (Coleman 1988) and 1990s (Becker 1996), reaching a high point around 2000 with the work of Putnam (1995; 2001). Unlike Bourdieu, whose social capital represents only one type of social resource among others, the core aim of the Anglo-American social capital tradition that has prospered was to develop a unitary framework to analyse the benefits derivable from social behaviour. This led to widespread accusations of reductionism (Fine 2002, 2010), which various frameworks have tried to address (Portes 1998; Portes and Landolt 2000; Woolcock 2001). However, social capital frameworks deployed in studies of the developing world (Goodhand, Hulme and Lewer 2002; Iyengar 2012; Oeur, Sopha and McAndrew 2012; Pellini 2004) have tended to retain the unitary goals of Putnam and Coleman's prior conceptions.

In Bourdieu's class theory, each person possesses 'a portfolio of these various types of capital' (Shucksmith 2012:282) and the position of an individual, group or institution within the class structure is derived from the configuration of this endowment as measured on 'three orthogonal axes' (Weininger 2005:88). The first axis charts the overall volume of capital; the total amount of efficacious economic, cultural and social resources or powers

that an incumbent possesses. The second plots the composition of capital, differentiating according to the relative stock of economic against cultural against social strains of assets and competencies. The third, the trajectory of capital, follows the fluctuations and stability of volume and composition as experienced over time. As Weininger (2005:89) notes, Bourdieu's approach thus 'opens up an intriguing area for the study of [social] mobility: in addition to vertical movements (along the first axis), mobility may also entail "horizontal" or "transverse" movements (along the second axis)'. Individuals who possess analogous combinations of capitals occupy analogous positions in social space and therefore 'may in principle be viewed as a class' (Shucksmith 2012:282).

Classes constituted thus, however, are only classes in a theoretical sense. It is a 'theoreticist fallacy', Bourdieu (1987 cited in Swartz 1997:148-9) asserts – a fallacy to which Marxist thought is particularly prone – to assume 'the movement from probability to reality, from theoretical class to practical class' and thereby conflate 'classes on paper' with real social groups. For Bourdieu, theoretical classes become real only when the individuals which constitute them 'begin to identify with one another and act together collectively' (Shucksmith 2012:282). Homologous social positions are, in this way, rendered necessary but not sufficient conditions for the evolution of practically-constituted classes (Swartz 1997:149). Thus 'the objectivist moment of research must be supplemented with the subjectivist moment of inquiry to see if the theoretically constructed classes of the social-scientific model correspond to real mobilised social groups' (Swartz 1997:148).

As above, one of Bourdieu's chief meta-theoretical concerns is to transcend the dualism of objective and subjective. He asserts that the 'fundamental antimon[y]' (Bourdieu 1987:1) between structure and agency, objectivism and subjectivism, realism and nominalism, that characterises much academic discourse (and of which the 'problem of social classes is one of the sites *par excellence*' (Bourdieu 1990:289 in Swartz 1997:145)) is both 'artificial and mutilating' (Wacquant 2007:267). Instead, 'the two moments, objective and subjective, stand in dialectical relationship' (Bourdieu 1987 in Swartz 1997:145). As Wacquant (2007:269) emphasises, the 'crucial' notion here is that of the interplay between the two: for 'neither has the capacity to unilaterally determine social action... It takes the meeting of disposition and position, the correspondence (or disjuncture) between mental structures and social structures to generate practice'. In other words, 'class lies neither in structures nor agency alone but in their relationship as it is historically produced, reproduced and transformed' (Wacquant 1991 in Weininger 2005:116).

Accordingly, 'the only form of class analysis adequate to the task would be one which is able to fuse structural analysis with a phenomenological account' of the processes of class-making (Weininger 2005:114) – a feat that traditional approaches to class have yet accomplish. Within the Marxist tradition, Weininger (2005:114) notes for example, there is on the one hand a rich heritage of historians and ethnographers (e.g. E.P. Thompson 1966) who emphasise class as 'something which must be made in a definite historical time and place' and whose work consequently 'identify the constitution of classes through processes of collocation and demarcation that result in more or less bounded social groups'. Yet the processes of class-making that they detail and explain 'tend to be local affairs which cannot be systematically connected to a broad underlying class structure' (Weininger 2005:114). On the other hand are those analysts (e.g. Wright 1997; 2005) 'who give priority to the class structure' (Weininger 2005:115) but who neglect the constructivist dimensions of the class experience. The complementary deficiencies of the two positions beg for a dialogue and this is where Bourdieu joins the fray, with an account intended to 'methodologically integrate the insights stemming from accounts which prioritize the structuralist and constructivist dimensions, respectively, in a coherent program of empirical research' (Weininger 2005:115). It is this to this synthesis of the objective and subjective moments of class that Bourdieu (1984:564) refers when he pronounces 'a class is defined by its perceived being as much as its being'.

To understand the process by which real social groups are borne from theoretical classes requires that the concept of capitals be positioned and interpreted in the context of its interrelation with that of habitus and field. Bourdieu observes in the first instance that 'the experience of the particular class condition that characterises a given location in social space imprints a particular set of dispositions on the individual' (Weininger 2005:92): individuals who, by virtue of homologous capital endowment, share a similar position in social space are 'likely to live in similar places, forming families and neighbourhoods' (Shucksmith 2012:382) and 'they are likely to develop similar lifestyles, outlooks, dispositions and a tacit sense of their place in the world or "class unconsciousness"' (Crossley 2005 cited in Shucksmith 2012:382). This 'class unconsciousness' constitutes habitus, defined by Bourdieu (1977:95) as 'an acquired system of generative schemes objectively adjusted to the particular conditions in which it is constituted'.

Habitus is situated in relation to 'field', an area of social space that presents as a 'structured space of positions' (Bourdieu 1993a:73) and an 'arena of struggle' (Wacquant 2007:268) – the term may recall both a forcefield and a battlefield – in which individuals, groups and

institutions are necessarily ensnared in 'conflict or competition with one another, each from a more or less advantageous position' (Weininger 2005:96) as they attempt to extract the resources or stakes – the capitals – on offer within. People must be knowledgeable and skilled for fields to operate, a competence that is 'critically related to their habitus, and their socially and historically acquired dispositions' (Devine and Savage 2005:13-14).

'For a field to function there have to be stakes and people prepared to play the game, endowed with the habitus that implies knowledge and recognition of the immanent laws of the field, the stakes and so on' (Bourdieu 1993:72 cited in Devine and Savage 2005:14).

Taken together, the concepts of habitus and field clarify Bourdieu's class analysis as a 'sociology of practice' that illuminates the genesis of inequalities as the result of the complex interrelationship of 'embodied practices and institutional processes' (Devine and Savage 2005:12) whereby 'habitus informs practice from within, [as] field structures action and representation from without' (Wacquant 2007:269).

Bourdieu's argument renders practice (his preferred term for action or behaviour) a purposeful but not percipient undertaking: 'actors have goals and interests' and 'pursue strategies' but these are 'not wholly consciously organised or orchestrated'; as though actors 'know instinctively – without knowing they know – the right thing to do' (Shucksmith 2012:383). Action originates not through recourse to rational reflection but a 'pre-reflexive' practical sense (Weininger 2005:91).

This has important implications for the manner in which Bourdieu conceptualises the movement from 'class-on-paper' to 'class-in-practice'; the triad of capital, habitus and field showing how individuals who share a location in social space might 'identify with one another and act together collectively' (Shucksmith 2012:382) despite a lack of any conscious recognition of this collective identity or interests, or indeed its origin. In other words, 'an objective class need not be a mobilised class' (Sayer 2005:80).

Of prime significance in an age where class solidarity and action are seen to be on the wane, Bourdieu thus shows that 'the absence of mobilisation does not mean class is disappearing' (Sayer 2005:80). In contrast to the 'structure>consciousness>action' approach to class, which floundered in the 1970s as a non sequitur, Bourdieu's framework, anchored in his meta-theoretical efforts to reconceptualise the structure and agency binary, 'expects consciousness to be lacking' for 'it is the very non-recognition of the power and significance of class which leads to deep-rooted and enduring inequality' (Shucksmith

2012:382; emphasis in original). Thus, 'what Bourdieu's argument points towards', according to Savage (2000 cited in Sayer 2005:80), 'is the need to consider the nature of contemporary identities in ways which are not premised in simplistic contrast between either class collectivism on the one hand, or individualised identities on the other, but which are attentive to their interactions': 'classes are most powerful and significant not when there are high levels of class consciousness and class identity, but when such awareness is in fact absent' (Savage 2002 cited in Shucksmith 2012:382).

Thus having examined Bourdieu's theory of class and established some of the principle benefits of Bourdieu's approach in general, we can now proceed to relate these new directions in class analysis to ideas of migration and consumption. First, the discussion will consider how consumption practices assume a mantle in Bourdieu's theory as both a structured and structuring force – subjective representations of objective classes that also possess a discursive power to objectify collectivities via processes of symbolic domination and violence. It will be argued that Bourdieu's insight into the dialectic between class position and consumption practices offers a promising conceptual base for the understanding of structural relations of consumption activity and its political and moral consequence.

Class as social practice: consumption, representation and symbolic violence

The centrality that Bourdieu affords to the constructivist dimension of class leads him to grant a uniquely (among class theorists) privileged role to consumption in its analysis, as of prime importance in the making of collectivities. Indeed, he argues (Bourdieu 1984:564, emphasis in original):

'A class is defined as much by its *being-perceived* as by its *being*, by its consumption — which need not be conspicuous in order to be symbolic — as much as by its position in the relations of production (even if it is true that the latter governs the former)'.

It is in the arena of consumption rather than production, Bourdieu contends, that the genesis of habitus occurs: 'for Bourdieu, it is neither the labour market, nor the shop floor (or office cubicle) which functions as the site in which the causal mechanisms giving rise to a class habitus unfold' (Weininger 2005:92); instead, Bourdieu weights the significance of lifestyle.

In *Distinction*, having plotted the space of social positions as a structured system of differential capital endowment, Bourdieu proceeds to demonstrate with the use of

multivariate correspondence analysis that the various 'indicators of lifestyle exhibit a structure that is isomorphic with... that of social space' (Weininger 2005:93). To each position in social space corresponds a habitus that undergirds a preference for specific tastes and practices: Bourdieu interrogates these associations to uncover the particular 'scheme' or 'principle' that underwrites and unifies them, 'orient[ing] the expenditure of economic and cultural capital in a manner that gives rise to the semantic coherence of a lifestyle' (Weininger 2005:93). This approach 'provides not merely a description of differences in taste and lifestyle but an explanation of the hierarchical relations among them... showing that these correlations between specific kinds of goods and their standing are not arbitrary and merely conventional, but have a rationale in terms of a practical logic related to habitus' (Sayer 2005:79).

In Bourdieu's (1984) study, this orienting principle is found to be chiefly related to 'distance from necessity'; the habitus reflecting the class conditions in which it was formed. Thus, the economically insecure, by virtue of their experience of material necessity, are predisposed to value utility and austerity; the dominant classes, with their juxtaposed experience of detachment from physical need, are inclined to value goods irrespective of their functionality – endowed to the contrary, with the prosperity that permits them to prize 'form over function' (Wacquant 2007:271). 'Substantial differences' occur according to the 'variation in asset structures' within, and not just between, classes (Weininger 2005:94). Thus, the dominant class's 'sense of distinction' (Bourdieu 1984) manifests differently among the industrial classes and cultural classes: their relatively high apportionment of economic and cultural capital, respectively, imparting in the former a taste for untrammelled pomp and splendour, and the latter a predilection for the 'intellectually most demanding (and least expensive) forms of culture' (Weininger 2005:94).

The lifestyles that Bourdieu delineates in *Distinction* allude to a very particular setting – mid-Twentieth-Century France – and should not be read as universal across place and time. Given Bourdieu's resistance to the separation of theory and research – yet another binary he regards as an obstreperous falsity – his conceptual propositions tend to be developed and presented 'only in the context of concrete empirical analysis' (Weininger 2005:83). In light of this, it can be contended that Bourdieu's work is too embedded in the milieu of European late modernity to be usefully applied elsewhere. However, though his findings are often presented heavily intertwined with rich empirical facts, observations and detail, the methodologies that underwrite them, as sensitive as they are to local context in the

form of economic, social and cultural relations by the very virtue of Bourdieu's insistence of the inseparability of theory and research, lend themselves readily to adaptive applications.

Those wishing to employ his innovations beyond the immediate environment in which they were conceived are left to 'untangle the substance of these propositions from the peculiarities of the context to which they were applied' (Weininger 2005:83) and must take care to undertake such a dissection with minimal consequent distortion to the analytical principles contained therein. This can be an intricate and contentious task, though in this instance some assistance is afforded by later works where Bourdieu has sought to offer some clarification as to how his analyses and methods might undergo transmutation to spatially or temporally variant sites of study. For example, in *A Japanese Reading of Distinction* (1991) Bourdieu breaks down the fundamentals thus:

'Habitus, which are the products of the social conditioning associated with the corresponding condition, make a systematic set of goods and properties, united by an affinity of style, correspond to each class of positions' (Bourdieu 1991:634).

Simply, social position and practice correspond in a systematic and meaningful manner.

By virtue of a rigorous and quantitative scientific methodology then, Bourdieu evidences Rothstein's insistence (in the preceding section) that consumption relations are structured by broader social cleavages; 'the myriad ways in which social class lurks in the kinds of individualised identities that matter to people' (Savage et al. 2001 in Shucksmith 2012). Bourdieu's framework therefore emerges as a suitable candidate on which to ground and expound a more structural understanding of consumption, as was called for above. Indeed, his insistence on the significance of the relationship between the objective and subjective is a the perfect foil to the actor-led conception that dominates the literature on consumption at present, well positioned to assist in the task of setting consumption 'back into the social process' (Douglas and Isherwood 1979:4 in Rothstein 2005:298) and moving towards a recognition of the embeddedness of consumption in the wider relations of economy and society.

As has been elaborated thus far, the relationship between position and practice appears 'static' – frozen as a 'snapshot' (Weininger 2005:95) – and unilinear, as though the former is the determinant of the latter. However, Bourdieu conceptualises the connection between the two in much more complex terms. Animating the account, by positioning consumption practices in the context of field, reveals the space of lifestyles not as a firm, fixed framework but a dynamic arena of conflict and cooperation between social groups; a

conflict that constitutes an oft-overlooked, perhaps 'hidden', but nonetheless 'fundamental' component of class struggles (Wacquant 2007:272), cementing position and practice in a co-constitutive collusion.

To understand consumption practices in the context of field is to recognise that differences in lifestyles are not substantial – owing to some intrinsic property – but relational – demarcated by their location in a structured, if shifting, hierarchy. The separate components of a lifestyle are 'not merely distinct' but rather:

[They] stand in opposition to one another... [A]s a result of this, lifestyles themselves are socially ranked. [T]he hierarchical "status" of a lifestyle is a function of its proximity to or distance from the "legitimate culture" (Weininger 2005:97).

To live to a particular lifestyle, to enjoy a particular cultural practice, object or form, is at once to esteem it and, by implication, disparage those other forms to which it stands, at odds, opposed. Taste is, by very definition, a 'distaste of the tastes of others' (Wacquant 2007:271). As 'practices or objects carry an association with the social actors who engage in or possess them' (Weininger 2005:98) so they become an instrument by which an individual may symbolically demonstrate an affinity or alterity to others. Thus 'through the minutiae of everyday consumption.... each individual continuously classifies him/herself and simultaneously all others as alike or different' (Weininger 2005:98). It is these common, shared and routine, acts of classification that give rise to social collectivities and thus bring 'classes-on-paper' to life. Real or practical classes, then, arise only 'in the conjunction of shared position in social space and shared dispositions actualized in the sphere of consumption' (Wacquant 2007:272): 'the *representations* that individuals and groups inevitably engage in their practices is part and parcel of their social reality' (Bourdieu 1984:564; emphasis in original).

Bourdieu's social classes, with this antagonistic and hierarchical system of classification and representation as a key constituent, are thus conceived as 'strongly relational' (Sayer 2005:80) entities. This renders the boundaries that delimit social groups not fixed but necessarily fluid and permeable: akin to 'a flame whose edges are in constant movement, oscillating around a line or surface' (Bourdieu 1987:13); 'existing only in the flux of ongoing practices' (Weininger 2005:101). The boundaries between classes are divisions that can only be apprehended interpretively through empirical investigation and not determined a priori through theoretical conjecture. This is a distinct advantage of Bourdieu's approach as opposed those underwritten by substantialist assumptions as he thus manages to avoid

what have become rather 'stale debates over where to draw class boundaries' (Sayer 2005:80). The other obvious merit of Bourdieu's rejection of substantialism is it goes some way to avoid the pitfalls associated with the imperialism of categories: the export and application to the South of theoretical frames developed by scholars in the North, reflecting the experience of the North (see e.g. Wilson and Rigg 2003). Whilst James Scott (1972:91), for example, remarks 'the fact that [traditional/Marxist] class categories are not prominent in either oral or written discourse in the Third World damages their a priori theoretical value', there can be no doubt that Bourdieu's social groups pass the test of 'find[ing] expression in material sense' (Wilson and Rigg 2003:699) as they are materially as well as discursively constructed.

The acme of Bourdieu's interrogation of the relationship between class and consumption is perhaps the acknowledgement that goods and practices 'not only reflect distinction but are also an instrument of it' (du Gay 1996:84). Bourdieu elaborates this by reference to the concepts of symbolic capital, domination and violence. Since classifications derive from practices that are not simply substantively distinct but underwritten by a hierarchical relation to the legitimate culture, Bourdieu contends that 'social classification is simultaneously a social allocation of honour, in Weber's sense' (Weininger 2005:145):

'It is Bourdieu's fundamental thesis that, precisely because individuals perceive one another primarily through the "status" which attaches to their practices—or in other words, through the symbolic veil of honour—that they misperceive the real basis of these practices: the economic and cultural capital that both underlies the different habitus and enables their realization. When differences of economic and cultural capital are misperceived as differences of honour, they function as what Bourdieu calls symbolic capital' (Weininger 2005:145).

Symbolic capital functions as symbolic violence where it serves to 'legitimize inequality by making the divisions of social space appear rooted in the inclinations of individuals rather than the underlying distribution of capital' (Wacquant 2007:272). Symbolic violence is a central concept for Bourdieu in terms of explaining and understanding entrenched patterns of inequality. Classifications become a 'central stake' in class struggle as each class 'tries to gain control over the classificatory schemata that command the power to conserve or change reality by preserving or altering the representation of reality' (Wacquant 2007:272). However, Bourdieu shows that 'the capacity to establish the divisions which structure the perception of social space is not evenly dispersed across this space' (Weininger 2005:145), resting with the dominant rather than dominated, who succeed in 'defining, through symbolic violence, what counts as legitimate knowledge, what social relations are valuable,

and what symbols confer prestige and social honour' (Shucksmith 2012:383). Classificatory discourse thus 'not only reproduces systems of belief and power, but also establishes and maintains structures of inequality and privilege as it defines the "valuable" and not "valuable" – and 'not valuable characteristics are invariably associated with "inferior social groupings"' (Crompton 2008:102).

Framing consumption practices, in this way, as an enduring principle of division in the social world – part of the very machinery of domination, oppression and inequality – lends to Bourdieu's account of consumption a prominent and forceful moral-political component, again evincing the potential utility of his framework in explicating a more embedded and multi-scalar understanding of consumption behaviour that takes greater account of the objective, material and social roots and tendrils of the phenomenon.

The means by which the tools from Bourdieu's conceptual cannon can be used to elucidate the dynamic relationship between two key edifices of this PhD's theoretical framework – class and consumption – having now been elaborated, the discussion must now present a codicil with the aim of completing the meta-theoretical narrative by relating these notions laterally to the remaining piece of the conceptual triad utilised herein, that of migration.

Migration and class: reproduction, transformation and the 'cleft habitus'

Oliver and O'Reilly (2010:50) have demonstrated that Bourdieu's conceptual cannon, specifically the ideas of field, habitus and capital, can be usefully applied to the study of migration, convincing that 'Bourdieu's work offers a fresh perspective to migration studies, a domain where class is predominantly employed as an objective category of occupational status and income'. The narrow scope with which the migration literature has tended to view and employ class is a reflection of the overly economic lens through which the topic of mobility is too often viewed.

Oliver and O'Reilly's work utilises Bourdieu's class framework to examine the class effects of lifestyle migration, where the cultural and social facets of mobility are more readily apparent and acknowledged. However, the extension of this perspective to the study of labour migration is certainly possible, indeed necessary: Bourdieu's own writing on the topic of migration reveals his inclination to unshroud the broader forces at play in its act and practice. Migration, he asserts, 'continually mystifies and misrecognises itself for what it is... Emigration is never an "export of raw labour power and nothing more"... As a total social fact... it disrupts the whole array of institutions that make up the sending society'

(Bourdieu and Wacquant 2000:176). This notion of migration as a multi-dimensional, multi-scalar 'total social fact' is captured in Mabogunje's migration systems approach, as discussed above, and underscores the meta-theoretical narrative of this PhD. Therefore Bourdieu's approach to class, with its focus on diverse currents of class constitution and (re-)making, anoints itself a complementary scaffold upon which to frame scrutiny of the association between mobility and inequality, where it is hypothesised as complex and multi-faceted in form.

In the first place, Bourdieu's perspectives on class can be usefully applied to the study of the causes of migration. Romanticist ideologies of the rural have typically espoused the conception of the rural locales of migrant origin as classless entities (Rye and Blekesaune 2007); the peasantry is frequently typified as a broadly homogeneous – standardised and harmonious – community. Sociological and anthropological accounts appear to oppose this view, however. Hinton (2004:57), for example, though recording, on the one hand, that Cambodian society has historically been 'categorised by an ethos of egalitarianism... and a lack of significant class stratification... not riven by landlessness and landlordism', appears to discount clear evidence to the counter when recounting simultaneously that 'villagers did distinguish between rich people, or "those who have" (*neak mean*), "those who have enough" (*neak kuorsam*), the poor (*neak kra*), and the destitute (*neak toal*, *neak toal kra*)'. Bourdieu's approach, then, can assist here in recognising these groupings (since they are both materially and discursively constituted) as class fractions, creating theoretical space for the analysis of class relations among and between those situated in homologous locations within the relations of production.

Holding this potential to salvage the rural from its representation as a steadfastly egalitarian social space, Bourdieu's theory offers scope for a renewed classed understanding of migration. It is accepted that individuals and households have divergent access to migratory livelihoods, with migration often requiring access to a certain type and level of variant resources, or capitals: e.g. economic, in the form of 'start-up' capital for travel and shelter in the urban location; social, such as the information contained in networks; and cultural, including the aspiration of social and physical mobility. As Barber and Lem (2008:6) argue, the 'social, material and geographical interconnectedness between those who are mobile and those who aspire to, and those who remain "condemned" to immobility and perpetual impoverishment provides a powerful antidote to classless narratives of mobility'.

Second, though often derided as an overly staunch reproductionist (e.g. Griller 1996; Jenkins 2002), a more holistic reading of Bourdieu's oeuvre reveals that his key theories are also well placed to conceptually elaborate social transformations, rendering his work of value in investigating the potential consequences of mobility, both resultant change and continuity in the positions and dispositions of individuals and institutions, structures and systems. It is true that Bourdieu's emphasis on the attunement of habitus and field, which leads to an overall tendency toward the reproduction of social systems and inequalities, has led to frequent criticism of his concepts as determinist and tautological – Crompton summarises these concerns: 'advantages are generated through being in a position of advantage, and the dominant classes always win...' Individuals and groups appear 'locked in to cycles of deprivation and disadvantage, as well as the opposite, and it might be argued that there can be little possibility of social change' (Crompton 2008:102) – yet Bourdieu clarifies, both in *Distinction* as well as a number of later works, that 'the habitus involves resistance as well as compliance' (Crompton 2008:102).

Sayer (2005:25) proposes, in this respect, that 'the generative powers of the habitus' must be elaborated in 'a critical realist way' that relies on the acceptance of a 'double contingency': that the effects of the habitus are, first, 'always mediated in some way (facilitated, blocked, overridden or refracted and modified) by the context' and, second, 'actors may be able to consciously override them'. Significantly, Bourdieu (cited in Sayer 2005:25) accords, 'a habitus can undergo modification in the face of different fields or even due to the awakening of consciousness and social analysis'. Thus, Wacquant (2007:268; emphasis in original) argues:

'Habitus is also a principle of *both social continuity and discontinuity*: continuity because it stores social forces into the individual organism and transports them across time and space; discontinuity because it can be modified through the acquisition of new dispositions and because it can trigger innovation whenever it encounters a social setting discrepant with the setting from which it issues'.

Rural-urban labour migration is one such instance in which individuals find themselves in an unfamiliar social setting, denizens of a new social field, in which they can (at least initially) be expected to lack a 'feel for the game', bereft of the implicit and practical knowledge of the laws, stakes and resources at play. The broader processes of modernisation and capitalist economic development of which such migration in Cambodia is but a part,

similarly boast potential to radically disrupt economic, social and cultural life within the Kingdom's borders to the extent that, indeed, all the various social fields that migrants and non-migrants alike inhabit are liable to be rendered anew.

Bourdieu draws upon his conceptual trinity to elucidate similar cases of social rupture and permutation in his early work on colonial Algeria and rural Béarn, France (see Bourdieu 2004a; 2004b). The consequential 'innovation, crisis and structural change' (Wacquant 2007:270) that he details, states Wacquant (2004:387), conclusively 'dissolves the caricatural figure of the "reproduction theorist" oblivious to historical change' that Bourdieu is frequently painted.

Further, the very malleability of the habitus, as it 'inscribe[s] into the body the evolving influence of the social milieu' (Wacquant 2007:267), raises the possibility of disjuncture occurring not merely between habitus and field, but within the habitus itself. The habitus is, at any moment, the product of 'involvement in a variety of relations that intersect in the habitus and extend to other parts of the social field': 'there is no reason why these different relations should be compatible, in fact they may be in contradiction' (Sayer 2005:25). Where this occurs, explains Bourdieu (Bourdieu et al. 1999 in Sayer 2005:25), 'tend[s] to produce a habitus divided against itself, in constant negotiation with itself and with its ambivalence, and therefore doomed to a kind of duplication, to a double perception of self, to successive allegiances and multiple identities.'

In *Science of Science and Reflexivity* (2004b:111), Bourdieu coins the expression 'cleft habitus' to describe this dispositional discord. Here, he employs it as part of an attempt at self-analysis, reflecting his own experiences as the son of Pyrenean peasants who spent much of his adult life in the *grandes écoles* of Paris. Elsewhere, he relates the concept to transnational migrants, describing them as 'birds of passage... too changed in and by migration: they become irrevocably distanced and dis-located from their originating milieu, losing a place in their native circle of honour without securing one in their new setting: they acquire this false and disjointed "double consciousness"' (Bourdieu and Wacquant 2000:176).

It is clear then that those experiencing either movement within the field of social positions (social mobility) or movement across geographic space (physical mobility) are susceptible to the development of 'cleft habitus', and both are categories to which rural-urban migrants

pertain as they traverse physical distance, encountering new social and cultural terrain in the process. Indeed, the notion of the 'cleft habitus' resonates with many depictions of the fractured identities of labour migrants in the South, though elaborated without the heuristic integrity, depth and causal reasoning of Bourdieu's sophisticated theoretical frame. Mills (1997; 1999), for example, captures the juxtaposition of the rural and urban identities of Thai migrant garment workers, caught between their desire to be 'dutiful daughters' and simultaneous longing to become *thansamay* (modern). Derks' (2008) depiction of Khmer female internal migrants as 'rice people in the city' similarly evokes Bourdieu's description of people without a place: 'distanced and dislocated' from home yet alien to their new surroundings.

With habitus a fundamental component in constructing the representations through which classes-on-paper are made into practically constituted, collective if not conscious, mobilized social groups, the capacity of this system of dispositions to trigger innovation in unfamiliar social fields and settings is fundamental to the potential of migration to effect transformation in the class structure of contemporary Cambodian society. The contested and fraught nature of the process by which such innovation occurs, however, suggests limitations to the extent and pace of change.

Conclusion

The theoretical framework for this PhD thesis, presented above, has been sketched in a tripartite manner. The opening section considered the theme of migration. It argued that many classic models of migration – which are still frequently drawn upon in the migration literature today – share similar Eurocentric biases that hinder their ability to usefully contribute to understandings of rural-urban mobility in the contemporary South. To capture the complexity of such movement, a more holistic approach is required that emphasises migration as dynamic process: drawing upon and feeding back into all facets and levels of society. The migration systems approach, associated with Mabogunje (1970) was highlighted as a framework capable of providing this scope.

Nonetheless, though the theoretical potential of Mabogunje's work has often been noted, its promise has not yet been fully realised. As such, the second section of this tripartite theoretical framework considered how understandings of mobility could be fleshed out further by drawing greater attention to the role of consumption within the migration

system. Dominant representations of consumption in the South, however, focus on the links between creative consumer agency and identity construction. In doing so, they tend to obfuscate the social and material relations of consumption. For the purposes of this PhD thesis, therefore, which seeks to understand the role and response of consumption in relation to wider processes of social transformation in the South, a different approach is required.

The concluding section of the theoretical framework for this PhD thesis, offered here, has explored the class theory of Pierre Bourdieu as a means to join and relate the analysis of changing patterns and practices of production and consumption in the South. Bourdieu's framework, it has been illustrated, coheres the study of class, consumption and migration, by emphasising their mutual constitution. It thus lends a semantic unity to the theoretical framework of this PhD and promises to shed new light on a country churning with the movement of people, resources and ideas.

With the theoretical framework of this PhD elaborated over the three sections of this chapter hereby concluded, Chapter Three, which follows, will outline the methodological approach used to examine the research themes discussed herein. It suggests that Bourdieu's social theory is best employed in conjunction with his often-overlooked epistemological and methodological contributions to critical social scientific endeavour. Using these contributions, the section advocates for a mixed methods approach to research. Under this mixed methods framework, quantitative techniques are first employed to locate patterns of practice in society, following which qualitative tools are used to identify the logic of practice that underwrites and articulates these practices. Having outlined the epistemological imperative behind this mixed methods approach, Chapter Three then describes the specific techniques and tools employed in the conduct of the data collection, reflecting on the ethical challenges they raise and how accordant risks to participants were mitigated.

Though the social sciences have been gripped, over recent decades, by a burgeoning interest in the theoretical innovations of Pierre Bourdieu, as considered above, this attention has nonetheless neglected certain parts of the academic's oeuvre. His methodological and epistemological considerations and advances, in particular, have been paid relatively scant heed in the literature to date. This is unfortunate since, in a number of ways, these contributions have much to offer the social sciences. First, in their own right, his methodological and epistemological contributions are compelling, the latter justly regarded by some as the most distinguishing and original component of his output. More than this, however, it is these aspects of his work that truly serve to illuminate and buttress the conceptual frame outlined. For Maton (2003:52), for instance, 'Bourdieu's epistemic reflexivity is the cornerstone of his whole intellectual enterprise, underpinning his claims to provide a distinctive and scientific knowledge of the social world'. Even a critic like Jenkins (2002:46) cannot but admire the rigor of Bourdieu's elaborations: 'one of the greatest strengths of Bourdieu's sociology that he has never' – unlike so 'many' others (Jenkins 2002:11) – 'lost sight of the practicality of epistemological issues (or their importance)'.

Bourdieu's distaste for the 'mutilating antinomies' that riddle the social sciences was observed in the previous chapter and it is a persistent disjuncture between theory and method that forms one of the prime lines of antagonism attracting Bourdieu's ire. Bourdieu's own contributions to academic debate have 'consistently been framed by an engagement between systematic empirical work... and reflexive theorising' (Jenkins 2002:10), driven by 'practical questions of field research' rather than the didactic desire to solve 'scholastic puzzles' (Wacquant 2004:391). For Bourdieu (1988 in Jenkins 2002:10), 'theory without empirical research is empty, empirical research without theory is blind'.

In proposing the inextricability of the triad of epistemology, methodology and theory, Bourdieu would likely be dismayed to see the abstraction of his conceptual work from the rest of his canon. In his lifetime, Bourdieu (1993 in Karakayali 2004:359) reflected, 'I blame most of my readers for having considered as theoretical treaties... works that, like gymnastics handbooks, were intended for exercise, or even better, for being put into practice'. Having outlined in the previous chapter the use of the thought of Pierre Bourdieu to undergird the conceptual frame of the PhD, this section will begin with reflection on his epistemological and methodological insight in order to consider how these facets of his

work might enable his theoretical innovations to be put to better and fuller use, lifting them off the page and into practice.

The first section will begin by placing Bourdieu's quest for a scientific study of the social world at the heart of his epistemology and practice. Given Bourdieu's lifelong commitment to matters of social justice, the second section will address the notion of an undermining epistemic tension in Bourdieu's work wrought by its simultaneous commitment to the seemingly contradictory aims of science and politics. Refuting this notion by reference to a discussion on the meaning of progressive academic practice in the contemporary era, the third section will outline the implications of Bourdieu's epistemology for methodological practice, outlining a broad framework for Bourdieusian method. The fourth and final section will expand on this general framework, detailing the precise ways it was put into practice in the data collection stages of the preparation of this PhD thesis.

A science of the social: Bourdieu and epistemology

Bourdieu's concern with epistemology is motivated by his desire that 'scientific ambition should affirm the social sciences by definition' (Bourdieu 1977 in Susen 2011:45). For the social sciences to solicit recognition that the systematic study of social arrangements constitutes a valid scientific enterprise, it is necessary, Bourdieu realises, to clarify what 'presuppositional grounds' (Susen 2011:46) permit a pursuit to be classed a 'scientific' endeavour and then pursue, in one's work, an epistemic approach that satisfies this standard. Thus, 'the scientificity of sociological knowledge' is rendered dependent on 'its exponents' capacity to demonstrate that its epistemology meets the criteria of positivity, objectivity, and universality' (Susen 2011:48).

Bourdieu realises that to affirm these conditions in the attempt to uncover 'the underlying interests of social life is... no simple matter' since 'according to his theory, *all* symbolic forms function to generate social distinctions' (Swartz 1997:10, emphasis in original). The practice of social science, like any form of cultural production, is thus 'not exempt from processes of social differentiation' (Swartz 1997:10). It is on these grounds that Bourdieu rejects the tradition of scientific positivism, burdened with the 'ideal of value-neutral objectivity' (Swartz 1997:10), to seek out a 'more adequate epistemology' that can anchor the claim to 'a scientific sociology' (Karakayali 2004:355).

His efforts to 'confront the symbolic violence inherent in the doxic experience' (Schubert 1995:1010) lead him to conclude that social scientific endeavour able to uphold such a

classification requires the incorporation of the practice of reflexivity, inspired by Bachelard, 'whose non-positivist epistemology calls for a reflexive monitoring of the cognitive and social conditions that make scientific work possible' (Swartz 1997:11). 'Bourdieu's brand of reflexivity' is 'cursorily defined' by Wacquant (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992:36) as 'the inclusion of a theory of intellectual practice as an integral component and necessary condition of critical theory' and culminates in the refinement of 'a rigorous scientific method in which our own positions as social scientists are foregrounded' (Schubert 1995:1010).

Contemporary invocations of the notion of 'reflexivity' within the social science literature are frequent but, as Maton (2003) demonstrates, when the common application of the term is juxtaposed with Bourdieu's own understanding, it is readily apparent that the novelty and originality claimed in the introduction of this chapter for Bourdieu's conception is neither mistaken nor outmoded. Though 'reflexivity' in research is enjoying a fashionable period of 'near universal approval', it is an 'individualistic' and 'narcissistic' guise that prevails, one which 'tends to construct reflexivity as a individual effort to overcome one's own biases' and 'often focuses on the individual author to the exclusion of all else' to the extent that 'the subject can come to usurp the ostensible object of the study' (Maton 2003:55).

Though Bourdieu does identify 'the social origins and coordinates of the individual researcher' (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992:39) as a possible source of bias in the production of research, it is not a source to which he directs much consternation: this 'most obvious' source of bias is also the 'most readily controlled' (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992:39). Indeed, it is almost self-regulating, in effect, as its outputs attract the 'self-interested criticism of those who are driven by other prejudices or convictions' (Bourdieu 2000 in Karakayali 2004:362). Indeed, Bourdieu is frequently 'disdainful' (Griller 1996:12) of the usual chorus of self-examination and self-focused reflection that typifies the approach to reflexivity, arguing that it is, paradoxically, a hindrance or obstacle to the epistemic conditions of scientific enterprise. As Maton (2003:55) elaborates, 'reflexivity is often proclaimed as critical and progressive' but 'by reducing reflexivity to individualised reflection' common usage practices 'represent strategies for maximising symbolic capital within the intellectual field at minimal cost' insofar as 'they emphasise individual status (particularly when allied to claims about the unreflexive nature of past work)'. Ironically, then:

'Such practices are more orientated toward conserving the status quo than their frequently professed "critical appellations" might suggest... They also fit the wider contemporary individualist political culture, whatever their proclaimed radical credentials' (Maton 2003:56).

Bourdieu is therefore dismissive of such notions of reflexivity, arguing that such a 'complacent and intimist return upon the private person' and 'self-fascinated observation of the observer's writings and feelings' encourages 'a thinly veiled narcissistic relativism' opposed to a 'truly reflexive social science' (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992 cited in Maton 2003).

Bourdieu posits, to the contrary, a brand of reflexivity that is at once collective and non-narcissistic. The position of the individual researcher in social space is but one of three potential biases Bourdieu identifies that 'blur the sociological gaze' (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992:39) and induce distortions in the construction of the object: it is to these two further, 'much less often discerned and pondered' (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992:39), forms of partiality that Bourdieu apportions greater apprehension and attention. The first of these regards the relational nature of positions in the academic field: the quest for distinction that results when each defines himself 'by their difference and distance from others with whom they compete' (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992:39); manifest in the vagaries of intellectual trends and fashions as academics strategise to maximise symbolic capital; anathema to the possibility of social study as a cumulative scientific venture. The last and most original prejudice that Bourdieu observes, he refers to as the 'intellectualist bias', which occurs in the act of construing the world 'as a spectacle... collapsing practical logic into theoretical logic' (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992:39). Wacquant (2007:273) explains:

'To study society, the sociologist necessarily assumes a contemplative or scholastic stance that causes her to (mis)construe the social world as an interpretive puzzle to be resolved, rather than a mesh of practical tasks to be accomplished in real time and space --which is what it is for social agents... Assuming the point of view of the "impartial spectator," standing above the world rather than being immersed in it, pre-occupied by it (in both senses of the term), creates systematic distortions in our conceptions of knowledge, beauty, and morality that reinforce each other and have every chance of going unnoticed inasmuch as those who produce and consume these conceptions share the same scholastic posture'.

Bourdieu's epistemic reflexivity, then, is concerned with the process of research rather than the private individual of the researcher: 'one is better off knowing little things about many people systematically bound together, than everything about one person' (Bourdieu cited in Maton 2003:58). Pursuing reflexive practice becomes 'a collective enterprise rather than the burden of a lone academic' (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992:36) that targets the 'the social and intellectual consciousness embedded in analytical tools and operations' (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992:36). Its purpose, clarifies Griller (1996:13), is thus:

'To objectify the scientist by placing the researcher, as a researcher rather than an individual, in the social structure (and in so doing develop an awareness of the habitus of the academic in a specific position in the social space) and to objectify his or her relationship to the objectified object of study'.

This task, Bourdieu maintains, can be achieved via the implementation of a series of 'epistemological breaks'. In elaborating the first 'break', Bourdieu borrows from the French tradition of historical epistemology, notably the work of Bachelard (1968), who stresses a polarised relation between 'spontaneous knowledge' – 'the unconscious internalization of "everyday notions"' – and 'scientific knowledge' (Karakayali 2004:353). Bachelard argues science fundamentally involves the construction of novel representations of the world, it is 'above all, a new way of looking at things', and thus a scientific approach must begin with a rupture from our ordinary and familiar conceptions of the world (Karakayali 2004:353). Bourdieu (Bourdieu et al. 1991 in Karakayali 2004:353) incorporates this claim into his own work, asserting that a scientific approach to the study of the social world must 'break the relationships that are most apparent and most familiar in order to bring out the new system of relations among the elements'. This is achieved with the process of objectification, 'dissecting "concrete totalities that are presented to intuition and replacing them with the set of abstract criteria"' (Bourdieu et al. 1991 in Karakayali 2004:354).

This first break alone, however, is inadequate. As Karakayali (2004:354) expounds, 'mere objectification of social relations is never enough. Everyday notions are "tenacious" and the objectification process through which the sociologist constructs his/her categories can easily fall prey to these "pre-notions"'. Thus a second break is required, a second 'step back' (Jenkins 2002:47), that objectifies the act of objectification. Jenkins (2002:47) delineates lucidly: the first step back distances 'from the situation in question' as an 'attempt to observe a situation from an analytical or sociological point of view', in other words, it follows 'the usual use of "objectivity"'; the second step aims to transcend the 'the

act of observation itself', to 'scrutinise both the "scientific" stance vis-a-vis that situation and the effect of adopting such a stance upon the resultant knowledge of the situation'.

The second break, then, demands that the very nature of anthropological and sociological forms of knowledge is called into question and this is where the methodological implications of epistemic reflexivity appear in greatest contrast. Bourdieu provides not a theory but a model for practice, insisting that social scientists 'should be reflexive about the notions they employ, their research methods, and the procedures they adopt in order to constitute social life as available for analysis' in a process that 'continually turns back onto itself the scientific weapons that it produces' (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992:214), engaging 'a sociology of sociology'. It is, writes Jenkins (2002:52), 'only thus can they hope to know what is "in the data" and what may be an artefact of the research process'.

In this statement, Jenkins captures the true originality that Bourdieu's approach towards reflexivity embodies: proposing reflexivity as an epistemic stance that 'seeks not to assault but to buttress the epistemological security of sociology' (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992:36). Against 'postmodernist and feminist currents that view and wield "positionality" as the deadly dagger plunged into the heart of the very idea of social science' (Wacquant 2004:398) and have tendered an epistemic nihilism that 'rejects all possibility of scientific objectivity in favour of a thoroughly interpretative and relativist approach to understanding the social world' (Swartz 1997:11), Bourdieu puts forward a method by which reflexivity comes to be 'a means of underwriting rather than undermining scientific knowledge' (Maton 2003:57). Reflexivity, he asserts, contra to idealist notions, is not the principal obstacle to scientific objectivity but the only means to its accomplishment.

This section has examined Bourdieu's notion of epistemic reflexivity as a foundationally realist approach to social research, which, in contrast to more pervasive understandings of the concept, has been demonstrated as a collective and non-narcissistic examination of the distortions that arise in the construction of the object of research that occur by the very act of this construction itself. Bourdieu offers a theoretical critique of the biases inherent in the act of academic production but, most importantly, contributes alongside the basis of a methodological practice by which such partiality is mitigated. As such, Bourdieu attempts to recover social disciplines from the fate of epistemic nihilism and outline a basis for a scientific study of the social world. This approach is intended to provide an epistemological scaffold for the theoretical and empirical inquiries of this PhD research.

Yet, if this stance aims towards a scientific analysis, might there be some conflict with the some of the objectives articulated in the previous chapter: the overt moral-political content of the concern with inequality, symbolic violence and the externalities of consumption behaviour, for instance? In broader terms, is Bourdieu's scientific proclivity reconcilable with the more rudimentary objectives of critical disciplines such as human or development geography? Before moving on to consider the methodological implications of this epistemology and outline the proposed research method of this PhD, it seems pertinent to address the potential 'epistemic tension' inherent in the conception of social research as simultaneously a critical and scientific enterprise (Susen 2011:54).

A critical science?

This suggestion of an 'epistemic tension' between the critical and scientific appellations of social study is made by Susen (2011:54), with reference to Bourdieu's own work. For whilst Bourdieu was, on the one hand, an avowed proponent of the conception of the social sciences as a scientific endeavour, he maintained a keen commitment to ideals of social justice and explicit political themes run through the entire of his intellectual oeuvre.

In light of this steadfast and wholly indiscreet engagement, it is surprising to read Karakayali's (2004) critique of Bourdieu's notion of epistemic reflexivity as a superficial and academic practice with no practical end or benefit. Invoking Adorno's notion of the 'fetishisation of science' – whereby 'science, with its specific form of argumentation and its immanent methods, becomes an end in itself, without any relation to its subject matter' (Adorno 2000 in Karakayali 2004:365) – Karakayali questions the political potentiality and telos of Bourdieu's search for scientificity and rigour. Though acknowledging Bourdieu's 'lifelong interest' is social justice, he asserts that these interests are extrinsic to reflexivity. 'What good', he asks, 'does it do the social that sociology liberates itself from scholastic fallacies?' (Karakayali 2004:360), thus positioning the reflexive enterprise as a sort of 'science for science's sake', devoid of critical purpose or meaning.

The critical and scientific facets of social research, however, need not contradict or preclude one another. To the contrary, for Bourdieu, scientific practice itself is an inherently political act, something that Karakayali fails to observe. Indeed, Karakayali's critique hinges on an outmoded conception of what progressive academic practice constitutes. As Schubert (1995:1005) elucidates, 'poststructuralist critiques of academic practice and knowledge have made problematic the status of the progressive academic in contemporary society': in postmodern times, the image of the academic as a vanguard in

'unfolding historical dialectic' is extremely 'antiquated' since the 'teleological and totalizing notion of historic progress is considered a myth'. Thus:

'To speak of progressive practices is therefore not suggest that a telos exists or even that one should exists. It is rather to emphasise ways of resisting and altering existing structures of hierarchy' (Schubert 1995:1005).

The very pursuit of scientific rigor is, for Bourdieu, a 'mode of political intervention' (Swartz 1997:12). As he writes:

'Politics begins... with the denunciation of the tacit adherence to the established order which defines the original doxa;... political subversion pre-supposes cognitive subversion, a conversion of the vision of the world' (Bourdieu, Chamboredon, Passeron 1991 cited in Schubert 1995:1010).

The reflexive practice of social research provides, therefore, the means by which to counteract the predominance of misrecognition: 'to change the world one has to change the ways of world making, that is, the vision of the world and the practical operations by which groups are produced and reproduced' (Bourdieu 1990 in Karakayali 2004:360). Since classifications serve to secure and naturalise domination, 'intellectuals, as professional producers of authoritative visions of the social world' are 'at the epicentre of the games of symbolic power' (Wacquant 2007:273). The task for progressive social academia therefore becomes:

'To denaturalise and defatalise the social world, that is, to destroy the myths that cloak the exercise of power and the perpetuation of domination' (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992:49).

Failure to achieve this renders the academic an 'unknowing accomplice' (Schubert 1995:1010) in the reproduction of oppressive social hierarchies. Schubert (1995:1010) observes, for example, that 'academics who accept such official categorisations lend intellectual authority to them, thus reinforcing their position and the social hierarchies they constitute'.

Bourdieu demonstrates here, as ever, his acute awareness of the symbolic functions of classifications: the nomenclature of social research, itself, is no superficial or inconsequent taxonomisation but has meaningful connotations. When the question, 'why do you feel the need to claim scientificity?', is put to Bourdieu in an interview (with Thullier 1980 and reproduced in Bourdieu 1993b: 8-9), his answer reveals his cognizance of the violent potential encapsulated in the semantics of this discursive nuance:

‘Why not say it is a science if it is one?... Something very important is at stake: one of the ways of disposing of awkward truths is to say that they are not scientific, which amounts to saying that they are ‘political’, that is, springing from ‘interest’, ‘passion’, and are therefore relative and relativisable’.

As is the case with so many other binaries, the space between politics and science is, for Bourdieu, not quite as vast as it is made to appear. Bourdieu’s stance against the extremes of postmodern nihilistic relativism is matched by his critique of the scientist absolutism of ‘modernist’ rationalism and, argues Wacquant (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992:47), ‘opens up a possibility of overcoming [such] opposition’ and drawing this polemic together into a more fruitful middle ground.

Bourdieu advocates, on the one hand, ‘that knowledge must be decontaminated, that categories are contingent social derivations and instruments of symbolic power possessing a constitutive efficacy – that the structures of discourse are often politically charged preconstructions’ (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992:47)’ and incorporates these poststructuralist concerns of thinkers like Foucault and Derrida into a powerful critique of positivist conceptions of social science. There can be, he asserts, no separation of fact and value here; evidence is never primary, instead ‘the scientific fact is won, constructed and confirmed’ (Bourdieu et al. 1991 in Schubert 1995:1013). Thus, ‘science is, as Gramsci saw well, an eminently political activity’ (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992:47).

Yet it is not ‘merely a politics and therefore incapable of yielding universally valid truths’ (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992:47) and, on these grounds, Bourdieu parts with poststructuralism. For on the other hand, he firmly believes in the ‘believes in the possibility and desirability of scientific truth’ (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992:47). Though stringently anti-positivist he remains ‘passionately modernist’ (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992:47). For Bourdieu, however, ‘facticity and normativity’ are ‘intertwined’ and this leaves the social sciences to wage the seemingly paradoxical effort of ‘producing both descriptive and normative knowledge of the world’ (Susen 2011:48). Social research is, or at least can be, a science of the social but this science will always be a political science, ‘crucially concerned with, and enmeshed in, strategies and mechanisms of symbolic domination’ (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992:50).

Having elaborated Bourdieu’s notion of reflexivity as upholding, simultaneously, the ideals of both progressive and scientific practice, this section has thereby nullified possible claims to a paradoxical ‘epistemic tension’ in his conception that threatens to undermine his propositions and, by extension, this PhD, which seeks to employ these as an undergirding

metatheoretical frame. With the conceptual base of reflexivity thus secured, the next section will consider the eminent consequences of epistemic reflexivity for the empirical practice of social research, outlining a framework for a Bourdieusian method.

Reflexivity in practice: Bourdieu and methodology

Though Bourdieu's commitment to reflection on method and methodology is extensive and spans the breadth of his oeuvre, nowhere is provided a systematic or codified 'blueprint' for the practice of scientific social research. This can be traced in part to Bourdieu's insistence on the inseparability of theory and practice, and his proclivity to present the two ever-united in the embedded context of a concrete empirical case-study; a conviction which, as noted in the previous chapter, has always created strife for those keen to isolate one particular strand of his thought. Above all, however, there is in Bourdieu's work no methodological blueprint because he is deeply opposed to such a thing. Indeed, the chief characteristic of Bourdieu's approach, aside from the necessity of epistemic reflexivity, is his adherence to what Wacquant (2007:266) describes as a 'methodological polytheism': 'to deploy whatever procedure of observation and verification is broadly suited to the question at hand'. Asked to provide advice for aspirant social scientists, Bourdieu (in Wacquant 1989:54) foremost commands that they must:

[Q]uestion and constantly challenge methodological prescriptions and interdicts. Social research is something much too serious and much too difficult that we can allow ourselves to mistake scientific rigidity, which is the nemesis of intelligence and invention, for scientific rigor, and thus to deprive ourselves of this or that resource available in the full panoply of our discipline – and of the sister disciplines of anthropology, economics, history, etc. In such matters, I would dare say that only one rule applies: "it is forbidden to forbid".

Freedom of method is not, however, total. Following his remarks above, Bourdieu (Bourdieu in Wacquant 1989:54) quickly clarifies:

'Of course the extreme liberty I advocate here... has its counterpart in the extreme vigilance that we must accord to the conditions of use of analytical techniques and to ensuring their fit with the question at hand'.

Thus, Bourdieu's investigations employ a number of tools and techniques, but not without system or stipulation. Indeed, as Griller suggests (1996:8), it is apparent that 'if we divide them into quantitative and qualitative techniques, each have specific roles to play'.

First, then, to examine the role and place of quantitative methods in Bourdieu analyses. Bourdieu's 'concern for quantifying his data material and for putting his thinking in mathematical terms', as Lebaron (2009:11) expresses, is an apt place to begin for this both 'an essential aspect' of Bourdieu's work – his reliance on statistical data being a 'lifelong commitment' that stretches back to his earliest studies of Algeria and Béarn – yet one 'somewhat neglected by those who have written about Bourdieu's theory'.

