THE POLITICS OF URBAN SPACE MAKING: A CASE STUDY OF BATTAMBANG TOWN, CAMBODIA

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CHAPTER 6

Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

This concluding chapter suggests that the politic of urban space making and resilience cannot be achieved without seriously considering the emergence of strategic groups and how they shape urban space, livelihoods and social resilience strategies. There are four major aspects of my research. First, I examine how different strategic groups emerge to influence urban spatial planning and land-use management processes. Second, I summarize the key findings in response to the core research questions and the politics of urban space-making. Third, I reflect upon the research methodology employed and the constraints that were faced. Finally, I discuss the theoretical framework used for the analysis and the significant contribution it has made towards the study of urban resilience.

6.2 Urban Transformation

Battambang is a major secondary city in Cambodia and plays the role as the main model site for municipality urban development models which are intended to be replicated in 27 other designated urban centers within the country. The town plays an important role within the ASEAN economic corridor and has strong links to other parts of Cambodia. It is endowed with a diversity of cultural heritages, where Buddhist and Hindu temples, pre-colonial ancient wooden architecture, French colonial buildings and infrastructure and post-colonial urban development co-exist. This makes the city the most attractive, charming and unique in the country. The formulization of spatial plans and land-use classifications is intended to balance modernization, beautification, and the development of a livable city through good environmental management. A feature of this planning process is the emerging concept of community-led urban development, which seeks to assist informal settlements through low-cost housing development and equitable

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land-sharing practices among the urban poor. The urban development model applied in Battambang was used to test five significant policy and planning frameworks.

The first was a large-scale land survey, which took place between 2003 and 2009 and was intended to be used to prepare the Battambang Municipal Land-Use Master Plan (Battambang Municipality Office 2015). This plan was to be approved shortly after the land survey was completed in 2009, however, it was delayed until 2016. By this stage, major land-use zones had been manipulated by dominant groups and urban elites. It contained an urban vision comprising of six major components: (i) good governance and administration; (ii) a clean and green city; (iii) a regional center for commerce and urban services; (iv) a regional center for agricultural production, processing and trade; (v) a regional center for education and knowledge; and (vi) a city of cultural and heritage tourism. This vision was inspired by the technical land-use survey published in 2009. It was predominantly made available to urban elites, enabling access to strategic groups from both within and outside of Battambang over others. On the publication of the spatial land-use survey, a five-year strategic plan for the Municipality (2011-2015) was developed with the aim of developing a 'green' prosperous town with better employment opportunities and increased tourist numbers; improving security and public order; and promoting education and gender equality. This framework was aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals, whereby sharing information and the development of partnerships were key actions, however, this was not reflected in practice.

The second framework was the National Policy for Housing, drafted in 2003. This acted as the foundation for the designing of the trial urban development strategy in Battambang. The outcome of the trial in Battambang will be used to inform the final approval of a revised policy. Low-cost housing development was an instrument to attract financial support and investment from multilateral development agencies, the national government, and other investors. As of 2014, the policy was in its third draft and had been discussed but has yet to be fully approved.

The third framework and perhaps one of the most important was the 'National Circular 03 on Informal Settlement Development and Upgrading.' This policy was approved by the government in 2010 and implemented a legal mechanism for the

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regulation of informal settlements. To limit the occurrence of evictions from urban areas and ensure that no one was left worse off, the policy outlines a seven stage process, where special working groups would be established to: (i) identify informal settlements; (ii) map and classify identified informal areas; (iii) conduct household surveys; (iv) develop a range of solutions for each site, (v) develop a plan for on-site upgrading or relocation, (vi) develop a procedure for infrastructure development and public service provisions at the proposed sites; and (vii) develop a project timeline, with scheduled participation by different key stakeholders. These procedures were considered by development planners, government officials and civil society to be a novel and ideal approach to urban development. Multiple stakeholders from national government ministries, provincial officials, local authorities, donors, and local and international NGOs had been involved in this novel form of development since 2008.

The fourth framework was an urban tourism vision, strongly supported by the Ministry of Tourism, and provincial and municipal governors. On the basis of its urban heritage, the urban tourism sector envisioned Battambang as a UNESCO Historic Urban Landscape site. This would act a collective source of pride for the local community, and as a foundation for the preservation and enrichment of Khmer culture for future generations, while at the same time boosting the reputation of the city as desirable tourist destination. This vision sees Battambang as receiving international recognition for its urban heritage tourism values, which included Angkorian temples, French colonial buildings, and the Khmer Rouge legacy. This heritage, combined with agricultural and fishery livelihoods, religious and cultural practices, art, crafts, and cuisine, means the city has great potential to develop into a tourist economy.

The final framework is the Battambang Provincial Spatial Plan (2010-2030), which maps out the infrastructure needs, natural resources, tourism and cultural sites of the province, particularly those located along the Cambodian-Thai border. Specifically, it outlines the status of existing natural resources, potential land for specialized agricultural production, and the labor requirements to develop these resources. It was developed at two scales. The first focuses on cross-border trade with Thailand, where economic agreements have been put in place in relation to trade and investment, food processing, and tourism, as well as private incentives for the development of other key

economic sectors. The second outlines the development of the Greater Mekong Subregion Economic Corridor, which incluees the development of sub-regional economic centers, as well as short-term SEZs for the development of natural resources.