This commitment to statistics reflects Bourdieu's emphasis on practice and the essential realism of his ontology and epistemology. As Jenkins (2002:60) establishes, Bourdieu is primarily 'interested in a model of reality, and statistics are the primary datum for determining what that model is'. His employ of statistics differs from 'traditional' sociological applications in two respects (Griller 1996:9). First, Bourdieu does not use statistics to determine causality, instead his use is 'is 'basically descriptive' (Jenkins 2002:60). There is no complex specification of cause and effect as typifies log linear and regression analyses: 'even in his most statistically elaborate research... the basic method usually involves no more than the sophisticated calculation of strength of association between various data' (Jenkins 2002:60). Second, 'as a result of his epistemology, embodied in his theory of practice, he cannot use survey data to answer questions of why people behave as they do' (Griller 1996:9). The unconscious nature of the habitus renders questions of 'why' futile, since 'even the most knowledgeable, capable agent is not aware of his/her reasons for acting' (Griller 1996:10).

Bourdieu's exercise of quantitative tools to describe rather than explain is deliberate and conscious, borne from a dissatisfaction with the implicit operants of more customary statistical models. As he explains in *Distinction* (Bourdieu 1979 cited in Lebaron 2009:12):

'the particular relations between a dependent variable and so-called independent variables... tend to dissimulate the complete system of relations that make up the true principle of force and form specific to the effects recorded in such and such particular correlation'.

Instead, for Bourdieu, social causality had to amount 'to the global effects of a complex structure of interrelations', a structure irreducible 'to the combination of the multiple 'pure effects' of independent variables' (Lebaron 2009:12). Bourdieu remarked of the need for a scientific instrument that could grasp at once the multi-dimensional and relational nature of the social world and found this in geometric modelling, declaring multiple

correspondence analysis as that 'most in "elective affinities" with his own theory' (Lebaron 2009:12):

'I use correspondence analysis very much, because I think that is it essentially a relational procedure whose philosophy fully expresses what in my views constitutes social reality. It is a procedure that "thinks" in relations as I try to do with the concept of field' (Bourdieu 1991 in Lebaron 2009:13).

Correspondence analysis is Bourdieu's preferred medium for establishing that which is 'directly observable and constructible from direct observation' in the field of study: 'what people do (practice)', 'the structure of the field (social structure)', 'the characteristics of those in various positions' (Griller 1996:8). Statistical data, thus, typically form the starting point of an investigation, setting out 'the constitution of the thing to be explained' (Jenkins 2002:60). Having established the patterns of field and practice, the researcher must illustrate their articulation, teasing out the logic and principles of practice that explain how these patterns are put into being. Bourdieu relies upon qualitative methods to fulfil this explanatory function.

Notable in Bourdieu's work is 'his use of an immense variety of qualitative sources', a usage which is for Griller (1996:10), 'one of the main sources of Bourdieu's importance for sociology as well as the most successful area of his methodology'. This significance derives from Bourdieu's calculated contravention of 'the unwritten rule that only data collected in socially defined scientific conditions, i.e., by prepared questioning and observation, may enter into the scientific construction' (Bourdieu 1984 in Griller 1996:10). The material that Bourdieu draws upon as evidence in *Distinction*, for example, includes photographs, advertisements and theatre reviews; in *Homo Academicus*, he circumvents the unwillingness of academics to discuss power and politics by formulating a 'cumulative index of political membership...using overt public declarations, that is, signatures of support given and published on different political occasions' (Bourdieu 1988 in Griller 1996:9).

As this example illustrates, Bourdieu's breach of this 'unwritten rule' and his engagement with such a creative and resourceful range of qualitative evidence is, for the most part, made necessary by the apparent unreliability of conventional techniques in accordance with his epistemic stance. He reserves greatest distrust for methodological approaches based on in-depth interviewing: 'whether formal or informal, structured or unstructured', notes Jenkins (2002:54), this is where 'Bourdieu's epistemological critique is at its sharpest'.

The fundamental premise of this critique is that any approach based on 'eliciting from informants accounts of and for their behaviour will', necessarily, 'produce a misleading picture of social life' (Jenkins 2002:53): this is reflected in his approach to quantitative techniques too; the insistence that survey data should only seek to ascertain what people do as opposed why they do it.

This misdirection emanates, first, from the inability of respondents to reflect on their own action: since habitus is unconsciousness, the structures that govern practice are imperceptible:

'Social agents do not have 'innate knowledge' of what they are and what they do; more precisely, they do not necessarily have access to the reason for their discontent or their distress and the most spontaneous declarations can, with no intention of dissimulation, express something quite different from what they are apparently saying' (Bourdieu et al. 1993 in Hamel 1998:9).

In addition to this however, and more significantly, are distortions intrinsic to the research process itself. The very occasion of the interview motivates the discourse of informants towards a 'semi-theoretical disposition', inspiring accounts that are 'heavy on rationalisation' as 'a product of the informant's desire to impress' and 'demonstrate a mastery of the topic in question' and delivered with 'constant recourse... to a vocabulary of rules – "the language of grammar, morality and law" – that is, according to Bourdieu, the outcome of a tacit, unreflexive, practical knowledge' (Jenkins 2002:53). Such 'native theories' are, argues Bourdieu (1977 in Jenkins 2002:54), 'dangerous': not so much because they lead research toward illusory explanations as because they bring quite superfluous reinforcement to the intellectualist tendency inherent in the research process'. This, asserts Jenkins (2002:54), is:

'the "objectification of objectification" at work. Bourdieu the ethnographer is reflecting upon the testimony of informants, not only as a product of their own existences but also as an artefact of the research relationship and objectivism'.

Thus, Bourdieu is sceptical of the capacity of discourse to communicate to researchers the logic of practice. But might a researcher learn the art of practice through the act of practice? Alas, Bourdieu holds similar reservations regarding the other time-honoured qualitative methodological tradition of the social sciences: participant observation. This, he

asserts (Bourdieu 1990 in Jenkins 2002:54), is 'a contradiction in terms (as anyone who has tried to do so will have confirmed in practice)'. The problem is that action undertaken as a participant observer can never be more than superficial, a mere pretence:

'One cannot live the belief associated with profoundly different conditions of existence, that is, with other games and other stakes, still less give others the means of reliving it by the sheer power of discourse... Those who want to believe with the beliefs of others grasp neither the objective truth nor the subjective experience of belief' (Bourdieu 1990 in Jenkins 2002:54).

It is important to emphasise, however, as Bourdieu himself does (2003 in Crang 2005:226), that this awareness of the fallibility of qualitative techniques does not undermine their use entirely, contributing to the idealist and 'rather disheartening conclusion that all is in the final analysis nothing but discourse, text, or, worse yet, pretext for text'. It is a frequent criticism of Bourdieu's methods that he appears to 'privilege' (Jenkins 2002:59) the use of statistics, subscribing too willingly to their objectivity and failing to subject them to the same ardour and ferocity of epistemological vigilance as qualitative tools. Yet this seems unfair. Bourdieu is clearly aware of the limitations of the quantitative approach and the survey method is subject to the same epistemological concern as any form of informant account, not merely those qualitative in direction: this is borne out by the assertion that statistical methods should be descriptive, seeking out only the patterns of practice and not the principles that underlie it.

Were Bourdieu only interested in understanding what people do as opposed why then this criticism might have some legitimacy, but he is clearly and fundamentally driven by the quest to uncover the causal logic of practices. It is clear that for Bourdieu, qualitative tools are necessary to discern this. Bourdieu's (in Wacquant 1989:54) appreciation for the value of direct observation and interaction is evidenced in an interview with Wacquant, where he advocates that researchers get into the field and face-to-face with research subjects:

'Get your hands dirty... Do not settle for the cosy and derealised experience of the social world fostered by those bureaucratic machineries of survey research that create a huge buffer between the social analyst and the universe he or she claims to dissect. Direct contact with the object not only has the virtue of helping preserve you from the fetishisation of concepts and theories; it will also make you more attentive to the built-in assumptions and consequences of apparently innocuous technical choices that are generally made unthinkingly'.

This brings us back to the goal of the exercise of epistemic reflexivity: it is not, as discussed above, a practice intended to undermine social research but, to the contrary, provide a buttress for claims to scientific understanding. Bourdieu's argument for greater consideration and awareness of the induced distortions of various modes of knowledge construction is made so as to enhance rather than negate their application and ultimate ends. In unpicking the problems associated with these tools, Bourdieu is not consigning them to a thoroughgoing futility but suggesting the need to question each with each to better refine and secure the scientificity of any conclusion thereby derived; pursuing, in accordance, what Jenkins (2002:59) defines as 'a reflexive epistemological pluralism which self-consciously juxtaposes different modes or kinds of sociological (or anthropological) knowledge'. This act of juxtaposition is crucial, underscoring Bourdieu's avowal of 'methodological polytheism' (Wacquant 2007:266) and his commission of such a vast range of sources in his ethnographic analysis:

'We must, wherever possible, mobilize and put to work all of the techniques which are relevant and practically useable given the definition of the problem under investigation... Methodological indictments are often no more than a disguised way of making a virtue out of necessity, of feigning to dismiss, to ignore in an active way what one is ignorant of in fact' (Bourdieu in Wacquant 1989:54).

There is a familiar appeal within methodology textbooks in the social sciences for the synthesis of qualitative and quantitative methods in research. Yet this appeal is presented with little reflection as to how this union may be forged, with little suggestion to the researcher about how to conceptualise and implement such a strategy, and therefore remains estranged from research practice (Hoggart et al. 2002:65).

Bakewell (2010: 1698) has observed that research on migration systems, in particular, likely requires a 'mix of methods' to 'reach a breadth of understanding that uncovers the multiple meanings of migration'. However, he finds in practice efforts to employ mixed methods in such work have been undermined by a lack of epistemological security: 'unsatisfactory' since it 'leaves us resting on an incoherent, mixed, theoretical foundation' (Bakewell 2010:1699). Instead, he suggests, 'mixed methods should arise from our epistemology' (Bakewell 2010:1699).

Bourdieu's ontological position of 'structural constructivism' – transcending the staid binary between objective and subjective – suggests that, in accordance with their complementary epistemic virtue and vice, qualitative and quantitative research can and should be adjoined, demonstrating a 'recursive' relation 'where one approach feeds back into the other', as Cupchik (2001:9) has suggested of his own brand of 'constructivist realism'. Thus, Bourdieu's conceptual work refines the epistemic grounds on which a mixed methodology is advocated, whilst at the same time, his empirical case studies provide ample example of the means to incorporate this hybridism into the practice of research.

This section has elucidated the consequences of Bourdieu's epistemic reflexivity for methodological practice; above all, has been emphasised Bourdieu's commitment to a 'methodological polythesism' borne from the epistemic advantage won through the employ of multiple methods, in particular the fusion of quantitative and qualitative approaches. In doing so, it has outline a general framework for Bourdieu's approach to method; an approach that, first, seeks to delimit the structures of field and patterns of practice through recourse to quantitative techniques and, second, locate the logic of practice that underwrites these systems with the employ of qualitative tools. This general framework yields the elementary structure of the methodology of this PhD. The final section of this chapter, which follows here, proceeds to elaborate in detail how this framework will be adapted and applied to achieve the objectives of proposed research.

Methods and techniques

Broadly, the research presented in this PhD thesis seeks to undertake an investigation into the shifting global bases of production and consumption, offering a novel account of unfolding class processes in the global South. Briefly summarised, it does so by advocating a holistic approach to the study of labour migration, examining the interrelated roles of changing patterns of rural-urban mobility and everyday consumption practices in the reproduction and transformation of class structures in contemporary Cambodia. To achieve this, the research addresses three core research questions, established in Chapter One, designed draw out the linkages between class, consumption and rural-urban migration in Cambodia. First, to what extent can the class theory of Pierre Bourdieu (1984) contribute to a clearer understanding of the structures of inequality in contemporary Cambodia? Second, building on this, what is the role of consumption practices in realising the divisions between different class groups in Cambodian society? Finally, how do

patterns of rural-urban labour migration interact with inequality to reproduce or transform local class structures?

The scope and aims of this study were informed, not merely through recourse to the academic literature, but by the candidate's previous experience of investigating labour migration in Cambodia. From 2008 to 2010, the candidate lived in Cambodia whilst reading for a Master's degree at the Royal University of Phnom Penh (RUPP). Throughout this period, the candidate was simultaneously employed by the Development Studies Faculty of this institution as a graduate researcher, working on a project funded by the International Development Research Centre, Canada, entitled 'Migration, Rural Poverty and Natural Resources Management' (hereafter referred to as 'the RUPP-IDRC project'). The candidate's role on this project was to conduct a detailed multi-method study (Parsons, Lawreniuk and Pilgrim 2014) of an urban migrant enclave in Teuk Thla, an administrative *sangkat* [commune] located in the west of Cambodia's capital, Phnom Penh.

This conduct of the fieldwork for the PhD thesis was enhanced by this experience, in many ways. First, the faculty offered to act as an institutional host for the candidate during the period of field data collection. This brought numerous advantages: the least of which included loans of field equipment such as recording devices (on the ethics and use of which, see below). Yet more significantly, it facilitated dialogue between the candidate and a network of national and international academics and researchers, with a vast wealth of theoretical and technical expertise. This association of professionals performed a valuable advisory role, providing a sounding board for conceptual ideas and a forum for problems that arose in the course of the research process.

The experience of the RUPP-IDRC project also provided the candidate with a foundational knowledge of the patterns and processes of labour migration in Cambodia and, as such, was able to lend to the development of the theoretical frame and methodology employed in this PhD research. An addendum to the urban phase of the RUPP-IDRC project fieldwork, for example, involved 'tracking back' a sample of consenting urban migrant respondents to their rural households, all within a single district of Prey Veng province, in order to meet and interview members of migrant-sending households and communities. This process highlighted the expansive reach of the economic, cultural and social structures, linkages and networks in which the process of labour migration is embedded: the 'total social fact' (Bourdieu and Wacquant 2000:176) of migration systems.

In doing so, it intimated the necessity of a more holistic approach to the study of labour migration, an argument developed throughout Chapter Two of this PhD thesis. Such an approach requires a treatment of migration that transcends potentially limiting binaries such as economy/culture, rural/urban, emigrant/immigrant. These latter two have important implications for the design of migration research methodologies. With notable exceptions (e.g. Kuhn 2003), much migration research focuses attention on only one side of the migrant continuum, basing data collection and field work around an analysis of either sending or receiving areas. To do so, as argued in Chapter Two, can elide recognition of the importance of recursive linkages between the two.

Accordingly, the methodology for this PhD research was designed as a 'matched origin-destination study' (Kuhn 2003:320), in which data pertaining to both the rural circumstance and urban experience of those individuals, households and communities involved in processes of labour migration is captured. Following the logic that 'before he or she becomes an immigrant, the migrant is always first an emigrant' and therefore the study of migration must 'imperatively start, not from the concerns and cleavages of the receiving society, but from the sending communities, their history, structure and contradictions' (Bourdieu and Wacquant 2000:174), it was adjudged that the research should initiate with a detailed analysis of a rural, migrant-sending locale and then proceed to trace its migrants to their urban destinations. Such a process enables the reconstitution of the 'complete trajectory of the individuals, households and groups involved in the peregrination under examination, in order to uncover the full system of determinants that first triggered exile and later continued, under new guises, to govern the differentiated paths they followed' (Bourdieu and Wacquant 2000:174).

The selection of the primary rural fieldsite, in which the initial phase of data collection for the PhD research was undertaken, occurred during a period of preliminary fieldwork that took place in August 2012. The candidate established a set of criteria that would render a site both 'practical and appropriate' (Bradshaw and Stratford 2010:74) for the purposes of the study. Practical considerations included the proximity of the site to Phnom Penh and ease of access during Cambodia's wet season¹, during which heavy rains can make (particularly unsurfaced) roads in some areas of the country difficult to use or impassable. Relative proximity to the city was important given the proposed multi-sited nature of the

¹ *Rodauv vossaa*, or wet season, roughly corresponds to the six months from May to October; the remaining six months of the year are known as *rodauv brang*, dry season.

research, which intended to incorporate data collection in the rural site as well as migrant locations in Phnom Penh. The ability to easily access the site in both wet and dry season was deemed vital to garner greater appreciation of how the seasons affect the economic, social and cultural milieu. The seasons shape patterns and processes of agriculture, labour, social rites, among other things, and, therefore, patterns and processes of consumption and labour mobility, lifestyle and livelihood. In respect of the particular aims of the study, the site was required to evidence considerable diversity of livelihoods and a degree of integration into the urban labour market, such that it contained a sufficient sample of urban labour migrants to facilitate the intended urban phase of research.

Following consultation with academics in the Development Studies Faculty at the RUPP, in which these conditions were discussed, the prospective location was narrowed to the commune of Krangyov in Kandal province², some 60km south-east of Phnom Penh. Krangyov has received significant development assistance from the state through Hun Sen Development Centre, which was established in 1995. Most of this assistance was delivered in the form of infrastructure improvement projects such as school and road building activity. Though the work of the development centre has since ceased, its contribution to agricultural activity and relative prosperity in Krangyov commune were, at least in the short term, recognised, along with potential for exacerbating inequality and cultivating uneven power relations (see Charya et al. 1998:60). Whether linked with the activity of the Hun Sen Development Centre or otherwise, Krangyov and the wider district of Saang in which it is located are now noted areas of nascent industrial activity, increasing the possibilities of local livelihoods (see Chapter Four).

The candidate visited three villages in Krangyov during a six-week period of preliminary fieldwork in July and August 2012 to assess their suitability for the PhD project. In each village, an interview was conducted with the respective village head, followed by a short focus-group discussion with a convenience sample of village residents. In these scoping studies, a brief account of village history was noted, along with basic information about village demography and livelihoods. After these appraisals, the village of Veal Rien was

² Cambodia is divided into 24 provinces or *khaet*. Each province is sub-divided into smaller administrative units known as districts or *srok*. Each district is further sub-divided into communes or *khum*, which contain a number of villages or *phum*. Phnom Penh is a special administrative unit, not formally part of any province, though it is surrounded geographically by Kandal province. Phnom Penh's districts are known as *khan* and its communes, *sangkat*.

selected as the primary field site for the research, meeting the criteria above and being of practical size to facilitate a full village sample of just over 100 households.

The delimitation of the field site and entitment of the full village sample in such a manner was not without certain complications. The social sciences have a long history of privileging the 'village study' in Southeast Asia research, arising from a tradition in which the structural integrity of the village was romanticised as an 'organic entity' (Rigg, Salamanca, Parnwell 2012:1473): a self-contained economic, social and cultural unit. As Chapter Four will detail, such an imagining may have never been an accurate conception of the Khmer countryside, whose villages have been subject to a process of slow economic opening since before the colonial period. In the contemporary era, this representation is ever more problematic as, echoing the experience of other parts of Southeast Asia, the livelihoods and lifestyles of residents become increasingly 'delocalised' (Rigg, Salamanca, Parnwell 2012:1474); and the household and family become 'disembedded' (Rigg, Salamanca, Parnwell 2012:1476), stretched over vast expanse of space (Kelly 2011).

A more mobile and less 'rural' village space creates several problems for research. The first is ensuring the capture of all this activity; avoiding the frequent yet obfuscating 'omission' (Elmhirst 2012:275) of rural-rural and rural-urban, transient and mobile populations from the sampling process. In this respect, delimiting the field site as a pre-existing, administrative – hence, by no means natural – entity had practical advantages. As the RUPP-IDRC project experience demonstrated, the majority of mobile populations in Cambodia remain formally registered with the authorities (for electoral and welfare purposes) at their village of birth rather than migratory destination. Thus, taking a whole village as a unit of study enabled the candidate to use a formal record of households provided by the village head as a main sampling frame, thereby mitigating the risk that households would be omitted from the sample selection through short- or long-term absence, or other unavailability.

The second problem lies in defining the categories of 'household', 'family', and such like, which can have important effects for the outcome of research (Beaman and Dillon 2012; Randall et al. 2011) – and, faced with their apparent unravelling, in justifying their continued employ as a base unit of study (Rigg 2013). Nonetheless, despite family and household ties in Veal Rien becoming looser in spatial terms, the economic, social and emotional attachments between geographically separated members often remain strong: a phenomenon illustrated by extensive communication and exchange – both social and

material (for more on this, see Chapter Seven) – and, moreover, highlighted by other studies of migrant lives and livelihoods in Cambodia (Parsons, Pilgrim and Lawreniuk 2014; Bylander 2015; Derks 2008). Most importantly, the concepts of household and family retain a discursive resonance, captured by the Khmer word *kruosar*. All of which suggests that rather than unravelling in the face of developmental change, these forms of association are being renegotiated, reworked and remade in spatially and relationally novel guises.

Much of this, however, undermines conventional definitions of the household as a ‘residential dwelling unit’ (Randall et al. 2011), one in which members, at the very least, share a roof (Beaman and Dillon 2012). As households become more mobile, multi-dimensional and fluid in rural areas of Cambodia, as in other parts of the South (see e.g. Kriel et al. 2014), the challenge becomes to create a definition of the household that incorporates this complexity and flexibility. Recognising this, rather than impose a rigid definition, the candidate, in the course of the research, permitted village households license to self-define their membership. Again, this is not to suggest that households such conceived represent an organic entity – instead they have been conditioned by economic and cultural influences, and, likely, experiences of past enumeration – but to gain a better appreciation of how residents perceive mobile and transient livelihoods to have reworked the relations of their household unit.

This process resulted in a considerable degree of consistency regarding household definitions, underlining the discursive resonance of notions of the household-based family unit or *kruosar*. Generally, children were regarded as members of the parental household unit – offspring are described as ‘*knong bantouk*’, literally ‘inside the burden’ of the household, evoking notions of falling within its jurisdiction, responsibility and charge – even if married, until they left the parental residence to live elsewhere with their spouse. If a couple marry, the husband may move to the residence of the wife, thus becoming an extended member of this household; the wife may move to the residence of the husband, thus becoming an extended member of this household; or they may move to a new residence, establishing a new household. The spatial location of the concerned residence appeared to have little consequence. Labour migrants and a small number of children and young people living elsewhere to pursue educational opportunities, often with relatives who were compensated for their upkeep, were considered part of their parental household unless they had moved with their spouse: as scholars of migration have routinely observed, ‘home’ is often ‘where one’s kinsfolk are’ (e.g. Gardner 1993:5). Where one spouse resided

with one set of parents (or, therefore, parents-in-law) in the village and the other migrated elsewhere, both were considered part of the village household in whose residence one of the pair remained. Crucially, the 'matched origin-destination' design of the study allowed the candidate to triangulate rural member's perceptions of household membership with urban migrant perceptions, between which there was little divergence from the understanding clarified above.

To observe that there is some degree of shared understanding between household members as to their composition and definition, and, therefore, some sense of collective identity, should not be extrapolated to suggest any necessary harmony between, for example, respective member's interests and actions. Though this PhD thesis refers to 'household strategies', this is in the consequentialist sense of strategies enacted by the household rather than jointly-determined household action. The decisions, surrounding such actions, regarding the use and distribution of household resources is not presumed to be uncontested: as Bourdieu has argued, action need not be conscious or even deliberate to be strategic, thus household action need not be the conscious or deliberate will of all (or, indeed, any) members to constitute a household strategy.

Indeed, development geography has long recognised that the household is not necessarily a site of cooperation but is fraught with contest and bargaining among constituents (Young 1997; Kandiyoti 1988; Moore 1988; Folbre 1986; Harris 1984). Investigating household relations in Cambodia, in particular, Brickell (2014; see also Brickell and Chant 2010; Brickell 2008) has notably built upon this tradition of feminist scholarship to examine the nature of intra-household relations in local context. She explores the meaning of a local proverb that instructs 'plates in a basket will rattle' (Brickell 2014:262), to illustrate that those living under the same roof do not anticipate peace and accord but, rather, routinely expect to encounter dissent and hostility. Understandings of the household among rural Cambodians therefore resonate with the established notion that the household is not a 'locus of assumed altruism and harmony' but one of 'negotiation, bargaining and even conflict' (Brickell 2014:263).

This thesis, therefore, draws upon these understandings. The contest between the household and individual's needs and desires is usefully illustrated by the remittance practices of migrants, explored in greater detail in Chapter Seven of this PhD thesis. The exchange of remittance between urban migrants from Veal Rien and their respective village households is near universal, which suggests that there is at least some notion of collective

responsibility and shared resources among different household members. Yet the volume, frequency, and even direction (rural-to-urban; urban-to-rural) of remittance transfers is widely varied, suggesting that there is, too, a considerable degree of negotiation and strategising between household members in the process of resource allocation.

Following the selection of the primary fieldsite in August 2012, it was necessary to secure the appropriate permissions to conduct research and begin data collection. The candidate sought, in the first instance, the generalised consent of the village head and leadership. After presenting an explanation of the PhD project's aims and its intended methods, outputs and outcomes, this was readily granted. Procedures of generalised consent such as this, though they may sometimes appear token gestures, are nonetheless critically important in 'creating a space in which non-local researchers are held accountable to the local', eschewing the assumption of the 'right to research' (Howlitt and Stevens 2010:51).

This broader permission to engage in research in the village was sought as a supplement to, rather than replacement for, the process of securing individual consent from all participants. Adhering to the conditions required to obtain ethical approval for the PhD project, granted by King's College London earlier in 2012 (ethical approval confirmation for this PhD project is attached, see Appendix I), the recruitment of individual informants by the candidate for the purposes of data collection was governed by the principles of informed consent. Each potential respondent was informed about the aims of the study and the nature of their intended participation. The principle of voluntarism was also explained, including the right to withdraw.

This information was initially communicated verbally to potential participants to mitigate the risk of non-comprehension inherent in the (sometimes low) literacy levels of the target population. Each participant, additionally, was provided with a written information sheet containing the information above to retain for future reference (reproduced in Appendix II). Participants were asked to confirm consent by adding a signature to a written information sheet retained by the candidate or, where preferred, to make a declaration of verbal consent on an audio recording.

Information sheets and audio recordings containing the consent declarations of participants were subject to the same stringent demands of confidentiality as other data collected in the course of the research. All paper records – including field notes, completed questionnaires, written consent forms – were stored in a locked cabinet and all electronic records – typed transcripts, data sets, audio recordings – were stored in password-protected encrypted

files. Further efforts to protect the privacy of respondents included a system to store data anonymously. As such, the names of all those cited in the empirical chapters of this PhD thesis, to follow, are pseudonyms. These endeavours ensure the PhD project is in compliance with both the ethical approval demands of King's College London and the Data Protection Act (1998). All details regarding confidentiality and anonymity measures were explained to participants as part of the process of gaining informed consent, such that participants would be 'assured that all the data collected will remain secure' (Longhurst 2010: 111).

The period of preliminary fieldwork in August 2012 provided an opportunity for the candidate to conduct semi-structured interviews with a range of village residents to gain a finer appreciation of village history, contemporary endowments and patterns of local livelihood activity and lifestyle practice. These initial impressions were important in shaping and refining the conceptual and methodological tools and approaches deployed in the course of the research.

The period of preliminary fieldwork also allowed the candidate to examine the administrative records held by the village, in order to determine how these might play a role in the research strategy. However, such records were rather limited, the main item of use being the household list that was used as a main sampling frame, as above. It was hoped that some degree of information pertaining to cadastral surveys and migratory movements might be available to corroborate data provided by households. Without this, then, a revised method of triangulation had to be employed. In detailing migratory histories, for example, temporal markers such as national elections and local events were used for comparison and contrast to ensure an acceptable degree of accuracy for timescales in the (limited) collection of recall-based data.

Throughout the course of this period of preliminary research and the main body of fieldwork conducted in 2013, the candidate's interviews and interactions with residents took place in the Khmer language, with the assistance of a Cambodian interpreter. Despite speaking Khmer to a good level, there remained a risk of misunderstanding or misrecognising colloquial phrases or subtle nuances and implications conveyed in the information related by respondents: particularly so, given that the candidate was unfamiliar with the accent and dialect of residents in the primary rural field site. The interpreter helped to flag and tease out the finer meaning of certain words and phrases.

As well as performing a necessary role in bettering the candidate's own understandings of respondents' accounts, the heightened cultural sensitivity of the Cambodian interpreter helped to minimise difficulties and awkwardness that the presence of the candidate might create. For example, the strong ethic of normative social hierarchy (see Chapter Four for a detailed exposition) and other social norms that operate in Cambodia intensified the already uneven power relations between the candidate and the research subjects. It is, for example, deemed impolite to refuse an invitation to a social engagement. Where the candidate requested meetings with residents in order to conduct interviews, therefore, it was possible that people might feel uncomfortable refusing the approach, even if this would pose an inconvenience or they simply did not wish to participate. The candidate's position as a well educated foreigner was liable to further increase the perceived demand for deference. The interpreter assisted the candidate in identifying hesitancy and unwillingness on the part of informants, reassuring them that there would be no negative impact for either party should they postpone or withhold engagement, helping to minimise the harm that might result from undue imposition. In a similar manner, the interpreter could advise where a subtle rewording or rephrasing of a question might be necessary to avoid offense or embarrassment, which might have caused residents to provide misleading or inaccurate information to avert any loss of face.

The candidate's decision to use the assistance of an interpreter, though minimising certain methodological and ethical risks in this fashion, heightened others, however. The need to translate questions and responses, for example, enhances the scope for the incorporation of subjectivities into the research process (Temple and Edwards 2008). Nonetheless, the candidate's own knowledge of Khmer greatly mitigated this potential, permitting corroboration and the opportunity to request detail or clarification from the respondent where there was any ambiguity in the account. The candidate also endeavoured to note particularly interesting or contentious parts of accounts verbatim, in the original Khmer, in addition to maintaining English transcriptions of interviews. Where appropriate, this literal Khmer transcription is included in the empirical presentation of data, which follows, as a measure of transparency.

It had been hoped that the potential for the introduction of subjectivities to the research process through the use of an interpreter could be further mitigated by working with a single individual through the course of the main body of fieldwork research. However, unforeseen circumstances rendered it necessary to work with two individuals for a period of three months each, concurrently. Initially, the candidate recruited a female final-year

university student to assist with interpreting for the PhD project. Three months into the project, however, this first assistant won a much desired and much deserved full-time role working for an NGO promoting women's rights and education opportunities. The timing was fortuitous, in many respects, as the first, rural phase (see below for details) of the field research was drawing to a conclusion. For the urban side of the study, therefore, the candidate worked with a new assistant, a second female final-year student recruited from a local university.

Though the necessity of working with two different individuals initially caused the candidate some concern, ultimately it helped to provide valuable insight into the process of knowledge construction through such research. Lest there be any ambiguity, both individuals were committed and evidenced a keen aptitude for conducting research. Nonetheless, working with them separately naturally evinced comparison and revealed relative strengths in their approaches that demanded the candidate meaningfully reflect on her own manner and attitude toward the process of actively doing fieldwork and the responses that this provoked from the researched. Most importantly, the candidate was able to identify instances where the personalities of the two assistants spilled over to variously affect the research process and its outcomes (see de Neve 2006); subtle differences in modesty, tact and reserve provoking nuanced yet distinguishable manner of reaction from informants. It thus provided a valuable reflexive awareness of how the presence of an interpreter interacts with the research process to necessarily shape outputs; that data collection is very much a process of data construction. The experience imparted the recognition that introduction of subjectivities is all but an inevitable part of the research process and, therefore, that the best means of reducing their impact on research is not always to attempt to negate them, problematic since absolute negation is nigh impossible, but to attempt to become aware of the distortions they engender.

The main body of fieldwork research for this PhD thesis was conducted over a period of seven months between March and September 2013. There were three main phases of data collection, each of which was designed roughly to correspond with one of the project's research objectives, established in Chapter One and reiterated at the beginning of the current section of the present chapter. In line with the mixed-methods approach advocated and delineated following Bourdieu's propositions at the outset of this chapter, the process of data collection was geared: first, to establish the patterns of practice prevalent in the rural site of Veal Rien and delimit the contours of social position and class therein; and then, to uncover the practical and discursive constructs that realised these

theoretical entities as lived, bonded social groups. In doing so, a framework for the analysis of village class structures and processes was established, which was then applied to the study of the village's urban migrants to seek evidence of how labour movement worked to transform or reproduce this class system. A more detailed elaboration of the tools and techniques employed during each of these stages and their respective relation to the research objectives of this PhD thesis is offered here.

The first phase of fieldwork research began in March 2013 and aimed to uncover the properties of inequality and the attendant trajectories of different class groups in Veal Rien. In doing so, it addressed the first objective of this PhD thesis, examining the use of Bourdieu's (1984) class theory towards gaining a better appreciation of the structures of difference and division in contemporary Cambodian society. This was primarily achieved through the deploy of a comprehensive socio-economic household survey, designed to capture a 'tabulation of tendencies' (Hoggart et al. 2002:172) of village livelihoods and lifestyles; a descriptive and quantifiable account of the circumstances, position and practices of households within the field site.

The candidate, with the assistance of the interpreter, as detailed above, delivered the survey face-to-face to all households within the village. Given the stated concerns about (mis)recognising the internal cohesion of the household, the candidate requested an interview with either the head of the household or his/her spouse, in order to avoid omitting the representation of female perspectives from the data collection process. This decision was supported by literature on Cambodian household structure that emphasises the shared role of male and female household in the organisation of household production and consumption activity, drawing upon traditional gender roles which 'place great importance on women's role as household managers and men's role as provider for the family' (Gorman 1999:1). These distinct yet complementary roles suggested that both partners would be suitably informed of household activities to contribute reliably to the requirements of the survey.

Perhaps owing to the (exclusively female) gendered composition of the research team or this perceived role of women as 'household managers', most households preferred to nominate a female delegate for this interview. From a total of 114 households interviewed, there were 17 female representatives of female-headed households and 62 female representatives of male-headed households, against 6 male representatives of female-headed households and 29 male representatives of male-headed households. Though

beyond the scope of the PhD thesis to explore and present at greater any depth, the comparison of data collected from female- and male-headed households nonetheless raised interesting questions about the intersectionality of gender and class in village society, which are, however imperfectly, implicitly acknowledged in the case histories presented in the empirical sections of this PhD thesis, notably Chapter Five, and cited as a potential avenue for further research in Chapter Eight, the conclusion.

The survey instrument (reproduced in Appendix III) was designed to require an interview length of approximately one hour and comprised five sections. These sections elicited responses on household demography, labour activity, economic and cultural capital endowment, and general consumption practices. The indicators of such as economic and cultural capital employed in this survey – land, housing type, productive assets, consumer goods, academic education, vocational training, and resource group membership – were developed from the wealth of qualitative data gleaned from the preliminary visit in the previous year. The survey was, then, intended to facilitate the capture patterns of correspondence between livelihoods and economic, cultural and symbolic household resources, in line with the class theory of Bourdieu (1984).

The administration of the survey proceeded in an ordered manner: each dwelling on a village road would be approached in turn, introduced to the aims of the research and asked to consider consenting to interview, as described above. All households in the village willingly consented to participate in the interview. After which, household representatives were asked to suggest a suitable time to arrange to conduct the interview. Many preferred the interview to take place immediately; others suggested a more convenient date and/or time. When interviews had taken place, the household was given an identifying code, which was added to a basic village map sketched and maintained by the researcher, and checked off the village register provided by the village head, as above. In this way, the researcher's own map and the administrative list served to corroborate each other: any households missing from the village household register, for any reason, would be otherwise encountered during the field visits; and the village household register would indicate where households in difficult locations had been overlooked by the research team.

The survey took just under three months to administer to each household in Veal Rien. After which, the data collected from the household survey was examined using multiple correspondence analysis (MCA) to identify homologous distributions of variables. This output of this process was a two-dimensional, interpretable 'map' of the village class

structure. This process and its outputs are examined in greater detail in Chapter Five of this PhD thesis.

In such a fashion, then, the survey component of the research was able to identify broad trends and patterns of practice among household groups in the village. As explored in Chapter Two, however, one of the main advantages of Bourdieu's approach to class is his insistence on the melding of the objectivist and subjectivist moments of enquiry. Classes as revealed through such an empirical framework are, at best, only 'theoretical' constructions (Bourdieu 1987). Having identified patterns of practice, further analysis must reveal the undergirding logic of practice: systems of disposition that orient collective interest and action, and thereby shape 'classes-on-paper' into 'classes-in-practice'.

A second rural phase of study was designed to examine this process of class-making in Veal Rien, seeking to account for the discursive and practical constructions of class in the village. In doing so, this phase of research further explored the first research question of this PhD thesis, examining how Bourdieu's work can illuminate understandings of inequality in Cambodia. In its specific analysis of the practices and discourses surrounding consumption in the village, moreover, it turned attention to the second objective outlined herein: investigating the role of consumption in realising the divisions between groups.

Through the course of the administration of the survey component of the research, the candidate recorded copious notes of observations and informal conversations in order to refine themes and questions for the second phase of the research. This second phase relied upon qualitative techniques of in-depth interviewing and case histories to examine the discourses and practices of different class groups within the village. A system of stratified sampling was employed to recruit a selection of 52 individual participants drawn from different class groups in the village, designed to capture responses from a broadly representative range of gender and age groups.

Following a semi-structured format, interviews in this second phase of research lasted up to two hours. Participants were asked a series of open-ended questions, inviting them to discuss and reflect upon their labour and leisure practices. First, they were asked to provide an account of their work history, detailing when and why they had left school and what income strategies they had pursued up to and including the present. The second section asked them to consider the dynamics of village society and economy, capturing responses on the perceived challenges and opportunities of local development, and social and economic relations in the village. A final section collected information about

respondents' consumption practices, from everyday items like food, clothing and leisure activities, to more overtly conspicuous practices such as leisure travel, large consumer goods, and social ceremonies.

This second phase of research, based upon a qualitative strategy of individual interviews, all but concluded the rural phase of fieldwork and, subsequently, a third phase of work was initiated. With the first twinned phases of investigation in Veal Rien having allowed consideration of both the patterns and logic of classed practice in Veal Rien, in line with the first and second research objectives of this PhD thesis as established above, the fieldwork shifted focus to the third objective, examining how rural-migration interacts with structures of inequality to reproduce or transform local class structures. In respect of this aim, the third phase of study tracked out migrants from Veal Rien to their urban residences and workplaces. Building on the activities previously carried out in the village, the third phase of the study attempted to apply the framework of analysis established therein to the urban migrant context and, in doing so, seek evidence of replication or rupture.

The data gathered over the course of the household survey component of the research indicated that, at the time this information was collected, 45 individuals from Veal Rien were living and working in Cambodia's capital of Phnom Penh. In accordance with the practical considerations, outlined above, that underlined the commitment to a full village study, each of these individuals was sought for participation in the third phase of research.

The process of tracking out migrants to Phnom Penh was complicated, presenting a number of difficulties in gaining access to the targeted individuals. The primary method of arranging interviews with Veal Rien's urban migrants was through household introductions, where the candidate requested that a representative of the village household discuss (usually as part of a telephone conversation) the possibility of participating in the project and, where migrants were interested and willing to consider this proposition further, to provide contact details (usually a telephone number) of the urban worker to the candidate, in order that participation could be discussed in further detail and, if they consented to participation, meeting times and places could be arranged.

For the majority of cases, this system of household bridged introduction was successful but there were a few examples where households were unable to assist: where, for example, the migrant or village household possessed no mobile telephone and, therefore, there was no ongoing channel of communication. Wary of a limiting sample bias that might result from excluding such individuals from participation, two further access strategies were used

in order to enhance the inclusivity of the third phase of investigation. The first was a system of snowball sampling among migrants in the city, where urban respondents were asked to share details of the research among networks of friends and relatives from Veal Rien at work around the city and to invite participation from interested acquaintances who had not yet been contacted directly by the candidate. This yielded several connections, particularly in cases where migrants shared workplaces or residences with cousins or friends.

The national election held towards the end of the fieldwork period, in July 2013, provided further opportunity to make contact with those that both previous systems of introduction had failed to locate. The election was surrounded by a three-day national holiday, to enable migrant workers to travel to their rural villages to cast votes at rural ballot stations to which they most often remain registered. Anticipating an influx of absent village members, therefore, the candidate deposited information sheets and contact details at the households of those migrants who had not yet been reached, requesting that consenting informants make contact. Again, this strategy yielded further connections.

In total, through the employ of these three strategies, 41 of Veal Rien's 45 urban migrant workers were contacted by the candidate, of whom 33 were deemed eligible and consented to participate. Two individuals were discounted from the sample on eligibility grounds as they had since moved to find new employment in another province. Six individuals did not consent to participation in this phase of the research. Reasons for refusal, where given – and this was not required information as ensured by the ethical guidelines governing the conduct of the research – including not being able to find time away from work and a latent unease with unfamiliar approaches given the political unrest and uncertainty that provided the backdrop for the research, conducted in the shadow of the 2013 general election (see e.g. McCargo 2014).

Indeed, researching among groups such as urban migrants workers whose schedules were often constrained by long working hours with limited free time proved to be a further prime difficulty in accessing the intended informants and managing the research schedule for the third phase of the study. Travelling across the city to migrants' dispersed sites of work and living was time consuming: pragmatism and flexibility were important approaches to accommodate and coordinate interview times and locations as dictated by the inconsistent work patterns of migrants with different occupations and urban situations.

This necessary flexibility extended to the timing and conduct of interviews. Whilst some migrants indicated an enthusiasm to meet for extended interviews, in which they were able to talk about and even demonstrate aspects of their work routine, rural ties and city life, others could allot only their short 20-minute lunch breaks to the candidate for the purposes of the interview.

Incorporating these practical concerns into the preparation of the question schedule for urban migrant interviews required building a three-tiered interview guide. Employing indicators reworked to have relevance in the urban context, the first part of the question schedule mirrored the first phase of the rural study, aiming to uncover the patterns of distribution and accumulation of capitals among Veal Rien's residents at work in the city and thereby discerning the classed contours of urban migrant society. This element of the survey was primarily quantitative, requesting information on such as migrants' education and skills development, employment and migratory history, income and remittances. Requiring only the recall of short and simple information ensured it was possible to deliver this section of the survey to all informants, irrespective of the above concerns over interview timing.

A second section of the migrant interview schedule mirrored phase two of the rural study, attempting to discern the undergirding logic of practice and discourse that constitute the lived, bonding reality of competing urban migrant class groups. Recognising the time constraints imposed by informant's life and work commitments, this section relied upon the recall of simple though open-ended information about the urban consumption practices of respondents, with several short areas of focus mirroring those employed in the collection of data from rural individual respondents: from the consumption of everyday items like food, clothing and leisure activities, to more overtly conspicuous practices such as leisure travel, large consumer goods, and social ceremonies. This, again, ensured the delivery of this section to, and collection of subsequent response from, all migrant informants. More than a methodological compromise, however, it moreover proved useful for orienting the focus of the interviews more tightly around the specific themes under investigation.

A final section of the migrant interview schedule was deployed in a more pragmatic manner. Here, in-depth responses were sought, in part to follow up on previous information but additionally to pursue other, sometimes emergent themes of enquiry. The schedule for this section was, therefore, much more fluid and could be adapted to suit the differing durations of migrant interviews. Migrants able to grant a longer interview slot

were able to elaborate on a more extensive range of subjects; whilst those with more limited availability could focus on a finer range of topics.

The schedule for this third phase of research was somewhat haphazard, with two or three interviews scheduled for some days and yet on others, none. To make use of available time at this late stage of the fieldwork process, several key informant interviews and focus group discussions were arranged to take place in Veal Rien and around Phnom Penh. This allowed, for example, the opportunity to test understandings emerging from preliminary analyses. It also provided valuable opportunity to refine details and wider of understandings of certain events or processes that seemed less interesting or unimportant at the time the primary fieldwork was conducted but had begun to appear more significant as further data collection progressed.

The selection of participants was designed to secure involvement from as broad a base of informants as possible, in order to enhance the representation of those from different sectors of society and build an awareness of the dynamics and impacts of power relations (both informant-informant and informant-respondent) inherent in such methods. Recognising that the hierarchies brought to bear in such situations are one of many factors that necessarily limit their rigour (Baxter and Eyles 1997), the collation of information from a diverse range of interviews was viewed less a means of corroboration of fact and more a critical window into the distortions of data: a chance to identify dissonance in accounts and explore 'multiple meanings' that surround practice and process (Cameron 2010:154). Thus, though key informant interviews sought response from representatives of international and national commercial organisations and NGOs (e.g. Aceleda Bank, the World Bank, the Cambodian Labour Confederation) and local holders of administrative, economic and ceremonial power (e.g. village heads, members of the pagoda association, moneylenders), the inclusion of the lay perspectives from across Veal Rien's class groups and a further range of urban and rural neighbours, such as stallholders and drivers, went some way towards limiting the potential for the unconscious instillation of elite bias.

Wary about the practical and ethical concerns (Hoggart et al. 2002: 246) associated with the use of audio-visual devices for recording interviews, whereby the presence of such devices may hamper the development of an effective rapport between participants and researchers (Clope et al. 2004:152) and, additionally, presents concerns as to the security and anonymity of respondents' data (Byron 1993), the candidate opted not to employ such devices in the course of data collection. Instead, quantitative responses were manually

recorded by the candidate on paper schedules and English translations of qualitative interviews were transcribed by the candidate at source, with notes recording the verbatim Khmer phrasing where appropriate, as discussed earlier.

There was, however, one exception to this general rule: in the case of urban professional respondents, such as NGO and commercial organisation employees, interviews were audio-recorded using a digital device. In these examples, the candidate worked without the assistance of an interpreter, and the primary language of the interview was English rather than Khmer. Without necessary breaks for interpretation, the candidate adjudged that the focus required for a detailed hand-transcription of response that offered an accurate record of dialogue might be more likely to lead to a breakdown of rapport than the use of an audio-recording device. This reflects, in part, the greater familiarity and experience of urban professional respondents with regards to such equipment. Moreover, urban professional respondents did not participate in the research with the guarantee of anonymity but consented to being identified in the study, helping to overcome the ethical concerns noted above.

Across all phases of the field research, from the preliminary visits in 2012 to the conclusion of the field research in 2013, the formal procedures of data collection, as delimited above, were supplemented by a range of ongoing, informal strategies. Foremost of these, was the use of field-notes and photographs to record direct observations. Such observation, conducted over the duration of the study, provided a vital insight into how the community operates; affording opportunity to discern the nature of processes and practical logic that might not otherwise be achieved. In particular, this facilitated appreciation of the tacit but vital assumptions that underwrite practices, which are frequently omitted from formally collected responses; so fundamental to practice and ingrained within it that they are taken for granted; too unapparent to appear in respondent's discursive accounts (Jenkins 2002:53).

Of course, it is hard to conceive a field research project that avoids capture of this type of data since '*all* research involves a combination of participation and observation in projects that change as they proceed, and such changes are invariably noted one way or another' (Cloke et al. 2004:197; emphasis in original). The ethical dilemmas involved in such data collection are not, however, always cognised nor explicitly acknowledged. These dilemmas relate to the upholding of the principles of informed consent: whilst this readily ascertained through survey and interviewing methods with the introduction of information and consent

sheets, the often impromptu nature of snatched, casual or offhand remarks and the observation of routine and other activity does not always render strict and prior informed consent a possibility. The candidate attempted, nonetheless, in order to mitigate ethical impropriety by widely disseminating candid acknowledgement of the purpose of her presence in the research sites, seeking consent for the inclusion of observational data into the empirical presentation of data, wherever possible, and disregarding any remarks that were clearly noted as confidential. Moreover, informants were granted the right to privacy and anonymity, adhering to which the candidate has made concerted effort to ensure that individuals in the study can not be easily identified as an additional guarantee that attributed remarks and practices should cause no harm.

Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the broad methodological approach employed through the preparation of this PhD thesis and the specific tools and techniques employed in the fieldwork stage of the research. Intended to anchor Bourdieu's conceptual work in his contributions to methodology, the opening sections of the chapter has illustrated the grounds for a mixed methods approach to research. The closing section explored how this was put in to practice in the conduct of the field research: a household survey geared to uncover patterns of practice among social group in the study site Veal Rien, supplemented by qualitative techniques aimed to flesh out the bones of this structure.

Before turning in Chapter Five to present the analysis and findings from the data collected therein, the next chapter of this PhD thesis will present the necessary background information required to appreciate the context of the study. Chapter Four will, then, consider the history of inequality and mobility in Cambodia, outlining how the historical experience of economic opening and Theravada Buddhist norms have shaped a society that is today exhibiting rapid but highly unequal economic growth. These contemporary phenomena are discussed at a broad, national level, before the chapter closes with a more local perspective, introducing the primary study site of Veal Rien and its recent development.

The theme of 'changelessness' is recurrent in accounts of Khmer history. Two millennia in which resources and economy have been 'remarkably consistent' (Chandler 2000:6), the monsoon has dictated the seasonal rhythm of life and the cultivation of wet rice has been the bedrock of subsistence have caused scholars to reflect on the possibility of an underlying immutability within Khmer culture. Cambodian society has been described, variously, as 'conservative' (Blunt and Turner 2005; Mehmet 1997; Martin 1994), 'passive' (Peang-Meth 1991) and 'placid' (Kiernan 1976); somehow resistant to change. 'Centuries of history in which the country has been recreated and transformed' (Derks 2008:1) – the notorious example of the 1970s revolution being but 'the fifth major one that Cambodia has undergone since prehistoric times' (Chandler 2000:10) – challenge this image of a people lost in time, however, and the myth of Cambodia's 'timeless' character is now as roundly discredited as it is clichéd.

Nonetheless, there has been some continuity in change. Contemporary concerns about the highly uneven nature of Cambodia's recent economic development, in which high rates of growth prosper in the face of stark and widening inequality, echo a historic experience of social division and difference, rooted in Cambodia's long encounter with Theravada Buddhist ethics of normative hierarchy and a slow process of economic opening that has fermented gradual social stratification since pre-colonial times. This chapter, thus, outlines these developments in order that this PhD's core investigative themes of inequality and its recursive relation to rural-urban labour movement may be understood in necessary context.

Chapter Four begins with an introduction to Cambodia's contemporary development, where proclamations of an 'economic miracle' are tempered by enduring inequality and a profound rural-urban developmental divide. The chapter then details the background to these twin problems, elucidating, first, the slow enculturation of social hierarchy and patronage arrangements through religious and cultural innovation and, then, the creation of a pronounced urban bias over several centuries and the waves of population movement that this has historically induced. The evolution of contemporary trends of rural-urban labour movement is considered thereafter, before the chapter concludes with a final section that traces the historical development and contemporary endowments of the primary field site, the village of Veal Rien.

Contemporary Cambodia: an 'economic miracle'?

Emerging from the ruins of a civil conflict that wrought the systematic destruction of both human population and physical and social infrastructure, Cambodia has, in recent years, begun to exhibit signs of recovery from the legacies of former horror. Following decades of insecurity, the prognosis for Cambodian development was undoubtedly weak when a transitional UN administration assumed control over the state in 1993; the vast task of rehabilitating such an ailing and peripheralised nation commanding what was then the international body's most expensive mandate. Against the odds, however, in the intervening years Cambodia has savoured, by the measure of many conventional metrics, an 'impressive renaissance' (Davies 2010:152). Besides achieving 'political stability, economic growth and reducing poverty', Cambodia has cast off its pariah state status and 'reintegrated with the international community, joining ASEAN and the WTO' (Davies 2010:152).

Topping the list of Cambodia's much vaunted feats is a sustained rate of rapid economic growth, averaging double digits in the decade to 2007 and continuing strong (World Bank 2009); a trajectory that ranks among the highest in the world. Indeed, even taking account of Cambodia's booming post-war population, this growth translates into a 'per capita GDP (on a PPP basis) [that] increased more rapidly than almost all of Cambodia's peers' (Davies 2010:153). Taking place against the backdrop of Cambodia's recent history and a regional context marred by crisis, in which the fortunes of many of Cambodia's neighbours stumbled at the onset of SARS and then the 1997 Asian financial crash, the World Bank's decision to proclaim this an 'economic miracle' bears little suggestion of hyperbole (World Bank 2009).

Rather than a product of divine intervention, however, this performance has been built on a policy platform designed to reap advantages from 'a geographic position in the heart of one of the most dynamic regions in the world, between two rapidly growing neighbours and well connected to China and India, [which] makes [Cambodia] ideally placed to take advantage of globalisation' (Davies 2010:162). Pursuing a program of economic and trade liberalisation, 'between 1995 and 2007 Cambodia became one of the most open economies in one of the most open regions in the world' (Davies 2010:158) and provoked a structural transformation of its once predominantly agrarian economy by encouraging an influx of trade and FDI. The growing service (41%) and industrial (30%) sectors now both exceed agriculture's (29%) declining contributions to GDP (World Bank 2009).

For the government, macroeconomic stability and the development of the private sector have been central imperatives of the drive to reduce poverty, arguing that 'robust industrial growth' drives 'creation of employment and incomes', which promise 'equitable' and 'sustainable' remedies to the problem of poverty (Ministry of Planning 2006). Creditably, levels of absolute deprivation have exhibited stark decline in the period post-reconciliation, with the proportion of Cambodians living under the poverty line falling from 47% in 1994 to 35% in 2004 (Davies 2010:154), and estimated to have reached a new low of 19% in 2012 (World Bank 2014).

In spite of these apparent successes, however, there remain lingering doubts about the legacy of Cambodia's restoration and the commitment of the government towards fostering inclusive and sustainable benefits from economic growth. As Hughes (2006a:67) has suggested, the underlying concern regarding many of the above achievements is that they reflect a 'one-off peace dividend' from the very low base of the 1980s. Indeed, a finer analysis of Cambodia's record in facilitating growth and poverty reduction suggests a vastly more equivocal performance.

Thus, though GDP growth has been rapid, it has been concentrated in a few narrow sectors of the economy. The garments and tourism industries alone, for example, account for half of Cambodia's growth to 2007 (Davies 2010:153). Though both sectors are presently expanding, this growth is heavily reliant on overseas investment, which renders the economy vulnerable to external shocks.

Moreover, whilst absolute poverty has waned, relative poverty, already high, is rising. The Gini coefficient for income has increased steadily since the 1980s, rising from 0.35 in 1994 to 0.4 in 2004 (Davies 2010:154), to 0.43 in 2007 (Chem et al. 2014:26), where 0 represents perfect inequality and 1 perfect inequality. Thus, whilst real per capita consumption grew 45 percent for the richest one-fifth of the population in the decade to 2007, for the poorest one-fifth it rose only eight percent (Ministry of Planning 2007). This limited growth in standards of living for the poor has occurred despite an influx of development aid amounting to more than \$5.5 billion over the same period (Ek and Sok 2008). The Gini coefficient for land, from which the two-thirds of the labour force engaged in agriculture derive a principal source of livelihood, is worse, at 0.65; indeed, 'one of the worst in the region' (Davies 2010:163).

The 'urban-centric nature' (Davies 2010:154) of growth illuminates, to some extent, the development of the skewed distribution of wealth in the Kingdom. As well as being limited

by a narrow sectoral base, most industry is geographically concentrated, too, in and around the capital and primate city of Phnom Penh. Outside Phnom Penh, where the vast majority of the population who remain below the poverty line reside, the narrative of development in recent decades has been defined by a contrasting process of 'dispossession'. The rural masses have been estranged not only from emergent growth sectors of the economy but 'excluded from the customary use of fisheries and forests and... driven from their land' (Hughes 2006a:11), as a program of privatisation and land reform has allowed state-sponsored economic concessions to swallow vast swathes of the country's productive resources (see Scheidel, Giampietro and Ramos-Martin 2013).

As such, Cambodia's contemporary problems amount to more than an ill-designed urban bias in policy making. Instead, as Hughes (2006a) and others have explored, Cambodia's economic liberalisation has occurred in the context of limited legal and administrative capacity, which has permitted 'those with political connections, money to pay bribes, or the means to resort to violence to appropriate... by means of corruption or force' (Hughes 2006a:6) and siphon the benefits of aid and growth. State policy has thereby worked to redistribute assets from the poor to the elite, and concentrate power and wealth 'in the hands of the already-rich and the well-connected' (Hughes 2006a:7).

There is an appealing simplicity in attributing the cause of Cambodia's modern problems to the institutional deficiencies that persist as a legacy of Khmer Rouge destruction, the unique challenges that arise from repositioning an agrarian command economy to a trade-oriented free market, or the savagery of the free market itself. Even taken together, however, these explanations are unsatisfactory and somewhat obfuscatory. Cambodia's recent uneven development has roots in social and economic systems that predate the 1970s revolution, which, though a professed aim, was unable to erase thousands of years of complex history in a four-year period.

What follows, then, elucidates key moments, themes and processes in Cambodia's historical trajectory in order to illustrate the social and cultural frame through which contemporary patterns of Cambodian development are articulated. In doing so, the object is not to essentialise Khmer culture by arguing, as some have done (e.g. Praso 1994), that contemporary developments are merely latter-day manifestations of a socio-economic system that has endured fundamentally unchanged since Angkorean times. Rather in a more limited manner, it is to recognise that 'whilst culture is not fixed; cultures evolve', still 'no-one escapes the history of their own society or the culture in which they were raised'

(Stuart-Fox 2010:169). For, as Springer (2010) has observed, though the broad processes of 'neoliberalisation' that appear to underwrite Cambodia's contemporary trajectory may be global in scope, they are mediated through and, thereby, a distinct product of the idiosyncrasies of local geography.

Cambodia today is a country in the throes of vast changes. The past two decades have brought rapid economic growth, thrusting a nation once described as 'fourth world' to the verge of middle income status. Commentators, however, are divided as to the conditions underpinning this change. Both 'changeless' and 'destroyed' are labels applied with equal frequency, to describe a nation viewed – with a degree of collective cognitive dissonance – as simultaneously entirely new and incorrigibly traditional. Neither can be wholly true, nor need it be. Cambodia's is a history for whom persistent pressures and vast changes have alternated around the key bases of hierarchy, status and mobility, all of which are fluid, adaptable, entities. Thus, in order to understand contemporary change in Cambodia, it is necessary first to understand these key factors in that change, to which this chapter will now turn.

A history of social hierarchy

The roots of inequality in Cambodia run deep. From the early empires of Funan, Chenla and Angkor, a system of hierarchy has underpinned the organisation of a society 'structured like a Buddhist temple, in layer upon layer of groups and classes' (Mehmet 1997:676). The origins of this system of hierarchy are traced to a sweeping wave of 'Indianisation' that accompanied early trade and migration between the southern and eastern regions of Asia from the First Century of the Christian era. Over several centuries, Hinduism slowly gained a following in Cambodia and society became suffused with Hindu notions of power, potency, and rank (Pellini 2004; Chandler 2000; Hinton 1998). Though a caste system 'did not gain momentum', as in India, a 'complex social hierarchy' emerged: a 'pyramid, with its labyrinth of internal entrances and corridors representing a complex web of relationships between people and institutions... that linked the local worlds of Cambodian villagers with the Khmer king' (Ayres 2000:10).

A later conversion to Theravada Buddhism that occurred under the reign of Jayavarman VII at Angkor lent further support to this system of social difference. Put simply, the concepts of karma and rebirth, central edifices of the Theravada canon, imply that social position has been earned in past lives: those born to privilege and poverty, alike, are rendered deserving of their status as a reflection of the meritorious deeds they have performed, or neglected

to perform, in prior incarnations. As such, the Theravada doctrine contributed a 'legitimizing moral order' (Hinton 1998a:99) to the system of stratification that prospered in Khmer society throughout the first millennium, undermining the very concept of equality. A process of synergy, this latter conversion is thus regarded as having entrenched the hierarchic principles that had flowered within Khmer society as a result of the first (Chandler 2000; Hinton 1998).

By the time the Angkor Kingdom was on the brink of collapse, in the Sixteenth Century, this normative ethic of hierarchy had melded with the pragmatic concern for survival to shape patronage networks, which became the building block of village society:

[Village] cohesion was maintained through a network of relationships between patrons and clients. People living in a village could be identified as either *neak mean* (a person who *has*), or *neak kro* (a person who does *not have*), depending on their status relative to each other. Weaker members of the village (*neak kro*) sought protection from those of greater strength (*neak mean*)... Village life was a fragile, and often savage, existence... [P]eople were dependent on each other. In order to survive alliances were formed and, as a result, the system of hierarchy endured' (Ayres 2000:10).

Despite the upheavals of the latter half of the second millennium – colonial incursions by Vietnam and France, independence, civil war, reconciliation – hierarchy and patronage have remained staple principles in social organisation, such that over 'the last 500 years... little seems to have changed in the basic structure of Khmer society (Mehmet 1997:677)' as 'the underlying basis of the hierarchy endured' (Ayres 2000:10). 'All political regimes and parties', for instance, 'have functioned and continue to function, as patronage networks' (Stuart-Fox 2010:175); from Sihanouk and his independence-era Sangkum party, the later Lon Nol regime, and the dominant Cambodian People's Party today.

It is perhaps the example of the Khmer Rouge regime, as Stuart-Fox considers (2010:175), that provides the most 'striking example of how deep the roots of the political culture of hierarchy and patronage really go'. Though the Khmer Rouge purported to have dispensed with traditional culture in building a new 'egalitarian society' – in which, according to a Khmer Rouge radio broadcast (in Clayton 1998:4), 'man is no longer exploited by man... there are no rich or poor and all are equal and harmoniously united' – still, Democratic Kampuchea itself 'nevertheless became dominated by new hierarchical elites' (Hinton 1998:110). 'Angkar, the supreme authority' was, for example:

‘a strictly hierarchical power structure, which though it purported to act on behalf of the people, never consulted them in any way. Within the organisation, hierarchy was assured through absolute discipline and unquestioning loyalty. But that loyalty was highly personalised, focused upon the tiny top echelon of the Party, on Angkar Loeu, and ultimately on Pol Pot himself’ (Stuart-Fox 2010:175).

The enforced distinction between ‘new’ and ‘base’ people in the communes is further evidence of a society, which, though it broke down many traditional forms of hierarchy, retained many of the features of the old system, with status differences, for example, still structured vertically (Hinton 1998). As Clayton (1998:4) and others have argued, the Khmer Rouge system ‘amounted more to a reversal of social stratification than to an eradication’. Hierarchy under the Khmer Rouge was, thus, inverted rather than abolished.

One of the reasons that this system of hierarchy has proved so enduring is the wide support it receives from other Cambodian institutions and customs; the very ‘pervasiveness of patronage and hierarchical terms in Cambodian thinking, politics and social relations’ (Chandler 2000:2). Everyday social interaction in Khmer society, for example, has evolved steeped in a series of linguistic and behavioural codes that convey a tacit recognition of difference and conferral of prestige.

The Khmer language, for instance, is ‘replete with hierarchical terms which differentiate people’ (Hinton 1998:99). Thus, no single word readily translates as ‘you’. Instead, a Cambodian must select from a gradated series of second person pronouns that ‘indicate the status of the speaker relative to the person being addressed’ (Chandler 2000:90). Those of slightly lower status might be referred to as ‘*aon*’ or ‘younger’, a peer afforded respect as ‘*bang*’ or ‘elder’, and those with positions of authority, such as a teacher or doctor, denoted with ‘*lohk*’ or ‘sir’. In such a fashion, the Khmer language requires that users subconsciously employ and reinforce status distinctions through everyday speech.

The role of social practice in the reproduction of the Khmer hierarchy, this particular emphasis on the active maintenance of the social order, where the population appears content, through such everyday ritual, to submit to authority has seen Khmer society labelled ‘passive’ (Peang-Meth 1991), ‘placid’ (Kiernan 1976), and even pessimistically ‘fatalistic’ (Mehmet 1997). The Cambodian, asserts Mehmet (1997:676), for example, ‘submits to higher authority as something supernaturally determined without question’; a proverb that exhorts ‘don’t hit a stone with an egg’ is interpreted by Fisher-Nguyen (cited in Ovesen, Trankell and Ojendal 1996:34) to counsel the futility of challenging superiors where ‘losing is inevitable’; and Stuart-Fox (2010:173) has argued that ‘there is a general lack of

interest in Cambodia over the trial of Khmer Rouge leaders, for Cambodians do not doubt they will suffer their just deserts in future lifetimes’.

These claims regarding the immutability of the social order and the related impression that social position is a fate to which the populace is resolutely resigned are of significance to this PhD thesis, which aims to examine, quite contrarily, how the structures of social difference might be transformed by processes of geographic mobility. Indeed, such arguments stand counter to recent studies that suggest migration is a strategy often consciously deployed in Cambodia towards the aim of securing an upturn in social status (see Derks 2008; Brickell 2011a).

In this respect, there is a strong counter current of opinion that considers the ‘fatalism’ of Khmer society wrongly postulated or, at least, somewhat overstated by scholars. Those who ‘argue for an essential harmoniousness in traditional society’ based on the ‘apparent acceptance of social superiors’ ignore startling evidence to the contrary, Chandler reprimands (2000:25), considering ‘Cambodian history is filled with rebellions and wars’. Deac concurs (1997:20), ‘Cambodia has been called a “gentle land”’ but ‘this surface is easily roiled by violence and callousness... reminding one that the “gentle land’s” past has been an extremely violent and unstable one’.

As the work of Scott illustrates (1976, 1985), such accusations of conservatism are not unique to Cambodia but common misrepresentations of developing societies burdened by unequal power-relations. Social pressures and the promise (or threat – see e.g. Hughes 2006b) of ‘protection’ are among the factors that might coerce populations to engage in and reproduce uneven power relations such as ‘lopsided’ patronage arrangements that saturate the social organisation of Cambodia (Chandler 2000:105; Ovesen, Trankell and Ojendal 1996:86). Compliance should not be assumed to indicate contentment when ‘the alternatives of flight or organised resistance were often impossible’ (Chandler 2000:105) and, indeed, the bloody incidents that pepper Cambodian history (see Chandler 2000; Kiernan 1996; Slocomb 2015; Vickery 1998; Vickery 1984) from before the time of Angkor through colonial incursions and beyond suggest that a veiled hostility and unrest has accompanied representations of conformity.

Indeed, Chandler (2000:28) does not merely warn idly that scholars must be ‘wary’ of accounts that insist on an innate Cambodian placidity or conservatism. Frequently, in later eras, the appeal to such ‘natural’ customs has been the recourse of leaders who have exploited these ‘invented traditions’ (Brickell 2011a; Hughes 2006b) to justify their own

hold on power: from the original Vietnamese *mission civilisatrice* in the early Nineteenth Century, which, in the words of Emperor Minh Mang, aimed at ‘turning the barbarians into civilised people’ (Minh Mang cited in Chandler 2000:126); to France’s own quest to reform the ‘lazy’ and ‘indolent’ Khmer ‘race’ (Muller 2006:88); and Pol Pot’s ambition to rouse a population ‘asleep or enslaved for two thousand years’ (cited in Chandler 2000:10).

In fact, though the structure of this system itself is often regarded to have established a degree of permanence, the relations it comprises are, by contrast, markedly fluid. As the varied emphasis of the terms for the second pronoun ‘you’ iterated above suggest, the structure of the Khmer hierarchy is complex and multi-layered: there is no single criterion of upon which the system is ordered. Instead, position in the hierarchy is ‘determined by a number of factors’ (Hinton 1998:98), which, though not exhaustively, includes material factors like ‘wealth’, cultural standards such as ‘education’ and ‘occupation’, demography in ‘age’ and ‘gender’, and subjective measures from ‘reputation of the family’, and ‘the character of the individual’, to ‘religious piety’ and ‘financial benevolence’ (see Ovesen, Trankell and Ojendal 1996:34 and Hinton 1998:98).

As a result of this multiplicity of origin, the location of an individual within the system is not fixed or, indeed, singular. Rather, social position is garnered through a set of dyadic relations, frequently contradictory. There are no absolutes: individuals are simultaneously ‘equipped with several positions, being at the same time older than some and younger than others, richer and poorer, wiser and more foolish’ (Chandler 2000:89).

Moreover, as Hinton (1998) has illustrated, the normative authority often ascribed to the Khmer social order through its relation to Theravada Buddhism need not entail its immutability. The logic of ‘natural inequality’ is quite consistent with the concept of ‘hierarchic mobility’, in which position within the social hierarchy though ‘morally legitimatised’ is not fixed. Individuals can work to elevate their location within it by increasing wealth, knowledge, or influence, with the success of such travails still a reflection of prior karmic enterprise. Thus, even if social position is ‘largely determined by one’s past actions’ under Theravada precepts, it is not necessarily ‘set at birth as it is, for example, in the Indian caste system’ (Hinton 1998:100). Instead, individual status is ‘temporary and modifiable’ (Muller 2006:58), with historical accounts illustrating how standing can change markedly ‘overnight’ through acts of guile and fortune (Muller 2006:58; Chandler 2000:94).

Though many studies reference Cambodia’s system of social hierarchy, often its existence and endurance are presumed rather than evidenced, with few studies offering a thorough

examination of the materiality of this structure and its means of reproduction (though there are, of course, exceptions: see, for example, Hinton 1998). Perhaps the apparent density and complexity of its structures have deterred attempts. As such, this PhD thesis is wary of accounts that attempt to ascribe contemporary inequality to a primordial alliance with structures of difference and subordination. Instead, by invoking Bourdieu's theory and methods, in line with the research objectives established in chapter one, the aim is to provide a more contingent account of the processes of stratification underway in Cambodia.

As chapter two of this PhD thesis has outlined and advocated, the class theory of Pierre Bourdieu (1984) promises to be a useful tool towards unveiling some of the almost mystic reverence that the notion of hierarchy has attained in the literature on two principal grounds. First, since Bourdieu's theory consciously seeks to 'synthesise diverse forms of differentiation' (Sayer 2005:73) into a coherent and concrete understanding of inequality, it is deftly capable of handling the multi-stranded nature of difference in Khmer society. In addition, the manner in which these differences are realised and instilled in Cambodian society – the performance of social life and daily interactions dependent upon the tacit invocation of status difference – affords a central role to the practices and discourses of social agents in realising class difference, which chimes with Bourdieu's insistence upon the importance of the subjectivist moment of class-making, as further detailed in chapter two of this PhD thesis.

Contemporary Cambodia is a society undergoing vast change, however, and it remains to be seen how the social hierarchy will respond to the pressures of the Twenty-First Century, among which number the challenges posed to these customary systems by new modalities of rural-urban labour. Indeed, whether contemporary labour mobility proves able to renegotiate or reproduce local class structures is a question considered by the third research objective of this PhD thesis, outlined here in chapter one. Such labour movement itself, however, is not a new phenomenon in Cambodia but has a long history rooted in the social divisions and hierarchic status differences that have forged within the Kingdom to distinguish rural and urban areas over time. Rural-urban relations in Cambodia have a fraught history, tied to the gradual assimilation of the national economy into regional and global networks. The subsequent section examines this background to rural-urban relations and mobility in Cambodia.

A history of rural-urban relations and mobility

The enduring image of Cambodia as a nation founded upon the twin tenets of rice and rurality is a caricature, whose claims to represent the underlying nature of the Kingdom have progressively waned since as long ago as the 16th Century. It was then, in the twilight of the Angkor Empire, that the decision was taken to relocate the capital some 300km south, from the historic seat of Angkor to its current location in the region of Phnom Penh, today's capital making 'an ideal site for an international port town' (Derks 2008:23) in a state eager to reorient its economy away from agriculture production towards participation in flourishing networks of regional and nascent global trade. This precipitous move thus marks the early beginnings of Cambodia's economic opening, which has advanced slowly since, bringing creeping yet profound rupture to the social geography of the Kingdom.

This early experiment as a trading nation, though ultimately ill-fated, redrew the social organisation of Cambodia. Forging trade networks required reshaping the administrative geography of the Kingdom: a system of provincial port towns [*kampong*] was established in strategic locations, each supported by an arc of rice-growing villages (Chandler 2000:13). A new social category of town dwellers was thus established on the basis of a mutual reliance with the peasantry, with the port centre responsible for trade, defence and administrative tasks and the surrounds for agricultural provisions.

Though a nascent rural-urban divide was thus brought into existence before the colonial period, it was greatly exacerbated under it. Initially inclined to view Cambodia as a site of strategic rather than economic importance, the French administration nonetheless devised to exploit such economic resources as did exist. Rice, corn and, later, rubber were produced for export, facilitated by a new network of road and rail linkages. Thus, over decades of colonial rule, did the French administration succeed where Angkor had failed centuries earlier in 'transform[ing] the Kingdom's primitive self-sufficient economy into one dependent on the outside world' (Deac 2004:23).

Beyond these improvements to transport infrastructure, the French lavished few development resources on Cambodia. With the impacts of these improvements scarcely felt outside the towns, rural society was 'mummified' (Kiernan 1996:4) by French rule and 'traditional society remained to a large extent intact' (Kiljunen 1984:2). Yet the peasantry nonetheless bore the cost of these schemes through the levy of taxes noted as 'the highest per capita in all of Indochina' (Deac 2004:23).

Thus, as the towns began to enjoy the privileges of international interconnectivity, the peasantry, by the same stroke, were pushed to the 'limits of endurance' (Martin 1994:35) and earlier processes of stratification heightened as a broad disconnect cleaved the increasingly laden peasantry and slowly prospering nodes at the urban junctions of the extractive system. 'The gap between urban advantage and rural poverty endemic to ancient societies widened with the country's exposure to Western influences, felt largely in the cities' (Deac 1997:19) and, as such, by the end of the colonial period 'Cambodia nearly comprised two separate societies, with little exchange between them: one rural, producing for subsistence, the other largely urban, producing a few goods for the world market and consuming mostly international commodities' (Kiernan 1996:5).

The contradictions inherent in Cambodia's 'lopsided development' (Deac 1997: 23) under the French were ruthlessly exposed through the era of independence from 1955, as this pattern of widening inequality continued, providing the catalyst for the descent into civil war and subsequent revolution. When the economy began to falter over the 1960s, a stark contraction in rural conditions occurred as the price of agricultural commodities dropped and 'increasing monetarization of the rural economy combined with extortionate interest rates, pushed small peasants off their insufficient land' (Grunewald 1990 cited in Ovesen, Trankell and Ojendal 1996:47). Attempts to remedy this through the nationalisation of several sectors of the economy were calamitous, provoking riots and civil unrest across swathes of the countryside (Chandler 2000). Yet though the situation in rural areas was one of increasing impoverishment and widespread economic insecurity, the prosperous centre of Phnom Penh meanwhile encountered a golden age of development. A series of public works projects soon earned Phnom Penh a reputation as the 'pearl of Asia': a 'den of decadence' into which the urban elite withdrew, 'oblivious to the agony' of the rest of the nation (Mehmet 1997:678).

This inequality brewed into a mutual antagonism that stirred political imaginations. Among the peasantry, there developed an attitude of suspicion toward the urban populace, whose ways of living were felt at odds with the dictates of Khmer tradition and culture, and a note of hostility directed at those who 'eat the country' (Ovesen, Trankell and Ojendal 1996:39) rather than cultivate the fields. 'The tree grows in rural areas but the fruit goes to the city' (cited in Derks 2008:25), ran a popular left wing campaign slogan. For their part, the urban populace returned the animosity, subscribing to the myths of rurality that had been promoted under the French administration, if conceived long before, of the countryside as

a region of 'poor and backward people who, because of the agricultural slack season, did not work enough' (Derks 2008:31).

As the spectre of regional crisis loomed over the nation, simmering tensions between the disenfranchised peasantry and urban elite provided the catalyst for civil conflict. The war that erupted being, to some degree, 'a war between town and country' (Derks 2008:25), as disaffection proving 'a fertile breeding ground for the political movements of the 1960s and 1970s' (Ovesen, Trankell and Ojendal 1996:48).

Throughout the turbulent latter half of the Twentieth Century, this rural-urban divide combined with the tolls of war and the ideological and pragmatic concerns of the revolution to create three population movements within Cambodia on a vast scale. As the disparity in rural and urban conditions reached its zenith over the 1950s and 1960s, the first of the Twentieth Century's three great waves of human mobility began in earnest. A stream of rural dwellers, many destitute, others seeking the promise of improved educational and economic prospects, descended upon Phnom Penh. In the space of two decades, the city's population trebled in size, expanding from 350 000 residents to more than a million (Derks 2008:25).

Later, the US government compounded the misery of Cambodia's peripheral regions with an aggressive bombing campaign, as the war in Vietnam spilled over the border. A covert tactical operation, delivered by B52 bombers, aimed at disrupting North Vietnamese troops' supply-routes and camps, which had been established in the relative security of Cambodia's mountainous north-eastern provinces (Deac 1997). Hundreds of thousands of Cambodian lives were lost as a direct result and still more suffered from the destruction of their sources of livelihood, like crops and livestock (Owen and Kiernan 1997). The disruption prompted a new wave of refugees to head towards the capital, where, by 1975, over two million people from a total population of around 7 million were seeking sanctuary (Kiljunen 1984:5-6).

When Khmer Rouge forces seized Phnom Penh that same year, this tide of rural to urban migration was forcibly reversed with an immediate initiative to evacuate the city and disperse its inhabitants across rural locations throughout the Kingdom, thus beginning the second wave of population movement. There were pragmatic advantages to be found in redressing the dearth of rural agricultural resources, which as a result of land, crop and livestock destruction, together with large-scale rural flight, had rendered the city dependent on US food aid for much of the previous conflict, and had already begun to

result in 'actual famine' (Kiljunen 1984:6). Nonetheless, this urban exodus also reflected the Khmer Rouge's commitment to an anti-urban agrarian socialist ideology. In the provinces, the 'new' urban evacuees, corrupted by their experience of city's decadence, were contrasted with the 'old' or 'base' village people, in whom Khmer culture was perceived to remain pure. Questioning the regime's commitment to egalitarianism, the 'new' people were subjected to harsher conditions in the revolutionary society, ensuring that divisive antagonisms between town and country remained stoked.

The Twentieth Century's third period of heightened mobility was triggered in 1979, after the overthrow of Democratic Kampuchea by Vietnamese troops. After nearly four years of the Khmer Rouge's chaotic brand of repression, the situation in many areas of the country was fragile: scarce agricultural resources and food shortages presented people with little incentive to remain settled. The new Vietnamese state was powerless or unwilling to hinder the movement of 'hundreds of thousands of Cambodians' who 'criss-crossed the country looking for relatives, returning to their homes, trading or seeking refuge overseas' (Chandler 2000:229).

In Cambodia, then, the distinction between rural and urban is not merely an empty or conceptual taxonomy but has been historically reflected in both a materially and discursively constructed social divide. Nevertheless, this divide has not been static. Rather, the meaning of each category and their hierarchic, economic, political and social relation has been contrasted and reworked over time. In the latter half of the Twentieth Century, the onset of three great waves of population movement – a contraction from rural to urban, an inverse sweep from the city outwards to the provinces, and a final, more fluid, stir of movement – has tested the anchoring of this divide. Perhaps unusually, those Cambodians over forty years of age who lived through this period are highly likely to have experienced mobility or, at least, some form of severance from the customary organisation of household land ownership. Yet, as this section has illustrated, this separation has been slowly growing since before the colonial era. To what extent, in today's context of renewed mobility, this divide meaningfully remains and how it is linked to this trend of rural-urban migration is an underlying concern of this PhD thesis as it seeks to investigate the contemporary dynamics of labour movement in Cambodia. The subsequent section of this chapter, to this end, presents a summary of the contemporary trends of inequality and rural-urban mobility in Cambodia, which undergird the themes of class, consumption and labour movement central to this PhD thesis.

Bridging past and present: the development of contemporary inequality and the rural-urban migration system

The development of Cambodia's current state of stark inequality and high rates of mobility, two central dynamics of Cambodia's Twenty-First Century condition under examination in this PhD thesis, is not, then, an exclusive product of the contemporary era but reflects this lengthy history of division and churning population movement. A history of normative hierarchy, rural-urban antagonism, and a slow severing of the primordial ties between man and the natural environment beginning even prior to the colonial era have laid the foundations for the Kingdom's still unfolding trajectory.

In the immediate aftermath of the Khmer Rouge, the decimation of agricultural resources that had occurred as a product of both the negligence and brutality of the revolution ensured that living conditions for some time remained bleak throughout most of Cambodia. A critical shortage of labour, equipment and livestock made a return to family farming improbable for some time. Instead, the collectivisation of production continued, in the form of *krom samakki* or 'solidarity groups', in some areas until the late 1980s (Chandler 2000). The effect was a situation 'of relative socio-economic equality' through the era, albeit one in which 'people were generally poor' (Ovesen, Trankell and Ojendal 1996:12). The development of Cambodia's present state of marked social inequality has thus occurred only recently, within the last three decades.

Economic reforms of the late 1980s returned land to private ownership and permitted foreign investment (Gottesman 2004), steadily accelerating socio-economic difference, 'both between urban and rural areas and between different segments of the latter' (Ovesen, Trankell and Ojendal 1996:12). A speculative trade in real estate saw elites absorb vast stretches of the countryside, whilst capitalising on the returns from the growth of nascent industry in the capital, Phnom Penh. The twofold effect for the majority of Cambodians, then, has been a decline in the availability and accessibility of productive resources in rural areas, whilst in the city new waged labour opportunities have proliferated.

If the 'lopsided development' (Deac 1997: 23) that has characterised Cambodian development in peacetime is not a particularly modern phenomenon – instead, as argued in the preceding section, symptomatic of a long-term asymmetry – still, today the disparities are perhaps greater than ever. Whilst the urban economy is the strongest it has been, rural livelihoods are under increasing pressure.

Beyond the stresses exerted by pervasive primitive accumulation strategies, the ability of rural smallholders to rely upon their land has been eroded by a further string of demands. Natural disasters, linked to human-made processes of climate change and deforestation, (De Lopez 2002; Le Billon and Springer 2007; Oeur et al. 2012; Frewer and Chan 2014), render yearly agricultural yields something of a lottery, whose outcome, in the words of villagers, 'depends on the sky' (Bylander 2015). The demographic background to this dwindling agricultural contraction is a rapidly growing population, the dividend of which, in rural areas alone, sees 220 000 persons entering the workforce each year (Scheidel, Giampietro and Ramos-Martin 2013:347). This squeeze of economic, environmental and demographic pressure has triggered the accumulation of debt (Bylander 2014) and a raft of desperate land sales. Already, 20% of rural households are estimated to possess no land for cultivation, with another 45% of households 'near landless' (<1ha), teetering on the margins of survival (Sophal 2008).

In the past, Cambodia's rich forestry and fishery resources have proved bases of support for fragile farm livelihoods (McKenny and Tola 2002) but are now bound up with the same problematic processes of human and ecological transformation as the latter. Large scale logging activity over the past two decades (Le Billion and Springer 2007), some of an illicit nature and some facilitated by state-approved forestry concessions, has decimated Cambodia's forest cover and, alongside, reduced the forest products available for households to collect, consume and trade. Drought, pollution, and stock depletion linked to over-fishing are among the myriad woes that torment fishing households, impeding the security and scale of potential income from fishery resources (Marschke and Berkes 2005).

Faced with such strictures, it is hardly surprising that 'employment in urban areas' has become 'the talk of rural villages' (Lim 2007:13). From the arrival of the first handful of garment factories in the industrial outskirts of Phnom Penh in the mid-1990s, labour demand in the city has steadily increased. In just two decades, the number of apparel factories in the city, alone, has multiplied to around 400, who together employ a workforce that numbers in excess of 300,000 individuals (Cambodian Centre for Human Rights 2015) – 2% of Cambodia's population of 15 million. As other industries and activities have muddled and mushroomed alongside, the cogs of development spluttering into a frenzied whirl, the city has been propelled from the status of 'fourth world' straggler of 'structural irrelevance' to the global economy (Shatkin 1998:378), to the centre of Cambodia's economic renaissance, at the vanguard of global production.

This 'increased demand [for labour in Phnom Penh] has primarily been satisfied by migration from the rural areas' (Yagura 2012:280), as, in increasing numbers, rural Cambodians have moved beyond conversation, actualising their concerns over the labour market in an ongoing tide of migration to the city. At the time of the 2008 census, an estimated 850 000 people from a total labour force of 7.5 million (National Institute of Statistics 2010), over 10%, had departed from provincial homes to take up work and residence in Phnom Penh.

As authors have pointed out (Ovesen, Trankell and Ojendal 1996), the survival of subsistence communities, in Cambodia and beyond, has been historically predicated on their ability to adapt when faced with hardship. In certain respects, then, there is something of a continuity illustrated by the propensity for adaptation that has been demonstrated by migrants in the contemporary era. Indeed, as the preceding section of this chapter has illustrated, the 'myth of the immobile peasant' (Skeldon 1997:7), bound by obligation to his land, has long been inappropriate in Cambodia. In one of the earliest anthropological accounts of village life, dating from the late 1950s, Kalab (1968:525) was able to observe the 'great mobility of the Cambodian peasant', where 'people shift between agriculture and other employment as easily as they move from place to place'. As such, contemporary patterns of labour mobility imply no fundamental rupture with traditional household strategies.

Indeed, such figures, of nearly a million rural Cambodians on the move, as cited above, may be evocative of the earliest development models, such as W. Arthur Lewis' (1954) two-sector typology, wherein unemployed or underemployed rural dwellers leave their home communities to find new urban opportunities, abandoning the fields for the modern sector. However, if such a conception has ever been applied accurately, it does not do so in contemporary Cambodia. Many migrants abandon neither the countryside, nor their engagement with agriculture, but use the city to enhance their rural livelihoods via bi-directional remittance, which flow throughout Cambodia in vast sums (Parsons, Lawreniuk and Pilgrim 2014).

Associated with migration, then, is not only a vast traffic of people but also of economic and cultural capitals, in the form of money, goods, knowledge and ideas. This is not a unilinear process but one in which ideas and influences from either end of the spectrum mutually engage and interact. It is through such recursive linkages that scholars of labour migration have noted its transformative capacity, detailing how 'even if it is not the

intended effect, the exposure to new places, ideas and practices which migrants experience often seems to lead to a questioning of existing forms of hierarchy, or a reinvention of the self's place within the social order' (Gardner and Osella 2003:xiv). Indeed, such flows necessarily alter the volume and distribution of capitals in both sending and destination locations, which, according to Bourdieu's theory, as outlined in Chapter Two, constitute the very foundation of class difference.

How, in Cambodia, apparently entrenched structures of inequality alternately shape and weather the pressures of labour migration to produce social change in the contemporary era is a core question addressed in this PhD thesis. Before turning, in Chapter Five, to begin the presentation of empirical findings regarding this concern, the final section of the current chapter details the background to the primary study site of Veal Rien, to which this data pertains. Building upon this account of the wider trajectory of Cambodian development, what follows introduces the history and contemporary endowments of the fieldsite in order that the wider changes detailed hitherto may be understood in local context.

A local perspective: the study site of Veal Rien

Some 60km south-west of Cambodia's capital, in the province of Kandal, sits the village of Veal Rien. To the north, the village is framed by a river, which, navigable by boat, is part of a wider network of waterways that links to the site to a freshwater lake and other settlements nearby. 'Hundreds of years old' (Noon 2012, per. comm., 15th August), the settlement and its inhabitants have relied upon the river for centuries as a source of livelihoods and means of transport. 'The village itself is older than us', explained Noon (2012, per. comm., 15th August), one of the oldest residents of the village.

'As long as I have been here, villagers have grown rice, raised cows and fished... So, for us, the river is very important because it provides water for the riceland and the food that we can eat... Before [the reign of King] Sihanouk, there were no roads, when someone wanted to go to town they had to take the boat'.

The relationship of the river to the vitality of Veal Rien is not unambiguous, however. As well as being a staple contributor to local livelihoods, the river has also often proved a threat. 'In the past time, there was a lot of flooding', Noon (2012, per. comm., 15th August) continued. 'The village was flooded every rainy season', concurred Mith (2013, per. comm., 27th May), another of the village's senior inhabitants. 'The flood was so severe that people

had to travel by boat to go anywhere. Not only to the town, but from one house to another’.

This uneasy relationship between water systems and village life extends to the present. Rice farming and fishing remain staple pursuits of many households, though tempered by the whims of the climate, which, in recent years, has dealt alternating blows of drought and flood. ‘This year, there is no rain’, clarified Chayu (2013, per. comm., 30th April), a local farmer. ‘Last year there there was flooding. It is hard for us to prepare the land, because we do not know what to expect’.

That is not to suggest, however, that the village has encountered little experience of change in recent history. On the contrary, since independence in the 1950s, residents recall piecemeal transformations that mark the slow integration of the settlement into the wider economy. ‘Under [the reign of King] Sihanouk’, Noon (2012, per. comm., 15th August) remembered, for example, ‘there was a new market in town that they [the villagers] could use, though still no road’. The size of the village was steadily increasing, from ten or twenty households at the time of the colonial administration, to around fifty. ‘The growth was just the families becoming larger’, explained Noon (2012, per. comm., 15th August). ‘There was no one [originating from elsewhere] who came to join here. But some people from our village started to go elsewhere. At this time, there were four or five households who had workers in Phnom Penh – they worked as *cyclo* drivers or water sellers. They migrated when there was no agricultural work to do, in the dry season’. Thus, the centuries old tradition of subsistence-based family farming began to faintly erode as some households began to produce surplus for sale and a few residents became hybridised wage labourers.

Nor was the village exempt from the social and demographic upheavals that occurred during the 1970s. The nascent stream of rural-urban migration that had begun after independence was forcibly ended under the Democratic Kampuchea regime. ‘At the Pol Pot time, the ones who had been to work in Phnom Penh were all killed. Usually, they were the ones with high education’ (Nim 2012, per. comm., 15th August). As part of the evacuation of the capital, the village was required to accommodate an influx of displaced urbanites. This was the village’s first experience of non-matrimonial in-migration, though it was it not permanent, as ‘when the Pol Pot time finished, they didn’t stay here but went back’ (Mien 2012, per. comm., 15th August). Despite a location that residents regard as ‘isolated’ or peripheral, then, Veal Rien was nonetheless incorporated into all three of the great waves of migration that bookended the Democratic Kampuchea era: the period of

increased mobility that preceded it; the vast dispersal of the city that inaugurated it; and the circulation of people that occurred afterwards, as uprooted and displaced persons traversed the breadth of the country and even beyond its borders seeking lost homes, families, security and refuge.

Though the dynamics of family farm cultivation in Veal Rien were slowly transforming through prior decades, under the Khmer Rouge this model of production was suspended altogether. Daily life and agriculture were collectivised. ‘They thought that being rich was bad’, explained Noon (2012, per. comm., 15th August). ‘They told us because the rich are rich because of the poor. Big houses were torn down and replaced with small ones. Two or three villages here were turned into one – they all ate and worked together, collectively. We grew rice as a group: the village was divided into different groups and they took care of a plot of land each’.

Memories of the era are painful: residents recall various groups of people being ‘taken away’ (Mien 2012, per. comm., 15th August), presumed to have been killed, and long periods of near starvation, when ‘we never had enough to eat. Sometimes we ate rice, other times porridge. But for a long time they only gave us soup. And the soup was mostly water because we didn’t have enough rice for cooking’ (Lina 2012, per. comm., 15th August).

Though the infrastructure improvement schemes sponsored by the authorities of Democratic Kampuchea were often undertaken at great human cost and with little practical benefit (Chandler 2000), implemented with high revolutionary zeal but minimal technical or scientific insight, there occurred in Veal Rien the completion of two significant projects, which eased the village’s path to recovery in the post-war decades and facilitated reintegration into the wider economy when marketisation was reintroduced. Mith (2013, per. comm., 27th May) recounted:

‘Before, the flooding problem was very bad but they solved the flood problem in the Pol Pot time. They built deep channels along the side of the road to contain the flood water. Actually, they made the village roads in the Pol Pot time, too. I was strong so I used to work during this time building the road and the channels. We built the bridges on this road here and all along the way to connect to the main road’.

The experiment with collective farming outlasted the fall of Democratic Kampuchea, ending only in the late 1980s when the solidarity group [*krom samakki*] policy of the State of Cambodia was disbanded in the area. As land returned to private ownership, a state

program of redistribution occurred. 'They shared the land equally between the people', explained Chayu (2012, per. comm., 15th August). 'They gave each person five ares³. This is just the total of the land and shared equally between the people in the village at the time. In this time, too, there were shortages of food but it was easier to survive because people felt freer'.

As elsewhere in Cambodia, then, the evolution of the contemporary state of inequality that characterises Veal Rien has occurred quite recently and thus rapidly. Today, for instance, one third of households (N=41, 36%) in the village are landless, with no access to arable land for farming rice or *chamkar* [vegetable or orchard plot] production. Yet a sixth of households (N=15, 20%) have accrued landholdings of over one hectare. The skew is such that the wealthiest quartile of households own 75% of the total farm land in the village.

According to residents, the sharpest acceleration of inequality began only in the early 2000s, after the road that links the village to the local market town was rebuilt with a permanent, paved surface. This development facilitated trade and exchange, and made it easier for residents to find work outside the village, farm and non-farm, locally and beyond. The previous road network, simple paths built on high banks above the rice fields, had diminished the village's reliance on waterways and permitted the transport of cargo using draught animals but the journey to market at Prek Long remained long and arduous. Mith (2013, per. comm., 27th May) recalled:

'At this time, the main transport was the ox-cart. We used the ox-cart until they made the road surface. Travelling by ox-cart was very slow: to reach the market at Prek Long took 6 or 7 hours. Even if you had something to sell, it was very difficult to do it. We had to wake up at dawn to load the ox-cart and ride to the market, and we did not get there until around noon. We had only time to sell for one or two hours before we had to return. On the way back to the village, we stopped to rest at a place with good grass and water for the animals, and by the time we arrived back at the village it was dark already.'

The new road reduced this time considerably; by a factor of more than half, villagers account. In the era of motor transport, this has been cut further and a motorbike can now make the journey in under half an hour. From the main road, Phnom Penh, 60km to the north east, is now less than two hours away and in the other direction the border to

³ An are (a) is a unit of area in the metric system, equal to 100 square metres. One hectare (ha) is equivalent to 100 are, or 10 000 square metres.

Vietnam sits a similar distance. 'Now it is very different for us, it has changed a lot. Now it is so much easier to move things around', reflected Chayu (2012, per. comm., 15th August).

'This black road was built in 1999, in fact', detailed Ta Mien (2012, per. comm., 15th August).

'Since they built the road... everything has changed here', concurred Noon (2012, per. comm., 15th August), continuing:

'After that, some people bought a lot of land so that they have rice all year round. These people have more land than normal people, who have two to three months without rice. So they have to fish as well, or they send their children to do work in Phnom Penh. There are some landless people – but very few, maybe 10%. They do work on other farms in the village.'

The development of such stratification is not, of course, fully attributable to the new road. Indeed, the association with the road likely reflects a timing coincident with the national experience of changing patterns of wealth and inequality; the late 1990s and early 2000s being a period of rapid growth and diversification.

In other ways too, the village accords with national trends of the post-war era. The population of the village, which declined sharply through the war, according to villagers, has grown rapidly since. From a base of around 50 households during the late colonial and early independence eras, the settlement now hosts 114 households, together home to just under 600 individuals. 'In the past time', contrasted Chayu (2012, per. comm., 15th August), 'all the village was rice fields but now the land has been filled with houses'. High rates of mortality during the decades of insecurity and conflict, and a high birth rate in the years following, have resulted in a population which is notably young, with around 50% of residents aged 21 or under.

Not all are full time residents, however. As the national economy got off its feet in the late 1990s, and the new road increased the scope of mobility, the village has seen a renascent traffic of labour migrants, who leave the village, sometimes temporarily and others on a more permanent basis, to take up work in distant destinations. Today, the village has residents scattered across locations within Cambodia and beyond: agricultural labourers in the heartland provinces of Kampong Cham and Kampong Speu; loggers working in the forested mountainous fringes of Ratanakiri; domestic servants and construction workers who have crossed the border to Bangkok.

The great majority of Veal Rien's labour migrants are found working in the capital of Phnom Penh, however, where opportunities are most abundant. A total of 48 individuals from the

village were living and working in the city in 2013, when the fieldwork for this PhD thesis was conducted, in a variety of locations and occupations. Villagers suggested that rural-urban migration began in earnest at the same time as the construction of the new road: 'the first people from the village began to go work in the city in the modern times in the year 2000; some went to in the factories, some went to drive trucks, some went to do construction. At that time, there was a lot more work to do in the city, so more and more people started to go there' (Noon 2012, per. comm., 15th August).

Most of Veal Rien's urban migrants are young: 90% are 30 years of age or less. The city is an attractive destination for both young men and young women – 60% and 40% of the village's urban migrants, respectively – though the type of work they undertake is different. For men, the principal occupations are construction work and haulage driving; women are concentrated in factory employment, and both private and domestic cleaning. There is a much broader range of occupations than this, however, including private security work, informal trade, office work, service sector work.

Villagers indicated that the links between migrant labour and the broader socio-economic stratification of Veal Rien were not clear. 'Today, it is hard to tell the difference between the families who have people working in the city and the families who do not. It makes no difference because almost all households have a wage earner', suggested Chayu (2012, per. comm., 15th August). 'It is true', agreed Noon (2012, per. comm., 15th August), 'in our village we cannot say that work in Phnom Penh is for the rich people or that work in Phnom Penh is for the poor. I think that if someone is young then they will go to the city because it is easy to find work there'.

For most of the village elders, the most striking aspect of the new inequalities of wealth in Veal Rien and its surrounds is not the labour activity of households and individuals but new symbols of prosperity. From concrete-and-tile houses [*pteah tmor*], to kitchen stoves or lavatories, and motorbikes and motorcars, the signs of wealth and social meaning of objects within the local area have evolved over the past decades. 'Twenty years ago, when I was a young boy, only the rich people had bicycles,' explained Mith (2013, per. comm., 27th May) one day as he surveyed the sporadic traffic on the new road as it passed the porch of his house. 'Now, everyone has [bicycles] but the rich, they have cars! It was very different then', he noted. 'There are more motos and cars than even one or two years before', another resident (Pan 2013, per. comm., 2nd May) concurred. 'It is hard to believe that even the rich only had bicycles in the past time'.

Conclusion

Cambodia's claims to a 'development miracle', manifest in a decade of double digit economic growth, are challenged by vast inequalities of wealth and opportunity that demarcate the contours of the Kingdom's social topography. Though the economy ranks among the fastest growing in the world, doubts nonetheless remain about the legacies of such growth and the distribution of its benefits across different tiers of society. Whilst it is clear that an urban elite has prospered from Cambodia's pursuit of economic liberalisation and global integration, the returns to the remainder of the population are ambiguous. Growth has created new labour opportunities for many, yet poverty remains endemic.

The layering of Cambodian society in such a fashion has been greatly exacerbated by contemporary economic development, then, but social division has a deeper ancestry. The unequal nature of Cambodian society has been shaped by two historic processes: the absorption of an ethic of normative hierarchy, the result of a lengthy interaction with Theravada Buddhism and ingrained patronage arrangements; and a gradual program of economic opening that has, over centuries, forged a highly stratified society with an acute urban bias.

The persistence of inequality and hierarchy through the highly unstable historic organisation of Khmer society suggests, to some, a 'fixed structure' (Mehmet 1997:677), whose edifices are invulnerable to change. Yet the evidence of past experience illustrates that this very perseverance is attributable not to resistance to change but, rather, a fluid, adaptable pragmatism. In the maelstrom of contemporary society, the customary organisation of Khmer life is being tested by unfolding processes of rapid economic development and the associated effects of social and cultural change. These include new patterns of rural-urban labour mobility, which appear to renegotiate underlying structures of inequality, providing the possibility of corroding the established contours of social class and the boundaries of Cambodia's rural-urban divide.

The data presented over the next three chapters of this PhD thesis examines this prospect, investigating the interaction of contemporary structures of inequality with patterns of labour mobility, as evidenced in the experiences and testimony of the residents of the primary fieldsite of Veal Rien, which has been introduced here, in accordance with the theoretical frame and methods outlined earlier in Chapters Two and Three, respectively. Chapter Five, which follows, inaugurates this analysis, reflecting on the diverse experience of social change within the village at household level, before evaluating and mapping the

various capitals that constituent households are, resultantly, unevenly possessed of. In doing so, the chapter aims to delineate the structures of inequality within the village, enquiring, in line with the first research objective outline herein, the extent to which the class theory of Pierre Bourdieu (1984) can illuminate understandings of inequality in contemporary Cambodia.

Thereafter, the remaining two research objectives are considered in turn. Chapter Six will augment this framework for the study of inequality by investigating the constructivist moment of class-making in the village, including through residents' consumption practices. Chapter Seven then applies the framework developed through the first two empirical chapters to Veal Rien's dispersed urban migrant society, seeking evidence of both reproduction and rupture.

In spite of frequent references to an intricately layered and highly unequal society within the anthropological (Hinton 1998; Ledgerwood and Un 2003; Ledgerwood 2012), geographic (Le Billon 2000; Brickell 2011b) and development (Pellini 2004; Blunt and Turner 2005) literature, class in Cambodia is poorly understood. Setting aside the salient but narrow example of Le Billon's commodity chain analysis of patriarchal power structures in the logging trade, academic understanding of the structure of Khmer society rarely proceeds beyond an acknowledgement of its power, inequality and complexity. It is perhaps this knowledge of the intricacy of Khmer society that has thus far prevented its analysis in terms of the various capitals which make it up. It has been assumed to be unsuitable. This chapter seeks to challenge this assumption.

To do so, the chapter employs the class theory of Pierre Bourdieu (1984, 1985, 1987, 1989) to conduct a detailed analysis of the primary study site of Veal Rien, thus addressing the first objective of this PhD thesis as established in Chapter One herein: to examine the extent to which Bourdieu's class theory can illuminate understandings of the structures of inequality in Cambodia in the Twenty-First Century. The field site of Veal Rien was introduced earlier, in Chapter Four, and the current chapter opens by building on this overture, expanding, first, on the historical trajectories that have brought the village to its contemporary incarnation and, further, considering the heterogeneous experience of this change at household level. The chapter proceeds to analyse this difference by evaluating the variant capital endowments of households. Finally, the holistic, historic evidence thus far presented is employed to inform and elaborate upon a model of Veal Rien's class structure, constructed following the tenets and methodology advocated by Bourdieu, discussed earlier in Chapters Two and Three.

Family farms and factory floors: opportunity and constraint in contemporary Veal Rien

Tucked away down a path that follows a river marking the northern limit of the village of Veal Rien is a small coffee shop run by a woman named Yun. When the field work for this PhD was conducted, through much of 2013, Yun's shop had been open but a few years. Yun dedicated the entire ground floor of her house to the premises, which had been newly paved with concrete for the purpose. Each morning and afternoon, she would set up a pair of folding metal tables and surround them with an assortment of red and blue stackable

plastic chairs. On a hot afternoon in March, the coffee shop was quiet, most of the village at work or rest elsewhere, but Yun had a few customers, to whom she dispensed glass tankards filled with sugary coffee syrup, served with a spoon, a straw and a splash of condensed milk, where preferred, and poured over crushed ice.

One of the lures of Yun's establishment was a large flatscreen television, newly fixed to the back wall. 'Want to watch?' she asked her guests as she served them and, when they nodded, she obliged; a flick of a switch filled the room with light and sound from a succession of karaoke videos, an enduringly popular form of entertainment in the village, as well as across the country. In short films featuring popular artists like Preap Sovath and Khemarak Sereymon, lovesick young men adorned with frayed straw hats and *krama* [a check-patterned Cambodian cloth often used as a scarf, bandanna or sunshield] bumble over crimson clay roads through verdant paddy, riding wooden carts pulled by sturdy long-horned oxen. Meanwhile, young women wrapped in bright *sampot* [Cambodian woven skirts] mend and launder clothing in the red waters of rivers that meander beside their neat palm-thatch homes. Like cultural discourse in Cambodia more broadly, it is a romanticised narrative of the rural that often prevails in these imaginations, one in which the countryside is cast as timeless and placeless, a conservative space that upholds tradition and resists change.