At the municipal level, the provincial spatial plan designated Battambang as the strategic center of the province, flagged for rapid urbanization and economic development. The city is considered to be a market town and regional connection point capturing economic flows from Thailand to Vietnam, as well as Japan and China, more broadly. Infrastructure development in the plan is focused on facilitating the flow of commodities and labor. The upgrading of informal settlements through low-cost housing and urban heritage tourism has been fully aligned with the plan to develop provincial agricultural production zones and a central market.

Overall, these plans have attracted multiple actors to assist in establishing the required technical and financial capacities of the project. Actors consist of local and international NGOs, donors, and the private sector, but generally the local elites end up directing and coordinating most of the activities. One of the most inspiring visions of the plan is the restructuring of urban space, where informal settlements are re-classified and officially become part of the existing urban plan, followed by low-cost housing development in order to avoid evictions. Urban heritage has been used to reassemble a modern urban vision. However, to date the theorized benefits of formal economic development and livelihood restoration strategies have not reached urban residents, except in the case of urban services and infrastructure upgrading. Specialized agricultural production of preserved fish, orange juice, and rice for export, for example, have not been fully realized despite being proposed since 2010.

6.3 Summary of Research Findings

6.3.1 The Politics of Urban Space Making

Battambang has been represented as a modern city, undergoing a beautification process. The resulting clean, livable urban environment, where resources are shared equitably, is presented as a model project to be replicated in other secondary cities in Cambodia. However, the practices of dominant groups, who have managed to control the strategic resources of the city through the urban planning process have been concealed. The

political culture embedded within the societal systems of the province has constrained the good intentions of urban development. The efforts of local residents and the trust they have placed in civil society should have been rewarded with a more socially inclusive urban development process (Roy 2009).

Increased population has become the dominant argument for policy interventions to develop infrastructure for urban growth, and create spaces for different actors to compete against each other for access to strategic urban resources. However, this process ignored the historical context of urbanization in Battambang. Urban development between the mid-1970s and early 1990s underwent a period of de-growth, in which forced agrarian collectivization promoted by the fierce ideologies of the civil war, led to this period being considered as one of the worst experiences in history. However, throughout later regimes, urbanization is again promoted, appearing to be inspired by the previous colonial structure.

Meanwhile, less effort has been focused on coping with urban problems, such as informal settlements and the need to develop low-cost housing as is set out in the Battambang Land-Use Master Plan (2015-2030). The urbanization of capital has created uneven development through the production of urban space (Smith 2008). This is a good description of the contemporary urban development processes occurring in Battambang.

6.3.2 The role of strategic groups

The control of the land-based resources in Battambang through the influencing of spatial planning and urban land-use management has become a key political strategy. Urban space arrangement has been controlled by dominant groups within the local political elite, who have competing interests. This has been facilitated through better access to the spatial plans and knowledge of the lands that have been designated for new urban development. A connection between politicians, local elites and their family members was observed at both research sites.

The first case study examines how the process of addressing informality issues through the practice of community-led urban research and low-cost housing development has been affected by the political strategies of emerging strategic groups.

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In this case, the intended outcome of the urban development model have been constrained. Local authorities made illegal use of state lands, concealed this practice, and later submitted land claims as part of the redistribution of land for low-cost housing. As such, equitable land sharing with the urban poor has not been achieved and there was a failure to include diverse social groups. These groups have been consistently overlooked in the history of land settlement and ownership in Battambang. In contrast, the practice of equitable land sharing has been used as a discourse to access land legally for the relatives of the local elite, who are well established in the urban core. This process has involved various actors and institutional arrangements, and reflects the interplay between various structures, and agents within the urban sphere.

The subordinate group in this case study utilized different strategies. Given the strong influence of the ruling political party, some weaker groups felt that they had no choice but to falsely accept inequitable land sharing. Other urban poor groups were newcomers, who would wind up living in unhealthy informal areas and would later have to resettle in a new village as part of the low-cost housing development scheme. This scheme was clearly not intended to provide legal land titles for these groups, as they lacked the financial capacity needed to take out loans and use them as collateral for the land title. There were two concealed traps for these urban poor residents that were set up by local elites. The first is that among the 82 families who received access to land under the scheme, 60 of them were required a takeout a loan in order to construct their house and start a small business. Many of these families borrowed between 25% and 50% of the total cost of the housing, and were required to pay it back within a very limited period. The second trap is that these urban poor residents were required to remain on the land for a period of 10 years to be rewarded legal tenure over both the land and housing.

This meant that poor income households involved in the scheme had to work disproportionally harder to improve their living conditions, while at the same time having to worry about paying back the loan or risk losing their tenure. The land was allocated in an area designated as a small to medium industrial zone within the urban core area. This means that the land is of high demand and value, making the land tenure offered by the scheme vulnerable in many ways. A group of 82 military families was

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the first to access legal land titles as part of the scheme for military leaders. However, as the scheme progressed, there was increasing skepticism about the scheme's integrity. Some residents occupied large allotments of land, while other soldiers' families that were later introduced to the scheme were not able to access land. These issues continued for many years. This process of creating local conflicts was observed to be part of the strategy of the local elites and the ruling political party to ensure sustainable local support in elections and to destroy the voter base of the opposition party.