Beyond the frame of Yun's coffee shop, such imagery finds little resonance in the contemporary hamlet of Veal Rien, a 114 household community towards the Southern central edge of Cambodia. Veal Rien, introduced in Chapter Four, is the primary field site from which the empirical data presented over the course of this thesis was gathered. Rather than riding over the parched earth there, the sons of Veal Rien are more likely to be found freighting it from province to province behind the wheel of haulage wagons; its young female residents manufacturing rather than mending clothes, labouring behind looms to produce apparel in the factories that fringe the grey tarmac route to town and, beyond, to the capital of Phnom Penh, 60km away to the north-east.

The residents of Veal Rien today are much more than simply farmers and housewives. They draw their income from upwards of 60 distinct sources, from foraging for local wild plants and insects, through farming, factory work, and white collar and professional activities such as teaching, nursing and police work. More than one third of households have no access to any farmland and 17% have abandoned – whether voluntarily or otherwise – agricultural production altogether, dispensing with activities described by residents as the staple

livelihoods of the village: rice and *chamkar* [vegetable or orchard plot] farming, livestock production, and fishing. The number of households engaging in forms of non-agricultural activity now outweighs those engaged in these more traditional subsistence-oriented pursuits, at 88% and 83% respectively (Table 5.1).

Table 5.1: Household livelihood activities in Veal Rien

Livelihood activity	Practising households (%)	Livelihood activity	Practising households (%)
Agricultural – all	82.5	Non-agricultural – all	87.7
Rice production	64.1	Local waged labour	66.7
<i>Chamkar</i>	10.8	Extra-local waged labour	45.6
Livestock	58.8	Local trade	25.4
Fishing	24.5	Extra-local trade	10.5

(Source: Household survey data, 2013.)

This structural diversity that characterises the social and economic landscape of Veal Rien in the present has been shaped by a mix of opportunity and constraint. The changes that have occurred, though mediated by local context, are concomitant with the broader development of the Southeast Asia region (Scott 1985; Parnwell and Bryant 1996; Rigg 2007; Rigg 2012; Rigg, Parnwell and Salamanca 2013): on the one hand, agriculture has been squeezed by a range of economic and environmental factors; on the other, industry has flourished with relative political stability and economic growth driving job creation.

Far from timeless, the village has experienced turbulent change in the last half decade or so. Villagers recall that in the 1950s and 1960s, in the period of Cambodia’s colonial rule and then newly independence status, Veal Rien was an isolated and largely agrarian space. Noon (2012, per. comm., 15th August), at 78 one of the oldest residents in the village, remembered:

‘As long as I have been here, villagers have grown rice, raised cows and fished. In the past time, there was a lot of flooding... There were no roads, when someone wanted to go to town they had to take the boat... Under [the reign of King] Sihanouk, there was a new market in town that they could use, though still no road. The main work was rice farming and fishing. The population grew to around fifty households... At this time, there were four or five households who had workers in Phnom Penh – they worked as *cyclo* drivers or water sellers. They migrated when there was no agricultural work to do, in the dry season.’

Though described as isolated, with ‘no road’, the village was nonetheless connected to the surrounding area by waterways that also provided a permanent degree of integration into

the wider economy. Already at this stage, there was some degree of outmigration to the urban centre of Phnom Penh. Thus, in the oldest living memories of residents, the village was experiencing profoundly new forms of labour practice and methods of commercial exchange. Since then, the economic organisation of the village has been transformed numerous times, with residents witnessing civil war and two distinct attempts at the collectivisation of agricultural production under the Democratic Kampuchea and socialist Vietnamese government regimes.

Over the last decade, however, it has been social and physical infrastructure improvements, compounded by greater global market integration at a national scale, that have opened new avenues for the rural populace to engage in novel forms of work and production activity. The symbolic beginning of the contemporary era is, for most residents, the creation of the permanently-surfaced road that runs in front of the village, which has established a lasting and expedient link to the main road, market, and beyond. 'Since they built the road, it was around the year 2000, everything has changed here', explained Noon (2012, per. comm., 15th August). The improved infrastructure and the village's proximity to both Phnom Penh and the Vietnamese border have brought trade and investment to the area. Prek Long remains the main commercial centre but small stores selling fruit, phones, fuel, fashion and everything in between have opened all along the new road on the route to the town. These micro-entrepreneurs have been joined by rather wealthier investors, predominantly Chinese, who have established local garment factories, creating a world of new labour and recreational opportunities for local people to pursue.

Yet Veal Rien's diverse economy is not merely a product of broadening horizons but, too, dwindling ones. The movement of Veal Rien's residents from family farms to factory floors has not been wholly voluntary, but conditioned by diminishing returns from natural resources brought about by a shifting environmental and economic context. The increasing frequency and ferocity of natural hazards and declining terms of agricultural trade have persuaded many residents that their means of subsistence are better guaranteed elsewhere.

'The price of rice is too low to make enough profit', a young couple (Ary 2013, per. comm., 29th April) complained, explaining their decision to scale down production from two crops each year to one, in order to invest their energies in a general supplies store instead. As a teenager, Makara, the daughter of the village head, was sent to live with her aunt who works as a tailor in neighbouring Takeo province so that she could learn the trade. Makara

has since married and returned to the village, where she now operates her own tailoring business from a breezeblock stall at the front of her home. 'My parents decided I needed skills for my own life', she explained (Makara 2013, per. comm., 5th June), 'so they sent me to study with my aunt. There are too many problems here to rely on the farm. There is usually no water or a big flood... There are rats and insects. The main problem is that the soil quality is getting worse because people are using more chemical fertiliser'.

The local economic "regeneration", as well as bringing opportunity to the area, has also made victims of some residents. Most villagers enthuse about the new road bringing 'modernity' [*tum neub*] to the village but Mien (2013, per. comm., 19th April) grumbled, 'the new road has caused problems for the rice crop. The yield has decreased because the road is high and blocks the river spreading fertiliser over the land'. Others have found themselves victims of speculation as the price of land has rocketed from next to nothing in the early 1980s to several thousand dollars per hectare today. Some have willingly sold land to the factories and investors, but others feel cheated. Lin and her husband sold one and a half hectares of their farm last year for \$1200. 'What could I do?' she asked (Lin 2013, per. comm., 17th April). 'A company bought all the land surrounding the farm from the other people. I had to sell, there was no longer access. The price was cheap because the land market just fell... I don't know [who they are] – they just keep the land, they don't build anything'.

The residents of Veal Rien have traditionally used the local lake, Boeng Cheung Loung, and its system of streams and tributaries to fish to supplement or supplant the income from the rice harvest where necessary. Some, like Mao's (2013, per comm., 13th June) children, now grown-up and married, continue to fish as a source of income. 'I have no farm to share with my children', she reasoned. '[But] they have houses on my land and they have learnt to fish. In this village, if you have no land and cannot fish, you will die'.

Yet the fortunes of fishermen, as well as farmers, have been transformed by processes of ecological change. 'Fishing is hard when there is too much water, we cannot fish when there is a flood', explained Koy (2013, per. comm., 25th April), before adding, 'there aren't so many fish now, anyway'. Part of the reason for the depletion of fishing stock is a new – albeit prohibited – fishing method, which involves using an adapted car battery to send an electric current through the water. The shock kills the fish within a few metres of the charge and, lifeless, they float to the surface of the lake where they can be easily collected. The method is quicker and cheaper than its traditional counterpart – which involves

expensive yet frail nets that need replacing a few times each year and overnight stays in the boat on the lake – and requires less skill and knowledge. Accordingly, the returns from labour and capital are much higher. The ease of entry and high yields, already damaging the sustainability of the lake's stock, encourage additional participation and a negative downwards spiral ensues.

The villagers are not keen to admit to their role in this process. 'We [in this village] don't use this way, it is illegal', Tola (2013, per. comm., 6th May), a fisherman, protested. Instead, blame is ascribed to the village of Svay, further West along the fringes of the lake. Svay is locally renowned for its purportedly unscrupulous collective character: 'it's full of gangsters', Tola complained. The battery charging outlet that operates in Veal Rien from a house on the laterite road that runs beside the lake, where generators whirl from noon until dusk each day, suggests that the negative aspersions cast on Svay, in this respect at least, are some measure of deception, hypocrisy and scapegoating. The fishermen of Veal Rien are understandably reticent to acknowledge their participation in this activity. It would, after all, be an admission of criminality. More than this, however, it would be an admission that the fishermen themselves are responsible for undermining their own, already insecure, livelihoods. As will be illustrated in Chapter Six, Veal Rien is embroiled in an ongoing ideological struggle over popular understandings of the roots of inequality and poverty; such an admission would be self-defeating in this respect.

With farming and fishing livelihoods – in some cases, literally – drying up, perhaps it is fortunate for the villagers of Veal Rien that off-farm livelihood alternatives have flourished, notwithstanding the nimby-ish reservations of Mien and Lin. At least, the funereal foreboding of Mao appears increasingly out-dated. After all, work in the factories is well paid by local standards and offers greater security of income: a factory worker can expect to make between \$60 and \$100 dollars per month, with additional monies earned from overtime; a fisherman in Veal Rien, by contrast, may land a 4 000 to 10 000 riel catch each day worked, equivalent to \$1 to \$2.50. At the bottom end of the industrial pay scale, the margins compared to fishing might be fine but they are not insignificant given that the line between subsistence and struggle is very thin in Veal Rien. Moreover, the factories are open all year round but fishing work is seasonal, with earning potential severely curtailed, if not void, for at least a few months of the year. For the more enterprising of Veal Rien's residents, local commercial activity is also fairly lucrative. Income differs according to the

goods traded but, for example, Makara, the tailor and daughter of the village head, expects a profit of between 200 000 and 400 000 riel each month, or \$50 to \$100⁴.

The promise of a smooth agrarian transition such that off-farm livelihoods appear to offer is, however, disrupted by the segmented manner in which they are available to residents to pursue. The opportunity and constraint that has heralded the onset of the contemporary era has not befallen households in an equal and homogeneous way, but has been mediated by nuance in the structure and relative endowments of each household unit that place some in a better position to seize advantage from periods of change. Thus, though the deck of livelihoods has been shuffled in Veal Rien, the cards have not fallen evenly and households have, instead, been dealt markedly different hands. As the discontent of Mien and Lin, above, suggests, the new era of national and local development and growth has not translated to prosperity for all.

Instead, the social space of Veal Rien is characterised in the contemporary era by marked inequality: the means and manner by which neighbours both live and work is quite different. With this section having provided an introduction to the changing wider economic landscape that undergirds Veal Rien's livelihoods, lifestyles and thus class structure in the present, the subsequent section will begin the task of sketching the form and properties of the class structure of the village, in pursuance of the first research objective established in Chapter One of this PhD, examining the extent to which Bourdieu's class theory can illuminate the structure of Cambodian inequality. The processes of differentiation underway in the village are illustrated, foremost, by the broad disparity that separates those at the fringes of the village's social topography. Thus, the section will examine the contrasting examples of two households at extremes of Veal Rien's space of social positions to begin to delineate the outer contours of this field.

Life at the margins: Mith and Mom

In Veal Rien today, neighbours who have spent whole lives together in the village find their livelihoods and lifestyles rapidly diverging. Mith and Mom, for example, live five houses apart. Both 62 years old and born in the village, their families have been close neighbours

⁴ The official currency of Cambodia is the riel but de facto dollarization has occurred. Both the US dollar and Cambodian riel are widely accepted at an informal standardised exchange rate of 4000 riel to 1 dollar. Typically, large sums are quoted in dollars, whilst everyday purchases are quoted in riel. In this thesis, I have endeavoured to convert prices where quoted in riel to dollars for ease of comparison.

for generations, sharing not only space but history. Having weathered Cambodia's course of war, reconciliation and latter-day development side-by-side, it might be expected that the two now have much in common. Yet beyond the bond of reminiscence, the similarities between the pair abruptly end. The contemporary reality of existence for Mith and Mom is decidedly disparate. An examination of their relative social and economic position in the village reveals the gross scale of differentiation among households in Veal Rien.

Among the winners of Veal Rien's recent history counts Mien's brother, Mith. With 4 hectares of paddy, Mith is the third largest landowner in the village. This is some way off the largest village holding of 10.6 hectares but, nonetheless, significantly above the median of 29 ares. As this suggests, the distribution of land in Veal Rien is characterised by a marked inequity: the top quartile of land owners possess seventy-five per cent of the total arable land, while just over a third of households (N=41, 36%) possess none. Table 5.2 illustrates the distribution of land in Veal Rien: the stark concentration of land among the small group of larger landowners of the village, combined with the exclusion of so many at the bottom of the scale, produces a Gini coefficient of 0.71 (where 1 indicates perfect inequality and 0 indicates perfect equality), slightly greater than the 2007 national coefficient of 0.65 (Löhr 2011).

Table 5.2: Distribution of farm land in Veal Rien

Quartile (land ownership)	Total arable land (HA)	Percentage of total village arable land
First	5109.0	76%
Second	1281.5	19%
Third	305.0	5%
Fourth	0.0	0%
Total	6695.5	100%

(Source: Household survey data, 2013.)

Despite being a large land owner, Mith (2013, per. comm., 2nd April) is 'too busy' to perform manual farm tasks himself and, instead, oversees production by his resident son-in-law and seasonal teams of hired farm hands. Though elsewhere in Southeast Asia the phenomena of idle land is becoming increasingly pronounced (Rigg, Veeravongs, Veeravongs, and Rohitarachoon 2008), those who have land in Veal Rien do make productive use of it, with all landowners reporting that they continue to farm each plot for at least one crop cycle each year. The extent to which production is mechanised varies between households according to, among other factors, the size and location of the land, and the ability of the household to finance the purchase or hire of machinery. As Mith is one of ten farmers in

the village to own a two-wheel tractor, a significant asset that cost the family between \$2000 and \$3000 to purchase, the household is among those with greater reliance on mechanisation. The two-wheel tractor is used to plough the paddy prior to manual transplanting of the rice seedlings and for the harvest but, he explained, 'even though we have the tractor, we still need [to hire] people to plant the rice and take care of the crop until it is ripe' (Mith 2013, per. comm., 22nd April). Taking care of the crop involves a number of rounds of watering, using motorised pumps, and application of chemical fertilisers, pesticides and weed control products.

Farmers in Veal Rien and the surrounding area appear to understand the benefits that the increased value of an organic crop could offer, with roadside sellers of local produce as quick to tout their green mangoes and watermelons as '*sarireang*' [organic] as they are '*chngan nas*' [delicious] in order to tempt passers-by to sample their wares. Most, however, appear reticent to undertake the greater risks associated with this form of production when it comes to the staple rice crop: just four rice farmers in the village have eschewed inorganic inputs altogether, largely through necessity rather than choice due to the prohibitive costs of chemical materials. 'Before we used the chemical fertiliser like the others', reported Chayu (2013, per. comm., 30th April), one such farmer, 'but now we only use what we can get from our own cows. This year, the chemicals are too expensive.'

With his 4 hectares of paddy spread over 3 plots, Mith already has some measure of diversification in place to guard against the climatic variations and pest infestations that regularly threaten crop yields in the village, as Makara described, above. Each plot is farmed once per year: two hectares in the dry season and two in the wet season, with this offering an additional precaution. He also owns two motorised water pumps, which draw water from underground to keep the soils irrigated, as above. Though his exposure to risk is clearly not negated by these arrangements, he does have some measure of mitigation.

In a typical year, Mith expects the wet season plot to yield 120 sacks of rice and the two dry season plots to produce 100 sacks together, a total of 220 sacks: 20 of these are retained for the household to consume over the course of the year, the remaining 200 are sold to a trader from neighbouring Takeo province who, understands Mith (2013, per. comm., 22nd April), 'takes it to sell in Vietnam'. Each sack fetches a price of between 65 000 and 84 000 *riel* [\$16.25 to \$21], resulting in a cash income from rice farming for the household of around \$3200 to \$4200.

The profit from the rice harvest is, alone, enough to meet the household's yearly staple expenditure. Though they keep enough rice from the harvest to feed the family all year round, food is still their biggest cost, with around 10 000 riel [\$2.50] each day spent to buy meat, either pork or chicken, which is expensive locally, and a further 5 000 riel [\$1.75] on other provisions: fruit, vegetables and some local luxuries like condensed milk to make syrupy coffees and sweet rice deserts. Other key costs include school fees, petrol for the motorbike, clothing, and the electricity bill that has arrived every month since the property was connected to a mains electrical supply a year ago. The connection itself incurred a \$90 fee that the household are still paying off, spread as monthly payment of 10 000 riel [\$2.50] over 3 years, and the energy tariff after that is gradated according to use, with higher users paying more per kilowatt hour than lower ones.

Nonetheless, Mith pursues a number of other income-generating activities to advance his earnings still further. Three years ago he opened a business that he operates from out front of his house, repairing damaged and punctured tyres of cars, trucks and bicycles. He works every day, and can make upwards of 10 000 riel, depending on custom. Punctured tyres are quick, cheap and easy to fix: he submerges the inner tube in a bowl of water, where bubbles of expelled air reveal the location of the puncture, and then uses burning black oil to heat a metal clamp that solders a new patch of rubber over the break.

Ten years ago he became the elected leader of the neighbouring village of Roka, directly opposite his house across the new road. Born in Veal Rien himself, his wife is from Roka, and they lived in the latter village, where they remain formally registered, for a period after the war. They moved back to Veal Rien after the new road was built, to get a plot of domestic land beside it: 'next to the road is the best place for business, so we moved back here to buy this land' (Mith 2013, per. comm., 19th August). He still retains the post of Roka's leader, however, for which he receives informal transaction fees when residents require formal documents or notarisation, in the case of land sales or making identity books.

History has been unkind to Veal Rien, recounted Mith (2013, per. comm., 27th May) in conversation one afternoon, but 'today, everything is good'. The success of his respective enterprises enabled Mith to build a new house three years ago. His home, a single storey construction with peach painted exterior walls and royal blue ceramic tiles atop, was the first whole concrete structure in the village and is still one of only four. The build and materials put the finished price above \$8000 – financed with some savings, sale of

livestock, and a loan from the Acleda bank that is now paid off – and Mith clearly regards it with pride. ‘It is the best in the village’, he boasted (Mith 2013, per. comm., 19th August). Inside, the walls and floors are covered with white patterned tiles and the furniture, though sparse, includes a silver television on an ornate hardwood dresser and a hardwood *kree* [a traditional Cambodian daybed] on the shaded front terrace where Mith can be found most days, sometimes hosting meetings with local party officials but always waiting for passing trade for his business.

Until recently, Mith possessed yet more farm land but as his children have grown up and married, over the past decade, he has passed some on to them: each of six children has received 1 hectare – an equal share of the parental plot – as a wedding gift, as is customary. He is proud of them, as he is of his home: ‘they are good men; they work hard and have good education’ (Mith 2013, per. comm., 19th August). All graduated lower secondary school – grade 8 in the Cambodian 12-tier system – as a minimum and he has high hopes that his two youngest sons, who at 17 and 18 have yet to leave home, might complete high school at grade 12. ‘If they get good marks they will get a scholarship [to a public university in Phnom Penh]. But if not, they can work in an office, something clean and comfortable’ (Mith 2013, per. comm., 19th August).

His eldest sons, like their father, still keep farm production going but in conjunction with other activities: two are mechanics, owning a garage in the distant north-eastern jungle province of Ratanakiri, servicing vehicles involved in Cambodia’s logging trade; two work as drivers for companies nearby; and a fifth owns and operates a battery charging shop in the neighbouring village of Roka. His only daughter remains in the family home, joined by the husband she married two years ago; it is intended that they will care for her parents in old age and then inherit the domestic plot, as youngest daughters often do in Cambodia. At present, she works in a local garment factory, earning \$60 a month. As she is married and the family are comfortably off, she is not expected to share her wage with her parents but can keep it for herself. As with many of Veal Rien’s younger workers, it is the lure of fashionable consumer goods that incentivises her sale of labour. ‘I want to save for a platinum necklace,’ she disclosed (Tina 2013, per. comm., 9th June). ‘I have two hundred dollars already so I hope I can buy it in September [in time for the wedding season]. I want to wear it for the wedding ceremonies’.

The notional image of the paddy farmer in Southeast Asia is one of relative self-sufficiency and a reliance on natural resources (see Rigg, Parnwell and Salamance 2013; Derks 2008;

Chandler 2000). That farmers have been providing for themselves for thousands of years suggests that this is not only a continuity, but a functional continuity. In reality, production, ownership and farming have diverged in the contemporary era to form a far more complex picture. Although Mith is by definition a farmer, neither he nor his family spend a great proportion of their time tending to the fields that they own. That responsibility falls to another type of farmer completely: the type of farmer that spends their day during the sowing and harvesting seasons amongst the rice stalks, under colourful umbrellas to protect them from the burning sun, planting or picking the paddy one stalk at a time among their peers. For these farmers the yield is not their own. A handful of riel notes is their reward for partaking in this traditional labour, which is the hallmark and, as commentators from the earliest missionaries to the latest anthropologists (Derks 2008; McCargo 2014) would have it, the ongoing soul of Cambodia.

As Derks explores, for example, the pre-eminence of rice as a staple crop within Cambodia has left an indelible imprint on rural identity, in particular. Indeed, the very phrase for 'rural person' in colloquial Cambodian is 'neak srae', which literally means 'rice person'. For the many rural Cambodians within migrant industries of Phnom Penh, this self-identification with their agrarian origins remains unbroken despite geographical separation: even in the urban setting, the female migrants that Derks encountered continued to describe themselves as but 'rice people in the city' (Derks 2008:21). Thus, authors like McCargo (2014) continue to define Cambodia as 'a nation of farmers'.

Yet in Veal Rien, as in countless villages across Cambodia, the meanings attached to the category of farmer are shifting. Here, Mom too classes her occupation as 'famer', but her relation to agricultural production differs markedly from that of Mith. Until recently Mom was a village smallholder, with 20 ares of land that her young family received in the 1989 distribution (see Chapter Four for a discussion of historic local land ownership patterns and (re-)distribution). The plot was small but so was the family: it produced around 6 to 10 sacks of rice that was almost enough to last year round, leaving a typical 2 to 3 month deficit if they sold none. To keep the costs low, they did as much of the farm work as they could themselves; at the planting and harvest periods when they needed extra help, they engaged in *pravas dei*, a traditional informal labour sharing arrangement where households contribute labour to other farms in return for a like labour contribution to their own. To supplement the rice yield, her husband fished and she waded the fringes of the local lakes to find snails and water lilies that she could sell within the village to earn a small cash income.

She and her husband divorced in the 1990s, however, which made farming the land and finding the necessary extra earnings harder. She was left to raise their three children alone but 'it was difficult to look after the children and make a living' (Mom 2013, per. comm., 24th April). She had problems securing the necessary income to care for the children and send them to school, and therefore withdrew them from the education system at grade 3. They have instead worked with her, both on the farm and foraging for pond life, since they were young.

Around 2010, Mom's son was arrested for fishing using the electrified illegal methods. 'He didn't pay for the permit from the police', she sighed (2013, per. comm., 16th August), referring to the payments that the local constabulary solicit to turn a blind eye to this illicit activity. Whilst Mith counts teachers, doctors and policemen among his friends, who he might be able to call upon for a favour, should he require, in circumstances such as this, Mom knows only small farmers and fishermen. 'Nobody can help the poor', she argued (2013, per. comm., 16th August). Other households, too, complained of the problems that the poor face when dealing with formal authority, with one such explaining (Koy 2013, per. comm., 25th April):

'It is very difficult for the poor when they get into disputes or conflicts. If I had a problem in the village, I would go to the police or a commune official to ask them to help find a solution, but already I know that I would lose the case because I have no money. Once my husband had a conflict with our neighbour, who assaulted him and injured him and was arrested. It made no difference because the neighbour was able to pay a fine to the police and then they released him. In this case, there was nothing more that my husband can do. This is always the way for the poor.'

A \$1700 fine was imposed on Mom's son. Without savings, and the prospect of prison the only other option, she sold the household land to secure his freedom. It raised \$1000 but, 'we can barter [with the police over the size of the fine] so it was enough' (2013, per. comm., 16th August).

Since then, the family have had to find other sources of income to compensate for the loss of the rice harvest. Her son has tried to find work elsewhere in the country but, perhaps due to his stained reputation (see Chapter Six for a discussion of reputation as an efficacious resource) and limited education, he has struggled to find a reliable source of income. 'Two years ago, he went to work on a rubber tree farm in Kampong Cham [a province in the central plains region]', she elaborated (2013, per. comm., 16th August). 'He was working for two months, three months, but they still did not pay him. He had to leave.

He cannot work without a wage'. She continued, 'as for me, I am too old. They will not give work to an old lady'. So she and her son, who is now 32, continue to find pond and plant life to sell locally. If they work all day, she says, they can find 3kg of snails and make 7500 riel [\$1.88], which would equate to a yearly income of \$680.

The outgoings they list are lower than Mith's – they have no form of transport so have no need for gasoline, no school age children, no electricity costs after being disconnected from the grid for failing to keep up with payments – yet they would still struggle to subsist on this income alone. Their biggest expenditure, like Mith, is on food, but this is not because they spend much on luxuries like meat and tinned goods; rather, without any farm land they are compelled to buy rice, one kilogram each day at 3000 riel [\$0.75], and they then spend an additional 2000 riel [\$0.50] on small river fish and local greens.

Thus, they look forward to the planting and harvesting seasons when work on the land of local farm owners is abundant. On a cloudy day in May of the fieldwork year, when the rains were becoming overdue, Mom surveyed the sky and pointed towards it, declaring, 'it is good, look, the rains are coming. Soon there will be so much work to do' (2013, per. comm., 26th June). The tradition of *pravas dei* has all but died out in contemporary Veal Rien, with only a handful of households (N=3, 2.6%) engaging in reciprocal labour exchange. Agricultural labour is now more commonly performed for cash wages. These vary according to the work done, with a significant amount of gender differentiation present in the structuring of work and wages. Finer, more dextrous work like transplanting and picking, which is commonly left to women, can earn 10000 to 15 000 riel [\$2.50-\$3.75] per day. Heavier, male, tasks like ploughing and carrying bunches of cut stalks from the harvested paddy makes closer to 20 000 riel [\$5]. Despite the differences in earnings, each task requires skill and is no less arduous; both planting and picking, whilst nimble, involve long days spent contorted, bent double, in the fields with only a *krama* or parasol for protection from the sun's heat.

This work, though lucrative by household standards, is only seasonal and for the rest of the year Mom and her son rely on remitted income from her youngest daughter, who has left the village to live and work at a factory in the provincial town of Takhmao. Workers in the provincial factories can make from \$60 to \$150 dollars a month, though Mom's daughter is on the lower end of this pay scale. With no experience and little education, 'she cannot ask the boss for more, she is lucky to have the job', Mom (2013, per comm., 24th April)

reasoned. The daughter endeavours to send 100 000 riel, or \$25, of her salary back to home each month.

Even with this additional money, Mom has been rarely able to make improvement to her household's standard of living. Their home is made of two walls of palm thatch and two walls of bare corrugated metal, supported by a timber frame that lifts the house a few feet off the ground. The space underneath, not tall enough to stand but crouch in, protects the house from seasonal flooding and provides a space to cook and rest in the shade, the grey metal roof trapping heat and making the internal temperature repressive during the day. There is a bamboo *kree* under the house, and a bamboo ladder assists the climb to the inside, which has a floor laid with narrow bamboo slats spaced a centimetre or so apart. There is no furniture, no electrical goods, but here and there are dashes of ornamentation: some straw mats, a few printed cushions, a plastic framed mirror, and a black-and-white picture of a pair of her ancestors in traditional costume on their wedding day.

The contrasting homes of Mom and Mith are almost apt metaphors for their contrasting lifestyles: one rustic, the other elaborate. There is a matched irony in their respective situations: Mith is a farmer who does not farm, a farmer by name but not in deed; Mom a farmer without a farm, a farmer in deed but not with deeds. Though she lives the notional traditional lifestyle of a paddy farmer, her key assets like her home and her year round income derived, principally, from the natural resources of the village, she lacks a vital defining component: agricultural land.

The two cases detailed in this section illustrate in greater detail the breadth of diversity of work and living in contemporary Veal Rien; their examples enable a sketched understanding of the outline of the village's social topography, delineating its furthest reaches. They also reveal much about the particular characteristics of Veal Rien's class structure. In line with the first research objective set out in this PhD, examining the extent to which Bourdieu's class theory can illuminate understandings of Cambodian inequality, the next section seeks to use the two examples above to apprise the key properties of class in the village focusing, as established in the theoretical framework set out in Chapter Two, on what they can disclose of the distribution of capitals in the village and the social trajectories of households that these entail.

Volume, composition, trajectory: properties of class in Veal Rien

Mom and Mith occupy locations at the lower and upper limits of the space of social positions in Veal Rien. The examination of their work activity and lifestyles, above, reveals that their respective households, though spatially adjacent, are in almost all other respects discrepant. What defines this discrepancy is, in the simplest of terms, the sheer scale of difference in the efficacious resources each is endowed with; the means each is able to deploy in the pursuit of the rewards and the avoidance of the hazards that are by-products of social and economic change in Veal Rien.

An analysis of village inequality that ends here is incomplete, however, even if its simplicity attracts. To reduce the difference between Mith and Mom to a matter of simple means is insufficient and obfuscatory, as it elides the totality of Mith's advantage over his neighbour. For a discrete or abstract measure of land or wealth cannot singularly account for the social bifurcation of their households. Rather, a finer reading of their endowments reveals inequality of a nature that is more complex, dense and inter-layered. Mith's domination and Mom's subjugation are not defined by a single measure but are manifest in the magnitude of multiple means of which each is either possessed or dispossessed. The vast difference in total capital between the two households does not always make this fact easy to recognise, nor the value of such recognition appear appreciable, yet it is.

Mith is endowed, first, with a far greater array of the economic forms of capital, as represented by the vast assortment of assets and income he has accumulated: his home and its contents, his land, his numerous streams of income. It is not merely the quantity of these resources that is superior to Mom's but the quality, too, contributes to their overall value and worth: the income from his puncture repair business is stable, regular and secure; it does not depend to any significant extent on the vagaries of weather or seasons unlike Mom's foraging activity, which may be disrupted by monsoonal swells and the parched conditions that prevail in Veal Rien at the height of the dry season.

He possesses, too, however, cultural forms of capital in much greater abundance. His own education and that of his household members is more advanced than Mom and her children; his position as elected leader of Roka is a scarce symbolic good with fungible advantage to which Mom possesses no equivalent. Thus, the space of social positions in Veal Rien may be seen to be distinguished not only according to the simple volume of capitals but, moreover, according to the composition of various types of capitals that households possess.

There is observed in the cases of Mith and Mom a high degree of covariance both among and between these genres of capital so that, first, alternate manifestations from within the same genus collect together, to form both clusters of the variant strains of economic capital and clusters of cultural capitals; and, second, hybridised agglomerations.

This twin relation is replicated at household level across Veal Rien more broadly. Table 5.3, below, for example, illustrates the coincidence of key indicators of economic capital against three categories of different sized landholdings: the landless; those households with an under-subsistence plot of less than 20 ares per household member liable to incur a yearly rice consumption deficit; and those with an over-subsistence plot of more than 20 ares per household member liable to produce a yearly rice surplus. For each measure – whether motorbike, motorboat, cow, connection to mains electricity, tiled roof or wooden walls – the proportion of households in possession of the resource displays a positive correlation with the size of farm plot, steadily increasing across the categories from landless to large endowment.

The inequality manifest in Veal Rien, accented by such clustering, is more pronounced than it appears for the fact that the utility of many assets is heightened by interaction with other forms of capital. A mobile telephone, for example, a good owned by both Mom and Mith, means something very different to each of them. Mom can rarely afford to purchase pre-paid credit with which to make calls herself and, instead, awaits contact from her absent daughter in Takhmao. There is a notional economic benefit to this communication, in the form of the remittances that the daughter sends monthly.

Table 5.3: Distribution of economic assets by farm size in Veal Rien

Size of land holding	Landless	Under subsistence	Above subsistence
<i>N</i>	41	34	39
Assets (% households owning)			
- Motorbike	46.3	58.8	64.1
- Motorboat	26.8	41.2	59.0
- Cow	14.6	38.2	56.4
- Grid electricity	51.2	58.8	69.2
- Wood-walled house	12.2	32.4	53.8
- Tiled roof	4.9	11.8	25.6

(Source: Household survey data, 2013.)

Table 5.4: Distribution of cultural assets by farm size in Veal Rien

Size of land holding		Landless	Under subsistence	Above subsistence
	<i>N</i>	41	34	39
Education (mean)				
- Household head		3.07	4.12	5.23
- All household members		3.58	4.68	4.66
- Highest household member		5.54	7.00	7.00
Committee members (mean [total])				
- Group leaders		0.05 [2]	0.18 [6]	0.26 [10]
- Security comm. members		0.02 [1]	0.12 [4]	0.10 [4]
- Fishery comm. members		0.00 [0]	0.09 [3]	0.10 [4]
- Village leadership roles		0.00 [0]	0.00 [0]	0.08 [3]

(Source: Household survey data, 2013.)

In contrast, Mith's telephone has more direct productive advantage. Not only can he use it to regularly maintain relations with his sons in Ratanakiri, it enables him to engage with suppliers, arranging deliveries of parts and equipment, and customers, deriving additional revenue for his business. This, again, illustrates that quality as well as quantity factors into the appreciation of capitals: what matters is not merely what people have but what they are able to do with it.

Villagers acutely perceive the layers of division that define the social space of positions in Veal Rien and this skewed distribution of economic capitals forms a determinate feature of lay discourse on inequality within the village. In conversation, residents refer to three prime vertical strata or classes of household. At one extreme, there are the '*neak mean*', literally 'those who have'; at the other, the '*neak kraa*' or 'the poor'; and, in between, the '*neak m'thchum*', 'the middle' or 'the average'. Each group is defined, as the nomenclature suggests, by their relative endowments. 'The *neak kraa* have only a small house that lacks pans and other equipment', clarified one resident (Pan 2013, per. comm., 23rd May), continuing, 'the *neak mean* have a big house, good environment around them, and a kitchen. The *neak kraa* have no transport but the *neak mean* have new motorbikes'. Chi (2013, per. comm., 20th August), the 25 year old son of a farming and fishing household, concurred. 'The *neak mean* have everything', he described, 'a big house, one that is made of wood. The *neak kraa* just have the palm leaf house. The *neak mean* in the village have land and *moto* and cows but if they are the *neak kraa*, they have nothing. No land, no *moto*, no bike, nothing. Only the body'. In these understandings, then, the *neak mean* are defined by what have and the poor largely by what they lack. The *neak m'thchum* are

located somewhere in between: 'they are not the *neak mean* and they are not the *neak kraa*; they are just *m'thchum*, they have enough' (Pan 2013, per. comm., 23rd May).

It is not, however, solely economic capitals that the *neak mean* possess in far greater abundance. As typified in the examples of Mith and Mom, there is also a relation between the volume of economic capital possessed by a household and its cultural capital consignment. Table 5.4 plots the same categories of household landholding as Table 5.3, above, now enabling comparison between these economic resources and measures of cultural capital, namely average education levels of the household as a whole and its key members and participation in village resource management and leadership groups. Again here, a positive relation is noted across all categories, whereby the mean education of the household collectively, of the head, and of the highest educated member swell as land size incrementally increases. The household head of a landless family, for example, has typically not completed a course of primary schooling, having withdrawn from the formal education system around grade 3. The head of a household in the higher category of land ownership has, by contrast, achieved a grade 5 education. The landed largely dominate the administrative hierarchies of the village both in absolute numbers and relative terms, adding to their total stake in the cultural resources of the village, furthering the asymmetric distribution of the total volume of capitals, and exemplifying the link between economic and cultural assets.

When the residents of Veal Rien describe the *neak mean* and *neak kraa* in terms of their respective possession or dispossession of such material goods as paddy land, motorbikes, cows, kitchens and pans, these are, therefore, best regarded as astute and emblematic markers that signify what it means to be rich or poor in the village. Markers which, much like the tip of the iceberg that penetrates the surface, represent that fraction of inequality most readily apparent and serve as symbolic indicators of a no less cognised, still greater and more sinister hulk below. Chi's statement, above, that the *neak mean* 'have everything', leaving the *neak kraa* with 'only the body' alludes to an understanding that runs deeper than exterior effervescence, an understanding that he later crystallised: 'if they have nothing, what will they do? The *neak kraa* can only become the one the *neak mean* hires' (Chi 2013, per. comm., 20th August).

Beneath the prevalent perception of the visual classifiers of material goods, then, lies an appreciation that the life chances of individuals are shaped and constrained by the classed conditions of their social existence. To say that the *neak mean* 'have motos' or 'have land'

is simply a synopsis of this. As tables 5.3 and 5.4 show, the better off in the village do not merely invest in physical goods but, too, cultural assets, which have significant inter-temporal and inter-generational properties.

Bourdieu himself (e.g. Bourdieu and Passeron 1990; Bourdieu 1984) noted this phenomenon in his work on education in 20th Century France, describing the 'hereditary transmission' of cultural capital as a key mechanism by which the wealthy could divest of some part of their assets over the course of their lifetime, thereby avoiding inheritance tax and prolonging advantage for their progeny. In the context of contemporary Cambodia, these ideas appear to remain salient.

Rather than investing in knowledge of art and literature, which Bourdieu sees as the pillars of cultural capital in France, the inhabitants of Veal Rien seek to acquire the linkages and symbolic authority associated with education and membership of village resource management groups, such as the fishery and security committees, or the hierarchies of village governance. Their advantage is threatened not by inheritance tax but by a gamut of ecological and economic factors and decades of tumult that have served perpetually to restructure the social field and the distribution of capitals, risk and reward in the countryside.

Like Makara's father and mother, who judged that, as 'there are too many problems here to rely on the farm', Makara 'needed skills' to succeed in life and sent her to learn the art of tailoring from an aunt, the better off in Veal Rien have surmised that a rapidly changing social and physical environment ensures that it no longer suffices to bequeath solely material or natural assets to their descendants; that the means to the social reproduction of their advantage are no longer secured by the legacies of material accumulation alone. To better guarantee that their progeny are poised to prosper, they must also assure that they are furnished with the fungible influence and interest that accrues to those rich in the embodied and institutionalised skills, knowledge and symbolic authority associated with education, political patronage and certain forms of 'modern', 'clean' work.

The importance of this social dimension of livelihoods in the developing world has received considerable attention in recent years. Whilst this has been enacted under a variety of approaches and lenses, moreover, none has been more influential than the social capital frameworks which have emerged from the recent Anglo-American tradition.

As such, the work of Coleman (1988), Becker (1996), Putnam (1993; 1995; 2000), conceived originally in an entirely occidental environment, has been transferred with some enthusiasm to a variety of developing world contexts. Success in this respect has been mixed, with some critics (Fine, 2001, 2002, 2003) accusing these transferable frameworks of "reductionism". However, this would be to ignore a great deal of recent nuance in the literature.

In particular, the Asian and Southeast Asian social capital literature has produced instructive results via various interpretations of the social capital tradition, with tightly focussed studies such as Pellini's (2004) investigation of pagoda associations, Oeur et al's examination of social capital and environmental risk and Colletta and Cullen's (2002) comparative study on post-conflict social linkages, providing useful examples of the value of the field.

Indeed, it is not that the *neak kraa* do not recognise this in much the same way that prevents them from following a similar strategy, but that they do not have the means at their disposal to pursue such schemes. At the moment in Veal Rien, for example, the desire for the acquisition of second languages and computing skills alongside standard state high school education is quickly gaining momentum. This has been brought about largely by the success of a few individuals who have obtained these proficiencies and managed to secure the type of occupation that Mith aspires for his youngest sons, as many others do: work 'in an office, something clean and comfortable'. One of these individuals is Makara's brother, who studied English and IT in his spare time whilst at school as a teenager; he has just completed his BA in Phnom Penh and now works for the Acleda bank as a clerk in the city. Two other residents studied Mandarin and now work as translators for the Chinese managers of factories, one local, the other in the city too. Such work is prized not only because it commands a higher salary but also because of the symbolic efficacy of its anchor in the relatively scarce cultural resource of education. 'They think the work you do with the head is better than the work you do with the hands', one resident explained (Put 2013, per. comm., 9th August).

The additional cost of private tuition is expensive, however, and this comes on top of the already substantial fees that public schooling incurs. Chen (2013, per. comm., 2nd May) has an 18 year old daughter currently at the local high school and elaborated:

'Education is very expensive. My daughter is in grade 12, it costs around 12000 [\$3] each day. They say that the public school is free but, even though it is public

school, we must pay: for books; the trip to school costs gas; she needs some money so she can buy food for lunch. Then we must pay for extra study. She goes to study Chinese, English and computers: this is 6 dollars, 8 dollars, 25 dollars; altogether 40 dollars for extra study every month’.

The pecuniary and opportunity costs – where the price of keeping adult children in school must be balanced against the potential income that could be earned from labour – of even a public education render it a luxury that the poor can sometimes ill afford.

Ny and her husband, for example, have six children between the ages of 6 and 16. None currently attend school, though the elder three have completed one or two grades at some stage in the past. Like Mom, Ny and her husband had to withdraw their children from school when their income became strained; in their case, after they were made landless, having sold their modest plot to pay for health treatment. They now make a living from fishing and the local waged work of their three adult children. Ny (2013, per. comm., 13th May) explained, ‘I want my children to stay studying at the school. I want them to learn English at the private school. I would prefer my children to study like this and then go to work in the office, of course’. She added, however, that, ‘we can eat or we can have education, but we cannot have both’. There are other households like Ny’s in Veal Rien, where 12 children under 13 years of age, representing 12 per cent of the age group, have never been or are no longer engaged in education.

Though a section of the poor may be excluded from the formal schooling system in such a manner as the families of Ny and Mom, generally in rural areas literacy rates and educational attainment levels of children have increased significantly in recent years (Hill and Menon 2013). It is against this wider backdrop of the proliferation of public education that the decisions taken by the better off in Veal Rien to pursue alternative and additional private education strategies must be placed. The value of cultural resources, like any other, is underwritten by their relative scarcity; as public education has reached a broader audience, the better off have had to search for novel ways to gain leverage by sourcing new and rarer breeds of educational strains of capital. Second language acquisition is one such measure, the reassuringly exclusive expense of which places it largely out of reach of all but the wealthiest categories of household, as table 5.5 suggests.

In the present context of unstable farm livelihoods for smallholders, in which falling crop prices, high input costs and a variable climate (De Lopez 2002; Le Billon and Springer 2007; Oeur et al. 2012; Frewer and Chan 2014) continue to undermine the security of agricultural production, many villagers are looking to off-farm strategies to make

a living (Bylander 2014). The high economic, cultural, social and symbolic returns and associated prestige of the ‘modern’ sector, as explored here (see also Rigg 2012; Rigg, Veeravongs, Veeravongs, and Rohitarachoon 2008) have captured the attention of residents looking to build futures that do not rely on farm livelihoods. Yet with over 200 000 young Cambodians coming of age and entering an already underemployed labour force each year, competition for employment away from the farm is fierce (Scheidel, Giampietro, and Ramos-Martin 2013). Given that they already possess greater relative endowments of the economic, cultural and social capitals that differentiate candidates in this growing labour market, the data suggest that the children of the rich will prolong their advantage, handed a head start in the scramble for ‘modern’ livelihoods, whilst the children of the poor will lag further behind.

The data indicate, therefore, that those better endowed in material terms in Veal Rien ensure their continued advantage on a two-fold basis: not only does their high economic and cultural capital stock combine to ensure they control the mechanisms of power today, it simultaneously enables them to act to procure material and symbiotic access to power for their progeny in the future. As such, when the poor of the village say the rich ‘have everything’, it is not just a statement for today but a proclamation of persistent inequality in not only the means but the making of their world.

Table 5.5: Distribution of second language learners by land size in Veal Rien

Size of land holding	Landless	Under subsistence	Above subsistence
<i>N</i>	41	34	39
Second language learners (% HHs [total])	2.4 [1]	2.9 [1]	17.9 [7]

(Source: Household survey data, 2013.)

The cases of Mith and Mom exemplify, as Bourdieu strove to demonstrate throughout his work, that the structure of class is a complex affair, one whose internal configuration contributes as much to its overall form as the simple tiers of its vertical strata. The difference between the two lies not solely in terms of what they have and what they do; rather, additionally, in terms of what they and the constituent members of their household may individually and in sum aspire to.

Mom and her family are not merely agricultural and industrial wage labourers by current occupation but by indelible circumstance. They have no land or other stream of income to withdraw or retire to; not one member has reached a level of education above grade three,

which makes the prospect of a promotion or even a sideways permutation of their productive activity seem remote. As Mom understands, her daughter is 'lucky' to have the limited opportunities and wage she draws now. Their living standards have stagnated after a decline in recent years and there is little about their situation that offers hope of a reversal of fortune.

By contrast, Mith's family has flourished. The capital that he and his children separately and mutually hold, their high education, numerous assets, and varied sources of income, facilitates not one but a number of different outcomes. Unlike Mom's daughter, Mith's may conceive of a limit to her labour at the local factory: 'after one or two years, when I have children, I will stop [working at the factory] and stay at home', she predicted (Tina 2013, per. comm., 9th June). Though her obligations to care for her parents and perhaps raise a family mean that her freedom is by no means limitless, she can reasonably expect to open a local business, should she desire, otherwise seek a short term move to experience life in the city, or attempt to balance the complex mix of modern and traditional livelihoods that her father has constructed. Should Mith's younger sons acquire the educational merit that he targets for them, more a probability than a plausibility, the opportunities that are open to them will widen even more considerably.

The two households are thus not marked merely by discordant present social positions but divergent social trajectories. These trajectories are undergirded, to some degree, by the variant logic to which their household strategies are attuned, defined by the concentration and composition of capitals they each possess. The Khmer slang for 'earning an income' or 'making a living' is '*rook sii*', a phrase which literally means 'to find food'. This is an apt summation of the descriptions that the poor present of the manner by which they live and labour, working to find the means of their short term subsistence: as Mom and others describe, they 'only live day-to-day', attempting to generate enough money to guarantee food and shelter and the barest of necessities from one day to the next, lacking the requisite level of immediate security to beginning planning for the future. The better off, however, incorporate long term strategies of accumulation. Only once households 'have enough', Mom (2013, per. comm., 16th August) explained, 'they can start to buy things and make savings'. They no longer labour simply to subsist but to prosper, working not to live, but to live well. Mith's daughter, for instance, does not spend her days at the factory to ensure her family are fed but because she wants to pursue consumer experiences, to purchase expensive jewellery, to participate in the show and display of material and symbolic wealth and well-being.

The rich and the poor in Veal Rien, then, are not simply defined by what they do, or what they currently possess in terms of overall capital volume or composition but, moreover, by the opportunities and limitations this presents for their futures. The contours of their life chances, their potential livelihoods and lifestyles, are forged from the classed conditions of their social existence. It is this that Chi acknowledged when he asked, without leaving a pause before answering his own question with surety, 'if they have nothing, what will they do? The *neak kraa* can only become the one the *neak mean* hires'. Another resident (Pan 2013, per. comm., 23rd May) explained the contrast between rich and poor in similar terms, stating that, 'the children of the poor work doing the farm for the rich, and go to the factory. The children of the rich can study or do garment factory work because they have higher education the children of the poor.'

This section has examined the properties of class in Veal Rien, revealing dense and complex structures of inter-layered inequality, fully intelligible not by strata but as an agglomeration of assets, abilities and aspirations. The structuring principles of inequality in the village, it has been demonstrated, display pertinent analogies to those identified by Bourdieu (1984). The next section will consider how geometric data techniques, the heuristic intelligibilities of which in the analysis of class have been strongly advocated by Bourdieu, can be used to further explore the form and shape of class in Veal Rien. This furthers the first research objective established in Chapter One of this PhD thesis, examining the extent to which Bourdieu's theory of class can illuminate understanding of the structures of inequality in contemporary Cambodian society.

Mapping social space: the form of class in Veal Rien

The preceding section has evidenced that efforts to understand wealth, poverty and inequality in rural places like Veal Rien must be undertaken with a high degree of nuance. However, the individual stories and histories, as well as bivariate descriptors, that have so far served to promote this insight, though instructive, are limited. By their very nature, these single perspectives, even in a comparative mould, capture light and shade in enviable detail but perform less well when asked to delineate the whole.

In accordance with the theoretical position adapted from Bourdieu's (1984) work and outlined here in Chapters Two and Three, these rich, qualitative observations, however, may be seen to have a greater value when utilised in conjunction with a more quantitative approach to identifying the precise patterns of difference in Veal Rien. Thus, in accordance with this proposed framework for analysis, a number of key indicators have been identified

from the quantitative and qualitative data collected on a household basis and explored using geometric data analysis techniques to determine how such an approach might shed a wider light on the nature of Veal Rien’s social organisation. The fruits of this agglomeration, a two-dimensional visual mapping of the social space of Veal Rien, are presented in figures 5.1 and 5.2, on the following pages.

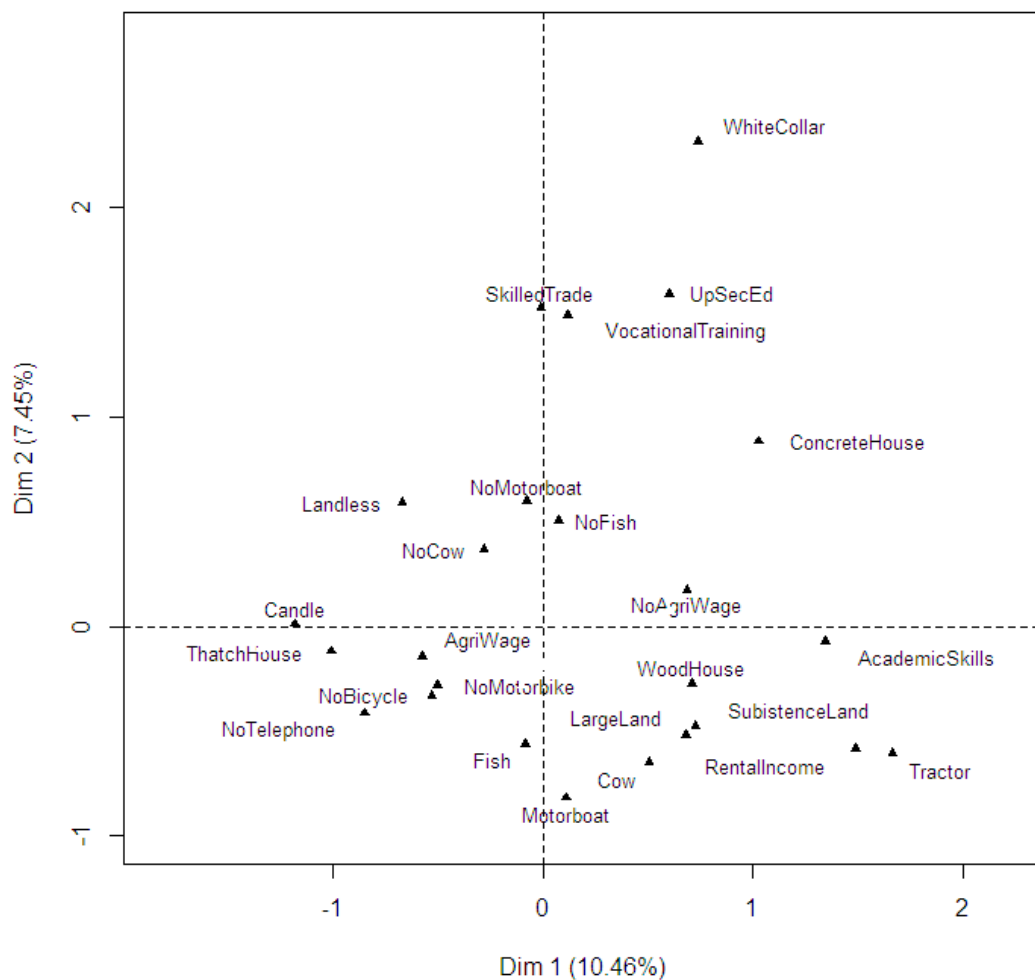


Figure 5.1: Mapped visualisation of the space of social positions in Veal Rien: plane representation of the cloud of categories. 25 most significant categories displayed.

(Source: Household survey data, 2013.)

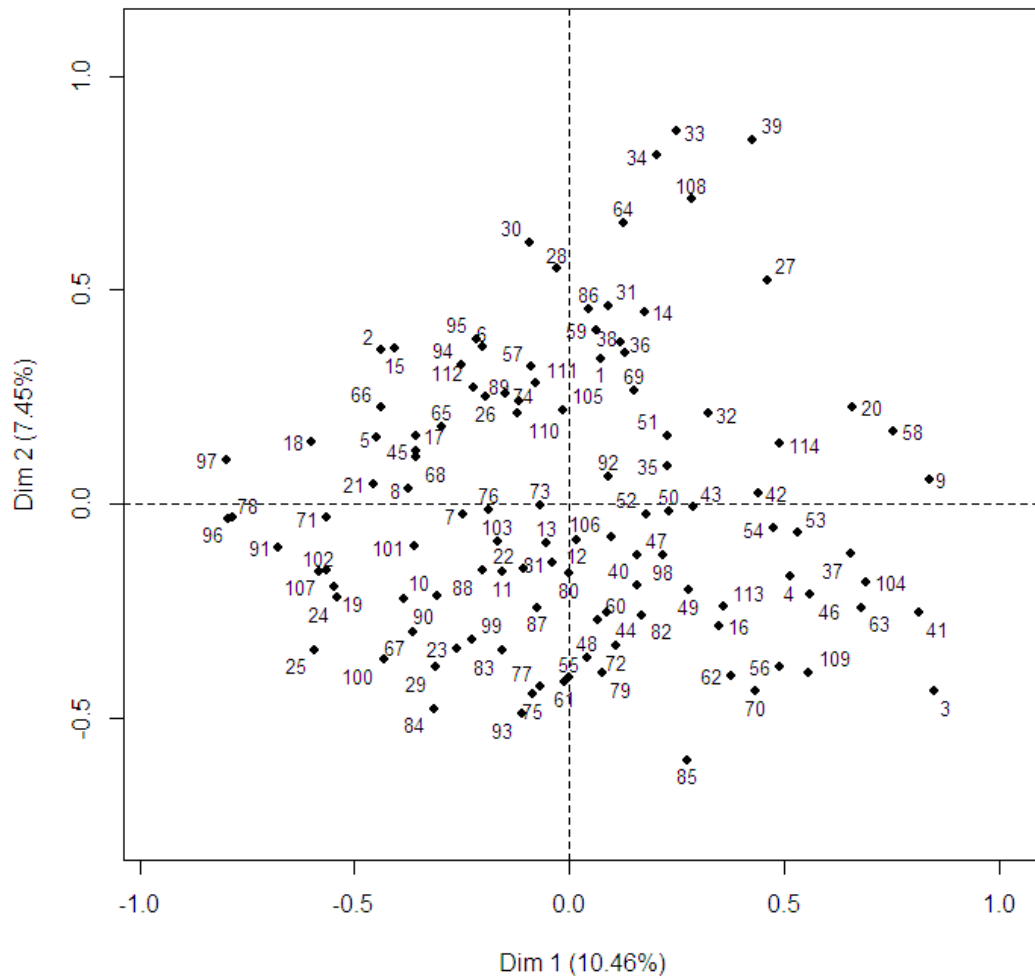


Figure 5.2: Mapped visualisation of the space of social positions in Veal Rien: plane representation of the cloud of individuals.

(Source: Household survey data, 2013.)

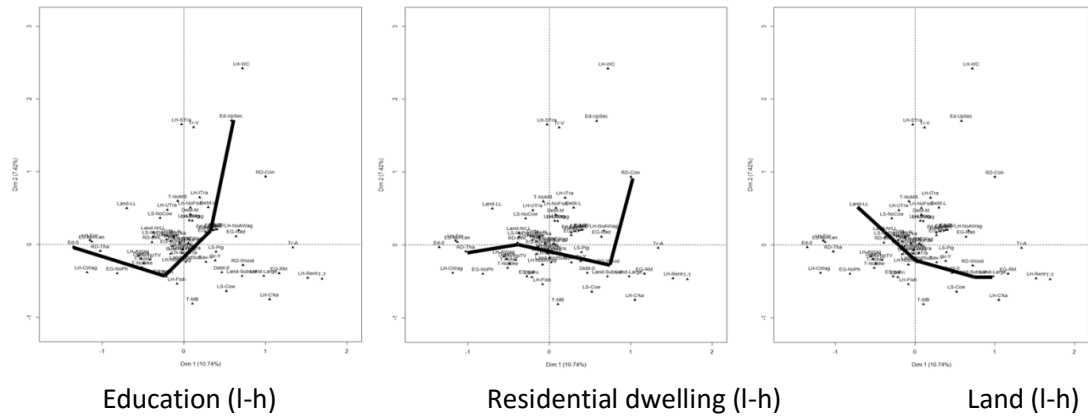


Figure 5.3: The trajectories of key capitals in Veal Rien’s social space of positions. All categories displayed.

(Source: Household survey data, 2013.)

Multiple correspondence analysis (MCA), the specific approach employed in this endeavour, is a technique that analyses the associations between multiple categorical variables. The results of the analysis are presented, not as tabular output, but a graphic representation, in the guise of two ‘clouds’ of points structured around two principal axes to be interpreted. The first of these plots, the ‘cloud of categories’, is given in figure 5.1. To produce this plot, responses are organised spatially and relationally, so that ‘categories with similar distributions will be represented as points that are close in space, and categories that have very dissimilar distributions will be positioned far apart’ (Clausen 1998:2). Here, the 25 most contributing categories are shown, as these are the most significant for analysis and aid legibility of the plot. By paying heed to the oppositions and homologies within the data that this brings into contrast, it is possible to determine the prime axes of the division of social space in Veal Rien.

The first axis, labelled as dimension one on the chart, which runs horizontally and accounts for 10.46% of the variance among respondents, is principally composed of the variables of residential dwelling type, agricultural land holdings, certain income types, mean education and training, and ownership of key productive assets. On the far left are sited the categories of thatch home, use of candles or kerosene for lighting, income sources of agricultural waged agricultural labour and landlessness. By contrast, on the far right, these categories are opposed by ownership of tractors, wooden or concrete dwellings, the largest landholdings, high education and extra-curricular academic activities and income from large

livestock and equipment rental. When all categories are viewed, the ordinal categories of education, residential dwelling and land can be seen to traverse the plot in a linear fashion, as shown in figure 5.3, with the lowest attainment or value to the left and the highest to the right.

This axis, then, can be surmised to represent the key class dimension of Veal Rien's social space as constructed primarily according to the total volume of cultural and economic capital households are endowed with. Such an interpretation corroborates the ethnographic evidence illustrated above, which suggests that the sum difference of resources is the prime marker of inequality and differentiation with the village.

The second axis, dimension two, runs vertically and accounts for 7.45% of variance. In this case, the principal structuring factors are mean education and vocational training, possession of certain productive assets, and certain income types. It opposes the highest education category, vocational training, white collar work and skilled trades, which are positioned at the top of the chart, with the possession of motorboats and cows, and income from fishing and livestock, at the other.

This second dimension could be interpreted in one of two ways: it might be supposed to represent, on the one hand, a division between modern forms of work and more traditional agrarian livelihoods. However, differing endowments of capital can be seen to underlie the pursuit of these forms of activity, with the former (skilled and white collar work) requiring cultural, chiefly educational, capital in greater abundance and the latter dependent on larger quantities of economic capital in the form of high value land, as for *chamkar* farming, or assets, in the case of livestock production or fishing using motorised boats. Thus, this axis can be interpreted at a foundational level as representing the different relative combinations of capital, with relatively high cultural capital competencies located at the top of the plot and relatively high economic capital endowments at the base.

The MCA also produces a cloud of individual responses, which identifies each household's position analogous to these two axes of division. This output, reproduced in figure 5.2, can be used to identify and examine landmark individuals and, thus, to expound and corroborate this interpretation of the dimensions.

Close to the extremes of the second dimension, and therefore worthy of investigation, are points 64 and 85. These represent the households of Makara, the village tailor, and Phalla:

both are young mothers with young daughters, living in a zinc walled and roofed house; they each own *motors* and farm a plot of paddy measuring just over 30 Ares, leaving them enough rice to last a year's consumption needs, with some left over to sell (Makara 2013, per. comm., 5th June; Phalla 2013, per. comm., 17th May). In terms of the first dimension, measuring total volume of capital, clearly neither quite possesses the riches of Mith, whose household is found on the far right of the first dimension, at point 20, yet nor are they destitute as Mom, on the far left at point 24. Instead, they are positioned nearer to the centre of this axis, though still squarely within the right-hand, wealthier half.

Whilst their locations relative to the first dimension are homologous, they diverge vastly with respect to the second. What is it about these two households, seemingly similar, that places them poles apart on this second axis? The answer lies in their education and work activities, and the assets they hold beyond the form of the physical dwelling and farmland. Makara and her husband were educated to grades 6 and 12, respectively. She has trained and works as a tailor and, he, a policeman. By contrast, Phalla and her husband left school after completing grades 4 and 3, and draw additional income from fishing with a motorboat, raising cattle, and hiring out a tractor that they own when the farming season comes around. Both households are better off than most, but in different ways: Makara's family enriched by investments in education and prestigious vocational and professional roles; Phalla's by material, productive assets.

Though this interpretation may seem at odds with the bivariate indication of broad covariance between the different species of capital, the form of the cloud of individuals reveals an endorsement of this thesis, yet with additional nuance that belies the advantage of the multivariate approach. The cloud, it can be seen, resembles the shape of a diamond, tapering to both left and right, with a prominent peak at the top, skewed in the direction of the right quadrant. Most households sit within a band ± 0.25 of the second dimension, indicating that they are neither relatively endowed with economic nor cultural capital to any significant extent; rather, though they may fall slightly one way or the other, their stock displays the typical balanced or equivalent amalgam that the bivariate analysis suggests. This is particularly true at the fringes of the first dimension, to the effect that the richest households are, therefore, absolutely better off and the poorest are absolutely worse off in terms of both economic and cultural resources.

In the centre of Veal Rien's social space, however, lie key households that confound this overall trend; households like those of Makara and Phalla. Their cases highlight the utility

of the multivariate approach, which is able to identify sub-trends among those who, like they, counter the dominant patterns in the data. Though the wider trend of covariance is an interesting observation that has emerged from the research, it is the finer grainer of detail that is revealed by the cases of Makara and Phalla that really serves to illuminate the structure of Veal Rien’s social space in the nascent modernising era. They illustrate the emergent possibilities of social differentiation and distinction that open to rural inhabitants, evidencing the opportunity of horizontal or transverse movements across space, as well as simple upwards and downwards trajectories, and underscore new forms of exclusion for those households on the lowest step of Veal Rien’s social ladder, unable to manoeuvre toward either direction due to constraint.

Proceeding with this interpretation, it is thus possible to postulate the existence of two key social classes within Veal Rien, the *neak kraa* and the *neak mean*, each of which contains two principal fractions with analogous, in degree, though variant in nature, total measures of capital. Each of these resultant four fractions occupies a quadrant in the mapped visualisation of the space of social positions, as suggested in figure 5.4.

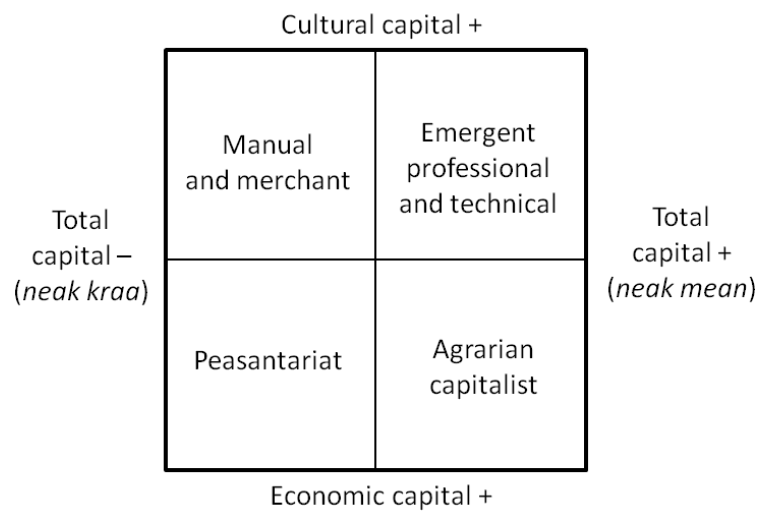


Figure 5.4: Illustration of the four principal class fractions and their relative position in the space of social positions in Veal Rien.

(Source: Household survey data, 2013.)

The dominant class, the *neak mean*, are subdivided into two groups: an emergent professional and technical fraction and an agrarian capitalist fraction. The former are a small but growing section of Veal Rien's populace: families with generally high education and some vocational skills training, with which, at the uppermost overall fringe, household members have secured white collar occupations and professional posts including police work, nursing, teaching, and language translation. Others have larger-scale skilled trade operations, such as Mith's tyre business. Though some do continue to have significant holdings of land, like Mith and Makara, they are not dependent on natural resources for subsistence or income. There are, too, a few households within this fraction who report selling land voluntarily due to its perceived low overall productivity and a preference for other forms of work activity.

Sereypheap, whose household is at point 33, for example, operates a beauty salon on the ground floor of her home, after undertaking an informal apprenticeship whilst working at a local garment factory in her teenage years. She is now 24 and married, and the business has been running for a number of years. Her husband has his own business, working locally felling trees. Though they owned half a hectare of land, they opted to sell it in 2010 because, as she explained (Sereypheap 2013, per. comm., 7th June), 'the yield was very low and we struggled to make a profit. It is easier to make money now through business or work'. Similarly Oeun, point 14, sold a third of her plot of 30 ares to support her son to establish an enterprise. 'The rice we can get from the land has mostly decreased each year. My son and daughter went to work in Phnom Penh then there was no one to work on the farm anyway. So 10 years ago I sold 10 ares of the land to get money to give to my son to start a business in the city' (Oeun 2013, per. comm., 19th April). The son, Panna, now employs several of his cousins and friends from Veal Rien at his site in Phnom Penh, designing, manufacturing and installing advertising hoardings for businesses around the city.

The second fraction of the *neak mean* is an agrarian proto-capitalist class. The fraction is typified, principally, by large land holdings and an array of other farm livelihoods, and evidences a creeping trend toward the professionalization of farming. This is suggested, first, as land is becoming increasingly concentrated in the hands of the 34 farming households located within this quadrant of social space. In the past five years, from 2008 to 2013, as shown in table 5.6, this fraction of households in Veal Rien has acquired by purchase or sale (i.e. not including land lost or gained through inheritance) a net total of 355 additional ares of paddy. The other 80 households in the village outside this quadrant

have, by contrast, recorded a net loss of 331 ares of land by the same means. This results in a net overall swing of 5% of the village's total land in the last five years.

In addition to a shift in the distribution of farm land, farming practices are changing too. As noted above, the tradition of *pravas dei* is now practiced by very few households in Veal Rien. Households, for the most part, instead perform labour on other farms in exchange for cash wages; the reciprocity that was a fundamental part of the *pravas dei* system has been lost. A division of labour has ruptured in rice farming, whereby it has become almost established within Veal Rien that households either sell labour or hire labour, it being much less common that they do both. As table 5.7 illustrates, this class fraction of agrarian proto-capitalists, as well as being the net purchasers of village land are also the net purchasers of village labour, the sale of which comes customarily from beyond this fragment of social space.

Table 5.6: Land sales and purchases recorded in the last 5 years (2008-2013) in Veal Rien

	Agrarian capitalist class	All other households
<i>N</i> households	34	80
Total land lost through sale (A)	75	504
Total land gained through purchase (A)	430	173
Net change in total land through sale or purchase (A)	+355	-331

(Source: Household survey data, 2013.)

Table 5.7: The division of labour in rice production in Veal Rien

	Agrarian capitalist class	All other households	Total
<i>N</i> households	34	80	114
Sell labour but do not hire labour	4	35	39
Hire labour but do not sell labour	20	12	32
Sell labour and hire labour	6	15	21
Neither sell nor hire labour	2	18	19
<i>Pravas dei</i>	2	1	2

(Source: Household survey data, 2013.)

Mechanisation of farming practices is another change occurring at some, albeit slow, pace. Ownership of draught animals like cattle and oxen is still common in Veal Rien, but these are rarely used for farm production: only three household in the village own a draught-drawn plough; instead, most farmers use two-wheel tractors to undertake the tasks these once performed. Ten households, 7 of which are located in the agrarian proto-capitalist fraction, now own such vehicles. Additionally, threshing and hulling are also increasingly performed by specialist machines rather than traditional labour intensive methods. Though clearly a minority, yet nonetheless a significant one, two of the 34 households in the agrarian proto-capitalist fraction are now fully reliant on mechanised production and employ no labour in the rice production process, as indicated in table 5.7. One of these is the household of Kut (2013, per. comm., 20th August), at point 41, who apprised, 'for me, it is better to use machines rather than people to do the farm because it is more expensive to hire people than hire the machine. If we use people to do the work, it takes longer too'.

This creeping trend towards the professionalization of farming is perhaps not recently inaugurated but, rather, as explored in Chapter Four, represents merely the contemporary manifestation of a centuries-old process of surplus production and slow economic opening, initiated prior to but exacerbated through the period of colonial rule. Though the processes underway in Cambodia are certainly the product of the Kingdom's own unique historical trajectory, then, there are nonetheless parallels with patterns of agrarian change evidenced elsewhere in the region (Rigg 2005).

Indeed, as Rigg explores, throughout the 1970s and 1980s, there reigned pessimistic outlook on the ability of agricultural production to sustain livelihoods in rural areas of many parts of Asia: with authors predicting a looming poverty crisis from Indonesia (Cederroth 1995), through the Philippines (Eder 1999; Hayami and Kikuchi 2000), Thailand (Molle and Thipperwal Srijantr 1995) and Nepal (Blaikie et al 2002). Malthusian concern about the speed of population growth in a context of fixed land resource was the chief agitator. However, fears that rural areas would be driven into deep poverty were partially alleviated by twin factors: first, an intensification of production that increased annual crop cycles and employed new technology in order to substantially raise yields; and, second, the evolution of national economies to diversify income opportunities. Instead of the general 'slide into deepening poverty for the majority of the population' that Blaikie et al. (2002:1267) warned of, therefore, the wider structural changes to local village livelihoods has been much more complex.

Two broad trends resulted (Rigg 2005): as non-farm opportunities proliferated, household began to devote time and labour to these activities and had to adapt to these agricultural practice to compensate for the decline in resources available to farm work, investing in labour-saving technology. The longer-term effect of these shifts on poverty and inequality through the region is harder to discern, however. For example, whilst Hayami and Kikuchi (2000) observe through longitudinal data that land in Central Luzon, in the Philippines, has concentrated over a period of thirty years in the possession of village elites, little difference in the distribution of income has occurred alongside. A second study, by Eder (1999), suggests that though concentration occurs, the majority of sales are voluntary and purposive strategies to optimise use of household resources, rather than propelled through distress.

In Veal Rien, the testimony of the dominant groups tends to accord with this optimistic representation. In the contemporary era, the two fractions of the dominant class have experienced changing relations with land, natural resources and farm work, though in quite different ways. The agrarian proto-capitalist class represents those households who have expanded and intensified their farm production. The emergent professional and technical elite have, contra, scaled back their reliance on the land and, in some cases, have started to move away from farm production altogether. Together they exemplify the variant strategies of distinction that advantaged households in Veal Rien have seized the opportunity to pursue as the social and economic landscape of the village has transformed over recent decades.

However, the trajectories of less advantaged groups challenge Eder's voluntaristic interpretation of change. The dominated classes, too, have experienced great shifts in the means and manner of their livelihoods. As the oscillation of the material and social relations of production in Veal Rien has made proto-capitalists of some farming households, it has made a peasantariat of others. The peasantariat form one fraction of the dominated class, located in the bottom left quadrant of the visualisation of Veal Rien's social space. The households that comprise this fraction are those whose land plot is insufficient to feed their household for the duration of the year. At one margin, these households, like Mom's, may have a total lack of agricultural land; at the other, they may retain some land but its productive capacity is severely limited relative to need, bestowing a median rice consumption deficit of three months and, accordingly, allowing little option to sell a share of their crop for profit.

With typically limited educational capital, industrial forms of employment are not as readily available to household members within this fraction and, thus, their means of subsistence are pursued through recourse to local natural resources. Though, as figure 5.1 above suggests, they are characterised by a lack of consumer assets, like motorbikes and televisions, they do have some measure of productive assets, notably motorboats and livestock. Thus, they breed and rear animals on a small scale and fish, for sale or consumption, as an additional source of income.

The description of this fraction thus far resembles that of a traditional peasantry, with a self-sufficient reliance on the exploitation of household labour and natural resources. However, this fraction is also Veal Rien's principal stock of locally hired seasonal labour. The performance of such labour takes two forms: agricultural, work on the farms of others; and non-agricultural, including casual employment washing dishes or building marquees in the annual wedding season that follows the wet rice harvest. This fraction, thus, is that most resonant with the common depiction of the *neak kraa* as 'the one that the *neak mean* hires'. They are, thus, a rural proletariat as much as a peasantry.

The second fraction of Veal Rien's dominated class are its manual industrial workers and petty merchant traders, located in the upper right quadrant. This fraction is Veal Rien's least endowed of economic capital: the majority of households, 17 of 23 (74%) are landless and the remainder have plots that produce a median six month rice deficit; few have livestock or productive assets; and the propensity of households to save is the lowest among all groups (24%). The education of this group, however, though on average less than that of the technical fraction of the dominant class, is higher than that of the peasantry and their income sources are markedly different from this other fraction of the *neak kraa*. Very few fish or raise cattle (8.2%); instead, over half of households (56%) have some form of petty enterprise and more yet (64%) are engaged in forms of more permanent waged labour beyond the village, some who remain living at home and some who have moved to work away, either in one the many factories and businesses that have been established over the last decade in the immediate local area or further afield.

The manual and merchant class, then, are those who have ceased reliance on the village's natural resources almost entirely, deriving an income more or less wholly from industrial wage labour or petty trade. Like, the dominant class, then, both fractions of the *neak kraa* have also experienced rapidly changing relationships with land and production.

The position of households within social space as appears at present is not fixed, however. Indeed, nor is the shape of that space itself. The distribution and composition of resources is dynamic rather than static and, in the process of this transmutation, the contours of social space and the arrangement of households relative to it are perpetually reconfigured. Households do take steps to secure their privilege where they can. Generally, this is a possibility afforded to the better off, as in the case of the cultural capital acquisition strategies detailed above that can be read as attempt to maximise the chances of the reproduction of advantage across generations in uncertain times. Households also attempt to maximise the economic capital that will be available to their progeny in this respect; Thim (2013, per. comm., 17th April), for example, has made piecemeal purchase of a hectare of land over the past five years because, 'I had to ensure that I have a good inheritance for my youngest daughter'.

Their efforts are rarely guaranteed, however, and residents in the village can recall examples of those who have been favoured or execrated by guile and fortune over the years and, thus, have redefined their location within Veal Rien's social space. Chhoeun (2013, per. comm., 8th August 2013), a landless widow, explained thus:

'It is possible that the *neak mean* can become the *neak kraa* – like if they do the farm but it is a bad year and they cannot collect the rice. This can mean they become bankrupt. People borrow money from Acleda [Bank] that they say they will pay back when the rice comes. But about once a year there is somebody who becomes bankrupt because they cannot get the rice'.

In recognising that class location is a fluid descriptor rather than a fixed determiner, the analysis offered above does not run counter to these suggestions, thus, nor to the prevalent concepts of churning poverty and 'livelihood turbulence' (Rigg and Salamanca 2015) that are often identified as a feature of inequality in rural areas across Southeast Asia or the South more broadly (Rigg 2012). In the example above, the household in question – losing economic resources in the form of the rice crop, first, and then the measures that will need to be taken to repay the credit – would incur a movement through Veal Rien's social space along the first dimension, experiencing a relative decline in the overall volume of capital possessed and, potentially, an additional transverse movement along the second dimension as this has, too, been liable to reorder the balance of capital forms that the household possesses.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined the form and properties of the social space in Veal Rien and, in doing so, has evaluated the heuristic use of Bourdieu's class theory towards building an understanding of the class dynamics of rural spaces in Cambodia in an era of rapid economic and social change, a task put forward in first research objective of this PhD thesis. The opening section detailed the broad shifts in economy and society that have served to restructure the organisation of social space in the study site of Veal Rien in recent decades. This was expanded through a case study of two households at extremes of Veal Rien's space of social positions. Analysis of their respective endowments revealed the properties of class in Veal Rien as a dense mesh of assets, abilities and aspirations realised in terms of the volume, composition and trajectory of household ownership of efficacious resources or capitals. To fully make sense of these and reveal the form and shape of class in Veal Rien, the products of a geometric data analysis were displayed and interpreted, a fruitful exercise that identified four principle trajectories of change in the contemporary era and delineated four class fractions according to these arcs. Both quantitative and qualitative data has served to illustrate that there are lucid parallels between the structuring principles of inequality observed in Veal Rien and those noted by Bourdieu in his consideration of Twentieth Century France.

Identifying the theoretical forms and structures of class in such a manner, however, was regarded by Bourdieu, and identified in the theoretical and methodological framework of this PhD, based upon an adaptation of his precepts, as only half the task of fleshing out the dynamics of class. What remains is to capture what Bourdieu (1987:7) described as 'the movement from probability to reality', the mechanisms by which these apparent classes are formed as tangible, practical social groups, who 'identify with one another and act together collectively' (Shucksmith 2012:282). Chapter Six of this PhD, which follows, is tasked with this endeavour and will explore the production of distinction in Veal Rien. This analysis will focus on two principal sources: how class becomes manifest in village discourse and practice, the latter of which will include consideration of the consumption strategies of households. This next chapter will, thus, notably turn attention to the second research objective established in this PhD, which seeks to understand how consumption, in its role as 'sign', underwrites the structures of Cambodian social space.

As the previous chapter sought to demonstrate, running counter to the persistent national narrative of agrarian homogeneity – ‘a nation of farmers’ (McCargo 2014; Derks 2008) – beloved in Khmer literature and popular culture alike (Nepote and King 1981), the unending rice fields of inner Cambodia are in fact varied, stratified and unequal places. Nevertheless, this position is based in livelihoods analysis and statistical examination. The question remains as to how pervasive the popular fallacy of sameness remains even in and amongst the farmers, fishermen and businessmen who comprise the kaleidoscope of rural life in Veal Rien. First impressions suggest that the equality narrative survives confrontation with the evidence with ease. ‘We are all the same’ is a frequent refrain. Nevertheless, it is unwise to take such statements at face value. Such words may be peacekeeping and conciliatory, but they do not reflect ignorance of the differences with which Veal Rien’s residents are daily faced.

The previous chapter having posited a theoretical model of the class structure in the primary study site of Veal Rien, Chapter Six of this PhD thesis explores the constructivist dimensions of class-making in the village, examining the processes by which the classes-on-paper identified therein are realised as bounded, practical social groups. By exploring these mechanisms, the chapter attempts to posit the genesis of ‘habitus’, the sense of class unconsciousness, and therefore furthers the pursuance of the first research objective outlined in this thesis, evaluating of the heuristic use of Bourdieu’s theory of class for understanding the social dynamics of contemporary rural, Southern spaces.

The chapter will, thus, examine the production of practical, material and discursive divisions and differences between the class groups identified in Chapter Five. The chapter has three areas of focus, elaborated in turn: narratives of wealth and poverty; reciprocal strategies of exchange; consumption practices. This latter focus will thus turn attention to the second research objective established in this thesis, which seeks to understand the role of consumption practices in realising the divisions between classed groups within Veal Rien.

Cooperation and collectivism: equality in difference?

On one visit, early in the course of the fieldwork for the purposes of this PhD, the primary study site of Veal Rien appeared transformed for a day. A marquee decked in blue, red and yellow awnings had been erected in the centre of the village, from under which a stack of

loudspeakers regaled Buddhist ceremonial chants. A group of monks dressed in saffron robes sat inside on patterned mats flecked with jade-green ribbons of straw, performing blessings from behind burning incense sticks and piles of fruit, and handing square boxes gift-wrapped in metallic gold paper to a group of residents. The rest of the village milled around: a few houses had their own music playing, dancing had begun, and food and drink were being shared. Srey Leak (2013, per. comm., 31st May) elaborated the source of the commotion:

‘We always have one big party every year after the rice harvest. The villagers organise it together, it is the work of the village chief and a committee of the elders. We share the cost, so that everyone pays a little money to join; a small family can pay just 5000 riel, or 10000 for a medium one. Maybe 15000 if the family is very big. But it is up to you, as well; it depends a little bit on what you are able to pay. The money we share pays for the tent and the speakers and the electricity; these sort of things. On the day of the celebration everyone brings their own food and drink to enjoy...

This year the yield is good: when the harvest is good like this then we will have another party at this time of year to honour the elders of the village. For this, everyone in the village contributes money to buy *sarong* and small things for the house, some food, all the things that the elderly might need, then we invite the monks to give them away to the elderly in a ceremony’.

The organisation and very existence of local celebrations such as these, in which households exhibit apparent strategies of communal reciprocity, joining and sharing together to give thanks for the harvest and ensure the care of vulnerable members, can cloud understandings of social relations within villages like Veal Rien by imparting a firm sense of mutualism and cooperation. When a resident like Ruthy (2013, per. comm., 22nd April) asserts that ‘the relationship between the rich and the poor in this village is normal. Here, we are all the same’, it is easy to point towards occasions like those noted above to corroborate this impression. It is possible to imagine that, despite the disparity patently visible from superficial observations of the physical forms of the village, somehow a shared logic or sentiment of equality might prevail in spite of this difference.

Other villagers, too, opined the cordial nature of Veal Rien’s social relations, making reference to an apparent functional equivalence of divergent social positions. Thаем (2013, per. comm., 16th August), for example, claimed from a farmer’s perspective that, ‘there are not any problems here between the rich and the poor. The rich and the poor get on well. To me, the rich act as normal to the poor because they need the poor to be workers for the rich’. Extrapolating Thаем’s position, the social space of Veal Rien can be

read as one in which households are bound as an inter-dependent collective, in which the interests of rich and poor collude to form a common public good.

Such a stance is not wholly fallacious, for there is clearly some degree of harmony in the fluctuations and interactions of village livelihoods. Though farm owners and farm labourers may take home differently sized slices of profit, they share the same pie, and the hired hands of the village rely on the timely arrival of the rains, just as the landed do. Thus was Mom's (2013, per. comm., 26th June) optimism palpable when the skies of the village finally clouded after a prolonged dry season: 'it is good, look, the rains are coming. Soon there will be so much work to do'. The relative success of the work activity of Veal Rien's landowner and labourers is, therefore, predicated on the fulfilment of the same climatic conditions and to some extent, then, they stand to prosper or fail together: a good crop for the growers means more work opportunities for the pickers and planters, and vice versa.

This homology between the revenues of those involved at the different scales of rice production extends to other activity within the village. The livelihoods of Veal Rien's fishermen are likewise dependent on the local climate: when local flooding negatively impacts returns from farming, it disrupts the returns from fishing activity alongside, as noted Koy (2013, per. comm., 25th April) who explained earlier that 'fishing is hard when there is too much water, we cannot fish when there is a flood'. Where flood waters create a poor season for farmers, then, it will often be a poor season for fishermen too.

The repercussions of a decline in fishing stocks reverberate through the village more widely, affecting those households whose principal source of income is the local or wider trade of the fishermen's catch. Sovann (2013, per. comm., 20th August) was one such vendor:

'I buy the fish from the others in the village early in the morning, just after dawn, then I take it to sell in Phnom Penh, usually at the *Psar Olympic*. I try to get to the market by 7.30. I don't go every day, maybe 5 or 6 days every week, and I usually sell everything by 1 or 2 in the afternoon. The profit you can make is not bad. In the village you can buy the fish for 12 000 riel [\$3] a kilo, then at Phnom Penh you can sell it for 14 000 or 15 000 [\$3.25-\$3.75]. We always buy from the same people so they know that this is price. If I cannot buy enough fish, then I will not go there. If you don't buy enough then you cannot sell enough to make a profit. So if the fishing is bad, it is bad for me too... There is sometimes flooding [which I cannot do anything about], but if it is a problem like the fishermen have a broken net, then I will provide a net for them, so that they can continue to sell to me.'

From Sovann's perspective then, the relationship between those located at the different scales of local fishing activity is akin to that posited by Thaem of the rice production process, defined by a mutual reliance. This is underscored by Sovann's provision of fishing nets to his suppliers, indicative of the endurance of patron-client linkages in the operation of Veal Rien's economy: in return for the loyalty of his clients, the fishermen from whom he purchases tradable stock, Sovann offers favours in the form of material support for their livelihoods. Sovann does not describe his motivations here as altruistic but cites a functional concern to secure his own livelihoods by providing insurance for theirs.

It is not only the livelihoods of those whose incomes are tied directly into the chains of agricultural production and natural resource exploitation who suffer when climatic or other events frustrate this activity. The profits of many village vendors are seasonal, woven into the web of affinity that connects the fortunes of households throughout Veal Rien. Makara (2013, per. comm., 5th June), the village tailor, for example, believed her revenue increased tenfold in the period following the harvest, when most other residents of the village experience the peak of their yearly income:

'Business depends on the season. After harvest, people have more money and there are many celebrations so business is good. Sometimes I have to turn customers away – I can't accept work that I cannot do in time, or the customers will be angry. After the harvest, I might make 10 items each day but other times maybe just two.'

Sereypheap (2013, per. comm., 7th June), the proprietor of Veal Rien's hairdressing and beauty salon, too, felt subject to these annual fluctuations of village income and had taken the decision to operate her shop for only six months of the year, supplementing this activity with work in a garment factory for the remaining period.

'The busy time for this work is the wedding season. I can make 30 000 riel every day. If there are no weddings, there are no customers so this will be much less. Now, I have started to work at the factory in Setbo as there is no work here at the salon when everybody is busy on the farm.'

The beginning of the 'wedding season' in rural Cambodia, to which Sereypheap refers, coincides with the end of the harvest, but this concurrence is not mere chance. The period following the harvest is when households are better able to advance the lump sum that is required for the staging of such celebrations and when, crucially, invitees are most likely to be liquid, so as to be able to reciprocate the gifted donations of cash money required with attendance.

The manner in which life and work in Veal Rien appear to remain structured upon and responsive to the annual cycles and seasonal tribulations of farm production and other ostensibly traditional pursuits, in spite of the recent changes to livelihoods detailed in the previous chapter, seems to confer an essential and authoritative unity to the system of social and economic relations with the village. That the prosperity of household enterprise is, to some extent, bounded to that of neighbours, that there remains some measure of reciprocal support in place, is enough to characterise the social relations of the village, in the view of some residents, as a functional, inter-reliant network of mutual assurance. The assertions made by Thaem and Ruthy, respectively, that 'the rich and the poor get on well' and 'we are all the same here' can be related to this evidence to suggest that Veal Rien remains structured according to putative 'Asian values': that, despite the differences between individuals and households, the normative ethic of community prevails above that of narrow self-interest and thus, in the contemporary era, order, harmony and mutual respect among residents predominates.

This cursory enquiry into the political economy of contemporary Veal Rien, therefore, appear to accord with the 'moral economy' position put forward by authors like Thompson (1971) and popularised in the study Southeast Asia peasant societies, notably through the work of Scott (1977). In the face of such testimony, attempts to relate a framework of class and accordant conflict to Veal Rien's social space appear to flounder. That is, however, until these narratives are understood as a principal site of such conflict. Though surface impressions of Veal Rien garnered from spirited occasions such as the elder festival, described above, suggest that the depictions of village relations as empathetic and egalitarian hold weight, further testimony gleaned from residents as the data collection wore on emphatically challenged this image. The next section of this chapter will explore this testimony, examining village discourse as a site of friction and means of enacting difference between the groups that constitute society in Veal Rien.

The 'lazy' poor and the 'selfish' rich

Thaem and Ruthy, both farmers from Veal Rien's dominant class, espoused in their analysis of a functional equivalence of social positions a self-edifying stance that typified the responses of the more privileged; not recognising, or claiming not to recognise, social differences between themselves and other individuals on the basis of wealth. Interviews with the village's dominated fractions, however, revealed fault lines of tension where resentment quietly simmers and threatens to rupture this pretence of cordiality.

The day after he had sat the national high school finishing exam, Put, one of two students in the village due to graduate that year, was not optimistic about his future. The son of a fishing household, it had taken Put beyond his 23rd year to reach this milestone but he was not sure where he would go from here.

‘It is my dream to study IT but very few students can get scholarships. If I can get a scholarship then I will continue to study. I don’t know much about work opportunities for the young, but I think that if I want to work, I will have to work in Phnom Penh’ (Put 2013, per. comm., 9th August).

He felt he was unlikely to remain in the village. ‘The situation here is bad’, he explained, detailing a broad lack of opportunity but also reflecting on what he perceived as widening inequality within the village and the negative atmosphere it had generated. Counter to Ruthy and Thae’s assertions that ‘we are all the same here’, Put explained that relationships between the rich and poor had deteriorated almost to the point of disintegration.

‘Most of those who are rich in the village look down on the poor. The relationship between the rich and the poor is no good. In my experience, those who are poor will only know the poor. The rich will know the rich. Sometimes the rich don’t want to talk to the poor; it is as if they are not there.’

Many of the poorer residents within village echoed Put’s sentiments. The impacts of the period of Cambodia’s economic boom have largely by-passed them; those impacts they have felt have been negative, such as the rising price of food and other necessities. As those with the least have been pushed to the margins of survival, however, others in Veal Rien have prospered. An, a landless resident, was frustrated by the unwillingness of the rich to acknowledge their own advantaged position, which, as she understood, undermined the status of marginalised households like her own. She railed (An 2013, per. comm., 16th August):

‘The rich are the ones who have their own business: they make a living selling things at their house or hiring out the machine when people need to make the fields. They have a lot of money from this. But even the rich will always say that they are the poor. They don’t recognise that they are the rich. The way they see the situation is not true. The poor are only those who the other people hire for work.’

Her suggestion that the rich would fail to concede their privilege was borne out by the results of the household survey, which asked each household to judge its relative position

within the village. Of 112 households in Veal Rien who answered the question, only 2 identified as relatively affluent.

The poor, like An, increasingly begrudge what they see as a growing chasm between the rich and the poor. It is commonly understood that inequality within the village is the highest it has ever been and, moreover, is worsening. An continued, 'the rich and the poor get further apart every year. They never get closer'. From next door, her neighbour Chhoeun (2013, per. comm., 8th August), older than An, pitched in, 'in my whole life, it has always been this way. The rich are always rich, and they get richer and richer. For the poor it is the opposite, the one who is poor always becomes poorer'.

Neither An, Chhoeun or Put felt that in spite of the difference between them, the rich of the village assumed some duty of care toward the poor, as the testimony of Sovann and Srey Leak had suggested. Put was dismissive of the notion. 'The rich try to work hard', he said, 'but they are very selfish [*komnañ*]. They do not care about problems of the poor. It is only the organisations that can help the poor in this village'.

In this way, the poor of the village like An, Chhoeun and Put resist the attempts by the rich to paint the social space of Veal Rien as harmonious and uncontested. Through their competing understandings of the nature of social relations, the arena of discourse emerges as a prime site in which the distinct classes attempt to impart legitimacy to their location within the space of social positions by presenting diverse but no less self-justifying visions of the village system. The rich attempt to highlight the commonalities that might be understood as bridging Veal Rien's class divide; the poor, by contrast, point to the intractability of that gulf. These efforts to legitimise their own positions are not superficial, limited to the appearance of social relations as they are performed on an everyday basis with Veal Rien. Rather, the different visions of the social divide as presented by the two groups are rooted in competing conceptualisations of the nature and very origins of wealth and poverty.

At the time the fieldwork was conducted, Chhin had just had a third child. She operated a small stall in the neighbouring village of Roka, next to a local garment factory, selling food to the workers as they left at lunch and dinner. She had been vendor since leaving school; her family had always been landless so there was no farm to work on. Just as when she was young, her mother prepared the food at home each morning and Chhin (2013, per. comm., 12th August) would collect it to sell in the afternoon:

‘It has changed a bit from before. Before we only sold eggs fried with noodles and vegetables, now I sell something different depending on the day: corn, banana cake maybe, or pork and rice. We will get more customers if we change each day.’

The profit derived from this enterprise totalled \$10 every two days, she estimated, and was supplemented by what her husband could find fishing. She was concerned about how she and her husband would be able to afford to raise another child on this income. Right now, in particular, one daughter was sick and they needed to fix the roof on their house. It would be better, she said, if they could build a new house like that being constructed over the road – tall, wooden, strong – but she was not sure it would be possible.

‘The problem with the small houses is that they are always broken: this year you have to fix one wall, next year you will have to replace the roof. The big houses are better because they are durable and strong... The ones [who have houses] like this, they are rich. They got some money from the past generation [*neak chumnoan mun*]. It means they always have land. If they have land, they can get more... [Say,] they have a two-wheel tractor: the other people can come and rent this machine so they make much more money. Or, another thing, like a cow: they keep this cow and they will make more money. One cow will give them one more cow.’

Chhin’s understanding of the nature of local inequality, as revealed here, is mirrored in Chi’s assessment of the trajectory of the poor as discussed in Chapter Five: ‘they have only the body. If they have nothing what can they do?’ Both represent the cause of inequality as an entrenched structural (dis-)advantage that is reproduced in a manner of escalating degrees: the rich locked in a virtuous cycle of return; the poor, a vicious cycle of lack. These cycles, as are they are understood, are inter-generational and notoriously difficult to break. Chhin continued:

‘It is not too easy for the poor to become the rich one, really not too easy for them. For the poor to become the rich, this too I have rarely seen. Maybe I have seen this once since I came here [to marry], because they got sick’.

In such an understanding, the seasonal fluctuations and lifetime trajectories of the rich and poor no longer appear harmonious, bound by an essential unity, but incongruent, even contradictory.

Sophat (2013, per. comm., 19th May), another of Veal Rien’s landless residents, had a yet more sophisticated analysis. To him the interaction between household livelihoods at different scales was not a source of mutual assurance within the village, as sketched by some wealthy farmers, but fundamentally antagonistic.

‘The rich build the houses like this because they want to show that they have money. You know, if they show that they have money, then the poor will go to ask if they can borrow some money from them because the poor, they always have a need for money. But when the poor borrow from the rich, the rich make money from that money. If you ask for one hundred dollars, they will say ‘Ok, but you must give back to me one hundred and fifty’. Everything here follows this way. The rich have land, so the poor send their children to do the work on the farm. The poor work to make money for the rich.’

In Sophat’s view, wealth and poverty are not disparate states of being but relational categories: the poor labour to perpetuate their enduring disadvantage by producing wealth for rich.

The estimations of the dominated class, like Sophat and Chhin, thus configured poverty and wealth alike as systemic features of the organisation and dynamics of the social space of the village. Inequality was described as the product of a relational, reproducible and largely immutable hierarchy. Whatever the truth to their suppositions, this vision of Veal Rien’s social divide is, vitally, one which serves to ameliorate their responsibility for and, thereby, communally and socially sanction their stubborn subaltern location at the base of the village’s structures of wealth and power.

These systemic readings of stratification and differentiation were notably absent from the testimony of those at the opposing periphery of Veal Rien’s social topography. By village standards, Chhoy (2013, per. comm., 9th August), for example, now in her fifties and retired, had lived a rather illustrious life. Following the establishment of the PRK government at the end of the Khmer Rouge period, she was elected by villager members to sit on the commune council. She held this post for the better part of two decades, before stepping down in 1999 to take up a position working locally for an NGO concerned with gender issues in rural areas. These high status roles had garnered a local reverence that remained though the roles themselves were now formally ended.

‘My family has not had a problem with the police or the authorities before. We would not have a problem with the police because they respect [*korup*] my family. I am not sure why exactly; they believe that we are powerful [*mean omnaach*]’.

Chhoy had witnessed much change in the five decades she had lived in the village and acknowledged the development of Veal Rien’s class division. She possessed conviction in her understanding of the roots of this disparity.

‘The village has changed a lot compared to before: now we have roads and schools but before it was very difficult in this village... [Since that time] the rich have become richer. The problem is that they poor don’t try hard to work. The poor are lazy [*khchel*]. That is why they are poor.’

That the poor were ‘lazy’ or unwilling to work hard was a routine charge levelled in the assessments of Veal Rien’s social dynamics offered by members of the village’s dominant class. Rather than viewing poverty as a structural facet of the village’s organisation, then, the elite render it a moral construct, the product of deviancy. The notion that impropriety is endemic among the poorer fractions of the village is reinforced by other negative stereotyping that emphasises the centrality of vice in the lifestyle of the dominated classes: ‘they spend all of their money on drinking and gambling’ (Srung 2013, per. comm., 28th May); ‘they don’t want to work, they only want to play cards’ (Prak 2013, per. comm., 14th June).

Where the dominant classes related accounts of downward social mobility, they did so not through recourse to stories of household crises resulting from economic shocks, such as the ill health or death of family members, as did the poorer fractions, but with reference to the perceived gratuitous and improvident acts and behaviours of individuals. Sothea (2013, per. comm., 15th August, interview conducted in English), a village resident and primary school teacher on a break from studying toward an MA in China on a government scholarship, reported the example of a local man whose family had been almost bankrupted through his apparent gambling habit:

‘Most of people who are rich in the countryside... they try their best to be the rich one because they are afraid of being poor... [F]or me, I just can see only two people [who have been rich and then become poor]. One is, I think, because of he is [a] gambler. So before he [worked]... sell[ing] the pork. He is so rich. But because he always spen[t] time in the weekend to [go to] the pub or to play games, so now he [has] become the poor one... [I]t’s very hard for him and he told me because he, I don’t know how to say it, he like[d] the game very much and everything could not change... When he get the poor one, he said, it is very hard. He said when he is poor and become[s] rich, and when he is poor [and] become[s] poor[er] and poor[er], is not too difficult. But when he is rich become poor, it is very hard to see everyone around him. For many rich, they keep themselves well: when they do anything they do it carefully because they are afraid of [being] poor. They are afraid of [the] poor[’s] situation.’

A compelling feature of Sothea’s account is his description of the social anxiety that torments the unidentified character as a result of his social trajectory: the shame and distress that accompanies his new social position, despite that, in Sothea’s narrative, the

locus of the individual's action appears rooted in the mitigating circumstance of addiction. All of this suggests the obdurate, deeply ingrained nature of the doctrines of moral corruptibility that signify and desecrate the structural locations of the poor in the conception of the dominant classes.

The dominant classes of Veal Rien also differed in their evaluation of the feasibility of ascendant social trajectories. Where for the poorer fractions this was frequently perceived as unimaginable or, at least, improbable, the dominant had a simple solution to their counterparts' plight. 'Of course it is possible for the poor to become rich', explained Srung (2013, per. comm., 25th May). 'The people who are poor must try to work hard so that they can become rich'. Thus, again, the onus is placed on the poor themselves as architects of their own estate, culpable for their social position through their immoral aversion to the rigours of labour, toil and exertion.

It is this prevalent notion that the base behaviour of the dominated fractions is the very cause of their subaltern status within the village that enables the dominant fractions of Veal Rien to so vehemently reject the idea of a social division on the basis of wealth. Their representation of Veal Rien's social space of positions as undergirded by an ethical framework, rather than any material structure, postulates the contours of differentiation within the village as marked by a moral pivot. The dominant classes may therefore protest that 'the people in the village do not reflect on the money of people, only their behaviour', as claimed Savung (2013, per. comm., 9th August), a resident married to a cassava plantation owner. Sothea (2013, per. comm., 15th August, interview conducted in English), similarly, professed that the educated – by the very nature of that descriptor implicitly meaning those among the dominant classes – did not base social estimations of the worth of individuals and households on measures of wealth but moral character.

'For the one who attend education system, they respect anyone just basing on good activity; good characteristic; he is good citizen. We did not view more value on property, the one who have more education always provide value to the people who think in common sense: kind, resourceful and the good one always help the people. We always respect to that kind of people... We know clearly about the real value of the person'.

In so far as poverty is popularly viewed by these classes as a symptom of morally disparaged behaviours rather than the obverse, Savung and Sothea's assertions are neither functional assessments of village life nor the didactic solutions they present them as. Rather, they constitute a means of legitimating the class structure of Veal Rien as it stands.

In this manner, the dominant and dominated, alike, compete to represent Veal Rien's social topography in popular imagination in a form that legitimates their respective location and simultaneously renders their opposition morally culpable for the divisions that cleave Veal Rien in the contemporary era – whether through 'lazy' or 'selfish', 'kchel' or 'komnañ', behaviours and attitudes.

Confounding the myth of functional equivalence postulated at the outset of this chapter, this section has examined village narratives on wealth and poverty as a site of friction between the classes that comprise society in Veal Rien. Discourse within the village is, it has been illustrated, both classified and classifying. Individuals who occupy similar structural locations in the village share similar outlooks; position fosters disposition. Yet village discourse also contributes towards the (re-)production of social divides, naturalising and thereby legitimising inequality by 'making the divisions of social space appear rooted in the inclinations of individuals rather than the underlying distributions of capital' (Wacquant 2007:272).

Moreover, just as the influence of differing livelihoods are felt also in the various narratives and perspectives which interweave the community in Veal Rien, however, this continual process of division and stratification is not limited, either, to words and wider discourse. Indeed, the differing positionalities and perspectives, outlined above, are not merely known but performed by their bearers. One of the ways in which this manifests is in the differing approaches to supposedly communal festivities. Rather than being a space where villagers meet on equal footing, the manner of participation in ceremonies and social groupings of all other sorts is predicated upon the class location of the participant. What follows shall explore this reinforcing role.

Reciprocity: mutual assurance or exclusion? The wedding gift system in Veal Rien

The celebrations which characterise village life during the 'wedding season' following the annual harvest are not only a means to bind the community, but also to disaggregate and distinguish them. Even those practices which seem most clearly reciprocal are undergirded by an implicit directionality which reinforces the uneven relationship between giver and receiver; powerful and powerless.

Though wedding celebrations are a ubiquitous and ostentatious feature of Cambodian society, to date most mention of such events in the contemporary literature has focused on the significance of these occasions to Khmer cultural life, exploring the meaning and

renewal of traditions such as costume, dance and song (Grant 2014; Jaehnichen 2012; McKinley 1999). The colour of such events entails that they frequently garner cursory descriptive mention in the geographical and other social science literature, but there have been few efforts to date to relate such occasions to the structure and dynamics of social organisation.