Some residents who were previously members of the opposition party, had land allocated to them that was larger than what was originally proposed and were forced to defect to the ruling party in order to retain the original size of the land title. Others were provided with no solution and received threats and accusations from ruling party officials. This situation continued as subordinate groups staged protests, made counter claims, sought support from ruling elites at the national level, and filed complaints through human right organizations and UN agencies. Other common resistance practices of the subordinate groups included character assassination and the defaming of ruling elites and individuals.

The second case study of the cultural village demonstrates the multiple strategies that are used by older residents and newcomers alike. Older residents tended to make use of their land assets and the cultural value of their traditional wooden houses through a transition to the tourist economy. This strategic group consisted mostly of those from the middle class. Many of them own land and have positions in the government across different departments at the provincial level, mostly within the social and education sectors.

This strategic group tends to have multiple ways of securing livelihood resources, including income generated from their government positions, agriculture, and investments in other assets once they manage to sell their existing land. Some of these residents also end up out-migrating to seek work, as this is a strategy to direct capital into investments in new land locations outside of the village. Another interesting group is the newcomers. This group only recently arrived to the village, having commercial interests in mind. They include government officials from the urban center who wish to invest in land so that they can rent it out to businesses along the new road infrastructure

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projects. This includes the development of hotels by those who wish to take advantage of the emergence of new tourism opportunities based on the urban heritage of Battambang. The cultural capital amongst older residents and their housing is most often held by former noble families. These families have passed their assets down across generations and through different political regimes. They now intend to modify their land-based economy to capture unevenly-distributed urban tourism services.

To compete within the tourism economy, local residents who own traditional houses have formed their own networks in order to better manage and provide authentic local foods to tourists who visit their houses, and enjoy local lunches, dinners or drinks. The tourism network has been captured by newcomers who have established hotels and restaurants in the villages. Their strategies have been contested by local residents, and resource distribution can be seen to be an emerging initiative among them.

However, dominant strategic groups are a lot stronger than the institutions discussed here. Political working groups that are dominated by the ruling party have become involved in every facet of land allocation, from the provision of land titles, to the development of low-cost housing for residents of informal settlements, to the emerging tourism economy.

6.3.3 Competing and Coping Strategies in Making Space

The dominant strategic groups are very much led by the ruling party. They manipulate land resources and control land distribution and its spatial arrangement. Their strategy is to secure support in elections and increase their power through resource exploitation.

The first case demonstrates that urban governance is manipulated by wealthy and powerful people in these dominant strategic groups, who have access to a broad variety of resources. In contrast, residents who do not hold this power may be classified as subordinate strategic groups, who tend to be more vulnerable to climate hazards.

Many of these strategic groups descend from "quasi-groups" of residents, who share a common identity based on ethnicity and/or kinship. For instance, Chinese migrants have largely bonded together through kinship, businesses relations, and cultural practices (Evers 1973). These groups have strategically exerted their influence through participation in political developments, such as conflicts, reforms, and

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revolutions. Specifically, such strategic groups can be seen to promote their political and economic goals via supporting the activities of political leaders who are assumed to represent their aspirations and interests (ibid). Strategic groups later evolve, transforming into social classes. While some integrate into the ruling class, others become those who are governed. Activities conducted by strategic groups include: establishing a distinct lifestyle and voluntary organizations; creating mechanisms for internal mobility within society and organizational structures; developing resource pools to ensure the sustainability of governing positions; and the sharing of resources through corruption and exploitation (ibid). Members of these dominant strategic groups include civil servants, military staff, primary school teachers, and Chinese businessmen (Evers 1973; Evers and Korff 2000). The role of these professionals plays a significant part in the structure of the government (Evers 1973).

The research demonstrates how diverse, competing and coping strategies interplay within the selected case studies. For dominant groups, the first case study used a strategy based on an existing claim to state land. The use of public transcripts, as Scott (1990) suggests, had been applied by the sub-national working groups dealing with informality and land allocation. Although the National Circulation 03 on Informal Settlements and Upgrading stipulates the consultation and engagement from local residents, as well as a clear mechanism of accountability, these did not occur, and villagers began to reclaim some of their lands. Key strategies used by this marginal group include local networking and submitting legal claims to the court. Character assassination and gossip against ruling elites, and building alliances with independent media and human rights organizations have also been seen as common strategies applied by the residents. The second case demonstrates more diversity in terms of the strategies used by the dominant strategic groups. Strategies include the use of existing lands as strategic resources and exploiting their position as government officials. Local networks of old residents in the cultural village have collaborated together to better host tourists and establish local restaurants. This strategy has attracted many foreign tourists and has effectively redistributed some of the power away from powerful tour companies who had previously been fully in control of the tourist industry. In contrast, business-minded newcomers use an approach of investing in land and renting it out in order to

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capture newly developed urban areas and control the development of the cultural village.