To host a marriage celebration with the requisite dose of pomp and circumstance comes at considerable financial expense to rural households. Several rituals and ceremonies must be observed, with festivities spaced over the course of a full day. The revelry begins just after dawn when the groom leads a procession of his family members and wedding party to the bride's house to make a formal offering of fruit and other gifts to his new wife's family. Outside the home, a temporary marquee will have appeared overnight, the same base structure that is wheeled out for all manner of village rites draped in sunshine yellow and cerise fabrics for the occasion of weddings. A floral arch and a photo of the couple in ceremonial outfits at their engagement – usually liberally photo-shopped to banish blemishes and make the pair appear lighter-skinned – wait to welcome callers. Even at this hour, a hired PA system and assembly of speakers, often stacked as wide and tall as the tent itself, will be reminding Veal Rien's residents of the impending nuptials at soaring decibel levels; round tables surrounded by eight to ten chairs each, all garlanded with satin coverings and bows, laid out in anticipation of guests.

Over the course of the day, as the couple perform cleansing hair cutting and other rituals inside the house, and have their union blessed by monks, guests trickle in and out to take their seats. As proceedings wear on, a banquet is served to tables; the bride and groom appear at intervals to check on guests and display a cycle of costume changes that can run into double figures, overseeing the steady delivery of a good number of dishes and liberal flow of drinks. The feast fuels a party that lasts beyond dusk, into the night, where guests clink glasses to cheers of '*chul muoy!*' ['finish it in one!'] and dance in circular motion around a centrepiece of fruit, a slow performance of elegant hand gesture and posturing. This format is almost always the same in Veal Rien, with seemingly little expense spared by the host household. At one wedding, Visal (2013, per. comm., 18th April), the young groom, was complimented by a friend on his sixth costume change of the day. 'Yes, everything is beautiful! Today I am a rich man', he laughed, 'but tomorrow, so poor!'

As Visal observed, the price of such frivolity is not cheap. Together, the 114 households of Veal Rien catalogued 56 separate marriage ceremonies taking place within the village over

the past five years. The median cost of these occasions was \$1200. To place this spending into context, the average household had put a sum equivalent to 194% of their annual food budget toward funding this celebration. The opulence is incongruous with the hardship that many households declare, and it is difficult to fathom how households of limited means can afford to finance such apparent extravagance.

A clue comes in the form of an envelope with gold-gilt, one of which is circulated to every family in attendance at some point during the ceremony or, prior, with the distribution of formal invitations. These envelopes are returned to the host during the celebration, filled with gifts of cash currency. Within the village around 30,000 or 40,000 riel is typically offered by each household, \$7.50 to \$10, though relatives and family members may bestow larger gifts of \$10 to \$25 to their hosts. In total, host households can hope to raise hundreds of dollars in this manner to subsidise, or often exceed, the cost of staging their events.

Though it may appear, therefore, that households render themselves liable to significant financial risk, staking a relative fortune on the generosity of attendees, this is mitigated by stringent norms of reciprocity that underlie these exchanges. That reciprocal mechanisms undergird the dynamics of gift exchange in communities is not, in itself, surprising but the structure and rigour with which these systems of reciprocal transactions are ordered and maintained in Veal Rien is particularly compelling.

Invitations to marriage celebrations are, for example, restricted to those who have a need to enter into the reciprocal contract or an outstanding obligation to the host household. Moreover, invitees weigh decisions on whether to attend based on such criteria. Chariya (2013, per. comm., 4th June), a 27 year old mother of two young children, had not been to many weddings recently; she explained that the household had been invited to very few.

‘This year I joined the wedding of three cousins, but the other villagers did not invite this family to any ceremonies. They don’t invite us because the family is only young, we have very small children. Normally they only invite the families that have older children. So only my parents will get the invite. I myself only go to the weddings of my relatives.’

With several years having passed since her own wedding, Chariya has fulfilled the most of her commitment to reimburse her own guests for their benevolence. With her children still young, she will not need to solicit wedding gifts for her own family for many years. Accordingly, she is, if temporarily, removed from obligations to attend ceremonies and

participate in these gift exchange rituals. Her parents with further sons and daughters approaching marriageable age, however, remain embedded within the system.

Prak had recently wed and the cost of reciprocating to those who had contributed to his own ceremony was taking its toll. He complained:

‘In the last year, I have had to attend so many weddings. It is not easy for us because if we join, we have to give money. I received twenty or thirty invitations. I just got married so I have to go to them all’ (Prak 2013, per. comm., 14th June).

The reciprocal nature of the wedding gift system in Veal Rien, though tacitly agreed, is not loosely defined. The manner in which households reimburse contributions they have collected has few imprecise elements; hosts do not, for example, merely estimate the sum that they “owe” to the community and then seek to re-inject a like amount randomly into the system. Rather, the structure of the commitment between households is bilateral and the debt specific. Prak (2013, per. comm., 14th June) explained, ‘when we get the money, we write it down inside the book, so that we know what we should give back to the other family’. Thus, hosts carefully journal their guests’ donations, maintaining a written log of what is owed to each attendee, which is reference to proffer a matching sum at the return event.

The rigour with which these bilateral structures of reciprocity are adhered to in Veal Rien entails that households in the village have a reasonable idea, when planning celebrations or ceremonies, of what they can expect to recoup toward the cost of financing this activity. Though Visal, above, joked that the sums he had levelled on celebrating the occasion of his wedding would impoverish him, the risks that his household had taken in paying for the outright cost of the wedding were far more circumspect. Later, he confided that the household had made a small profit on the immediate occasion and he was thinking about using this capital to enable his new wife to pursue an accounting qualification at a small training centre near to the room they rent whilst working away in Phnom Penh.

Building on the work of Mauss (1924), commentators often highlight the positive, cohesive role of strategies of mutual gift exchange for social organisation. In particular, authors working in Southeast Asia (Welch 2014) and beyond (Cnaan et al. 2014; Brandes 1973; Beals 1970) have identified and explored similar reciprocal systems of cash-gift exchange at wedding ceremonies, depicting them as a glue that binds communities: forging solidarity and functioning as insurance scheme, or an alternative savings mechanism, that permits households to obtain the necessary (large) sums of money need to host wedding

ceremonies and establish new residences for offspring as they come of age. However, examining the precise mechanics of the politics of gift-giving at wedding ceremonies in Veal Rien suggests that there is an external negative function to these interactions, what Portes and Landolt (2000) describe as the 'dark side' of social capital. As such, these findings contribute to a counter-current of thought (Vasile 2015; Soucy; Yan 2013), which emphasises how strategies of gift exchange at wedding ceremonies can codify friction and fracture between social groups, and reinscribe social hierarchies.

In the first place, the strict regulation of adherence to the reciprocal norms that underpin gift exchange at wedding ceremonies works to exclude the poor from participating in the system. Those families who would stand to benefit most from this strategy of mutual assurance are therefore denied the opportunity. Chea and Thav have a daughter who has just married and two sons in their late teens. A landless household, they derive income from industrial labour: all three men live in the dormitory of a factory that makes piping in the local town of Prek Long; the daughter still lives with her parents as her husband has just migrated to find fishing work in Thailand, and works in a small garment factory in the neighbouring village of Andong. Chea stays at home to care for their three youngest, school-age children. With several 'older children' the family might, according to Chariya, above, have expected a recent surge in requests to attend ceremonies. Yet this has not been the case, Chea (2013, per. comm., 8th August) contended: 'so far the village has asked me to join only two weddings, but I did not go because I have no money'. Chea and her family, by virtue of their limited means, are rarely welcome at ceremonies and, additionally, are hesitant to participate even where hospitality is extended due to their inability to offer a cash contribution that would be deemed worthy by their hosts.

Chab and his wife also have two single children at home in their late teens and two children who have just married, for whom they have built new houses next door to their own, sharing their residential plot. All three households now farm rice, grow mushrooms, fish and raise pigs. As their offspring have come of age, they have seen their social stock rise. Chab (2013, per. comm., 6th June) explained, 'in the past two years, I have been to so many weddings it is difficult to remember [the exact amount]. This month alone I have received ten invites. This is not a strange month; now in the wedding season this is normal for us'. Unlike Chea, Chab is able to afford the pecuniary liability that accompanies sharing in the celebration of Veal Rien's social rites of passage. That the gift exchange system predicated the allocation of invitations to ceremonies, then, has the effect of ostracising the poor, not

just from the measure of risk-pooling that the gift system might be seen to present, but from participating in the social life of the village more broadly.

As significant in terms of reinforcing the social divisions that characterise Veal Rien is the variation in the size of donations tendered and received at weddings. Though 30,000 to 40,000 *riel* represents the modal amount extended by households to those outside their immediate family, there are notable outliers: wealthier residents like Chhoy, the former commune councillor, Yun (2013, per. comm., 12th August) proprietor of the village coffee shop, and Mith (2013, per. comm. 19th August), for example, reported typical gifts of 50 000 to 60 000 *riel*.

A cursory examination of this quantitative data suggests that the size of payments bears positive correlation to the relative economic and/or social standing of donor households. Such an assessment oversimplifies the structure of the wedding gift system, however, as qualitative accounts of gift extension and collection from Veal Rien's residents clarify. It is not merely that wealthy households give more. Rather, the appropriate amount to bequest at celebrations is the product of a calculus that, like the kinship nomenclature that governs pronoun use and interpersonal reference in Khmer language and society (see Chapter Four), considers most vital the nature of the relation that exists between the two parties. The social network of Sothea (2013, per. comm., 15th August, interview conducted in English), a teacher born in a rural village, who has undertaken study towards a Bachelor's degree in Phnom Penh and is now completing an MA in China, is among the most varied in the village. He related the formula according to which his personal decisions on suitable contributory amounts to proffer are appraised:

'This year I did not go to join any weddings because I was in China, but the year before I went to join my friend's wedding... We have to give the money to join... For me, the less people start from ten dollars upwards. The most people, around forty or fifty for the people who have more income. But if they are in the government, or those who can gain more income [still], maybe one hundred or one hundred and fifty'.

Despite his superior social position, indicated by the economic advantages and cultural prestige that Sothea's work and educational activity both generate and require, as detailed in Chapter Five, the customary gifts that he extends to most households within the village are equivalent to those at the opposite pole of Veal Rien's social topography. This is because, as the rigorous and bilateral structure of the wedding gift system dictates, Sothea is required only to bestow on his neighbours what they have already or may be expected, in

future, to bestow on his own household. It is to his social superiors that Sothea bequeaths the largest amount of sponsorship, in amounts that increase as the social cleft between himself and his host widens.

That the dominant classes of Veal Rien purport to offer greater donations at marriage ceremonies is, therefore, not indicative that households of greater means have greater propensity to contribute to weddings, or perform acts of greater generosity or benevolence in doing so. It indicates that they move in social circles of greater distinction – or, perhaps, that they would like to convey such an impression. Actuality and intent, here, are almost equally relevant to the aims of this chapter and, moreover, supportive of its findings.

An interesting feature of this hierarchical ordering of wedding gifts is the almost inverse corruption of patron-client norms that they display. The dominant reserve their largest measures of support not for competition over recruitment and retention of clients, but for gifting to one other. This is still a form of contest: in this respect, for example, it is instructive that Sothea gives less to those, like his neighbours, to whom his superior wealth, merit or distinction have been a priori established and more to those he has much left to prove. Previously, however, the externalities of this competition worked, to some extent, to favour the less well off. Now these acts of competition among the dominant have the grander and ironic outcome of forging alliance. By (re-)distributing wealth at the upper echelons of society and inhibiting the trickle-down effect, the dominant thereby collude to preserve and assert their collective privilege. The system thus evidences a measured shift in rural society, according to which the prime lines of social division in the village are no longer, as might once have been the case, among those who reside at the peaks of the acclaimed pyramidal structures of patronage networks but between those who occupy these spires and the remainder who constitute the base.

The wedding gift system therefore fulfils a central ordering role in Khmer society, delineating social division and (re-)producing social hierarchy through the bounded social practices of individuals and collectives. In giving, receiving and reciprocating wedding favours, households tacitly demonstrate their understanding of the configuration of the space of social positions within Veal Rien and beyond, and their actions reaffirm and reify the symbolic order of these structures.

This section has demonstrated, thus, that practices as well as perspectives within the village function as both products and performances of classed differences between groups in Veal Rien's society. Building on this analysis, the next section of this chapter will turn attention

to the ordering role of consumption practices within the village, addressing the second research objective outlined in this thesis, defining the role that consumption plays in manifestations of class.

Consumption and habitus: classed preference and practice

Beyond their function as a stage for the direct transfer of cash gifts, marriage ceremonies are, themselves, imbued with a deeply significant symbolic role in the ordering of village society. That the format and features of these celebrations is broadly uniform can inhibit such recognition. To the external gaze, at least, the deployment of status signifiers appears subtle: the costumes, routine and setting of most weddings are markedly similar. Yet nuanced difference in this staple ornamentation of ceremonies belies a discrete coding of these features. Veal Rien's residents are able to delicately interpret devilish details that betray the social position of hosting households. Quantity and quality are both important here: there is variation in the scale of the tent that holds the banquet and the number of costume changes; a household may dress the marquee in fresh-cut or artificial flowers, leave bottles of spirits or soft-drinks on tables for guests, have music from a live band or a recording piped through the speaker stack, and so forth. The differences may not appear much to outsiders, but the slight touches are emblems of sophistication in the estimations of rural inhabitants. 'This is the wedding of a rich person', explained one onlooker at a wedding in the market town of Prek Long, 'you can just tell, it is more beautiful [*s'aart cheang*]'.

The quantitative data collected from the household survey supports these observations, as demonstrated in Table 6.1. There is significant variance in the sums that households of different classes report spending on weddings; a feature that may, in part, derive from the structuring of the gift system, as above, that brings greater return to better off households. Chab and Chea, examples from antithetical extremities of the Veal Rien's social topography, each had a daughter marry last year. Chab, part of the village's landed elite, spent more than \$1300 on his daughter's celebration but Chea, from the factory labour fraction, less than \$250.

Table 6.1: Wedding expenditure by household class fraction

	Dominant class		Dominated class	
	Technical and professional	Agrarian capitalist	Merchant and manual	Peasantariat
<i>N</i> households hosting wedding ceremony in past five years	14	14	13	15
Mean cost of wedding (\$)	1600	1700	1100	900
Median cost of wedding (\$)	1750	1500	1000	1000

Mean and median cost rounded to the nearest \$100.

(Source: Household survey data, 2013).

From this data, a picture emerges of marriage ceremonies as a further site for the production of distinction among Veal Rien’s residents, enacted through practices of conspicuous forms of consumption. These practices are, as Bourdieu asserted, both a structured and structuring facet of village life. Structured, because they emanate principally from the classed conditions of their hosts: a manifestation of the volume of economic and cultural capital that households have earned, saved, or otherwise accrued through, for example, the system of reciprocal gift-giving. Yet they are, too, structuring, because they concretise the underlying differences between groups in society and reaffirm class divides in popular imagination.

Bourdieu was adamant, however, that consumption need not be conspicuous to be symbolic, instead demonstrating that even the most everyday practices are imbued with these inherent structured and structuring properties. Examining the stated preferences and habits of Veal Rien’s residents, the notion that even the most personal questions of taste are, contrarily, consequences of the most impersonal conditions can be reliably upheld. The testimony of villagers reveals that the daily diet, attire, and leisure activity of individuals and household groups in the village all bear a discrete coding.

For the poorer fractions of the village, meals are relatively simple and uniform: rice and local vegetables are staple foods, supplemented by fish from the local lake when it can be found. ‘We are lucky, we can find our food from the environment’, explained Hour (2013, per comm., 15th August), a fisherman from one of Veal Rien’s poorer class fractions. ‘We have to spend a little on rice, but I fish everyday so I never have to buy something to eat

like meat'. Using wood-fuelled fires or small gas-burning stoves, they cook meals at home, rarely indulging in the wares of itinerant food sellers or market stalls. Such spoils are regarded as an unnecessary expense. Another fisherman (Sun 2013, per. comm., 3rd June) complained,

'The food at restaurants is too expensive – if we always go there, we will be bankrupt. I think that it is the same food if you cook for yourself or if you buy it from the seller, but one is more expensive. I never go to buy food from somebody else. It is a waste of money.'

The dominant classes exercise more variety in their nutritional decisions. Whereas, for the poor, poultry or pork is regarded as a luxury to be consumed only on special occasions, these meats are part of the daily diet of wealthier households. When they cook, they do not source ingredients directly, through fishing or foraging for wild plant life, but purchase materials from shopkeepers and market traders. Sothea (2013, per. comm., 15th August, interview conducted in English) recounted his household's customary meal habits:

'At breakfast there are many sellers [who visit the village to sell food]. They drive motorbikes and they sell bread and many cakes that they brought from Takeo or Takhmao city centre. They take to sell along the way and we can call them. Other times we can cook for ourselves. We have one small market over there and one shop over there: they cook breakfast, they cook lunch. So if we don't have time we can go and buy it. But often we cook by ourselves. We can go to the market to buy some meat and we can prepare it for our breakfast, our lunch, our dinner. Normally my wife and my wife's sister like meat or fish. But now I try to change for more vegetables. That is more important for our health. So we eat meat every day, but we mix with vegetables.'

Though the poorer fractions are wary of frittering even small amounts of money on meals and snacks touted by local hawkers, the better off fractions exhibit far less restraint. On her family's interactions with street vendors, Srey Leak (2013, per. comm., 31st May) elaborated:

'For breakfast, I never cook the meal. There is an aunt in the village who walks round in the morning selling noodle soup, so my husband and I buy the soup for breakfast from her. Always this same lady, because she is the one who makes it best. I sometimes buy food from the other sellers too: my son always asks me to buy ice cream because it is his favourite so I have to buy some every time the sellers come around. Sometimes I buy three or four each day but it is cheap, only 500 riel [\$0.12] each time.'

By Srey Leak's most conservative estimate, the family spend more than one dollar each day on the produce of local traders. Though she asserts that this is 'cheap', such a sum is not

trivial by village standards and renders even these penny economy practices beyond the reach of many poorer households. These most micro patterns of consumption, then, serve to signify the pecuniary distance of the dominant fractions from those in the village with fewer economic resources.

Practices of leisure consumption within the village are underscored by similar patterns of preference and motivation. For a young male household head from the poorer fractions of the village, an evening's entertainment with friends may involve a small gathering at a friend, neighbour, or relative's house. Chamroeun (2013, per. comm., 16th August), a near landless farmer and fisherman, described the frequency and form of such an occurrence:

'Sometimes, but not too often, my brother invites me to join small parties at his house, just to enjoy with some friends. If we want, we can play cards, but otherwise we just talk and have some jokes or something small to eat. This is a good area so we can take things from nature like fish, frogs or rats to cook on the fire. Then we don't need to spend anything, except for salt and some wine. For a big occasion, like a holiday, then we might drink beer but normally we share money to buy ricewine'.

Chamroeun's counterparts from Veal Rien's dominant class report different experiences. Thom (2013, per. comm., 19th August), a large landowner and fish trader from the village's agrarian elite, detailed his own social routines:

'For me, if I want to have some fun with my friends, I will invite them to come to my house, maybe two or three times each month. I buy two or three boxes of beer from the shop and my wife will cook a little bit of food to share. Normally the one who invites someone is the one who spends more money than the others. Of course, if I am the one who invites the guests then I should pay for everything, this is polite... Then once or twice a year, we go to Phnom Penh together, four or five people. In the city, we like to go to a soup restaurant and share a meal... We have some drinks too, like Angkor [beer] and then after go to the beer garden'.

On first inspection, both sets of practices appear to be strongly rooted in the accessible logic of what is necessary and what the household can afford. Poorer houses make more compromises to the ease of their lifestyle and the quality of their consumption because, unlike richer households, they cannot afford to do otherwise. Though readily intelligible, however, this interpretation includes an inherent bias towards the richer members of the community, who are implicitly viewed as the "one" from which the "other" poorer deviate. Otherwise put, the rich do what is good, and the poorer do what they can. The result, therefore, is to cast a less stringent examination upon why richer households consume what they do and the wider purpose doing so may serve.

Nevertheless, as Bourdieu (1984) informs us, the everyday actions of rich and poor alike perform a fundamental structuring role within communities and societies at large. Richer villagers choose to consume certain goods not merely because they can, but to demonstrate that they can. Ergo, their choices are rooted in a desire to separate themselves, as far as possible, from those with more limited means. In Veal Rien, this manifests not only in pecuniary value, but in symbolic value also. Certain goods are more expensive when purchased in the village, due to their being imported to, or manufactured in the city. Although cheaper, however, the purchase of the same good in the city is conversely more prestigious, more or less simply because the worse off cannot go there to make the same purchase. The act of buying therefore distinguishes the buyer.

As such, comparing these two sets of classed consumption practices reveals an undergirding, congruent logic, which suggests that the preferences of groups in Veal Rien's society are not arbitrary but situated within a relational system. They appear guided by what Bourdieu describes (1984) as an orienting principle, which confers a semantic unity to the pursuit of lifestyle. In his work on Twentieth Century France, Bourdieu observed that the lifestyles of the dominant and dominated were oriented by relation to distance from pecuniary necessity; principally opposed by disposition to the value of function versus form. This is clearly evident in contemporary Veal Rien, too, where the dominant classes prize economically scarce consumption practices as a measure of their material advantage that serves to distinguish them from the masses.

In addition to pecuniary distance, however, physical or proximate distance also appears a central element in the calculus of consumption practices within Veal Rien. The poorer fractions of the village do not only source cheaper goods but are satisfied with the products of their local environment, both natural and human. The dominant class, however, increasingly look further afield, deploying goods and experiences procured beyond the confines of the village to articulate distinction within it. Where the poor celebrate with small barbecues of local wildlife and shared bottles of ricewine, a spirit distilled within the village from fermented rice grain, the dominant seek alternatives that signify not only greater expense but removed origin, in the form of crates of beer manufactured in industrial locations elsewhere in the country or beyond its borders, and even short trips to experience the aura of city trends.

These twin relations of pecuniary and proximate distancing are evidenced in other consumption practices too. The poorer fractions spend little on clothing, for example.

Their daily attire is usually second hand: sometimes donated by family members or bought from traders who ply used clothing on motorbikes from village to village, selling at a price of a few thousand *riel* per garment. 'I never buy new clothes, I have no money', explained Mach (2013, per. comm., 12th August), one of Veal Rien's petty merchants, with a small grocery store on the edge of the village. 'What I wear is given to me by my relatives. Even if I join weddings, I wear second hand clothes from the sellers who come to the village. I can find something for 1000 or 2000 riel.'

The dominant classes prefer to buy new clothing. 'Maybe I wore old clothes when I was young', mused Sothea (2013, per. comm., 15th August, interview conducted in English), 'but I have not worn second hand clothes since I became a teacher'. They are more discerning and more industrious: willing to travel to town and city to spend much larger amounts on the pursuit of newer fashions. Savung (2013, per. comm., 9th August), the wife of a cassava plantation owner reflected,

'When I want to buy new clothes, I have to go to Takhmao or Prek Long to find the good styles. I go with my husband four or five times a year and we spend \$50 each time... [For a ceremony,] I wear something different. The custom is to wear traditional clothes... made for us by a tailor. I buy new clothes every time I join a wedding of a relative, maybe once every year or two years, from a tailor at Takhmao. We choose the fabric ourselves and we ask her for a style and she can make it. The price depends on what you choose. The last time I bought them, these clothes cost \$70 because I wanted the design to be so beautiful'.

Veal Rien's dominant classes, then, maintain their difference from the village's subaltern groups by invoking consumption choices that demonstrate their economic distance and, additionally, a sense of urbanity and worldliness imparted by the extra-local sourcing of goods.

Underlining these twin taste markers of pecuniary and proximate distance is the nascent but mushrooming popularity of leisure travel among Veal Rien's dominant classes. Travel is a luxury of prime scarcity: it is novel, made possible only through recent improvements to physical infrastructure and national security, and subject to significant opportunity and financial constraint. Households must afford not only the direct expense but the opportunity cost in terms of lost income. Accordingly, there are many individuals within Veal Rien who rarely leave the confines of the village, some never venturing even as far as the local market town of Prek Long. Others, however, have begun to traverse the country,

ticking off sites and provinces as though collecting passport stamps, proudly brandishing these badges of honour.

Srey Leak and her husband, for example, have initiated a household tradition of an annual sightseeing trip, undertaken over the New Year holiday each April. Thus far, they have visited several heritage and tourist sites, taking in a wildlife centre and Angkor-era temple in adjacent provinces, both close to Phnom Penh.

‘The last few years I tried to go and see more of the country. So at Khmer New Year we took the motorbike to visit some new places, the first time to see the animals at Phnom Thmao and the second time to Phnom Chisor. They have a ceremony there you can join, you buy a small Buddha statue to place in the pagoda. It will bring good luck to you’ (Srey Leak 2013, per. comm., 31st May).

Her most treasured experience to date is their most recent trip, to the port town of Kampong Saom on Cambodia’s narrow South coast. ‘Really, I wanted to go to swim in the sea. I had not seen the sea before. I wanted to taste the water to see if it was salty like they say.’ Exploits such as seeing the sea and taking part in small tourist rituals may appear to be quite simple pleasures but for the residents of Veal Rien they function as prized and premium markers of distinction.

Another resident, Chhoy (2013, per. comm., 9th August 2013), regaled her travels over the past year, outlining a concrete ambition to build on this wealth of experience:

‘This year I have been to a few places in the country. In January I visited Bokor mountain in Kampot, just to stay for one night, and then I went back again in June... And I visited Poipet in February because we have some family there. I enjoy seeing the different places. My children told me that they want to take me to see all the twenty-four provinces of Cambodia.’

From their house on the southern-Eastern tip of the village, Bona and his wife Da have responded to these heightened and more expansive outlooks and aspirations of village residents, extending the scope of their business to become the village’s first, albeit somewhat unofficial, travel agency. Previously, their household-managed enterprise had fulfilled a role as the village’s informal leisure centre. Outside their home are a volleyball court, boules court, and pool table, where men in the village come to wager a few thousand riel a match to compete against friends. Bona and Da take a small cut of the stakes, usually 10%, for the hiring of the courts and their children, when not in school, help out selling drinks, snacks and cigarettes to customers and the small crowds of spectators that gather. They still run this local side of the operation but last year branched out into organising

group tours for Veal Rien's neophyte excursionists, chartering a minibus to take a select group of clients on a short break to see the temples of Angkor. 'From each village nearby three or five people joined', explained Da (2013, per. comm., 27th May). 'Three or five people from this village, three or five people from the next, and so on. Altogether there were around 20 people. This was the first time that we arranged a trip like this. We spent three days there to see Angkor Thom.'

The new road that the village elders cited as bringing 'modernity' to the village, as discussed in Chapter Five, has not only transformed the production systems of the village, facilitating the movement of the village residents into off-farm and non-local employment, but has simultaneously transformed consumption preference and practice. As with the former, however, the end of the 'isolation' that was described as having once characterised the village has not befallen households in a homogeneous manner. Opportunities for the consumption of novel leisure pursuits and commodities have, instead, been afforded to the exclusion of Veal Rien's poorer fractions. Mach, a stallholder, affirmed, 'I know that there are some villagers who made a trip to see Angkor Wat last year, but I never go anywhere. I don't know even know Phnom Penh, though I live so close.'

Drawing on this classed dimension of mobility in Veal Rien in the contemporary era, the village's dominant classes have sought the symbolic value inherent in manifestations of the extra-local to leverage a distinguishing and all but insurmountable difference from the village's poorer fractions. They draw on consumption practices that emphasise pecuniary displays and the cultural sensibilities of world beyond the village, which serve to concretise the underlying material differences that exist between themselves and Veal Rien's subaltern.

This section has explored the meanings that underwrite classed preferences and practices of consumption, serving to distinguish the different fractions that comprise society in Veal Rien. Furthering this, the next section explores consumption as a site of cultural contest within the village, the locus of the production of local distinction.

Consumption and field: cultural contest

As highlighted above, culture in Veal Rien must be conceived of in a bi-modal manner. The rich do not use and buy the things they do as a result of an objective judgement of quality. Although the word is often used, it is in a symbolic and firmly unempirical sense: foreign goods are 'better quality', as are goods and services from the city. The logic is received and

stubbornly untested. Similarly, though, as Bourdieu (1984) notes, the poorer do not use and buy the things they do simply because they cannot afford better. Their choices are rooted not only in necessity but also in opposition. In this fashion, the daily preference and practice of dominated and dominant routinely collide, rendering the sphere of consumption a 'field' of battle (Bourdieu 1984) upon which the village social structure is contested and enacted.

The poorer fractions, for their part, use discursive strategies to criticise the consumption choices of the village elite and effect their own mechanisms of social distancing. They do not venerate the ideals of the elite but, rather, castigate these preferences. In descriptions of their own practices, the poorer fractions reveal an implicit distaste for the behaviours of the dominant, which they see as rooted in the arrogant and selfish dispositions of this class depicted at the outset of this chapter. This is revealed, above, in Sun's (2013, per. comm., 3rd June) assessment of his household's dietary habits. 'I never go to buy food from somebody else. It is a waste of money', he said, condemning those practices that oppose his own as frivolous, ostentatious and irresponsible.

In giggled conversations, the poorer fractions ridicule these properties of dominant practices. The dominant have, for example, begun to acquire new models of mobile phones with enhanced functionality and flair: gold cases, dual sim capabilities, internet connectivity. By contrast, the poorer fractions, where they own phones at all, rely nigh uniformly on a ubiquitous, simple but archaic, Nokia model. 'This phone, we call it the *N-chuch pil* but that is not its real name', explained Peng (2013, per. comm., 7th June) of her modest handset, continuing,

'I don't know what the actual name [of the model] is. We just call it the *chuch pil* as some kind of little joke. There are people who are very arrogant [*vymean*], they like to boast about everything, you know, "my new moto" or "my N-87 phone". So we say, "I have the *N-chuch pil* phone".'

The joke here is a pun. The phrase *chuch pil* means 'turn on the torch', with a flashlight one of the few extraneous features of the popular model. It is similar to the colloquial rendering of 'seventy-seven', *chet pil*. The designation *N-chuch pil* sounds, therefore, like a model number, the N-77. In such a fashion, then, the dominated poke fun at the pretensions of the dominant.

Gossip is thus a 'weapon of the weak' (Scott 1985) in Veal Rien but, as with any weapon, it is one that may also be wielded by the strong, often to greater effect. The dominant classes, too, deploy discursive strategies to defame the preferences and practices of the poor, rooting their criticism in the same notions of moral impropriety outlined above. Describing his leisure habits, Thom (2013, per. comm., 19th August), for instance, included the remark that 'normally the one who invites someone is the one who spends more money than the others. Of course, if I am the one who invites the guests then I should pay for everything, this is polite'. His statement contains implicit disdain for the behaviours of poorer men, who frequently pool money to facilitate social activities that they could otherwise ill-afford to partake of; his words characterise the dominated fractions as uncivil and discourteous and serve as means to thereby distinguish his own social superiority as an ordered and upstanding host.

These slights that the dominant direct toward poorer fractions ripple through local small talk, which the elite employ to challenge the legitimacy of the subaltern. Vanna (2013, per. comm., 25th June), a young urban worker, detailed the social stigma attached to practices that counter the standards set by the dominant:

'Right now, many of my friends are getting married. I have started to dread the wedding season because it costs so much money every year. Just to go to one wedding is expensive: you have to buy a new dress and have your hair done before you go, as well as giving a gift. The cost is unavoidable: if they invite you, they expect you to come. If you don't go to the weddings or you don't want to buy new outfits, you make problems for yourself. The neighbours will criticise and talk. They will say that I am not a good girl, not proper.'

In the contemporary era, this besmirching of character continues to have measured and tangible impact on Veal Rien's censured residents, where perceptions or commendations of individuals can, as detailed by various residents, procure employment, secure loans, and win nomination and election to the various authorities and committees at the level of village administration and above.

Character references collected from neighbours and village leaders, for example, have a central role in shaping the decisions of micro-finance lenders on potential borrowers. In Veal Rien, the biggest lender is Aceda Bank, in terms of both clients and total debt. The bank was founded in 1993 as a non-profit micro-credit NGO, financed by the United Nations and other international development agencies. It has since developed into the

largest commercial bank in Cambodia but its provenance yields confusion among residents of the village, many of whom refer to it, mistakenly, as the 'government bank'. This misnomer fuels the bank's popularity, as residents assume it is obliged to offer favourable rates. Nou Sotiara (2013, per. comm. 14th August, interview conducted in English), Vice President and Deputy Head of Credit at the bank, outlined the pivotal role of 'character' in lending decisions:

'To be able to take loan from the bank? It's a little complicated. They must have a permanent residence and character. The bank really focuses on character, characteristics of borrowers... If we assess that he is not good in the village, we don't give loan... [There are a] lot of things to assess: one, experience of our credit officers with that customer; two, people's neighbours... Especially in rural areas, normally they go to farm, come back from farm and, afterwards, just sit together under the trees and have small talk. So normally they have known each other; this is habit of Cambodian people. So, for example, you are prospective client A and I want to give loan to you. I ask you how much you want to pay, what is your business and what about income, then your expenses in the family, this is your real residence. Then the credit officer will take a note. And then the credit officer will leave your home and take a small but highly important assessment. [The credit officer will] ask Mr. B, 'What do you think about client A?' or something like that. But we don't only ask one guy... Sometimes we ask two people or the chief of the village... If I assess your information from your relatives they will tell us you are the good one. So we must have information from neighbour. It's kind of a simple thing.'

Sotiara's comments illustrate the efficacy of local reputation, elucidating the manner by which discursive strategies at the village level may be codified by formal institutions into official categorisations of good or worthy households and individuals. While reputation may have long been central to the capture of symbolic authority at a village level, this extension into the formal, modern sector represents a novel appropriation of traditional mechanisms of both resistance and control. This appropriation is one of the channels by which original, rural inequalities may be reproduced through processes of migration in urban destinations, a theme considered in more detail in the subsequent chapter of this PhD thesis.

The strategic, symbolic struggle at the heart of consumption practices is rarely made explicit. Village residents are rarely wont to acknowledge the employ of consumption in the pursuit of distinction and, instead, even the dominant class tend to emphasise the practical utility of their behaviours. This occurs even where the conspicuous intent of

consumption appears most overt. Marriage ceremonies are a prime example: the grandiose levels of expenditure on display are not reserved for the satisfaction and enjoyment of hosts and guests but are paraded for the benefit of neighbours. The hosting marquee is usually staged in a highly prominent location – ideally obstructing a main thoroughfare – and music forced through speakers at similarly obtrusive, almost punishing, volume, demanding the attention of onlookers. The resultant disruption warrants a paid “permit” from local police to overlook the activity, scaled according to the level of interference.

To an observer, the decision to stage a boisterous wedding party across a main road can appear ill-judged, but residents explained that utmost disturbance was a rational aim of these endeavours. ‘Of course the wedding is too loud! We want everyone to know it is there!’, declared one (Chab 2013, per. comm., 6th June). Though, at first, this appeared an admission of the symbolic efficacy of such occasions, the informant continued, ‘we want to remind everyone to join the wedding; if more people come then we will get more money’. As such, the use of ceremonies as a means to display and accrue social prestige is obscured by recourse to reasoning that stresses the improved economic returns from more elaborate and expensive events.

In such a fashion, the practical and symbolic utility of many consumption practices in Veal Rien are interwoven and it is this intricacy that often renders the latter difficult to discern. House building, for example, is an activity undergoing a boom in Veal Rien, where close to half of households (N=53) have built, or re-built, their village home in a period of five years. Some of these are new households constructing a first home; some are repairing decaying properties; others looking to upgrade their current dwelling type.

The inherent symbolic role of housing types is typically downplayed by residents. Though they can posit a hierarchical order of homes based on the fabric of construction, the material benefits of ‘better’ wall and roofing elements are most keenly emphasised. Srey Leak and her husband (2013, per. comm., 31st May) had built their first home from concrete, still relatively rare in the village, because ‘the concrete house will last longer than the wooden house’. A construction foreman (Sambo 2013, per. comm., 30th April 2013) from the village, who had built many of its new homes, explained in more detail:

‘Traditionally the people preferred the *phteah chheu* [wooden house], but now many people want to build the *tmor* [concrete] to be more modern. These are both good because they are strong. The *phteah sloek* [grass thatch house] and the *phteah sphao* [palm leaf house] have always been houses for the poor. *Phteah sangkosei* [zinc house], this is a new material. They often build the house from this

because it is cheap and the zinc roof is much better to protect from the rain than the thatch one. But it is not good, because it is very hot inside these houses.'

Despite the central emphasis of Sambo, the foreman here, on the material advantage of certain styles of dwelling, his initial remark hints at an underlying cultural contest. One of the interesting features of the house building boom is the cleft that has emerged between fractions of the dominant class over desired styles of housing: the 'traditional' *chheu* being preferred by the agrarian elite and the 'modern' *tmor* favoured by the technical and professional fraction, each reflecting the broader orientation of their labour and lifestyle. The split reveals a nascent conflict among the dominant class over the representation of legitimate culture.

That cultural contest is a broad impetus of the house building boom is also apparent when the contextual factors underwriting the proliferation of such activity are examined. Some of the increased activity is attributable to the work of an international NGO, who have extended their operations to the vicinity of Veal Rien, building homes for local residents at subsidised cost, reportedly requiring a household contribution of 1 million riel [\$250]. Those residents who have participated in this scheme have typically replaced thatch homes, or other quite ramshackle constructions of temporary materials, with simple and uniform green zinc housing. As the houses of Veal Rien's dominated class have, thereby, been improved and brought more or less in line with the rest of village, the clamour among Veal Rien's dominant fractions to upgrade to concrete or wooden dwellings acquires a noted air of distinction. Another household phrased this explicitly, stating that 'they build concrete houses now to show that they have money. They think it will make them more powerful [*twur omnaach*]' (Athith 2013, per. comm., 20th August).

That strategies of consumption can be geared towards the accrual of some material gain, whether pecuniary, as in the case of marriage ceremony expenditure, or physical, as in the example of housing provision, should not, therefore, obscure the still very real symbolic effect of these activities. The properties and behaviours of households in this respect are imbued with performative effect that realises the divisions between the classed groups apparent in village society.

The importance of consumption practices as a mark of social location and legitimacy in Veal Rien is underscored by the low rate of formal saving among villagers. No household saved with a formal financial institution, such as a bank or microfinance institute. The 36 households who reported having any monetary savings had small amounts staked in the

tontin instead: a group savings system to which households pool a fixed monthly amount and bid, should they wish, for the right to borrow the total pot, which is then paid back with interest over a pre-determined timeframe. There is an ample degree of risk attached to these types of local investments, particularly where, for example, borrowers of the communal fund have been bankrupted or, as was also reported to have occurred, absconded in possession of the kitty.

When the perceived risks of these local savings systems are balanced against those of formal savings institutions, it is perhaps not surprising that households have largely preferred to eschew these strategies of cash savings altogether. Rather, the residents of Veal Rien commonly revert to what can be considered an alternative savings mechanism: the acquisition and accumulation of material goods and assets such as motorbikes, jewellery and livestock, which are bought, traded, and up-or-downgraded as and when the circumstances of the household allow. Chhoy (2013, per. comm., 9th August) elucidated:

‘I have just a small amount of jewellery, a pair of earrings and a ring. They are made of *platin* [alloyed gold] but only small so not very expensive, altogether 150 dollars. I do not buy jewellery every year, however. I do not buy regularly. If I have no money I will sell it, if I have money I will buy it.’

Peng (2013, per. comm., 7th June), a younger resident, clearly articulated the link between temporal household finances and these flexible and cyclical forms of consumption practice:

‘If I can save money, normally I will buy use it to buy jewellery. If I can save, then I will buy, but if I need money it is easy to sell again. Already this year I have bought a necklace from the market at Prek Long three times: once I sold it because we needed money to do the rice farm; once I sold it to buy food for the pigs. It cost 600 dollars each time to buy because it is made of *platin*’.

Again, these practices appear rooted in a rational, risk-averse logic; geared toward material rather than symbolic function. Yet they afford a powerful effect to consumption behaviours in the ordering of village society, whereby almost the entire wealth of households is placed on permanent display (Martin 1994).

This display is the framework on which the livelihoods based class differences outlined in the previous chapter are hung. Livelihoods are not compared and contrasted with each other to produce class as such; their many varieties and combinations make this an almost impossible task. Instead, class is interpreted in a consequentialist manner via the fruits of the multifarious labours of the village. Their structured ostentation, their form, inhabits the

vital linking role not only between production and consumption but also labour and society, culture and class.

Conclusion

The previous chapter of this PhD thesis examined the capital endowments of the primary study site of Veal Rien in order to postulate a theoretical model of class within the village, and examine the heuristic use of Bourdieu's theory of class for understanding the dynamics of change in rural, Southern spaces, a task defined by the first research objective established herein. Bourdieu maintains (1984:546) however, that 'a class is defined by its perceived being as much its being', giving equal weight to the constructivist as structuralist elements of class. Furthering the pursuance of the first research objective of this thesis, therefore, this chapter has aimed to incorporate a phenomenological account of the processes of class-making in Veal Rien, detailing how practical, bounded groups arise from the theoretical classes delineated in Chapter Five: the genesis of habitus, or the production of distinction.

The chapter examined the production of practical divisions and differences between the class groups outlined in Chapter Five, examining three principal sites of conflict and contest: narratives of wealth and poverty, reciprocal strategies of exchange, and consumption practices. Refuting a myth of village harmony that can otherwise be read from selective ethnographic evidence gleaned from observations of and interactions with the study village, these three strands of discourse and practice interact to forge Veal Rien's theoretical classes into concrete social groups. Each strand, it has been illustrated, bears the imprint of habitus: different groups exhibit contrasting strategies each anchored in the classed conditions of their origin, contributing to a practical, lived representation of the divisions that constitute class at a theoretical level.

The latter focus of the chapter turned attention to the second objective posed by this PhD thesis, examining the role of consumption practices in realising the class structure of the village. These sets of practices, it has been shown, are both classified and classifying; have a central role in the production of local distinction; and combine with other strategies to produce powerful effect on the lived realities of competing social classes.

With the foundations of class as both theoretical and practical division having been established by Chapters Five and Six, the subsequent chapter moves to consider how labour

migration interacts with this structure. It seeks to posit the manner and extent to which patterns of mobility reproduce or transform this facet of rural social structure.

As illustrated in the previous two chapters of this PhD thesis, vast divisions remain inscribed on the social landscape of Cambodia's rural villages in an era of rapid change. Undergirding protests of equality and harmony remains an embittered contest between rich and poor for the moral right to define their respective social locations. Forged from material difference, realised by practical and discursive strategies of village residents, class differences shape the opportunities and constraints borne by households and individuals, defining social and economic trajectories and life chances.

In the second decade of the planet's first 'urban century' (Hall and Pfeiffer 2013), however, what do such conflicts matter? As high rates of rural-urban migration in Cambodia (detailed in chapter four) purport to transform the Kingdom's villagers into a global urban working class, some might question the significance, relevance and impact of local village politics to future geographic debate. Such a stance presupposes that migration itself is an inherently classless process, however, and it is this assumption which this chapter sets out to test.

To address this, the second phase of fieldwork collection for the purposes of this PhD followed Veal Rien's urban migrants to their sites of work and living in Phnom Penh to consider the relevance of rural class to their urban circumstance. This chapter presents the findings of this series of visits, observations and interviews.

Beginning by considering the imaginaries and realities of urban migration between Veal Rien and Phnom Penh, the chapter will proceed to build on the analytic framework developed in the previous two chapters. First, it will examine the theoretical form and properties of class in migrant society by investigating the capital endowments of the village's urban workers; a task performed in the village context in chapter five, which will provide a point of reference for evaluating continuity and change. Second, it will examine the production of distinction in Phnom Penh, revisiting the sites of conflict and contest explored in chapter six that gave rise to concrete social groups in Veal Rien to question their salience in migrant society. In doing so, the present chapter considers the third and final research objective of this PhD, outlined in chapter one, which asks how migratory processes interact with the class structure of the village in order to reproduce or transform the lines of fissure that demark rural society in the urban space.

The Cambodian Dream

Bon Chaul Chhnam Thmei, the Khmer New Year Festival introduced by Srey Leak at the outset of chapter six, takes place over three days in April, timed to coincide with the end of the rice harvest. A national holiday, it is considered the most important celebration in the Cambodian calendar, with revelry staged in communities and households all over the country. For Veal Rien's residents, the festival has acquired new significance in the contemporary era; a significance that stems from the increased traffic of migrant labour the village has wrought.

Whether in spite of the recent dynamism of the local economy, as discussed in Chapters Four and Five, or perhaps because of it, many village residents have been persuaded to search for work opportunities further afield, moving to find employment in more distant areas of the country and even beyond. At the time the fieldwork for this PhD was conducted in 2013, more than a quarter of Veal Rien's labour force (defined here as adults aged between 16 and 60, inclusive, and not currently engaged in full-time education, excluding two residents prevented from work through physical disability), 92 individuals from a total of 332, had taken the decision to leave the village and seek employment elsewhere. The greatest number, some 45 individuals, had moved to work and reside in the capital city of Phnom Penh, located 60km away to the north-east.

With most factories and shops in the capital closed for the New Year period, granting employees leave, the holiday sparks an exodus from the city and its surrounds, returning these absent loved ones back into the folds of the village to be reunited with family and friends, where they are absorbed by the celebratory atmosphere. 'We are all very happy at Khmer New Year because our children come back to us', explained An (2013, per. comm., 16th August), the mother of Darin and Dara, both teenagers working as domestic servants in the city.

In April that year, like others, Veal Rien's migrant workers began flooding back to the village to celebrate Khmer New Year riding motorbikes, minibuses and cars; two or three people sharing every seat, including the driver's, with additional passengers crammed in boot spaces or perched on roofs. By the time they reached the village a small but expectant crowd had usually assembled to welcome these wayfarers home. An's younger daughter, Darin, left the village a few months prior to join her older sister in Phnom Penh, where they worked cleaning rooms in a new apartment building. Though she had, on occasion, called

by phone to share news of her progress in the city, she had not seen her cousins and village friends since her departure and they were eagerly awaiting her visit.

‘Sister, you look so beautiful!’, one exclaimed as she descended the vehicle that carried her from the main road. They later explained that Darin looked quite different to the girl who departed the village. Adorned with a hooded jumper bearing a print of ‘Hello Kitty’ on the reverse, her fingernails were each painted a different bold colour: electric blue, lime green, shocking pink, neon yellow. ‘Oh, *neak Phnom Penh mokleng haey!*’, a friend teased, ‘a city girl comes here!’. Back at her house, she pulled out some presents that she had brought back from the capital: some small hairclips to distribute among her cousins, and bags of fruit and curled wafer biscuits to share with the rest.

Interactions such as these guide village residents, including potential or aspirant migrants, to form impressions about the nature of life and work in the city. With their new clothes and armfuls of gifts, visiting urban migrants are perceived by those who remain left behind in the village as wealthy, glamorous and hard-working. As Derks (2008) has explored previously in Cambodia, these impressions garner wide praise and esteem for urban migrants from their rural peers.

‘People in this village are more respectful to me since I migrated to Phnom Penh’, reflected Kunthea (2013, per. comm., 4th July). With some money her mother raised by selling a portion of the family land, her brother left their village a decade ago to seek their fortune in the city and established a business making advertising hoardings. It has enjoyed a good degree of success and they now employ 10 people, including Kunthea and her husband, and some family and friends from Veal Rien and other villages nearby. ‘I think that they admire me and my brother’, she continued, ‘because we have our own business and we have improved our living conditions a lot. Sometimes, when I am back in the village they tell me this. They say that they admire us because we are much better off now’. Kunthea’s cousin Vichet is another employee. At 17, he began working in the city, training to work with metals to construct the frames on which signage is mounted. He concurred with her sentiments. ‘The other people in the village now treat me differently from before [I migrated]. They say I am a good person, one who works hard. In the village, they really respect those like me who come to find work in the city. They respect that we have skills, we have work, we make money’ (Vichet 2013, per. comm., 1st August).

Srey Ly (2013, per. comm., 16th July), a domestic worker elsewhere in the city, attempted to reason the cause of the enhanced local reputation enjoyed by migrants like herself. ‘I am

not different myself since I migrated but I have been able to help my family a lot', she appraised, 'so the other people like me more. I have my own job so they know that I am not lazy.' To migrate to the city is an act laced with inherent industry; a trait that is highly regarded. In moving to the city to search for work, migrants from even the poorest households of Veal Rien confound the stereotype of the 'lazy' poor detailed in the previous chapter.

The industry apparent in migratory acts is not all that appeals to the ideals and prejudices of those who remain in the village, however. The proximity of urban migrants to the city's markets and shopping centres affords them opportunity to purchase apparel and accessories attuned to urban fashion. On return to the village, the appearance of such migrants thus bears the mark of proximate distancing that signifies wealth and cultural distinction in the eyes of many village residents, as further explored in chapter six of this PhD. Small details from hair styling to attire hint at a prestigious, exotic, urban lifestyle. Heng, a cleaner at a photography shop in the city, born to one of Veal Rien's poorest households, emphasised this symbolic transformation of his physical image as the source of local approbation:

'I get more respect in the village since I migrated because of my appearance. When I was helping on the farm, my clothes and my body were not good. Now I dress well, I look smart, so I get more respect from them' (Heng 2013, per. comm., 2th July).

Occasions like the New Year Festival are ripe opportunities for migrants to display their new urban cultural sensibilities. Young and old, the residents of Veal Rien take seriously the work of grooming for the village party; many parading new clothing purchased especially for the occasion. 'Normally, I buy second hand clothes', Phalla (2013, per. comm., 18th July), a cleaner at a Phnom Penh private hospital, revealed. 'But once or twice a year I buy new clothes, like when there is a big party. I want to look good when I return to the village to meet with my relatives'.

In this manner, migrants to the city appear to undergo a thorough metamorphosis during their urban residency and convey a newfound prosperity and sophistication to those who are left behind in the village. On their return, this apparent wealth and glamour, juxtaposed with the village, appears to its non-peregrinating residents as both a herald of the development and modernity that mark the city and a reminder of the stark constraints that bind many households in Veal Rien.

When aspirant and accomplished migrants from the village discuss their motivations for mobility, they appeal to this dichotomy of urban renewal and rural reserve. They speak, on the one hand, of the poverty of the village and surrounding area, the lack of infrastructure and prospects, the hardships that their households endure, and a compulsion or obligation to intervene. 'After I finished grade 6, I stopped school and stayed at home for a while to help my family on the farm. It was really difficult there to make any money, so I left my village and came to work here in this place instead. My family was poor so I needed to come to Phnom Penh to find work', recalled Vichear (2013, per. comm., 17th July), the elder brother of Vichet, who came to work for his cousin in the city at the age of 16. Phalla (2013, per. comm., 18th July) arrived in the city when she was older, concerned for the welfare of her children after her divorce: 'I wanted to come and work here [in Phnom Penh] because the village could not provide enough money for us to enjoy good living standards'.

Though the countryside has undergone remarkable change in the contemporary era with increasing opportunity for labour and leisure, as outlined in Chapters Five and Six, the pace of its transformation is outstripped by the city. The residents of Veal Rien and its emigrant urbanites are in thrall to the perceived majesty of what they describe as Phnom Penh's 'modernity'. On a break from his work as in the photography shop on one of the city's main commercial streets, Heng (2013, per. comm., 2th July) enthused:

'In the city, it is easy to enjoy life. I love the modernity of the city [*pheptomneub ti krong*]. I love the tall buildings and the big cars. There are people everywhere. My accommodation is so much better than the village, the food is better too'.

Whilst it is patent that migrants want to help themselves and their families escape poverty, it is also clear that many harbour a simultaneous longing to be part of urban life, to participate in new forms of work and leisure. Srey Sros was enticed to the city by tales from her friends, who invoked the twin lures of liberty and frivolity that appear an integral part of the urban lifestyle. She (2013, per. comm., 10th July) described:

'Forever, Phnom Penh has been my favourite place. It was the beauty of the city that made me want to come here to work. In my village there are only rice fields. Here there are lots of people and lots of entertainment. At home, if I wanted to go out, my mother would not let me. My friend told me to come to the city because here we can have freedom. Here [she said], if I want to go out, I can just call my friends... like to go *dae laeng* [to go out for a stroll; literally, 'to walk to play']. Just go somewhere to have a look, get something to eat'.