6.4. Reflections on the Methodology and Conceptual Framework

This study is guided by an urban political ecology framework with a focus on urban climate resilience. This is informed by qualitative semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and participatory mapping with local people. This approach was key to accessing local perspectives.

6.4.1 Urban political ecology

Urban political ecology views urban space as a product of urbanization and inequality among different groups. This is reflected in the practices of spatial planning and the formalization process. This approach demonstrates the structuration practices defined by Gidden (1984). Different forms of structure-agency relations play key roles in shaping urbanization and its contested terrains, where rules and resources are in continuous interplay. Within this context, dominant groups often place much of their efforts into capturing new resources. Moreover, the work of Brown (2016) on the political ecology of resilience can be used to reflect the contested meaning of urban planning through everyday forms of resistance, as suggested by Scott (1984). This effort brings together different actors and networks, who hold different viewpoints, values, and objectives within the negotiation process.

Early work on political ecology was pioneered by Blaikie and Brookfield (1987), who argued that land degradation was the result of inequality and power relations among diverse groups and social classes. The study was conducted in resource-rich rural areas and later expanded to include urban areas. In these areas, the production of urban landscapes was shown to be caused by uneven development and unfair spatial arrangements, in which the urban poor were usually the most negatively-impacted (Heynen, Kaika and Swyngedouw 2006). This can be traced back to the uneven development argument of Smith (2008), which suggests that within urban areas, the production of urban space is an outcome of capital movements, which seek investments in newly-built environments to accumulate surplus values, before moving

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on to other places, where higher profits can be generated. Harvey (1985) called this the "urbanization of capital," where capital is not fixed geographically, but is required to circulate and continue seeking new sources to accumulate capital. Both Smith and Harvey (1985, 2003, 2012, 2018) use Marxist approaches to critique this capitalist mode of production.

Swyngedouw (1996) has analyzed urbanization through the lens of water circulation. More specifically, he looked at the interplay between human and nonhuman actors within the context of inclusionary and exclusionary powers arising from socio-ecological transformations. This work has been extended further by Heynen to understand the product of environment justice and social change between the contested ideologies of liberalism and socialism. Heynen combines ecology, economy and the emerging Science and Technology Studies, where actor-network theory has been used to replace Marxist thinking (Heynen 2014). Soon later, this approach was being used to examine the role of ethnic groups in influencing urban development. However, this type of research was mostly conducted in the European context, where the dichotomy between racial tensions is stronger. These results demonstrated that the racism held by white capitalists has proved harmful black ethnic groups in urban areas (Heynen 2015). Urban political ecology has also borrowed concepts from feminist and queer studies to examine unequal resource and access distribution within specific urban spaces, in this case the home and kitchen. Later, queer urban political ecology would focus on urban renewal and displacement through spatial arrangements and gentrification, which in effect greatly disoriented the social life of lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) communities residing in urban areas.

Heynen (2017) argues that the expansion of urban political ecology towards feminist and queer studies is rooted in the Marxist thought of uneven distribution. Marxist theorists have also examined the relation between urban space and gender, taking on subjects such as the woman's space in the home, as well as queer urban ecology, which analyzes urban spaces from different perspectives. Overall, Heynen's review of urban political ecology covers a diverse amount of areas, demonstrating that the field has borrowed many useful concepts from women's studies, race studies and science and technology studies. However, the role of strategic groups is absent from his

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review, as well as how urban resistance shapes urban resilience practices within developing countries.

An urban political ecology framework focused on resilience and urbanization is meant to critique mainstream urban resilience thinking. This mainstream thinking favors the structural approach of systems thinking, and is mainly concerned with infrastructure development, and enhancing the capacity of institutions and actors (Tyler and Marcus 2012). However, it fails to examine the administrative structures and cultural practices of the urban elites and other dominant groups. Modernization and beautification of the urban environment is often influenced by this type of thinking, ignoring the livelihood situation and social and cultural practices of marginalized groups. In the case of Battambang, dominant strategic groups tended to conceal various practices that were used to gain access and control of land resources through the approval of a formalized spatial plan. Mainstream resilience approaches overlook the individual and community means of resilience, as well as the competing claims over access to urban space, services, values, and meaning. Therefore, an urban political ecology of resilience that takes into account strategic subordinate groups provides better insights into people-centered urban resilience. By examining the strategies adopted by subordinate groups in the first case study, we can see that the intention of equitable land sharing imposed by the dominant strategic groups, in effect concealed the hidden values beyond urban modernization and beautification. In reality, this vision was more focused on the survival of dominant groups, who used their land resources for political strategies. One village chief recalled that land was previously abundant.

"It used to be less populated and when we needed, the people who lived here were willing to sacrifice family land to build Buddhist temples in the commune. Now that land values have increased, we no longer receive these contributions as land has become a contested resource to be controlled". (Village chief from Ou Kcheay village, March 2017).

Once access to land and other strategic resources began to be unjustly denied, at least two forms of responses were observed amongst marginalized groups. One was to survive through false compliance and avoiding direct confrontation. The second

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response was to become more strategic, reposition themselves, and plan counter claims. The latter group became more organized, demonstrating greater fluidity in terms of their networks and ability to bounce back. This reflects the practice of social resilience, which is absent within mainstream resilience thinking.

Social resilience is the ability to resist the actions of dominant strategic groups, as well as respond to unjust situations. Positivist thought focuses on money, materials, and financial support in terms of resilience. However, resilience is about more than simply money. It is also about urban residents' knowledge about urban development, healthcare systems, and infrastructure. However, resistance against domination and injustice is rarely mentioned. These residents attend multiple trainings but are often seen as lacking the capacity to resist by NGOs. But these citizens can resist. Local subordinate groups have managed to mount great amounts of political pressure on dominant strategic groups to fight against inequality. Generally, these conflicts take the form of land ownership. For the urban poor, land ownership is critical, and without it, they feel as though they are left out of livelihood options. There were two main strategies used to build a network focusing on resiliency and resistance.

The first was "character assassination." Based from the work of James Scott (1985), character assassination is a resistance strategy employed by powerless people in response to dominant groups. This form of resistance is generally invisible and used when they are left with no other options. It is widely used by residents in the region and includes spreading gossip about the bad reputation of particular opponents, and undermining the professional skills of those who hold power. It is a hidden form of resistance that does not directly confront or challenge dominant power systems.

The second resistance strategy was the use of the media. Some residents have a long contact lists which include people within human rights organizations and the media. They know which media outlets are corrupt and those that are not. Some media organizations request payment to report occurrences. Other media organizations are easily persuaded and accept money to not publish certain stories. One woman, who has been involved in the land protests since 2012, sought support from various human rights organizations, as well as staff from the U.N., only to have the advice of:

"Fighting legal land issues against the government is like using an egg to hit a stone."
(Ms. Bopha 13 March 2018).

She was so angry that she responded:

"Even if the eggs do not break the stone, it will release a bad smell from the eggs."
(Ms. Bopha, 13 March 2018).

Psychological strength and legal claims are the starting points for staging counter arguments against eviction processes implemented by local authorities. In Block I of Ou Kcheay village, between seven and nine families make consistent legal claims for official land-titles. They often draw upon the recommendation from Prime Minister Hun Sen, who suggests that *"the longer you live in these areas, the more likely you will get ownership." Said Mr. Lim, 16 March 2018).*

Among these families, some residents have previously worked with human rights and development NGOs and have an extensive knowledge of the legal system. Others have worked as primary school teachers for more than thirty years and understand the ideologies of the different regimes, which they can use to adapt their own strategies when confronting dominant strategic groups.

The second case study demonstrates a different type of resilience, moving away from acts of resistance, towards the accumulation of cultural capital by the older residents of the community. Their traditional wooden houses, land assets and cultural strategies have provided them with a greater potential to co-exist within the urban vision of the modernization of their urban cultural heritage. Their noble class positions held during feudal times have changed as political regimes have changed. The current process of urbanization provides them with a strategic position to revitalize their status. This includes a land-based economy, where they can rent their land, as well as selling land that is becoming more valuable and expand their investments to other built environments. Despite this, only two families had opened their traditional houses to tourism in order to gain an income. The history of these families and the architectural features of the traditional housing reflect the social arrangements and order of times

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passed up until the present. The need to revive this lost culture has been a strong driver for the development of tourism, in turn creating opportunities for income generation for these families.

6.4.2 Reflection on methodology

Structured interviews proved ineffective in obtaining data about the social dynamics and land tenure issues from key informants in the selected case study sites.

Instead, participatory mapping, semi-structured interviews and participant observation provided the most meaningful information about the hidden practices of the dominant strategic groups and the problems faced by urban residents and subordinate strategic groups.

Pinel (2015) identifies that this approach can be helpful for researchers and planners intending to: obtain more meaningful public input to develop feasible and appropriate alternatives; evaluate social impacts; and understand the spatial relations to landscapes as part of a regional collaborative planning processes (Pinel 2015).

In these processes, the goal and vision is enhanced by researching the diverse local values of the community, the contested ideas that they hold, and the multiple landscapes of the urban space. The use of participatory mapping assisted in identifying the existing land-use practices, relationships, and meanings attached to a specific place by distinct groups.

Social scientists have long used hand-drawn maps to enrich their understanding of spatial relationships, such as how people use land, go to school, or how diseases spread. Healey (2010) argues that 21st century urban planning has shifted towards the concept of sustainability and livability, where the distribution of welfare by urban projects is often influenced by technical experts, which later shapes the decision-making processes of government institutions. These outcomes overlook the real needs of local people and thus pressure increases on the knowledge and practices of elite groups. Lobby groups and social movements demand a greater say in policy development. For instance, the experience of a local NGO, CEDT, proved to be more successful as a

result of their use of participatory mapping and local engagement, where all stakeholders fully understood and accepted the practice of community land sharing. The interaction between their research and local people was able to realize greater local impact than other positivist approaches using modern, linear urban development interventions (Palermo and Ponzini 2015).