The stories of urban exploits that migrants bring with them on their return to the village contributes to a widely subscribed legend of Phnom Penh life and living; together, their alms and remade appearances fuel the fervent notion that fortune awaits those who dare to seek it in the city. A move to the city appears a panacea that promises, at once, to both quench desires for urban experience and cure the ills of poverty. As such, few young people who remain in the village, those still in school or working with their family, do not harbour dreams of accompanying their peers to Phnom Penh, nurturing the impression that the city is a land of opportunity, where vibrant streets are paved with gold. The narrative spun suggests that geographic mobility offers individuals the opportunity to transcend their economic and social position, and to reinvent self and lifestyle.

With this section having explored certain local imaginings of migratory possibilities, the chapter will consider some of the lived experiences of urban life that await migrants on arrival in Phnom Penh.

City life and city living

From just a few kilometres east of Veal Rien, the rapidly evolving skyline of the city pokes into view from beyond the horizon, peeping over the rice fields of Kandal province. Phnom Penh, the city at the heart of Cambodia's industrial revolution, bristles with the prosperity of the Kingdom's recent economic renaissance. A population of 2 million inhabit the metropolitan area; its narrow, gridded streets are daily choked with a deluge of new automotives; air-conditioned offices and malls pepper the central streets, where a raft of international brands have established outlets and franchises to serve the needs of the city's aspirant global consumers. Still, the city grows: the construction of housing developments stretches the lateral fringes of the city with the addition of row-upon-row of three- and four-storey shophouses and industrial zones, whilst skyscrapers elevate its ceiling. Outwardly, Phnom Penh stands a proud emblem of national progress.

From the distance of Kandal's ricefields, there is much for Veal Rien's residents to marvel at and admire. At work in the city, however, the village's urban migrants are offered an unrivalled insight into the many contradictions that tarnish the gloss of the city's 'modernity' and threaten to unravel the narrative of prosperity and progress that propels the excursion to town from the village. The fruits of high economic growth, a concentrated influx of FDI, and infrastructure development have, like elsewhere in the country, not been distributed evenly in Phnom Penh and the problem of urban inequality remains acute (Paling 2012; World Bank 2014).

Each night, as Phnom Penh's urban elite bed down in their new apartment buildings and townhouses, the labourers who crafted these homes, now moved on to other sites, will take to their own rest in temporary shelters made of scrap timber and iron, made waterproof with empty cement sacks and plastic sheets. Heng's first experience of Phnom Penh was as part of this army of itinerant construction workers. 'My uncle was working in the city and, one day, he called to invite me to join him. I didn't think about the work too much, I was focused on earning money' (Heng 2013, per. comm., 2th July).

For almost all of Veal Rien's urban migrants, employment was secured, in this way, through personal introduction. As authors have explored of Cambodian rural-urban migration strategies (Derks 2008; Parsons, Lawreniuk and Pilgrim 2014), the importance of informal social networks is paramount in resolving the logistics of rural-urban movement, concurring with findings elsewhere in the region (Chua and Wellman 2015; Curran and Saguy 2013) and beyond (Yue et al. 2013; Kuhn 2003). Drawing upon the assistance of kin, friends and neighbours, each aspect of the rural-urban translocation is meticulously planned, with provision made for work, accommodation, transport and even pastoral care, with the proximity of trusted associates providing a latent sense of safety and security for the departing migrant and their rural household (Parsons, Lawreniuk and Pilgrim 2014). Indeed, Heng's uncle did not only procure a source of employment for his nephew, but permissions from the foreman to allow Heng to sleep on site, and a ready made network of friends and colleagues to help him settle and advise on the quotidian aspects of urban life.

Life in the construction sector is hard, heavy and dangerous. Though there is some variance between sites, the day typically starts at 7am and finishes at 5pm, through which workers toil outdoors in noise, dust and heat, shielded only by clothing. Few foremen give thought to health or safety precautions: workers often gambol at great height along bamboo scaffolds and operate machinery without harnesses or specialist protective equipment. These conditions ultimately forced Heng's resignation from the sector:

'I worked with my uncle for a long time, around two years, but then I had an accident where I fell from many storeys above the ground. It was very serious. After this, I decided to quit because it was too dangerous for me but also for a while I was too ill to work. I was scared. Even after I recovered, I stayed at home for several years' (Heng 2013, per. comm., 2th July).

The five dollar daily wage that construction workers receive appears generous by village standards but, burdened by the obligation to send a large portion home to family members, it must stretch thin in the city, where 'everything is very expensive, much more so than in

the village' (2013, per. comm., 2th July). Construction workers usually live on site to serve as resident guardians of materials and equipment, forgoing access to electricity and sanitation until plumbing and wiring have been installed, at once perturbed by these conditions but also often pleased to have, at least, avoided haemorrhaging part of their salary on the cost of rent or utilities. 'It is bad for our health', assessed Seth (2013, per. comm., 10th July), another construction worker in Phnom Penh from Veal Rien, as he surveyed his own living quarters on a separate project building a villa in a prosperous enclave in the south of the city. 'There is no water, no drinking water. It is hard for us to live well. But it is also hard for us to spend money. If we don't spend, then we save'.

Whilst the aims of helping the family and taking part in the excitement of urban life appear harmonious in the village, even synchronistic, satiated simultaneously by the prospect of urban wages, once in the city they are often revealed as conflicted. To help the family means saving relatively large sums to send home; to experience the city's more hedonistic pursuits requires spending those large sums on urban amenities and entertainments. Migrant's wages often leave them in search of a compromise, a somewhat less than satisfactory form of redress.

Construction workers, confined to the site on which they work to act as round-the-clock watchmen, may find saving simple but this apparent ease is offset by a certain degree of social marginalisation. 'From time to time, we buy some beers at the shop and share them on the site here but we cannot go out too far because we must take care of everything', Many (2013, per. comm., 8th July), another of Veal Rien's urban construction workers, explained. Neither Seth nor Many finds with any regularity the time, ability or want to browse the city's markets or unwind at a café with friends. 'Only after we finish a project, then we will have a small party', Many continued, 'go out to eat, to drink beer and celebrate together. The next day we will go home and we might not meet [back in the city to begin a new project] for a while'.

Insofar as they remain a visible presence in the city centre, construction workers like Seth and Many are something of an anomaly among migrant groups. In retreat from soaring land values and the high rents that have accompanied Phnom Penh's 21st Century boom, Veal Rien's urban wayfarers do not, for the main, occupy locations in the city's central zone but, instead, have followed business to live and work in the outer orbit of the city's industrial belt. The tree-lined boulevards of downtown Boeung Keng Kang and the gated communities of villas in Toul Kork are little known to most. Instead, they inhabit the

sprawling and dusty suburbs of Meanchey or Dangkao, living not amid skyscrapers and shopping malls, as they might aspire, but low-rise blocks of single 'rented rooms' [*bantub chuo*] surrounded by workshops, warehouses and factories.

Workers in these districts experience a rather more literal manifestation of marginalisation, living in the less salubrious parts of the city, along its periphery. 'The environment, the air, it's dirty here, it's bad', Bopha (2013, per. comm., 11th July) apologised on her way to her rented room. Her feet picked a way through a path strewn with litter at the side of National Road Number 4 as traffic zipped past in a haze of heat and fumes, kicking up dust from the road. A machinist in one of Phnom Penh's many garment factories, Bopha left Veal Rien to come work in the district of Chom Chao, a factory district that straddles the main highway to Kampong Saom, Cambodia's main sea port, at the western tip of the city.

As the vanguard of the global economy, the arrangements that govern the employment of garment workers like Bopha have been extensively documented in the local and international press: a narrative that emphasises arduous hours of labour in dismal conditions for negligible wages. Yet beyond her concern for pollutants in the local environment affecting her health, Bopha voiced little discontent with her current way of life. 'Before, life was hard. Here I am relieved', she countered (Bopha 2013, per. comm., 11th July). 'The salary at the factory suits me and I like the work. It is easy for me to do and the bosses don't try to blame the workers when there are problems'.

In Chom Chao, Bopha shares a rented room with 3 friends in a warren of blocks next to the factory building, every wall of the 8 foot square space covered with pictures of singing stars and handsome couples cut from the pages of magazines. Though the district is located on the fringes of the city, the large population of migrant workers there sustains a community with an urban vitality: there are cafes, beauty salons, phone and clothes shops, and a market with stalls selling both a wide range of goods including daily necessities and occasional treats: fresh and packaged food, CDs and DVDs, household goods, cosmetics and detergents. Bopha enjoys living in the area. 'It is a good place, it is safe. There is work to do and many things to eat. I prefer to live here [rather than somewhere more central]', she continued (Bopha 2013, per. comm., 11th July), 'because it's close to the factory. If I work overtime then I finish after 6 in the evening. It is too late to travel too far. I just want to relax, to listen to some music and have something to eat'.

For Bopha, the activities undertaken during her free time on evenings and weekends made the long shifts that she had to put in at the factory worthwhile. 'Normally, in the morning,

we start from 7 until 11 and then in the afternoon from 12 until 4, or 6 if there is overtime, maybe two weeks every month. But we have free time on Saturday afternoon and Sunday', she detailed (Bopha 2013, per. comm., 11th July), adding:

'There is no work then... [so] my sister and my friends come over to visit me... My sister lives nearby. I can go to see her but I have a television in my room so it is better if she comes here. We like to watch the stars on [the TV station] "MyTV". My sister brings the magazines to look at so we can follow their lives... Once a month, after we get paid, we always take a trip to buy clothes at the big markets [*psar*]. We share a *moto* there or take a ride with a friend to buy three or four items at the *Psar O'Russe*i or the *Psar Thmei*, then stop to have some snacks on the way back at a place like *Koh Pich* or the riverside. These places, if we go there, then we are happy and relaxed.'

Bopha's urban experience, in this manner, is far richer than that Seth and Many have achieved. Despite the greater distances and costs involved, she has proved able to supersede the attendant marginalisation that derives from her work and residential location.

Together, the cases of Bopha, Seth and Many illustrate some of the experiences that await those who undertake the move from Veal Rien to Phnom Penh. Clearly, those experiences are far from uniform; instead, all are refracted by the nature of the inequalities that texture the social fabric of Phnom Penh in the contemporary era. Veal Rien's urban migrants often find themselves not merely on the economic margins of the city but, in various ways, spatially and socially segregated from those trappings of development and 'modernity' that, in the village, hold such allure. Though geographic mobility appeals in the village as an escape from the strictures of an underprivileged economic and social location, many migrants find themselves recast in a stubborn subaltern position in new urban structures of competing disadvantage and distinction.

The novelty of these urban structures can be called into question, however. The heterogeneity of the migrant experience indicates that inequality is not simply manifest on a grand scale in the city but permeates the layers of urban society, serving to structure the urban migrant sub-field. From the few examples above, urban migrant society appears disaggregated by numerous fault lines that echo the divides separating individuals and households in Veal Rien: migrants are endowed with different urban material resources in the form of economic and cultural capitals like wages and skill sets; they practice diverse urban lifestyles. What is not yet clear is how these divisions are cast in the city.

This section has explored the life and work of a small number of Veal Rien's urban labour migrants, in order to examine some of the imaginaries of migratory possibilities that abound in the village. Though residents frequently suppose migration presents an opportunity for individuals to transcend economic and social constraint, the evidence from these cases suggests that the experiences of migrants in this regard are, at best, limited. There is much difference in the livelihoods and lifestyles that Veal Rien's residents have pursued and achieved in the city. These disparate examples of work, living and leisure hint at urban divisions that mirror the structures of inequality in the village, as outlined in the previous chapters. The next section is therefore tasked with exploring the nature and provenance of these urban divisions more fully. It will therefore turn attention to the third research question of this PhD thesis, which asks to what extent processes of urban migration may reproduce or transform the class structures of the village.

Capitals: transmission, oscillation, reproduction

In the imagination of Veal Rien's residents, migration to the city is almost presumed to supersede class difference, bestowing a matched reward of riches across the rural social divide and implicitly imparting something of a levelling effect among those who make the move. It is not difficult to fathom why. The diversity of livelihoods that differentiate households and individuals in the village is whittled, with the notable exception of a handful of migrants who have taken up self-employed work in the informal sector, to one. In the city, the sons and daughters of farmhands and farm-owners are reinvented, alike, as urban waged labourers; a position that appears privileged from the perspective of the village, with relatively high urban wages and the proximity of urban services promising opportunity for betterment to all.

The testimony of those who have undertaken the move to reside and work in Phnom Penh reveals however, in contrast to these egalitarian imaginings, that there is little universal about the experience of migration. Though many migrants who move to the city harbour aspirations of securing high incomes, these ideals are attained quite unevenly and the migrant field remains economically differentiated. Among Veal Rien's urban workers were mechanics, a photographer and a *remorque* driver each earning over \$200 each month, almost double the median salary of \$120 ($N=33$). At the other end of the scale, those working as cleaners and domestic servants made as little as \$60 to \$80.

Much like in the village, the approach to labour in the city is marked by flexibility and adaptability. Few migrants stay in one workplace for a number of years; instead there is a high degree of lateral movement within and between employment sectors. In part this reflects prevalent employment practices and the broader instability that afflicts smaller enterprises. Chantha (2013, per. comm., 10th July) and Srey Ly both arrived in Phnom Penh as teenagers to work on market stalls, only to be left out of work when the businesses went bust or were sold on. 'One day', Srey Ly (2013, per. comm., 16th July) recalled, 'the boss just sold the shop to another man. I was finished. One day I was making money but the next day, nothing'. Except in the garment factories, where permanent [*penhseth* – literally 'full rights'] contracts are the norm, employment is generally offered on the basis of a short-term or informal agreement with fewer rights or guarantees.

For many migrants, however, the decision to hop from job to job appeared more purposive. Kun, a Chinese-Khmer translator, had worked for 6 employers in 5 different provinces in the space of just two years. 'The reason that I changed my job so much is to try to get more salary,' he explained (Kun 2013, per comm., 6th August). 'Only the last time I moved to here it was not for the salary. I wanted to be a little bit closer to home. I was working in Koh Kong and Kratie [provinces] so it was very far from my family'. Chariya (2013, per. comm., 4th June), a former garment worker, had worked in five factories in a period of employment lasting as many years: she quit one because the commute, standing in the back of a pickup truck, was 'dangerous and overcrowded'; another because the piece rate payments system provided insufficient income; a third because 'the smell of the chemicals was too bad'.

Again, this illustrates the vital importance of building informal social networks for success in migrant occupations, as observed by Wang et al. (2015). In Phnom Penh, migrants must continually work develop associations beyond the close sphere of kin, friendship and neighbour by which they are transported to the city. Migrants who grow their networks of contacts multiply their stock of information and access to new occupational and residential opportunities, making these frequent movements between places of work and sectors of industry possible.

Simone (2008) has described such movements as livelihood 'speculation'. With many migrant jobs offering limited opportunities for promotion or advancement – 'if we work here for one year or ten years', a domestic worker complained (Darin 2013, per. comm., 28th July), 'nothing will change for us' – the varied conditions, rewards and benefits offered

by different employers make lateral movements such as these the best hope of increasing returns from labour, even if the chances of success are unknown.

As the testimonies of Kun and Chariya illustrate, better wages are not the only advantage that migrants seek to secure by engaging in this process of churning labour market activity. Other material assets and some less tangible goods are also prized. In addition to monetary remuneration, some employers provide workers with food and board, which improve the profits of labour by minimising essential urban outlay. Personal relationships are also clearly important: like Kun, above, migrants may move to be closer to home or other family members and friends working elsewhere in the city; bosses who are perceived to behave in a discriminatory or otherwise unfair manner may also encourage workers to seek better workplace relations. 'I had to leave the factory at Andieng because of the administration', explained Kunthea (2013, per. comm., 4th July), 'the Chinese [owners and supervisors] were difficult. They always blamed us and did not respect our rights. It was not easy to get permissions from them [to take leave].'

A particular concern of migrants, however, was the development of new skills [*chomneañ*]. 'The main thing for me after I migrated', reflected Rotha (2013, per. comm., 8th August), a mechanic, 'is that I feel now that I want to try harder than before. I really want to try to study to get some skills'. Wan (2013, per. comm., 7th August), a graphic designer, concurred:

'We are lucky because in Phnom Penh there are very many jobs so we can change to get new skills... After I left school, I moved to Steung Meanchey to help design advertising with my cousin, who was working there and asked me to join him. After three years there, I changed to my current job in Borei Keila. The work is the same but I changed because the new job offered the chance to learn new skills. I worked at my previous job a long time, it was enough time to learn all the skills, so [I thought] if I move to here there is something new to learn'.

Thus, though migrants often arrive nurturing the impression that the city offers easy prospects for prosperity, they soon discover that achieving the conditions to flourish is a task that must be carefully worked at. Far from a homogeneous plain, the social space that migrants inhabit in the city boasts a contoured topography delineated in a manner analogous to that of Veal Rien, with an uneven distribution of economic and cultural capitals: that is, wages, benefits and skills. Within this new field, as in the village, migrants must strategise to assume positions that maximise their access to these resources, jostling

and hustling to capture new opportunities and secure advantage, ever mindful of new urban hazards like unemployment and unscrupulous employers.

In this contest, only few can emerge as winners. Of Veal Rien's urban migrants, those whose rural household derives from the village's dominant class have succeeded in capturing a greater share of economic and cultural capital in the urban space, as demonstrated in tables 7.1 and 7.2. Table 7.1 examines the distribution of economic capital, as measured by urban wages, by rural class fraction. Both mean and median monthly salary, it demonstrates, are higher among those migrants who originate from Veal Rien's dominant fractions. Table 7.2 examines the distribution of cultural capital, as measured by skill-level of urban employment, by rural class fraction. It evidences that the greatest proportion of those migrants from the village's dominant groups are engaged in skilled employment, whilst the dominated fractions are concentrated in unskilled or low-skilled work.

As in the village, the advantages accrued from skilled forms of labour are of multifold character. First, there is an obvious link between skilled work and higher wages, as illustrated by table 7.3. 'Even though I think the salary is low', attested a cleaner (Heng 2013, per. comm., 2th July), 'I never complain. It is right for my skills. If I have no skills I cannot get more'. Wan (2013, per. comm., 7th August) corroborated, 'if we get more skills then we can get more money'; a statement which in part explains his pursuit of additional vocational knowledge.

Yet such labour boasts, additionally, a symbolic measure of distinction: as a village resident explained, previously, 'they think the work you do with the head is better than the work you do with the hands' (Put 2013, per. comm., 9th August). As Derks (2008:49) has explored, the ritual movement of young, single rural females through certain types of urban work has parallels with an historic but now obsolete rite of passage known as 'entering the shade' [*chaul mlob*], in which women of marriageable age remained indoors for protracted periods in preparation for marital ceremonies. This period of preparation and reflection was represented by a lightened skin tone on emergence, the consequence of time away from manual work in the bronzing sun of the fields, and has contemporary resonance in the distinction between, for example, semi-skilled factory labour performed in the shade of industrial buildings and unskilled hawkers who ply their trade along the city streets. At the local beauty shop in Veal Rien, for example, Sereypheap (2013, per. comm., 7th June) suggested:

‘The work is easier with the migrants because they are clean since they work only inside. The village people work in the fields so it is difficult to clean their nails and their skin is always black’.

‘Cleanliness’ and ‘beauty’ are inseparable ideals in Khmer, both represented by the single word, *‘saart’*.

Table 7.1. Urban economic capital by rural class fraction

	Dominant class		Dominated class	
	Technical and professional	Agrarian capitalist	Merchant and manual	Peasantariat
<i>N</i>	11	8	7	7
Monthly wage (US\$)				
Median	147	90	101	100
Mean	150	126	110	96

(Source: Migrant survey data, 2013).

Table 7.2. Urban cultural capital by rural class fraction

	Dominant class		Dominated class	
	Technical and professional	Agrarian capitalist	Merchant and manual	Peasantariat
<i>N</i>	11	8	7	7
% Skilled workforce				
Skilled	54.5	50.0	14.3	0.00
Semi-skilled	36.4	12.5	28.6	28.6
Unskilled	09.1	37.5	57.1	71.4

(Source: Migrant survey data, 2013).

Table 7.3. Urban wage by employment type

	Employment type		
	Skilled	Semi-skilled	Unskilled
<i>N</i>	11	9	13
Monthly wage (\$)			
Median	150	128	85
Mean	156	142	75

(Source: Migrant survey data, 2013).

Male migrants, too, attempt to capitalise on these cultural mores by cultivating symbolic overtures to their place in hierarchies of work. Those who extend above the rank of simple labourers, a gamut of occupations from *motodup* to office worker, commonly grow the fingernails to subtle yet notable lengths of half a centimetre to evidence that they are

unchallenged by the exertions of manual graft. Visal (2013, per. comm., 23rd July), a *motodup* driver working around Phnom Penh explained:

‘We can tell the one who works in the field or on the construction site because the skin and the hands are no good. If we take care [of our nails] like this, we can show to other people that we are not the one who is from the field any more’.

This clustering of economic, cultural and symbolic genres of capital in certain occupations replicates the general distribution of wealth and inequality observed in the village, where resources are concentrated in the clutches of the dominant classes. That migrants who stem from the dominant fractions of the village procure access to more privileged roles and resources in the urban space suggests that urban migrant society is not merely analogous to the structures of rural society but a direct descendent of it. As Bourdieu (1984, 1990) has repeatedly averred, fields tend to be homologues of the wider system of distinction so that ‘the general effect is the reproduction of common patterns of hierarchy and conflict from one field to another’ (Swartz 1997: 132). Across the rural-urban divide, the transmission and translocation of material difference thus reproduces the form and properties of the village class structure in the city.

To conceive of the urban migrant social space as a mere derivative of the former or original, rural class structure is to oversimplify the relation between the two, however. The transit of individuals from Veal Rien to Phnom Penh in the name of work is rarely a discrete act but part of a broader procession of movements and flows; migration is not a onetime transfer of labour but a current in an ongoing symbiotic system of exchange. Within this system of exchange, therefore, capitals are not merely deposited in the city but, instead, oscillate between place of origin and destination, Veal Rien and Phnom Penh.

As the opening section of this chapter examined, a driving ambition of many rural-urban migrants is aiding those family members who remain left behind in the village. As such, monetary remittances and other goods constitute a fundamental part of this dense reciprocal network that binds the city to Veal Rien, where the propensity to remit and the proportion of income remitted are both notably high. 79 per cent ($N=33$) of Veal Rien’s urban workers reported regularly returning some portion of their city wage to family members in the village, with the mean average contribution comprising 56% ($N=26$) of monthly income.

These mean figures do not depict the complexity of remittance practices, however. Whilst many of Veal Rien’s urban workforce found almost half their salary immediately swallowed

by their continuing affiliation with and obligation towards the rural community, remitting upwards of \$100 each month, there were others who sent smaller figures of \$10 or \$12 sporadically, which amounted to token fractions of urban income. This variance in remittance payments was generally articulated by migrants with reference to the heterogeneous needs of the sending community.

Seth, for example, now married, lives as part of his wife's household. Whilst they are both at work in the city, he as a construction worker and she as a domestic servant, their two children remain in the village in the care of their grandparents. The costs of raising two young children are difficult for the already impoverished household to bear. 'Every two weeks, I send \$50 to my wife's family at Krangyov [the administrative commune of which Veal Rien is a part]', he declared (2013, per. comm., 10th July), explaining:

'The conditions in the village are so poor. There is no work to do and no money there, so my wife's parents need help for their own daily eating and living. Then they must take care of the children. It is not easy. They are still very young so they are often sick. It is expensive to see the doctor because we must travel all the way to Prek Long, pay for the consultation, then pay for medicines. Last time my son was sick, three or four months ago, they had to borrow \$250 to pay for the treatment. Now they are still paying it back, as well as the interest. If I do not send money, then I am sure the family will not survive'.

Burdened by obligations to service debts, raise young children and take care of ageing relatives, Seth is compelled to devote a large part of his urban wage to sustaining his rural-based family.

For two female migrants from among the village's poorest households, one a domestic worker and the other a cleaner in a new condominium block, the remittance obligations that they were expected to shoulder were so high that they had to undertake extra work to earn the requisite income to meet the costs of urban living. Srey Sros (2013, per. comm., 10th July), a seventeen year old migrant working in the private residence of a group of Korean businessmen, detailed:

'I earn \$70 every month, which seems like a lot. But all the salary is sent home to my mother... She uses the money for living, because I have many siblings to take care of, and to repay a debt. They took the loan because my mother was ill some time ago, but I'm not sure of the exact details... At first, it was difficult [to get by without any remaining salary] but now I find money to spend for myself by doing little jobs for the people who live in the house. If I cook for them and then take the food to them, maybe they will give me a small tip. In one month I can make twenty to thirty dollars like this and I can use it to buy what I need'.

By contrast, Bopha's family are relatively wealthy in Veal Rien. 'I send my parents a little [money] every month,' she reasoned (Bopha 2013, per. comm., 11th July), 'so they can buy food for the pigs and some chemicals for the farm. It is the same for my sister. But we don't need to send much, maybe \$50 in one month, sometimes less, because they have their own money from the [livestock] business and the farm'. The local interests and assets of Bopha's household bestow greater financial security, which diminishes their need for immediate and substantial remittance transfers. Thus, wittingly or otherwise, those at home exert less pressure on Bopha's urban income.

This relation of financial obligation to household need suggests a classed division; an intimation that is corroborated by quantitative data collected on the theme. As table 7.4 illustrates, those migrants from Veal Rien's dominant fractions not only earned higher salaries in Phnom Penh than those from the dominated fractions, but remitted smaller absolute amounts of those salaries to the village. Consequently, a far lower proportion of their urban wage was consumed by fulfilling these obligations to village-based kin, affording them greater control over their income and permitting them to retain larger amounts to devote to the pursuance of their own interests.

Inverse remittances, whereby transfers of material goods make their way from rural households to city dwellers, also form a constituent part of the cycle of symbiotic migratory exchange. With the price of rice and much other primary produce set higher in Phnom Penh than Veal Rien, many rural families apportion part of the household crop to share with those members working away from the village.

Lon (2013, per. comm., 20th August), who sent up to 30kg of rice every month to each of two sons at work in the city, explained:

'It is very expensive when people go to work in the city. They can make money easily but they can spend it easily. A house is expensive; food is expensive. If we have enough rice then we will send some to help our children, of course... [because] if we don't send [rice] to them, they will have to spend all their money on expensive rice in the city'.

As this illustrates, the principal intent behind these transfers is to reduce the pressures on migrant income exacted by their own subsistence needs.

Table 7.4. Urban wage and remittances by rural class fraction

	Dominant class		Dominated class	
	Technical and professional	Agrarian capitalist	Merchant and manual	Peasantariat
<i>N</i>	11	8	7	7
Monthly wage (US\$)				
Median	147	90	101	100
Mean	150	126	110	96
Monthly remittances (\$)				
Median	40	31	60	65
Mean	42	50	57	57
Remittances as a proportion of wage (%)				
Median	21	21	60	74
Mean	34	34	55	64
Monthly wage retained for own use (\$ wage – remittance)				
Median	90	63	51	25
Mean	108	76	53	39

(Source: Migrant survey data, 2013.)

Such relief is, however, contingent on the rural household's ability to provide it, as indicated by the initial conditional clause in Lon's remarks. Thus, migrants from landowning households, like Lon's two sons, may receive enough assistance to almost eradicate certain urban expenditures. 'Yes, one of the problems in the city is the price of food', confirmed the eldest, Rotha (2013, per. comm., 8th August), 'but it is not too much of a problem for me because I do not need to buy very much here. I get rice [sent from the village] all year round'. Conversely, those migrants from households whose subsistence needs in the village are already compromised may receive little or no help. Roat, for example, is a *motodup* from a near landless household. His parents are too old to work and his younger brother catches wild rats, when not in school, to help the family get by. 'My parents send nothing to me in the city', he attested (Roat 2013, per. comm., 22nd July), 'because they have nothing to give'.

It is, in such a fashion, that rural livelihoods continue to impinge on the structures of inequality and difference in the city. The reproduction of the village class structure within Phnom Penh migrant society is not a simple case of the diffusion of difference from one locale to another. Rather, the manner in which capitals vacillate, shunted back and forth,

between place of origin and destination serves to channel inequity bilaterally, from village to city and city to village.

As in the village, this perpetuation of asymmetric capital endowments does not merely delineate difference in migrant society in the present but has important bearing on the possibilities and aspirations of individuals moving forward in time. That migrants from the dominant class retain vastly greater net sums of relative and absolute income than those from the dominated fractions, taking account of earnings and remittance burdens, as illustrated in table 7.4, has significant implications for the way in which they plan and make preparations for their futures.

Kunthea and her husband, from the village's dominant group, live in Phnom Penh with her husband and infant daughter, where both work at her brother's advertising hoarding business. Together they draw a \$200 monthly salary and have been able to save part of this money, making investments in the village. 'We are saving to buy livestock, equipment to breed fish in the pond, and land', she detailed (2013, per. comm., 4th July). 'Already, I have bought half a hectare of land but I have left it for my mother to farm'. Despite these investments, Kunthea remained noncommittal about returning on a permanent basis to live and work in Veal Rien. She mused:

'I am not sure that I will return to the village to farm even though there are many improvements there for us. If I could save a lot of money I would buy a house in Phnom Penh and live here. Phnom Penh is easy for doing business – we sell something, we get money immediately. In the village, it can take days or months to get money from work. In Phnom Penh everything is good for business so it is better to make a business here' (Kunthea 2013, per. comm., 4th July).

By investing in the village, Kunthea and her husband have found a way to make their savings work for them in the present and have kept open their option of return. They have done so without limiting their ability to remain in the city and, indeed, hold viable hopes of establishing a secure enterprise in Phnom Penh. Their future is not fixed according to their present circumstance but remains adaptable and flexible to longer term needs, prospects and imaginations.

For others, however, longer term projections appear more muted. Many originates from a landless rural household that contains his two young children and wife, who works at a small apparel factory in the village next door to Veal Rien. He first moved to work in Phnom Penh several years ago, entering a construction site as a *kammakor*, or general labourer, performing heavy work like carrying buckets of water and lifting bags of sand and cement.

After a few years of service, he was trained to attain the rank of *cheang*, a designation that translates literally as ‘more’ or ‘better’, denoting here not a supervisory role but the mastery of a specialist craft; there are, for example, *cheang leab* (painters), *cheang phleung* (electricians) and *cheang chheu* (carpenters). Becoming a *cheang* involves an informal learning process delivered with the agreement of another worker already in possession of the desired talent. Many shadowed his mentor for a period of one and a half years until the site foreman, the *me*, was sufficiently convinced of his ability to reward him with the appellation and higher salary that comes with this recognition of expertise.

In many respects, Many’s story is unusual: his success in moving up the employment hierarchy is unique among migrants who originate from Veal Rien’s dominated fractions; he is the only skilled urban worker among this subaltern class; and his wage, approximately \$189 a month, far eclipses the average for this group. Yet even Many refuted the notion that geographic mobility has improved his social trajectory. He contended (Many 2013, per. comm., 8th July):

‘When I started to work here the salary was just \$5 a day. Now it has increased to \$7, but the price of everything is rising too, so the new wage is still low. I send most of this every month to my wife, she just uses it for food and daily living, and then I try to take care of my parents. For us, saving is impossible. We just work day to day, we live waiting for the day that we die [*rues rongcham thngai slab*]’.

The previous section of this chapter examined divergent realities of urban life and work in Phnom Penh, in order to illustrate some of the challenges posed to imaginaries of migration that circulate in Veal Rien. In order to make sense of these heterogeneous urban experiences, this section has questioned how a class approach to the analysis of inequality in urban migrant society might illuminate this diversity. It has demonstrated that the structures of difference that divide Veal Rien’s residents in the city mirror that of the village: individuals possess asymmetric volumes and combinations of capitals, which bestow unmatched opportunity and constraint for urban trajectories upon their bearers. These distributions are not random or chance. Rather, the oscillation of capitals between city and village ensures that migrants from the dominant class extend their advantage over the dominated in this new urban existence. Thus, whilst in the village geographic mobility is frequently seen as a means to transcend social and economic position, the structures of material difference in the village are, in fact, rearticulated within the city and the relative location of individuals within this uneven field of social positions remains much the same.

As Chapter Two of this PhD thesis has argued following Bourdieu (1979, 1984), however, investigating the structures of material difference constitutes only half the task of fleshing out the dynamics of class. What remains to be seen is how the subjective experience of difference is affected when the structures and strategies that shape village distinction are recast against the broader local, national and global inequalities that provide the backdrop to migrant life in Phnom Penh. The subsequent section of this chapter will thus turn attention to the practical and discursive production of distinction within the migrant space, furthering the third research objective outlined in this PhD thesis, which aims to consider how processes of migration affect and are affected by class dynamics.

The production of distinction in Phnom Penh

The material differences that continue to structure divisions among Veal Rien's urban migrants have obvious implications for the type of lifestyle that these workers can pursue in the city. The ability of migrants to engage with the city's surrounds, to delve into the coffee shop culture, browse malls and markets, or *dae leng* with friends and neighbours is circumscribed by what can be considered their personal income – that which remains after other obligations to family or household have been accounted for. For members of the privileged class, left with an average of \$96 each to budget with every month, consumption practices and preferences diverge from those of the dominated fractions, who have to eke out a existence on \$46 (mean averages, see table 7.4). Both groups, clearly, must manage and allocate their earnings carefully but the limits within which the better off must do so are less tightly defined.

The differences between the two cannot be represented in absolute numbers alone; it is not the case that the rich simply do more in the city than poorer migrants but their lifestyle and leisure practices are enacted in different ways. Thus, the distinction is frequently a qualitative one rather than simply a quantitative one. For male migrants from the dominated classes, a free evening spent with friends might involve meeting up in a rented abode or, on rarer occasions, an excursion to a local beer stall. Heng (2013, per. comm., 2th July), a cleaner, detailed:

'Normally, I just sit in my room everyday with the others who live there. We eat together and listen to music in our free time. But we meet to go out once or twice in one month, to the cafe in the street behind the shop. Each person spends ten to twenty thousand riel to buy some Cambodian wine, or sometimes Angkor beer... It is my co-workers usually, two or three people who work together'.

As many migrant workers live together in accommodation shared with relatives, rural neighbours or urban colleagues, opportunities for social interaction are high. For poorer workers, shared meals and trips to local cafes in the evening are leisure practices that can be pursued even within the strictures of a limited budget. Female workers, too, described gathering in one another's rooms to watch television, cook together, or listen to music. 'Phnom Penh is always busy but for me it seems like a quiet place', observed Srey Pov (2013, per. comm., 31st July), 'I just stay at home. In my free time I do some housework or watch TV with my friends... I never go out with my friends, we stay at home. We have everything we need for us here'.

For those from the dominant classes, who possess greater disposable income in the city, entertainment is a more elaborate affair. Narith works as a mechanic. He described (Narith 2013, per. comm., 28th June):

'I feel that living is very good in Phnom Penh. The work is hard but if we do it a long time, we understand it so it becomes easy. After work every day, then we can enjoy the city... With my friends, sometimes I go to take a walk along the river or go to sit in front of the royal palace. It is very busy there with sellers and people. Other times we go to eat at a soup place near to there and share some beer... I see my friends like this once or twice every week, but the day is not regular, we go when somebody decides it and then calls to invite the others. In one time, we spend all together about twenty dollars between three people.'

Like Narith, the dominant classes routinely sought out iconic city sights to provide a very specific backdrop against which to perform their urban lives. In addition to the riverside promenade and royal palace, Koh Pich, a spit of land that stretches into the Sap River and has been developed into a leisure and residential centre, and Kbal Tnol, home to Phnom Penh's third '*spean akas*' or 'skybridge' – a rather glamorous euphemism for what might more mundanely be referred to as a road flyover – were lauded by the dominant groups as 'modern' and 'beautiful' sites appropriate for the deploy of recreational pursuits.

The latter site of Kbal Tnol was a favoured spot of Srey Neang (2013, per. comm., 6th August), who works in a factory office translating for the factory owners:

'I go out with my friends every month to Kbal Tnol to eat together in a barbecue restaurant... Fish, meat, vegetables [are all available]: we can choose what we want and then we cook it at the table. It is the Korean style barbecue. If we take a few dishes, the cost may be around seven to eight dollars for each person'.

Prestige urban locales also framed other consumption practices of wealthier migrants. The larger, central markets and air-conditioned city malls were their preferred destinations for buying clothes. ‘Every month I am excited to get paid’, enthused Chantha (2013, per. comm., 10th July), a garment worker, ‘after we get the money, I go to Sorya mall with my husband to look at the new clothes and buy some new styles’. Srey Neang (2013, per. comm., 6th August) added:

‘For me, Phnom Penh is a good place to live for me because we have so many markets. My favourite is *Psar Boeung Keng Kang*, my sister says I am addicted. I go at least three times a month to buy everything there, some new clothes or make-up or accessories... To buy clothes, I spend twenty or thirty dollars every month’.

Careful attention paid to matters of style was a prominent concern for male migrants too. ‘In Phnom Penh, it is important to look good’, pronounced Wan (2013, per. comm., 7th August), sporting a pencil moustache and high quiff on top of the close-cropped sides of his head. ‘I spend about fifteen dollars on clothes every month at the *Psar Olympic*’, he figured, ‘or sometimes I prefer the shops there. I don’t have to work on weekends, so I go on Saturday when many people go there. Even if they don’t come to buy, they want to look around’. For this wealthier fraction of migrant society, in this manner, the sites of consumption, the urban centres in which one could at once see and be seen, contributed as much to the fulfilment of their urban ambitions and the pursuit of ‘the modernity of the city’ as the object of that consumption. Though prices in the larger markets and malls were seen as inflated, following from higher rents for vendors and the additional expense of access, whether hiring a *motodup* or parking one’s own motorbike, the additional benefit of taking part in the spectacle of city life was perceived to nonetheless provide value.

Poorer workers testified that although their migration had brought them within closer geographic proximity of urban malls and markets, they remained estranged as ever. Many preferred to continue to use Veal Rien’s local markets at Prek Long and Takhmao, or buy second hand clothes from pavement stalls in Phnom Penh. ‘I buy new clothes just once every year’, Seth (2013, per. comm., 10th July) reported:

‘I want to wear something smart to ceremonies at Khmer New Year. I buy them from *Psar Toic*, when I am on the way back to Veal Rien. New trousers and a shirt costs 50 000 riel [\$12.50]. The rest of the time, I only buy second hand clothes. For this, I spend 50 000 riel too but I buy more often, maybe two or three times a year’.

Kim is a garment worker like Chantha, above, yet cites a fraction of the latter's spending each year. Buying second hand goods from the market at Chak Angrea Krom, adjacent to the factory where she works, Kim spends less than \$10 each year on clothes, a figure smaller than her counterpart's monthly expenditure. 'I am afraid to spend too much money in the city', she confided (Kim 2013, per. comm., 22nd July):

'I try to spend only a little on things for myself like clothes and cosmetics. I paint my nails at home and I buy only cheap clothes, second hand clothes. I want to look good but I think it is better to try save a little money where I can. I want to keep something for when I get ill or have to find a new job. Even just \$200 is able to prevent us from taking on debt'.

This final quote from Kim, in which she speaks of a fear of spending in the city, illustrates that urban lifestyles are not only manifestations of economic power but remain tied to habitus. Kim reflects, here, not on a resolute inability to spend, a simple lack of money, but on her disinclination to do so. Her practices in the city are tempered by lingering concerns over the fragility of livelihoods: though her wage as a garment worker is relatively stable and lucrative, and her employment guaranteed by contract, rarities in the maelstrom of urban employment tenders and proclivities, the fear of ruin is yet never far away.

This is because the system of disposition that guides practice and preference is not forged in the present but a product rooted in and nurtured through past circumstance. Though receptive to changing circumstance, habitus adapts only slowly. It is, as Bourdieu has argued, that:

'In each of us... there is part of yesterday's man; it is yesterday's man who inevitably predominates us, since the present amounts to little compared with the long past in the course of which we were formed and from whom we result' (Bourdieu 1977:79).

That is not to suggest that this fear is wholly imagined: though Kim earns well in the city, her rural household remains poor, landless and indebted, with few assets and vulnerable sources of relatively low income. These concerns undoubtedly weigh on Kim in the city and she is perhaps right to suspect that a disruption to her urban wage is not something that the household could absorb or weather smoothly. Nonetheless, her current situation, in which her husband also contributes to the household a second income from working as a security guard at a different factory, is far more secure and affluent than she has ever known. Yet her consumption practices and preferences remain anchored in that 'taste for

necessity' that orients the dispositions of Veal Rien's vulnerable, as discussed in chapter six of this PhD thesis; the vilification of waste and wanton excess.

Reflecting, again, on the divergent remittance practices of Veal Rien's migrants, elaborated in greater detail in the previous section of this chapter, the decision of the poorer fractions to remit greater absolute and relative sums to their rural families appears no longer necessarily a strident act of altruism. The causal relationship between high remittance burden and austere urban lifestyle is tried and fails to be reliably upheld. It is perhaps not the case that the latter derives from the former, but both obtain from some other; that the two decisions to remit large sums and spend small ones emanate jointly from dispositions rooted in habitus – the veneration of parsimony and distaste for profligacy – given the rural realities faced.

Indeed, though the rhetoric that surround migratory practices in Veal Rien boasts of the transformative capacity of geographic mobility, of opportunities to reflexively recast the image of self and remould lifestyle practices through transcending one's economic and social position, what can be observed amongst the poorer fractions in this manner is a thorough, if unconscious, reluctance to undertake that metamorphosis, to throw caution to wind and embrace the 'modern' life that is so eagerly traded in the village. Yet this almost suggests, inversely and misleadingly, that the dominant can be conversely lauded for achieving success in the self-making project when the reality must be understood with greater nuance.

Unpicking the practices of migrants from the dominant fractions, in order to uncover the orienting principle that confers semantic unity to their design for life, reveals that the appeal to 'modern' and 'urban' pursuits bears the same hallmark of proximate and pecuniary distancing strategies that undergirds the undertakings of the dominant in the village. That which is desired in the city is that which is economically scarce, malls and restaurants, and made more so by the transport costs entailed. Hiring a *motodup* to go to the river or a central market might cost from a handful of riel notes to a couple of dollars, but it is enough to deter the poorer fractions from making the journey.

The labelling of these objects and lifestyles as 'modern' is a symbolic appellation that reflects the power of the dominant to define the legitimate culture; a further means for the dominant to leverage distinction over others by imbuing their practices with a normative ethic. 'Modernity' is the ostentatious and the expensive: 'the tall buildings and the big cars', as Heng (2013, per. comm., 2th July) described; 'the modern one is the one with good

living' clarified Wan (2013, per. comm., 7th August), 'always new clothes, and a new car with good style'. Others tastes are implicitly distained as backwards, old, behind and inferior. That the dominated fractions, like Heng, subscribe to such ideals, which implicitly castigate their own lifestyles, intimates the triumph of the characterisation.

This notion of 'modernity' thus becomes a choice weapon in the war of words between dominant and dominated, an instrument by which acts of symbolic violence are meted out. The distinctions between rich and poor become blurred with broader conceptions of urban and rural and their connotations, transfigured into a conflict between modern and backward, civil and savage.

'The *neak srae* [literally, 'rice people', meaning villagers] are not fashionable like the *neak krong* ['city people']', chastised Srey Neang (2013, per. comm., 6th August). 'They wear clothes that people never wear in the city. The *neak srae* still dress like the '79 generation [*samy chet 'mboun*]!', she scoffed, referencing the era of the Khmer Rouge regime. Wan (2013, per. comm., 7th August) agreed:

'At my hometown, people always behave and wear clothes that are not so good. In Phnom Penh, people wear clothes that are beautiful and nice. The *neak krong* wear clothes that are more beautiful than the *neak srae*'.

In both examples, there is an implicit parallel between unseemly actions and unbecoming appearance. That people dress 'not so good' reflects a broader lack of respectability; a natural emblem of the true tastes, interests, ideas and beliefs of the individual.

Migrants from the dominant class saw those who had remained behind in the village as voluntarily withdrawn from the opportunities for progress and self-development that abound in the city. 'The ones who stay behind in the village', contested Sokhom (2013, per. comm., 28th June), 'are the ones who are not good men, they are not friendly. Instead, they are the ones who make trouble. They are always fighting; they always get drunk'. Seduced by the life of vice, the village poor were moral deviants; lazy and undeserving.

By contrast, richer migrants saw in themselves the fruits of good character. They had risen to the challenge of the urban transition by showing wit and diligence, developing confidence and independence. Success was a gratifying personal achievement. 'Since I migrated', reflected Panneth (2013, per. comm., 18th July), 'I feel that I have changed because I can be more proud of myself: I work now and I have money. Before I came to the city, maybe I was a soft man, too quiet, but now I am more open and friendly'. Wan (2013,

per. comm., 7th August) concurred with these sentiments. 'Of course, I am a different man now', he professed, explaining:

'I know more, I have more skills. I always have respect from the others in the village. When I was young they admired me because I was the outstanding student in the village. But after I came to work in the city, now I can appreciate about the difficulty of work. It is very hard to make money. So the other people in the village, they place more respect on me than before because of the work that I do'.

In these statements is an irony, in which migrants from the dominant class at once illustrate, in their mimicry of village discourse on wealth and poverty, explored in chapter six of this PhD thesis, the enduring and embodied inscription of rural behaviours and ideology, through which they yet attempt to make a break with the village. It is clear that in these postulations of the *neak srae*, firmly conceived as 'those left behind', present company is excluded. In their attempts to distance themselves from Veal Rien, thus, they reveal the lingering imprint of habitus, the dispositions that guide the judgements by which they know and, furthermore, are known.

For, in a further twist of irony, it is this very aloofness upon which the dominated seize, in turn, to depict the dominant, staking their own claim for moral legitimacy and completing the process of (re-)inscribing rural social divisions in the urban space. Migrants from the dominated fractions see, in the practices of the dominant, those traits of selfishness and arrogance that are ascribed to the rich in the village, detailed in chapter six. 'After they migrate', Srey Sros (2013, per. comm., 10th July) levelled, frankly, 'they are often snobs [*veayryk*]'. She continued:

'Me, I am different, too. After I migrated, I became more friendly. But they became less friendly. When they become snobs like this, they don't want to know the villagers any more, they don't like the villagers any more... It is because they have more money, so they think that they are better [than the villagers]'

Pisey (2013, per. comm., 1st August) elaborated:

'In the city, the rich ones start to become like the *neak krong*. They want to wear the modern clothes when they go back to the village; they start to dye their hair; they start to behave like snobs because they no longer want to know the other villagers. When they come back home, now they dislike the mud!'

Whether the disdain for mud is invoked literally or intended as a metaphor, the accusation is that the better off, in their pursuit of urban modes of distinction, have lost touch with the village, seeking to airbrush their history or otherwise abandon their rural roots. They are

recognised by that same air of disregard that the poorer fractions of Veal Rien observe of the rich in the village. The discourse of wealth and poverty in urban migrant society thus replicates the classified and classifying stances that circulate in Veal Rien. The lines of friction between competing groups are redrawn, rearticulated, and reproduced under these new conditions. The rhetoric of transcendence is, once again, left wanting.

The previous section of this chapter examined the ways in which asymmetries of economic and cultural capital, the bedrock of class difference in Veal Rien, are transferred to urban migrant society, providing the theoretical basis for a renewal of class divisions in this new field. The present section has examined the practical production of difference between groups in the city, illustrating the continued significance of consumption behaviours and discursive strategies in leveraging distinction. Crucially, these behaviours and strategies remain rooted in the dispositions of habitus formed within the village. Thus, though migrants speak of the possibility of remaking their self-image and lifestyle through geographic mobility, as explored at the outset of the chapter, the process of reinvention was limited and reproduction of former modes of division was evidenced instead.

The chapter has addressed the three research objectives targeted by this PhD thesis and outlined in chapter two herein: refocusing attention on the class theory of Bourdieu (1979; 1984), in line with the first objective, it has illustrated the continued salience of this mode of analysis in contemporary urban Cambodian society; reiterating the importance of class-making strategies, in line with the second objective, it has underscored the importance of consumption practices in realising divisions between social groups. Predominantly, however, it has sought to address the third research objective outlined, which asks how structures and processes of class difference are reproduced or transformed by rural-urban migration. Though the thrust of the argument has generally weighed in favour of the former, before concluding some final insight on the limitations to this notion of reproduction is provided.

The limits of reproduction

One thing that the rich and the poor, alike, could agree upon on was the many challenges they faced in their day-to-day interactions with the city. Beyond specific concerns about potentially exploitative or unfair systems of work, living conditions or pay, was a wider malaise. 'It is not so easy for us here', insisted Srey Ly (2013, per. comm., 16th July):

‘In Phnom Penh, people find it difficult to connect to each other [*pibaaq t’eaq t’ong knear*]. In the village, everyone can know each other but not in the city. Everyone here is distant, like a stranger’.

Though frequently depicted, on the one hand, as sustaining, nourishing and full of promise, many migrants nonetheless alluded to a darker side of urban society. Roat (2013, per. comm., 22nd July), a *motodup*, considered:

‘In Phnom Penh, it is easy to work, easy to live. There are lots of rented rooms and I enjoy the view of the city. But the security is not too good. There are a lot of thieves in the city. Sometimes I am not sure if we can really get along well with the people in the city, it is difficult to communicate with our neighbours here. There is a lack of community. I feel like people here are no good [*mnous kmean chet*, literally, ‘people have no heart’]: perhaps only two or three in every ten is a good man, the rest I cannot trust’.

Srey Neang (2013, per. comm., 6th August) attested:

‘Even the city has problems. There are a lot of gangsters and thieves. Last week, my friend had her *moto* stolen. There are bad men here, they get addicted to substances and they have no money so they steal. You must be careful about crime, there is more of it here than in the village’.

This unease reflects the disjuncture between habitus and field in the migrant setting. Imported to a new social world, migrant workers lack that unconscious ‘feel for the game’ (Bourdieu 1980:11) that enables individuals to act with due guile and cunning. An implicit yet unconscious awareness of some deficit in practical knowledge of the rules and rewards of urban society manifests in a sense of estrangement from the new social arena, which, they though inhabit, they can not quite feel an accepted part of.

Such disquiet is not an imagined fancy, a social paranoia, but rooted in the broader system of urban difference and distinction to which they are injected. They are disadvantaged, principally, in relation to native and longer term residents, whose interests lie in preserving their control of urban mechanics and spoils. The Phnom Penhois employ effective distancing strategies to weaken the social legitimacy of new arrivals, hampering the ability of migrants to meaningfully engage with their new surrounds and, thereby, sealing their continued dominance of the urban space.

Specifically, the pursuit of ‘modernity’, so lauded by dominant groups in the village, was represented as a shallow affectation by long term urban residents. At a coffee shop in a

migrant settlement, a rented room owner (Sov 2013, per. comm., 21st June) complained of his tenants:

‘They have lived in my house for a long time, some of them for sixteen years... They enjoy the work that they do in the factories because they know what is good for them [*ke doeng ka muoy na l’a samrab ke*]. They know what it is like to work in the factory rather than in the fields... But there are some problems with migrant people. Some of the workers save a lot to help their families, but some save less because of modernity. They want to buy clothes and phones. The families of the workers in my rooms come to see me and beg me to take care of their children and not let them spend. But they no longer listen to me. Some have boyfriends or girlfriends come to stay in their rooms, who they then have to pay for’.

On the same road, a dessert stall owner (Pheakdei 2013, per. comm., 21st June) concurred:

‘Some garment workers have followed modernity to buy clothes, phones, motorbikes. It is no good because they send less money to their family. It is worse for the ones from nearby. If their family lives far away, often they think about them more, so they save more money to send home to them and then they spend less’.