This is in agreement with Healey (1997) who argues that being trapped by modernist instruments of rationality sometimes leads to violence against the urban poor. She suggests that early urban development frameworks have tended to favor industrial growth through capitalist modes of exploitation of human labor and natural resources, generally resulted in increased social impacts. This created space for Marxist approaches to overcome these systems through class struggle and the overthrowing of the system. Many scholars such as Healey (1997) and Lefebvre (2009, 2016) accuse capitalist modes of production as being concealed practice of communism, seeking their own power, while state power was withering in countries of many regions.

Healey suggests that strategic urban planning processes should shape an urban future where multiple actors are directly involved in urban governance. The key concept of strategic urban planning is to prioritize the urban actions linked to good judgement, where both technical expertise and political attributes are involved (Healey 2009). She proposes four skills that are required to plan urban areas. This includes the ability to understand local complexities, the capacity to imagine future opportunities, safeguard policies, intellectual and political engagement, and the need to understand spatial strategy. Furthermore, Medina and Monclus (2018) demonstrate the relationship between local tradition and urbanism through the key roles that urban projects play in shaping the urban vision. This relation often has a strong influence on the success rate of these projects in terms of social housing and resettlement.

My study on urban space and urban resilience was inspired by a similar debate. During my field research, the many local political and cultural challenges faced by local residents were embedded within the local administrative practices of urban elites and the ruling class. The intent of urban spatial planning and land-use management was very much influenced by the dominant strategic groups, while the discourse of the everyday practice of searching for urban good governance was articulated publicly.

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6.5 Conclusion

This study demonstrates that while the current process of developing urban master plans aim to harmonize urban development and well-being, the opposite is often the case. In contrast, it tends to place the logic of informal settlements in opposition to master planning in order to pave the way for capital accumulation by dominant strategic groups (Harvey 2003). The plan has the stated aims of balancing and harmonizing land allocation between the needs of private interests, such as those of investors, entrepreneurs, and land owners; and the public interest, such as those of the community, local people, and the environment. However, by not considering the culture that is embedded within these strategic groups' practices through the processes of law enforcement, decision making, and the inclusion of subordinate groups whose livelihoods depend on access to public space, it falls short of a complete examination of the subject.

Dominant strategic groups have been found to shape urban space in unique ways that were previously not fully considered as part of the urban resilience framework. This framework failed to explain this phenomena due to simply using a structure-agency approach. The emerging strategies of urban resistance from subordinate strategic groups included informal networking and establishing power relations with the local ruling party, as well as the enhancing their relationships with human rights NGOs and social media organizations. Character assassination, gossip, and false compliance were also used as everyday forms of resistance against dominant groups.

The experience of equal land-sharing among informal urban settlements has taken place as expected. This reflects what Ferguson (1990) describes as the "anti-politics machine", where the intentions of a project work in certain ways in order to legitimize the ruling political groups. This is considered to be unique in the region, as it seems to only be common in Cambodia's democratic system. However, this situation contradicts Scott (1984), who seeks to understand why and how certain schemes fail to improve human conditions. Scott fails to come to the conclusion that the simplification of state administrative structures and the lack of local participation are influenced by modernist planning. On the other hand, Ferguson (1990) argues that the project has not failed, but rather served a different purpose for the ruling party through democratic

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practices. He argues that even failed projects may lead to beneficial structural changes. For instance, in the case in Ou Kcheay, provincial leaders and administrative staff were all removed due to a legal claim by a local resident, who was involved with the project. Scott (1984) further advocates for local resistance as a form of democratic negotiation.

This research argues that urban climate resilience cannot be achieved without a critical understanding of the role of strategic groups and their influence on the production of urban space and related systems. Moreover, subordinate strategic groups are not passive, but rather draws upon a wide range of means such as media, local power relations, and cultural rootedness to contest unfair urban policy. The significance of the study suggests that to foster social resilience, we need to examine both the ecological and systems approach. In particular, we need to examine how people struggle and resist changes, as well as cooperate with dominate strategic groups, where the systems thinking concept of urban resilience is missing.

Theoretical contribution and Limitation

The production of urban space for capital accumulation suggested by Smith (2008) and Harvey (1985, 2001, 2003, 2012; 2018). They were inspired by early work of Lefebvre (2014; 2016), who views the production of space through the lens of science as non-objective, or biased. In fact, spatial strategies are applied by the state to assemble space and political control. Lefebvre suggest that state institutions remain key players in the control of urban space through both political parties and political frameworks. He contradicts scholars who may adopt different approaches for viewing the state as realist, where state policies and practices are unconsciously accepted. Contrarily, others may see these processes as being manipulated by certain groups of people. He identifies this as the political technique of institutions determined by the state. Lefebvre views institutions from a social science perspective, as the interaction between the institution, the discipline and practice. Thus, the politics of space is where the state's role is contradicted, and the structure of the state is determined by social forces such as urban social movements. Urban planning must be understood as a form of urban struggle for urban space.

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Smith and Harvey argue that the capitalist production of urban space is determined by capital flows and human practices for the accumulation of profits. Lefebvre (2009) dichotomizes left- and right-wing urban planning visions. He frames the right wing as viewing urban space as a place for capital circulation, directing the flow of commodities from primary to secondary markets. For example, land and housing is transformed for exchange through marketplaces as primary, while being transformed into real estate market as secondary. A right wing vision calls for individual house ownership and private initiative, often linked to the accumulation of private capital. This facilitates their search for investments, transforming primary production as the first circuit towards the secondary circuit of land and housing exchange in the marketplace, with an aim of normalizing the real estate market. A left-wing vision critiques the vanishing beauty of the world's landscapes and the destruction of the basic natural elements in classical philosophy of water, air, and light (Lefebvre 2016). The left calls for the collective ownership of the commons, which includes air, water and light, elements that are now being commoditized and privately owned by individuals. Lefebvre moves even deeper into urban social life, referring to everyday boredom and practices, where the quality of life cannot be quantitatively measured and exchanged (Lefevre 2014).

To overcome this, Lefebvre (2009) suggests the creation of socialist spaces, or a space that allows the individual to escape from everyday boredom and reach greater consciousness. Lefebvre critiques Marx, who did not introduce the core concept of use-value and exchange-value applied to urban space and the domination and appropriation over nature, which is considered to be used value. This calls for an end to absolute private ownership over urban space and the creation of a space for equity sharing and respecting diversity (Jacob 1962, Feinstain 2010; Healey 1997, 2009, and 2010) and democratic decision-making processes.

The first case study suggests a partial-success story achieved through political strategies that sustain power through an intended practice of urban space arrangement. Informality was initially perceived as a progressive step in realizing an urban development model in Battambang, however this was later abandoned by the dominant class. Gans (1962) identifies two aspects that influence the definition of informality: the

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image of informal areas; and their physical condition. By this conceptual lens, law and regulation is applied by urban elites or municipal authorities to describe illegal settlements where spatial, economic and political factors interplay (ibid). As for Roy, she suggests that the creation of informality is due to the practices of the state, which has the power to define what is formal or informal (Roy 2009). The concept of informality is central to understand the urbanization and planning processes. It concerns the practice of space production as a capitalist survival strategy, through spatial fixes and creating uneven development, as well as exploiting low-income workers, the unemployed, and the urban poor.

The good intentions of the scheme to improve the living conditions of Prek Preah Sdach through the upgrading of informal settlements to low-cost housing did come into fruition but was rather a trap. The support of local power networks in accessing tenure was found to be conditional on a continued pledge to vote for the ruling CPP party in elections.

Lefebvre (2016) and Marx and Engel (2008) show that early urban planning resulted in the production of class struggle, particularly when the city is in transition towards an industrialized capitalist mode of production. Experience shows that without proper planning; urban distress, poverty, hunger, oppression and exploitation increase, causing further social conflicts. Modernist planners have become convinced that every great city often has one or more slums, where working class people live in high densities. They believe this can be improved by spatial planning and proper social order.

Urban resistance among individuals and marginalized groups have recently been viewed as an emerging strategy to counter the dominance of expert-led urban planning. This has been missed out within strategic groups proposed by Evers (1973) and Ever and Korff (2000). Evers and Korff (2000) also failed to see the role of Buddhist monks play strategic roles in constructing urban space with urban areas and restoring social order while dominant groups as such those from the political strategic groups received less trust from local subordinate groups. Thus, the resistance from subordinate groups provide a counter argument to the sustainable, livable city proposed Healey (2009, 2010). Lefevre (2009) advises urban social movements to create an urban socialist space as part of the process of developing autonomous state institutions. Citizen participation

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in urban planning processes remains critical in overcoming urban problems. Citizens should be consulted about projects that affect their tenure security and livelihoods, and this requires political commitment from the state. The need for re-negotiating the distribution of urban space and land allocations to local residents, regaining trust in civil society, and developing autonomous state institutions are the foundations to achieving urban resilience. In Wat Kor, the classification of urban space as cultural village is seen as space for old resident to develop their cultural capital in coping and committing with newcomers for tourism economic and spaces. These local people are not statics but developing their social network among old resident to benefit from the tourists while promoting their social and cultural belonging in the village.

There are also some limitations of the thesis. The role of Khmer Chinese in influencing the urban space making and town vision was not capture all given the nature of selected case studies. Most these ethnic groups (Sino-Khmer or Khmer Chinese) are mostly dominated with urban core of the city and their business spread throughout the province, mostly those at the border, cross-borders and beyond provincial territory. Their roles as entrepreneur, traders and political affiliation should be highly considered for the next studies.

CHAPTER 5

Tourism Space as Contested Strategies among Strategic Groups

5.1 Introduction

Tourism space has become one of the urban realities where human and nonhuman actors interact (Farias 2010b). It reflects the nature of image narrative, the production and reproduction of meaning through visual maps, territorial classifications, zonings and spatial rearrangements (Esposito 2018). Tourism spaces go hand in hand with the control of perception and influence over people's movement, resources, occupation of space, and local practices.