As Parsons and Lawreniuk (2016) have explored, therefore, ‘modernity’ in the context of migrant Cambodia is a loaded term that connotes far more than ephemeral urban fashions, consumption behaviour, or industrial work. Instead, as Mills (1997) and Derks (2008) have argued, it relates to broader cultural, social and economic shifts, including a renegotiation of individual and household roles and relations (Rao 2014; Gidwani and SivaramaKrishnan 2003). At work in the city, a greater degree of financial and personal independence has given young people and young women, in particular, greater freedom to contest and renegotiate the social norms and sanctions that operate upon them: disturbing, though not dismantling, established hierarchies of age and gender, and the traditional ‘laws’ that guide the conduct of Khmer social life (Derks 2008; see also Chapter Four).

As Sov’s, description of ‘modern’ behaviours, above, illustrates, the moral, financial and cultural aspects of ‘modernity’ in lay understandings are sufficiently blurred, such that ‘modernity’ comes to represent not merely ‘newness’ but a breakdown of character: vice, avarice, and the avoidance of familial obligation. As such, ‘modernity reveals itself as a contradictory and ambiguous process of change’ (de Neve 2003:252), through which migrants must tread a careful compromise in order to satiate their desire for urban freedoms without incurring a loss of reputation or shame (Hinton 1998).

The links between migrancy and modernity, on the one hand, and vanity and moral degeneracy on the other, were sketched in this way, so as to render migrants responsible

for the social ills and stigmas that stalk them in the city. The lingering suspicions of distrust and malaise provoked by urbanites led migrants from across Veal Rien's social spectrum to assess, wistfully, that though they were in the city, they could never truly be of it. At the village's new year celebrations when a friend teased Darin by exclaiming '*neak Phnom Penh mokleng haey!*' – 'a city girl comes here!' – Darin (2013, per. comm., 28th July) confided after the event, 'they joke and say I am now a city girl. But I am not a city girl. I just work in the city'. Pisey (2013, per. comm., 1st August) protested, similarly, 'even though I have been in the city 10 years I am still not the one you would call the *neak krong*'.

Yet it was clear, too, that migrant relations with the village had also become strained and neither did they remain *neak srae*. The jokes made by Darin's friend, in this respect, are telling. Migrants were frequently perceived as being changed in and by their migration, though the form and manner of this metamorphosis was subtle and difficult for residents to articulate. 'I am different since I migrated', Srey Sros (2013, per. comm., 10th July) attempted to expound, explaining:

'Before I came to work in the city, when I was at home, I just stayed in the house and never talked to anybody. After I migrated, I became much more talkative. My brother says he cannot recognise me. He says I am so strange [*chamlek*] now because I always talk so much'.

Darin (2013, per. comm., 28th July), too, tried to reason:

'[Those in the village] also think I am stranger than before. For me, I cannot see how I have changed. I think that I am normal but other people say I am strange. I really don't know why'.

Often conveying a mute sense of being somehow braver [*klahean*], more daring or more outspoken, it was thus that migrants illustrated the limits to social continuity. Though unsettled in the urban space, they had nonetheless sparked an unconscious acquisition of new dispositions and practices; relocation in a new urban social field triggering the innovative function of the habitus. The process of the habitus adapting to new surrounds occurs slowly, not rapidly enough to wholly suppress or transform the systems of disposition that emanate from the origin, but with enough haste that these systems are no longer internally uncontested or coherent.

As Veal Rien's migrants are marked as distinct from urbanites, they are marked too as distinct from villagers and cite a breakdown of social relations between their group and the village. 'I think the other villagers are jealous of the ones who migrate', mused Seam (2013,

per. comm., 30th July), an urban worker, claiming that ‘when we come back to the village, sometimes they will not talk to us’. Mach (2013, per. comm., 12th August), a local petty merchant who operated a grocery and sundry stall at the edge of the Veal Rien, alleged:

‘The people who migrate to the city, they always have many dollars to spend. When they come back to the village, they don’t want to talk to us anymore. If I talk to them, they will not talk back, they just ignore us’.

The blame game is once again entered into; opposing sides accused of envy or conceit; the battle over representation stealing the spotlight from the new lines of fissure that have begun to appear in village society. The hallmarks of ‘cleft habitus’ are foregrounded, the dispositional discord that Bourdieu (2004:11) identifies when the set of relations that intersect in the habitus contradict to produce a system ‘divided against itself’ (Bourdieu et al. 1999 in Sayer 2002:25). Veal Rien’s rural-urban migrants are Bourdieu’s (Bourdieu and Wacquant 2000:176) archetypal ‘birds of passage’: ‘irrevocably distanced and dis-located from their original milieu, losing a place of honour in their native circle of honour without securing one in their new setting’. Social continuity may predominate but the limits to this reproduction are found in the transformations that occur meanwhile.

Conclusion

Chapters five and six of this PhD thesis examined the structural and constructivist moments of class in the primary study site of Veal Rien, in line with the first research objective of this PhD thesis, which aimed to posit the extent to which the class theory of Pierre Bourdieu (1984) can illuminate understandings of inequality in contemporary Cambodia, in an era of rapid social change. To begin, chapter five investigated the capital endowments of the village, illustrating the theoretical form and properties of difference in the site and presenting an outline of four different class fractions within two class groups. Following from this, chapter six explored the production of practical divisions between these factions, examining three principal sites of conflict and contest – narratives of wealth and poverty, reciprocal strategies of exchange, and consumption practices – to demonstrate how discourse and practice combine to turn chapter five’s ‘classes-on-paper’ into concrete social groups. In doing so, it turned attention to the second objective posed by this PhD thesis, examining the role of consumption practices in realising the class structure of the village. Building on this framework of theoretical and practical division and difference thus established, the present chapter inquired how patterns of labour mobility interact with these structures of class, addressing the third and final objective of this PhD thesis.

The chapter opened by considering the narratives and imaginaries of rural-urban migration that promote the excursion of Veal Rien's residents to the capital, Phnom Penh. Geographic mobility, it was argued, is seen by village inhabitants as a means to transcend economic and social position. The chapter then considered the lived experience of some of these workers, existing on the geographic and social margins of the city. Some appeared, despite their circumstances, to flourish in the city while others floundered and the chapter proceeded to question the cause of this difference.

Returning to an investigation of the underlying capital endowments of migrant workers, as performed in chapter five in the village context, it was evidenced that material differences between competing class groups were rearticulated in the city. Migrants from wealthier households had greater allocations of economic, cultural and symbolic capital in the city. Not only had they departed with greater shares, they had accrued greater shares since arrival, exemplifying that migration had magnified rather than simply mirrored inequality.

Proceeding to unpick practical divisions, the principal sites of conflict identified in chapter six were re-examined in the urban milieu: reciprocal strategies of remittance exchange, it was shown, exacerbated the underlying material differences between class groups; these material differences underscored competing consumption practices in the city; these practices shaped discourse on the relative wealth status and social legitimacy of the different fractions. Throughout, the lingering imprint of habitus in the new social field was clear. Despite the rhetoric of transcendence, Veal Rien's residents were bound and marked in urban migrant society by classified and classifying dispositions inscribed in the village.

The general effect of migration was, thus, to translocate difference from village to city, and reproduce social divisions. Yet, as a final section considered, this reproduction was not absolute. Although the pace of change was slow and the manner difficult to discern, 'strange' behaviours and strained relations between migrants and full time village residents teased at underlying innovation and discord within the migrant habitus, serving as a reminder that even where social continuity predominates, social discontinuity may persist as a peripheral force.

The research presented in this PhD thesis has examined the everyday experience of the shifting bases of production and consumption in the global South. In particular, it has explored how changing patterns of labour migration and everyday consumption practices interact to both reproduce and yet subtly transform class structures in contemporary Cambodia. In doing so, this PhD has sought to explore and analyse the linkages between economy and society in a country where two decades of rapid economic growth has engendered profound shifts in the practice of working and living.

Thus, as this chapter will demonstrate, the findings derived from this thesis make a contribution to three interrelated clusters of literature. First, this study has built on the tradition of agrarian political economy by tendering a fresh framework for the analysis of social class in rural, Southern society based on the theory and methods of Pierre Bourdieu. Second, in highlighting the role of consumption practices in reifying social divisions, it has furthered understandings of such practices as a mechanism not merely for identity construction and social bonding but of difference and division, thereby re-embedding consumption in social processes. Third, by exploring the ways in which consumption influences migratory processes, it has explored the cultural dynamics of migration systems. In what follows, each of these contributions is examined in greater detail, in turn.

Class

Inequality and hierarchy are commonly regarded as cornerstones of the architecture of social organisation in Cambodia (Mehmet 1997; Chandler 2000; Stuart-Fox 2010). Despite frequent reference in the literature to the power and persistence of these societal traits, however, with key exceptions (Hinton 1998, Le Billon 2000), little research has gone beyond cursory acknowledgement of their legacy to detail and define their form and functioning. Resultantly, understanding of such structures remains, at best, woolly and the problem of how they might interact with and influence the nature of development, only poorly understood.

Historical sources (Chandler 2000; Ayres 2000) suggest a deeply ingrained system of hierarchy, reinforced by the successive adoption of Hindu and then Theravadan Buddhist religious beliefs in the first and seventh centuries, respectively, of the Christian era: the doctrines of karma and rebirth associated with the latter, for example, providing a natural

legitimacy for inequality. The lingering power of hierarchical norms spans the ages since, evident in the social structures reworked by nonetheless avowedly 'egalitarian' (Clayton 1998:4) Khmer Rouge regime (Hinton 1998) and contemporary political parties (Stuart-Fox 2010). Indeed, despite the upheavals of the latter half of the second millennium – colonial incursions, independence, civil war, revolution and reconciliation – hierarchy has remained such a staple feature of social organisation that some commentators have argued that over 'the last 500 years... little has changed in the basic structure of Khmer society' (Mehmet 1997:677).

Though the structures of this system are regarded to have established a degree of permanence, the relations it comprises are, by contrast, notably fluid. There is no single criterion that determines one's place in the system, instead the Khmer hierarchy is notably complex (Hinton 1998): material factors like 'wealth', cultural standards like 'education', demography in 'age' and 'gender', and more subjective measures such as 'reputation of the family', 'character of the individual', 'religious piety' and 'financial benevolence' collude to determine an individual's social position (Oveson, Trankell and Ojendal 1996:34; Hinton 1998:98). As such, an individual's location is never fixed: first, because these factors shift over time, but moreover, because no factor is absolute. Instead each is relative, meaning an individual's social position is not singular but multiple. Each person is simultaneously 'equipped with several social positions, being at the same older than some and younger than others', richer and poorer, wiser and more foolish' (Chandler 2000:89).

The repeated restatement of the marvellous intricacy and density of these structures of difference is perhaps what has led to their almost mythic status in the literature. Like the animist ghosts that Cambodian village elders often believe inhabit objects and bodies (Beban 2014), the spirit world's own invisible hand that intervene in local matters to regulate and maintain order, the inability to visualise these structures does not temper belief in their existence or force: they are assumed to operate on a higher plain, beyond the doors of our perception. Indeed, until now, the apparent complexity of the dynamics of this social system has perhaps been viewed as barrier to more rigorous analysis or mapping.

Nonetheless, the class theory of Pierre Bourdieu (1984, 1985, 1989, 1998, etc.) promises to be a useful tool for making sense of this complexity: a model consciously designed to integrate multiple measures of differentiation (Sayer 2005); and bring about a marriage of material endowments and symbolic performance in the (re-)inscription of class divisions. Though the concept of class has been estranged for some time from the dominant rural

development agenda, scholars have recently issued calls for a reconciliation (Herring and Agawala 2008; Kay 2008; Borrás Jr 2009; Bernstein 2010). Bourdieu's theory remains a popular tool for class analysis of Western societies, having recently been employed in several high-profile and large-scale studies (Flemmen 2013; Savage et al. 2013). As such, it is perhaps time to reflect if and how new approaches to class can enhance understanding of structures of inequality in the South, too.

In light of these concerns, the first research question of this PhD was formulated to address this issue of class, enquiring how Bourdieu's theory of class can illuminate understandings of inequality in contemporary Cambodia. In answering this question, the study thus aims to make a threefold impact: first, to contribute towards a better appreciation of the dynamics of inequality and hierarchy in Twenty-First Century Cambodia, specifically. Second, to illustrate the constructive role that critical geographies of class might play in analysing rural development across the South more broadly – and to establish a plausible framework for analysis based on the theory and tools of Bourdieu. Third, to help bridge the conceptual divide between approaches adopted for class analysis of Western and Southern societies by illustrating the heuristic use of Bourdieu's class theory in a discrepant setting hitherto alien and seemingly, perhaps, even incongruous.

Chapter Five initiated the presentation of empirical data and analysis that addressed this first research question. Therein, data gleaned from the primary study site of Veal Rien illustrated the changing economic and ecological context of the village and considered local responses to these processes. Such responses, the broad weight and shape of livelihood and lifestyles, suggest that the resonance of Cambodia as a 'nation of farmers' (McCargo 2014), were it ever apt (see Chapter Four), has waned further in the contemporary era, with residents pursuing a broad range of off-farm and extra-local work. Yet this is not a simple or straightforward agrarian transition, whereby households shirk or abandon traditional farm work for modern sector wages. Instead, as scholars elsewhere in the region have noted (Scott 1979, 1985; Rigg 2006, 2013), rural lives in Cambodia are becoming increasingly hybridised: factory labour in the city, where possible, supports rather than supersedes work on the family farm.

The processes of development and change have not been weathered alike by households, however. Instead, these households and their constituent members have exhibited divergent responses to the opportunities and constraints ushered in through the modern era. The pattern of transformation in rural areas, then, is not a simple depreciation or

advancement of prevailing conditions: what has brought ruin to some has brought riches to others, leaving a fractured rural society of 'haves' and 'have-nots'.

Inequality in rural areas must be understood as more than simply an unequal distribution of income or land, however. Important as they may be, the differences between households extend to more than a measure of material assets and a focus on such resources serves only to elide the totality of the poor's disadvantage. In a society where, as authors like Derks (2008) have previously acknowledged, 'modern' work and 'modern' living have become desired norms, academic education, vocational skills and technical knowledge are prized resources that look increasingly key to Twenty-First Century success. The pecuniary and opportunity costs involved in acquiring these competencies render them beyond the reach of the poor, however. The already privileged sections of society have, in this way, found means of extending and prolonging their advantage over the rest. The structure of class in Cambodia is, thus, a dense mesh of economic endowments and cultural capabilities.

Class is more than a matter of possession and dispossession, however: social groups are not bound only by the resources they have but by what these resources enable them to do, both in the present and looking to the future. As Chapters Five through Seven together illustrated, social class shapes practice, disposition and possibility. The livelihoods, lifestyles and, ultimately, the very life chances of individuals are firmly rooted in the classed conditions of their social existence.

It is increasingly recognised (Kelly 2011; Rigg 2013) that the nature of economic and social dynamism in contemporary rural society in Southeast Asia has pushed the boundaries of traditional agrarian political economy, challenging the conceptual approaches and categories customarily employed in analysis of rural areas. In this respect, invoking a fresh perspective, namely the class theory of Bourdieu and, in particular, his conceptual trinity of capital, habitus and field, proved useful for making sense of the properties and (re-)production of inequality in rural Cambodia. Though scholars (e.g. Vorng 2011) have doubted the heuristic use of existing class concepts in understanding Southeast Asian class relations, this study illustrates that the theory of Bourdieu is suited to such a purpose, boasting a conceptual fluidity and pragmatism that equips it to readily comprehend the diversity and hybridity of existence in the maelstrom of contemporary society.

Work elsewhere (Bélanger, Welch Drummond and Nguyen-Marhsall 2012; Schindler 2014) has tentatively noted this potential but has focused on urban areas and, particularly, the issue of emergent middle classes (Kleinen 2013). Building on previous work conducted in

rural areas of transitional economies (Eichholz et al. 2013), therefore, this study has illustrated that the scope of Bourdieu's propositions may be usefully broadened to further understanding of class dynamics and disadvantage in rural areas of Southeast Asia amid the economic and social turbulence of the Twenty-First Century.

Consumption

It is a truism widely observed in the literature that the dynamic global and regional economic and ecological environment entails shifting mode and means of production activity in the global South in the contemporary era; mechanics, which, in fact, can be traced to centuries earlier. Much scholarly energy has been focused on theorising and detailing the extent, scope, and trajectory of these still unfolding processes. The sphere of consumption, however, has garnered sparser attention in the human geography literature, despite its systems, too, being profoundly and continually reworked through centuries of transformation.

This neglect continues despite the emergence of a strong consumption studies field producing research that spans the disciplines of the social sciences (see Clammer 2011; Miller 2005; Miller 2012) and in geography, in particular (see Brooks and Bryant 2013; Goss 2006; Mansvelt 2012). Scholars of consumption have for the most part, however, confined their activities to the study of the West, though this is slowly changing as consumption becomes an emergent avenue of research in studies of Southeast Asia and beyond (Kleinen 2013). The effect of the South's longer-term omission from the consumption literature has been the fabrication of a geographic binary, a lingering essentialist imagination of the South as a realm of production, whose inhabitants are workers rather than consumers. Such a perspective obfuscates the dyadic relation between these two aspects of Southern life.

Within the literature that exists considering consumption in the South, there has been a persistent elision of the depth of these linkages between consumption practices and other economic and social spheres. In such studies, the cultural values and meanings of consumption practices have been fruitfully explored. Yet a methodological individualism reigns that considers consumption from the narrow perspective of the consumer and thereby fails to take account of the relation between consumption and broader social processes. This relation deserves acknowledgement because it is not unproblematic: consumption may have, for example, destructive impact on the physical environment or, as explored herein, divisive reverberations within the social one.

The second research question of this PhD thesis, thus, was designed to respond to these concerns about consumption and its treatment in the literature, seeking to understand the role that consumption practices play in realising the differences between class groups in Cambodian society. In developing this understanding, the research aimed to make a twofold impact: first, to take steps towards redressing the relative scarcity of studies of consumption in the South generally; a deficit which is, nonetheless, particularly acute in current scholarship of Cambodia. Second, to do so in a manner that moves beyond conventional celebrationist narratives of consumption, furthering a more critical approach to consumption in the South, which takes greater account of the moral and political ambiguities and externalities of consumption practices; an account which re-embeds consumption in the social and economic milieu from which it originates.

In doing so, this PhD has contributed to a body of Southern scholarship that details the use of consumption practices in identity construction (Derks 2008; Hoefinger 2013) and fostering group belonging (Beazley and Chakraborty 2009; Czymonewicz-Klippel 2011; Martin-Iverson 2012; Vann 2012; Beazley and Miller 2015). In several ways, however, this thesis has broadened the horizons of this emergent research agenda and, perhaps as a product, furthered the understandings it has thus far evinced.

First, such accounts have tended to focus on urban (Derks 2008; Martin-Iverson 2012; Vann 2012; Hoefinger 2013) and/or youth (Beazley and Chakraborty 2009; Czymonewicz-Klippel 2011) consumption practices. This is likely related to a second emphasis on more ostentatious or 'conspicuous' modes of consumption, including 'deviant' strategies like the formation of sub- and counter-culture (Czymonewicz-Klippel 2011; Martin-Iverson 2012; Beazley and Miller 2015). By contrast, this PhD has considered consumption in the context of rural, subaltern areas and demographics and, in doing so, has spotlighted more mundane, everyday and routine consumption practices. It has thereby illustrated the role of these more closeted and hitherto underappreciated strategies in the production of identity and cohesion of social groups.

Likely following from these twinned foci – after all, counter-culture and sub-culture are defined as movements of norm violation – has been a third observable trend, whereby such authors tend to, often implicitly, orient creative consumer agency as the locus of identity construction (Czymonewicz-Klippel 2011; Hoefinger 2013; Beazley and Miller 2015). The theoretical and methodological approach undertaken here, however, has sited consumption practices in relation to Bourdieu's concepts of habitus and field, which has

elicited a more nuanced appraisal where the construction of identity through consumption appears more constrained and less purposive: an unconscious classified and classifying act. Thus, whilst Czymonewicz-Klippel (2011), Beazley and Miller (2015), etc., see conspicuous consumption as a overt strategy of resistance for those from oppressed or maligned groups, this thesis has illustrated, following the seminal work of Scott (1985), that dissent or rebellion may, in the majority of cases, be more discrete or circumspect – even unknowing. Consumption need not be provoking to be political.

Finally, Bourdieu's concept of field – in its sense as an intended play on the concept of battlefield rather than forcefield – suggest the need to look beyond the cohesive functions of shared interests or collective practice to observe their simultaneously oppositional and divisive reverberations. Consumption, as this thesis has elaborated in drawing upon these notions, is a site of class struggle: it does not only bond groups but, through tacit referral of social legitimacy and associated moral worth, serves to segregate.

Migration

The longevity of structures of inequality and hierarchy in Cambodia has led to speculation that these societal traits are not only deeply entrenched but fixed, and perhaps immutable (Mehmet 1997). Nonetheless, a finer reading of Cambodia's history suggests that the persistence of these edifices is not attributable to their rigidity but, in contrast, their fluidity and adaptability. Where in the past such structures have been challenged by regional conquest, international war and civil revolt, it is the economic dynamism of the contemporary era that now tests the endurance of the customary organisation of society. This dynamism includes new patterns of rural-urban labour migration, a mass phenomenon of still increasing scale, with the potential to rework the distribution of resources and opportunity across the country and transform the contours of class in the Kingdom.

Patterns of internal labour movement are highly visible phenomena reshaping economy, society and culture throughout Southeast Asia, yet the human geography literature has bequeathed greater attention, to date, to pathways of international mobility. This attention is disproportionate to numerical importance, where the former dwarves the latter and its transformative potential may be, therefore, much greater (Rigg 2013; Elmhirst 2012). The extent of the transformation manifest in the dynamics of internal movement has been obfuscated, further, by the dominance of economic approaches to its study, in which population mobility was, for many decades, seen as subservient to the economic forces that supposedly propelled it. Migration research, taken broadly, has gradually

broken free from such shackles but, still, much of the work on the cultural and social aspects of mobility is concentrated on movement in the West (King 2012).

The third research question of this PhD was framed to begin to address some of these imbalances, enquiring how rural-urban labour migration in Cambodia interacts with inequality to reproduce or transform local class structures. In doing so it aimed to make four principal contributions to the literature: first, to further understanding of class processes in Cambodia in an era marked by rapid growth but high inequality; second, to exemplify the mechanics and transformational processes of internal labour movement in an increasingly mobile South; third, in examining the recursive linkages between consumption, migration and inequality, to do so in a manner that spotlights the social and cultural impetus and effect of population mobility; and fourth, in doing so, contribute to a renascent body of work on the contemporary theory and application of Mabogunje's (1977) migration systems theory.

Throughout the empirical sections of PhD thesis, the sweeping and profound transformations that contemporary patterns of migration have wrought to rural ways of not simply working but living and being have been a prominent theme of investigation. As Rigg (2001; 2006; 2013) has elsewhere elaborated, urban and global influences have continued to seep steadily into village life; a traffic of more than material goods, but of knowledge, information and ideas redefining ambition, prestige and aspiration.

For the young of the village, then, urban migration is more than simply a reluctant route of out an economic bind. It has become a hotly anticipated rite of passage, a pathway to a period of independence, linked to notions of fast and free city living. Where internal labour mobility is considered in the literature, the strictures of often difficult, dirty and dangerous urban work is routinely examined but the corollary of lively, better provisioned, and 'modern' modes of urban living is, with notable exceptions from anthropologists (Derks 2008; Hoefinger 2013), rarely acknowledged. Of course, this is not to diminish the need for improvements to the general conditions and security of workforces and communities in Cambodia. Instead, it is merely to argue that to get a clear picture of the impetus behind migratory decisions, the objective facts of urban poverty may contribute less than its highly subjective experience.

Indeed, however, just as livelihood and lifestyle diverge in the village, there is considerable heterogeneity, too, of urban migrant work and living. In this respect, then, there has at least been some continuity in change. As Chapter Seven considered, the twinned effect of

oscillating economic and cultural capitals entails that rural class location continues to impinge urban achievement. Though geographic mobility is pursued, in some part, as a means of transcending social position, the general effect is that migration translocates structures of inequality from village to city, reproducing class divisions in urban migrant society. Bourdieu's concepts of capital, habitus and field again proved useful for illustrating the means and processes of this reproduction – and suggesting its frontiers and limitations. The heuristic use of these concepts has previously been noted in the literatures on international migration and transnationalism (Gardner 2012; Oliver and O'Reilly 2010; Vertovec 2009); this thesis has, therefore, furthered the scope of these engagements by suggesting and developing continued resonance towards understanding internal migrations involving the crossing of perhaps lesser spatial, social and cultural frontiers.

In examining these rural-urban linkages and feedback, particularly in demonstrating the continued imprint of habitus on migrant consumption practices, the study has contributed to the nascent migration systems literature by emphasising the cultural dynamics of migrations systems: mechanics that Mabogunje's (1970) original systems framework, and subsequent work based upon it, have been criticised for eliding (Bakewell, De Haas and Kubal 2012).

Suggestions for future research

The research and analysis undertaken for the preparation of this PhD thesis has not only contributed towards answering the research questions and objectives established in Chapter One. In the process of exploring the linkages between class, consumption and rural-urban migration, this study has additionally uncovered hitherto underexplored avenues that emerge as promising sites for further enquiry. In some cases, these new avenues for research are areas of thematic concern that were beyond the original focus of the study but surfaced, over the course of the research, as possibly related or otherwise significant considerations. Other are suggested as extensions of the methodologies tested herein or potentially complementary developments. The following few pages will briefly detail these prospective advances.

One of the implications of the current study is that the divide between rural class groups is not only mirrored in urban society, but magnified. In other words, class differences in Veal Rien have become wider and more marked over time as they have been stretched across new social fields. Though the evidence herein is sufficient to support this proposition, notably that which is presented through Chapter Seven of this PhD, it is harder to

extrapolate from the data a rigorous assessment as to whether this trend will continue in the longer term. The data suggest that dominant class groups possess the ability, at least in some circumstances, to prolong their advantage when encountering new fields but there remains the possibility that the disadvantaged may yet uncover means to resist their further subjugation or that the dominant may encounter some other hindrance in the maintenance of their superiority.

To better understand the temporal dynamics of class processes, therefore, an adaptation of the current methodology to incorporate a longitudinal frame of reference is proposed. Such a lens might capture the longer term mechanics of the temporal fluidity of class structures in developing societies, examining first, how the social field itself and the resources of which it is chiefly comprised weather the passage of economic change: which capitals are leveraged into positions of foundational importance or, conversely, subside as ballasts of class structure. More crucially, however, it might seek to uncover how the social position of households and individuals within the field move: to both posit the key trajectories of social mobility and examine how habitus is affected by repeated and enduring distortions of the social field.

Such longitudinal data as pertains to intra-national geographic mobility and social development are rare, as Rigg, Salamanca and Parnwell (2013) attest. Nonetheless, similar data (e.g. Rigg 2012; Rigg, Salamanca and Parnwell 2013) suggests that household resources, livelihoods and attendant development trajectories are defined by turbulence and exhibit churning patterns of short term success, simple coping, and poverty. As elaborated in the theoretical framework of this PhD thesis, presented in Chapter Two, Bourdieu's method of measuring and mapping class is deftly suited to task of examining the elementary fluidity of class dynamics. This capacity, however, has remained somewhat understated in the presentation of this PhD thesis, due to the limitations of a single, fixed-point data collection.

In continued terms of extending the empirical scope of the investigation is the possibility of expanding not merely the temporal but spatial reach of the study. The focus of this PhD thesis has been a specific channel of rural-urban labour migration to Phnom Penh and its wider interactions upon and within class and consumption relations. These relations, however, also shape and sustain many other patterns of labour movement within Cambodia: a dominant flow of rural-rural mobility (Diepart 2010) exists alongside narrower but still significant streams of migration to the sea port of Kampong Som, to the prime

tourist site of Siem Reap town, and the – albeit rapidly disappearing – regions of Cambodia’s frontier-land forests. Further, just short of one million Cambodians are working overseas.

To introduce and incorporate the study of these additional trends of labour movement would not serve simply as a descriptive enquiry but further understanding of the correspondence and interlinkages between different types of mobility. As King (2010) has observed, one of the advantages of the systems approach is the attendant possibility to locate sub-systems of migration as nesting within broader national, regional and global systems. Scholars of migration have often mused whether the study of internal and international mobility can be reconciled within one theoretical approach (King and Skeldon 2010) and the systems framework might therefore represent the best prospect for the attainment of such an undertaking.

Moreover, performing the measuring and mapping the class structure of additional communities bound up with novel forms of movement would serve as a useful exercise for testing and refining the fundamental conclusions of this PhD thesis. Bourdieu, for instance, regarded such diffusion as a form of ‘epistemological experiment’ (see Wacquant 2004): a search for evidence of homology in the undergirding structures of social fields with the surface appearance of dissimilarity; where the stakes and rules of the game, the sum and value of available resources, differ markedly but are subject to consonant and revealing power struggles.

In developing a robust understanding of the operations and dynamics of class, the question of how and where class intersects with other social identities like, notably, gender, ethnicity and sexuality is an important consideration that has fallen outside the scope of this PhD thesis. Previous work on the relational production of subjectivity has highlighted that inequalities emerge as social and material meanings are co-produced: rendered, renewed and reproduced from everyday practices (Nightingale 2011). The ongoing debate on the issue of intersectionality, however, suggests that the complexities of social inequalities are more fully understood when taking account of multiple rather than single social dynamics (Clarke and McCall 2013; Walby, Armstrong and Strid 2012), lending to the capture of the multiple constitution of (dis)advantage and inequity.

Though Cambodia is often characterised as a ‘homogenous’ nation, this might be better interpreted as an indication of the visibility and recognition of disadvantaged and minority groups rather than an accurate summation of their number (Frewer 2014; Ward and

Mouly 2013). The tentative suggestion that emerges from the evidence presented in this PhD thesis, as observable in, for instance, the brief life histories of Mith and Mom presented in Chapter Five, and other data collected indicates that there is some reciprocal constitution of multiply-layered social position and practice. Beyond the scope of this PhD to pursue in greater detail, however, the elaboration of this intersectionality might commence in further, alternately focused research.

A further shift in emphasis might additionally be required to deepen understandings of the locus of migratory agency. This study has emphasised the active role of migrant workers themselves in negotiating and shaping migratory pathways and dynamics, paying heed to the dynamic manipulation of labour market opportunity by urban workers and their capacity to strategise, if sometimes unconsciously, and construct meaning through everyday experience and practice, provoking social change and rupture. The wider literature on migration, however, has increasingly recognised that migrant workers themselves are not the only individuals to contribute to the production and patterning of migration systems, exploring, for example, the agency of the children of migrant workers: both those 'left behind' by their parents (Hoang and Yeoh 2015) and those accompanying (Gardner 2012), though this more regularly considers transnational rather than internal forms of mobility (Thorne, Chee and Lam 2001). Bylander (2014), too, has broadened the conceptualisation of migrant agency, examining the origins and implications of the decisions of voluntarily non-migrant youth in rural Cambodian populations, who counter the emergent norm of mobility (see also Toyota, Yeoh, and Nguyen, L. (2007), again looking at movement across national borders.

There are many other groups bound up in the mechanics of migration systems who are not merely affected by changing modes of work and living, but too exhibit agency in shaping and distorting prevalent migratory practices and effects. This is equally true of intra- and international movement. One such group involved with rural-urban migration systems in Cambodia includes the elderly, who rarely directly undertake migration but may indirectly facilitate it. Often conceived as abandoned by migrant offspring (He and Ye 2014) or burdened with the care of grandchildren 'left behind' Zhang, Bécares, Chandola, and Callery 2015), the agency of these individuals is negated by the implicit proposition that they are passive recipients or victims of social change rather than architects. Further work should, therefore, interrogate these assumptions and examine how older residents and, indeed, others caught within mobile communities but not directly undertaking movement actively

contribute to the development and evolution of the migration systems of which they are undeniably a part.

Conclusion

Life and work in rural areas of Cambodia today reflects new patterns and pathways of production and consumption, based around increasingly mobile modes of livelihood and lifestyle. Historic social inequities have been challenged by ongoing rupture with the customary organisation of rural life, frequently, if misleadingly, regarded as static and immune to change. Examining the facets of economic, social and cultural transformation in Cambodia, this PhD thesis has sought to posit the everyday experience of development and local level, examining the manner in which power structures in rural communities adapt to changing conditions and new economic and ecological environments. As this PhD thesis has shown, subtle differences in endowments make a significant difference in this respect, but such advantages are far from being merely a financial question. Rather, the meaning and value of a person's assets within a community must be viewed both holistically and historically in order to discern how rural class structures underpin increasingly urban lives. Indeed, far from rendering these historically agrarian categories irrelevant, Cambodia's process of economic urbanization is underpinning a deepening and widening of class divisions and inequality of opportunity.

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9th August 2012

Sabina Lawreniuk,
Department of Geography



Dear Sabina,

REP(GSSHM)/11/12-33 'Migration as distinction-making: rural-urban migration, consumption and class in contemporary Cambodia.'

I am pleased to inform you that the above application has been reviewed by the GSSHM Research Ethics Panel that FULL APPROVAL is now granted.

Please ensure that you follow all relevant guidance as laid out in the King's College London Guidelines on Good Practice in Academic Research (<http://www.kcl.ac.uk/college/policyzone/index.php?id=247>).

For your information ethical approval is granted until 09/08/14. If you need approval beyond this point you will need to apply for an extension to approval at least two weeks prior to this explaining why the extension is needed, (please note however that a full re-application will not be necessary unless the protocol has changed). You should also note that if your approval is for one year, you will not be sent a reminder when it is due to lapse.

Ethical approval is required to cover the duration of the research study, up to the conclusion of the research. The conclusion of the research is defined as the final date or event detailed in the study description section of your approved application form (usually the end of data collection when all work with human participants will have been completed), not the completion of data analysis or publication of the results. For projects that only involve the further analysis of pre-existing data, approval must cover any period during which the researcher will be accessing or evaluating individual sensitive and/or un-anonymised records. Note that after the point at which ethical approval for your study is no longer required due to the study being complete (as per the above definitions), you will still need to ensure all research data/records management and storage procedures agreed to as part of your application are adhered to and carried out accordingly.

If you do not start the project within three months of this letter please contact the Research Ethics Office.

Should you wish to make a modification to the project or request an extension to approval you will need approval for this and should follow the guidance relating to modifying approved applications: <http://www.kcl.ac.uk/innovation/research/support/ethics/applications/modifications.aspx>

The circumstances where modification requests are required include the addition/removal of participant groups, additions/removal/changes to research methods, asking for additional data from participants, extensions to the ethical approval period. Any proposed modifications should only be carried out once full approval for the modification request has been granted.

Any unforeseen ethical problems arising during the course of the project should be reported to the approving committee/panel. In the event of an untoward event or an adverse reaction a full report must be made to the Chair of the approving committee/review panel within one week of the incident.

Please would you also note that we may, for the purposes of audit, contact you from time to time to ascertain the status of your research.

If you have any query about any aspect of this ethical approval, please contact your panel/committee administrator in the first instance (<http://www.kcl.ac.uk/innovation/research/support/ethics/contact.aspx>). We wish you every success with this work.

Yours sincerely

Daniel Butcher
Research Ethics Officer

INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS

REC Reference Number: REP(GSSHM)/11/12-33



YOU WILL BE GIVEN A COPY OF THIS INFORMATION SHEET

Migration as Distinction? Class, consumption and rural-urban migration in contemporary Cambodia

We would like to invite you to participate in this postgraduate research project. You should only participate if you want to; choosing not to take part will not disadvantage you in any way. Before you decide whether you want to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what your participation will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

The research aims to examine how people have been made better and worse off by participation in labour migration to Phnom Penh. I am inviting every household head in Veal Rien to participate in the study by completing a survey questionnaire.

If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. The survey will take approximately one hour to complete and will ask questions about your household's livelihood activities. The survey can be administered at a time and location that is convenient for you. I will ask if I may contact you in the future to ask some follow-up questions.

We hope the study will help people understand how people and communities in Cambodia are using labour migration to prosper or to understand how it can have negative effects. Please note that participation will not have any direct positive effect on your personal circumstance but may help development planners to improve community welfare in Cambodia in the longer term.

Any data collected from you will be stored anonymously and only I, the principle researcher, will have access to any data containing personal information such as your name.

It is up to you to decide whether to take part or not. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. In addition to withdrawing yourself from the study, you may also withdraw any data/information you have already provided up until it is transcribed for use in the final report (01/08/2013).

If you have any further questions or wish to withdraw at any point, please contact me:

Sabina Lawreniuk

Department of Geography, King's College London, Strand, London, WC2R 2LS, United Kingdom

If this study has harmed you in any way you can contact King's College London using the details below for further advice and information:

Professor Raymond Bryant

Department of Geography, King's College London, Strand, London, WC2R 2LS, United Kingdom

CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS IN RESEARCH STUDIES

Please complete this form after you have read the Information Sheet and/or listened to an explanation about the research.



Title of Study:

Migration as Distinction?

King's College Research Ethics Committee Ref:

REP(GSSHM)/11/12-33

Thank you for considering taking part in this research. The person organising the research must explain the project to you before you agree to take part. If you have any questions arising from the Information Sheet or explanation already given to you, please ask the researcher before you decide whether to join in. You will be given a copy of this Consent Form to keep and refer to at any time.

Please tick
or initial

I understand that if I decide at any time during the research that I no longer wish to participate in this project, I can notify the researchers involved and withdraw from it immediately without giving any reason. Furthermore, I understand that I will be able to withdraw my data until it is transcribed for use in the final report (01/08/2013).

I consent to the processing of my personal information for the purposes explained to me. I understand that such information will be handled in accordance with the terms of the Data Protection Act 1998.

I agree to be contacted in the future by the researcher who would like to invite me to participate in follow up interviews for this project.

I agree that the research team may use my data for future research and understand that, in such cases, as with this project, data would not be identifiable in any report.

Participant's Statement:

I, _____, agree that the research project named above has been explained to me to my satisfaction and I agree to take part in the study. I have read both the notes written above and the Information Sheet about the project, and understand what the research study involves.

Signed _____

Date _____

Appendix III: Question schedule

Part I: Household

1. Household membership. Include all members of household normally resident, including those temporarily away at work/school/university.									
Member (R?)	Relation to head	Age	Sex	Religion	Married	Education	In school?	School type	School cost/year
1	HEAD								
2									
3									
4									
5									
6									
7									
8									
9									
10									
11									
12									

Part II: Labour force deployment and labour migration

2.1. Household member work. List all activities that can earn income or consumable resources.												
Mem	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
1												
2												
3												
4												
5												
6												
7												
8												
9												
10												
11												

12												
2.2.1. Does any member of the household currently migrate?								Yes 1	No 0			

2.2.2. If yes, please fill in the table.				
Member	Year departed	Where to	Occupation	Remittances
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				
11				
12				

2.3.1. Has any member of the household previously migrated?	Yes 1	No 0
---	----------	---------

2.3.2. If yes, please complete household migration history.

2.4.1. How many children have left the household in total?
 Where are these children living now?
 Please give details of all children no longer resident in village:

Part III: Economic capitals

3.2. Land and labour

3.2.1. Currently, does the household have any farmland?	Yes 1	No 0
---	----------	---------

3.2.2. If no, has the household ever had any land?	Yes 1	No 0
	Size: Year lost:	

3.2.3. Why did the household lose land (or never have any) and how has it been affected since?

3.2.4. If yes, please fill in the table for each plot:

Plot	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Size								
Source								
Titled?								
When titled?								
Quality								
Crop								
Use								
Output								
Evolution of output								

Coding for table 3.2.4.			
Source	Quality	Use	Evolution
(1) State land	(1) Good	(1) Household consumption	(1) Increase
(2) Inherited	(2) Average	(2) sale	(2) Same
(3) Bought	(3) Poor	(3) both	(3) Decrease
(4) Rented	(0)DK		
(5)Cleared			
(6) Mortgaged			

3.2.5. What fertiliser is used for the above land?	Yes	No
Rotation crop	1	0
Manure	1	0
Chemical	1	0
Alluvium	1	0
None	1	0
3.2.6. What is the source of irrigation for the above land?		
Rain fed	1	0
River	1	0
Irrigated	1	0

3.2.7. In the last 5 years has the household lost any land?	Yes	No
	1	0
3.2.8. How much, why, from where and with what effect?		

3.2.9. In the last five years, has the household gained any additional land?	Yes	No		
	1	0		
3.2.10. How much, why, from where and with what effect?				
3.2.11. Has the overall agricultural output of the household changed in the last five years?	Increase 1	Same 2	Decrease 3	DK 0
3.2.12. If there has been some change, whether increase or decrease, why has this occurred?				

3.2.13. Do some members of your household do farm work on non-household land?	Yes 1	No 0
3.2.14. If yes, do they receive cash payment?	1	0

3.2.15. Do you usually call for external labour to help on your land?	Yes 1	No 0
3.2.16. If yes, do they receive cash payment?	1	0

3.3. Housing

3.3.1. Housing build type (see sheet – n.b. observation only, no need to ask respondent)	Code
--	---------------

3.3.2. Do you own the house in which you live?	Yes, own the house 1	2
No, rent the house from landlord	3	4
No, look after the house for someone	4	
Other (please note).....		
3.3.2.1. Is the land titled?		
3.3.2.2. What was the source of the HH land?		

3.3.3. In the past five years, have you improved, repaired, enlarged or rebuilt your house?	Yes 1	No 0
3.3.4. If yes, have you:	Improved/repaired 1	0
Enlarged	1	0
Built or building new house	1	0

3.3.5. What are your sources of:								
a) Drinking water?			b) Energy for cooking?			c) Light/electricity?		
	Y	N		Y	N		Y	N
Rain water	1	0	Wood/charcoal	1	0	Kero/candle	1	0
Pump	1	0	Gas	1	0	Battery	1	0
Lake/river	1	0	Biomass	1	0	Own generator	1	0
Water supply	1	0	Rice husk	1	0	Grid	1	0
Other.....	1	0	Other	1	0	Solar power	1	0
						Other.....	1	0

3.4. Inheritance

3.4.1. Does the household expect to receive any form of inheritance in the future?	Yes 1	No 0
3.4.2. If yes, what?		
3.4.2. Does the household have any savings? If yes, what?		

3.5. Assets

3.5.1. Does the rural household have access to the following goods?			
Item	Own	Rent	Borrow
Television			
Satellite			
Radio			
Computer			
Mobile phone			
Table			

3.5.2. Does the rural household have access to the following transport?			
Item	Own	Rent	Borrow
Bicycle			
Cart			
Motorbike			
Car			
Remorque			
Truck			
Rowboat			
Motorboat			

3.5.3. Does the rural household have access to the following livestock?			
Item	Own	Rent	Borrow
Chicken			
Duck			
Pig			
Goat			
Horse			
Ox/cow			
Buffalo			

3.5.4. Does the rural household have access to the following equipment?			
Item	Own	Rent	Borrow
Plough			
Rake			
Ox-plough			
Tractor			
Water pump			
Ricemill			

3.6. Vulnerability

3.6.1. In the past five years, has the household been adversely affected by the following:	Severely affected	Mildly affected	None
Flood	2	1	0
Drought	2	1	0
Crop loss	2	1	0
Land loss	2	1	0
Sick/dead animal(s)	2	1	0
Disability/ill health/death of family member	2	1	0
Other.....	2	1	0

3.7. Debt/credit

3.7.1. At present, does the household have any outstanding debt?	Yes 1	No 0
3.7.2. If yes how much?		

3.7.3. If yes, who was this borrowed from?	Yes	No
Family/relatives	1	0
Neighbour	1	0
Tontin	1	0
NGOs	1	0
Employer	1	0
Bank	1	0
Rice bank	1	0
Other	1	0

3.8.1. At present is the household owed money by anyone?	Yes	No
	1	0
3.8.2. If yes, who, how much, why?		

3.9. Overall wealth perception

3.1.1. Where does the household rank in the village hierarchy as a percentage?				
VR	QR	A	QP	VP

Part IV: Cultural capitals

4.1.1. Is any member of the household currently undertaking any form of training or apprenticeship, whether paid/unpaid, formal/informal, related to employment or other?	Yes	No
	1	0
4.1.2. Who is the trainee, who is the trainer, how much, when and where, with what aim?		

4.1.3. Does any member of the household belong to the following group or committee?	Yes	No
Pagoda committee	1	0
Health equity fund	1	0
Funeral association	1	0
Tontin	1	0
Village development committee	1	0
Commune council	1	0
Non-governmental organisation	1	0
NGO credit organisation	1	0
Community forestry	1	0
Community fishery	1	0
School supporting committee	1	0
Boat racing committee	1	0
Community protected areas	1	0

Security committee	1	0
Road maintenance committee	1	0
Farmer water use committee	1	0
Farmer association	1	0
Rice bank	1	0
Seed bank	1	0
Trade union	1	0
Other	1	0

4.1.4. Does the household know anyone (family/friends) in the following occupation?	Yes	No
Teacher	1	0
Doctor	1	0
Policeman	1	0
Urban construction worker	1	0
Local construction worker	1	0
Urban factory worker	1	0
Local factory worker	1	0
Small business owner (petty trader, shop keeper, petroleum seller, mechanic)	1	0
Commune official	1	0
Civil servant	1	0
Agricultural labourer	1	0
Student	1	0
Motodop	1	0
Taxi driver	1	0
Urban services	1	0
Someone who is landless	1	0
Someone with landholdings over	1	0

4.1.5. Who can help you if you need to borrow money?

4.1.6. If you had a problem or dispute with somebody in the village, who would help you?

4.1.7. If you had a problem or dispute with the police or government administration, who would help you?

4.1.8. Who has helped you to find work before?

Part V: Consumption behaviour

5.1.1. In the past five years, has the household paid for any wedding ceremony?	Yes 1	No 0
---	----------	---------

5.1.2. For who and how much did the marriage cost in total?

5.1.3. On average, how much money do you spend as a household each month on the following:

Total food budget
Rice
Meat
Entertainment/leisure
Clothing
Household goods
Transport (inc. petrol)
Pagoda

Veal Rien residents

Name, gender, age, interview location, interview date(s)

An, female, 45 years old, Veal Rien, 16th August 2013

Ary, female, 20 years old, Veal Rien, 29th April 2013

Athith, male, 49 years old, Veal Rien, 20th August 2013

Chab, male, 55 years old, Veal Rien, 6th June 2013

Chamroeun, male, 35 years old, Veal Rien, 16th August 2013

Chariya, female, 27 years old, Veal Rien, 4th June 2013

Chayu, male, 70 years old, Veal Rien, 15th August 2012, 30th April 2013

Chea, female, 43 years old, Veal Rien, 8th August 2013

Chen, male, 41 years old, Veal Rien, 2nd May 2013

Chhin, female, 30 years old, Veal Rien, 12th August 2013

Chhoeun, female, 49 years old, Veal Rien, 9th August 2013

Chhoy, female, 51 years old, Veal Rien, 9th August 2013

Chi, male, 25 years old, Veal Rien, 20th August 2013

Da, female, 40 years old, Veal Rien, 27th May 2013

Hour, male, 42 years old, Veal Rien, 5th August 2013

Koy, female, 31 years old, Veal Rien, 25th April 2013

Kut, male, 47 years old, Veal Rien, 20th August 2013

Lin, female, 26 years old, Veal Rien, 17th April 2013

Lina, female, 85 years old, Veal Rien, 15th August 2012

Lon, female, 46 years old, Veal Rien, 3rd May 2013

Mach, female, 42 years old, Veal Rien, 12th August 2013

Makara, female, 29 years old, Veal Rien, 5th June 2013

Mao, female, 60 years old, Veal Rien, 13th June 2013

Mien, male, 68 years old, Veal Rien, 15th August 2012, 19th April 2013

Mith, male, 62 years old, Veal Rien, 22nd April 2013, 27th May 2013, 19th August 2013

Mom, female, 62 years old, Veal Rien, 24th April 2013, 26th June 2013, 16th August 2013

Nim, female, 71 years old, Veal Rien, 15th August 2012

Noon, female, 78 years old, Veal Rien, 15th August 2012

Ny, female, 39 years old, Veal Rien, 13th May 2013

Oeun, female, 54 years old, Veal Rien, 19th April 2013

Pan, male, 57 years old, Veal Rien, 23rd May 2013

Peng, female, 25 years old, Veal Rien, 7th June 2013

Phalla, female, 26 years old, Veal Rien, 17th May 2013

Prak, male, 33 years old, Veal Rien, 14th June 2013

Put, male, 23 years old, Veal Rien, 9th August 2013

Ruthy, male, 37 years old, Veal Rien, 22nd April 2013

Sambo, male, 49 years old, Veal Rien, 30th April 2013

Savung, female, 32 years old, Veal Rien, 9th August 2013

Sereypheap, female, 23 years old, Veal Rien, 7th June 2013

Sophat, male, 33 years old, Veal Rien, 19th May 2013

Sothea, male, 32 years old, Veal Rien, 15th August 2013

Sovann, male, 34 years old, Veal Rien, 20th August 2013

Srey Leak, female, 25 years old, Veal Rien, 31st May 2013

Srung, male, 45 years old, Veal Rien, 28th May 2013

Sun, male, 53 years old, Veal Rien, 3rd June 2013

Thaem, male, 28 years old, Veal Rien, 16th August 2013

Thim, male, 39 years old, Veal Rien, 17th April 2013

Thom, male, 39 years old, Veal Rien, 19th August 2013

Tina, female, 22 years old, Veal Rien, 9th June 2013

Tola, male, 60 years old, Veal Rien, 6th May 2013

Vanna, female, 29 years old, Veal Rien, 25th June 2013

Visal, male, 30 years old, Veal Rien, 18th April 2013

Yun, female, 57 years old, Veal Rien, 12th August 2013

Veal Rien migrants

Name, gender, age, interview location, interview date(s)

Bopha, female, 24 years old, Phnom Penh, 11th July 2013

Chantha, female, 26 years old, Phnom Penh,

Darin, female, 17 years old, Phnom Penh, 28th July 2013

Heng, male, 30 years old, Phnom Penh, 2nd July 2013

Kim, female, 22 years old, Phnom Penh, 22nd July 2013

Kun, male, 26 years old, Phnom Penh, 6th August 2013

Kunthea, female, 27 years old, Phnom Penh, 4th July 2013

Many, male, 27 years old, Phnom Penh, 8th July 2013

Narith, male, 19 years old, Phnom Penh, 28th June 2013

Pannet, male, 30 years old, Phnom Penh, 18th July 2013

Phalla, female, 38 years old, Phnom Penh, 18th July 2013

Pisey, female, 30 years old, Phnom Penh, 1st August 2013

Roat, male, 38 years old, Phnom Penh, 22nd July 2013

Rotha, male, 26 years old, Phnom Penh, 8th August 2013

Seam, female, 21 years old, Phnom Penh, 30th July 2013

Seth, male, 28 years old, Phnom Penh, 10th July 2013

Sokhom, male, 30 years old, Phnom Penh, 28th June 2013

Srey Ly, female, 22 years old, Phnom Penh, 16th July 2013

Srey Neang, female, 18 years old, Phnom Penh, 6th August 2013

Srey Pov, female, 19 years old, Phnom Penh, 31st July 2013

Srey Sros, female, 19 years old, Phnom Penh, 10th July 2013

Vichear, male, 19 years old, Phnom Penh, 17th July 2013

Vichet, male, 17 years old, Phnom Penh, 1st August 2013

Visal, male, 30 years old, Phnom Penh, 23rd July 2013

Wan, male, 26 years old, Phnom Penh, 7th August 2013

Key informants

Name, occupation, interview location, interview date

Nou Sotiara, Vice President of ACLEDA Bank, Phnom Penh, 14th August 2013

Pheakdei, dessert stall proprietor, Phnom Penh, 21st June 2013

Sov, landlord, Phnom Penh, 21st June 2013

The names of the village and its resident and migrant population have been changed to preserve anonymity.