In this chapter, I argue that the promotion of urban heritage through tourism in Battambang municipality has revived cultural capital and the social identity of older residents, including noble families who have lived in Wat Kor village for generations. The approach to this case study is guided by a mainstream urban resilience framework, where the role of urban systems, institutions and agents are blended. It presents the historical context of the urbanization process, specifically, the increasing interactions with outsiders following the civil war period between the 1970s and early 1990s, as well as the more recent urban development process. This chapter is divided into five sections. The first provides the historical context of the village, its citizens, and their livelihoods. The second section discusses the processes of urban restructuring, the shaping and control of urbans space and resources by emerging strategic groups, the consequences of informal settlements, and the impacts of climate change. The third section will examine how the socio-political administrative processes in place have affected urban heritage, livelihoods and well-being. The fourth discusses urban heritage space through the promotion of cultural villages and the revival of cultural capital for older residents. This involves a revision of the architectural practices of their traditional wooden houses and a reconstructing of social space and status.

The final section concludes by reflecting on where gaps remain in mainstream urban resilience practice.
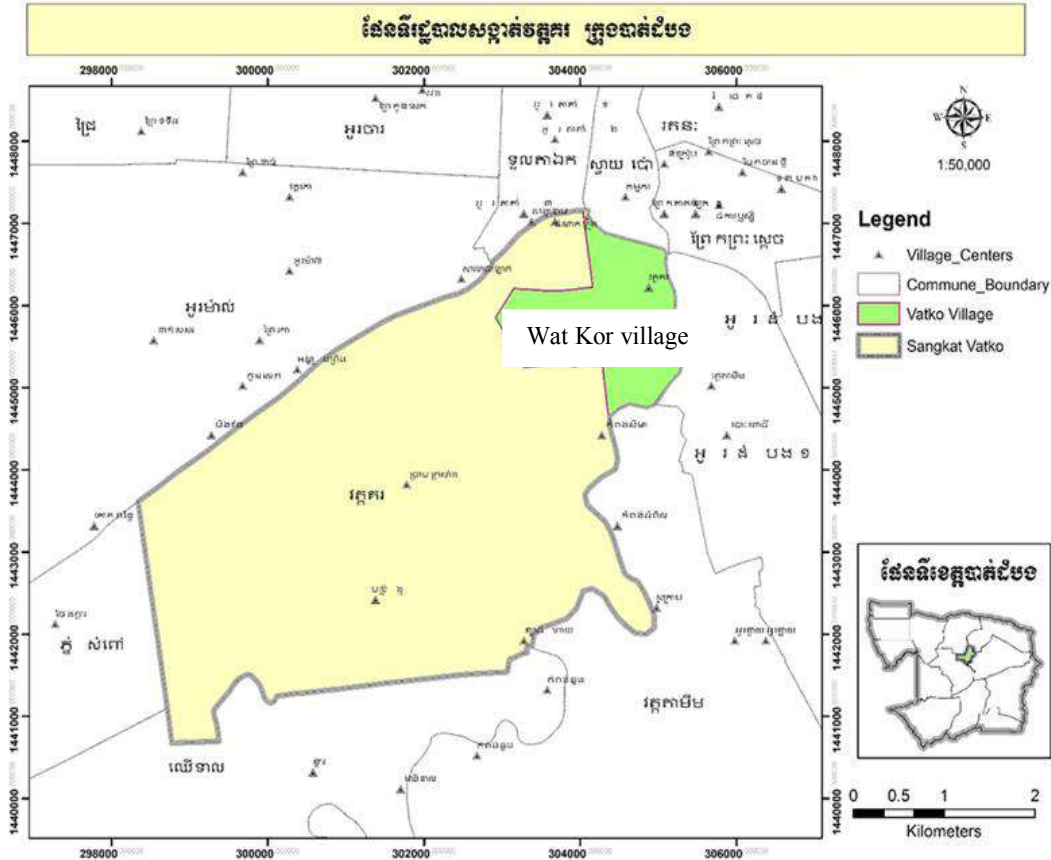
5.2 The Setting

Figure 5.1: Map of Wat Kor village

Wat Kor is one of six villages in Wat Kor commune. It is situated on the Sangker River.

Table 5.1: Commune demographics by each village in 2016

Village	Population				No. of Labor migrants				Total
	No. of families	Female	Male	Total	Internal		External		
					Female	Male	Female	Male	
Wat Kor	800	1987	2046	4033	119	95	233	108	555
Chhrab Krosaing	760	1961	1947	3908	189	125	112	99	525
Bak Laing	404	1538	1082	2620	193	93	246	104	636
Kchach Poy	500	1424	1291	2715	69	89	89	76	323
Damnak Hluong	540	1407	1452	2859	95	76	85	32	288
Kampong Seima	390	1065	1082	2147	25	36	65	30	156
Total	**3394**	**9382**	**8900**	**18282**	**690**	**514**	**830**	**449**	**2,483**

Source: Commune Database (CBD) and personal communication with village chief

In total 2,480 migrants (1,201 in-migrants and 1,279 out-migrants) sought work outside of the commune, yet the number of citizens registered as living in Wat Kor increased rapidly. For instance, in 2010, 2,781 families were registered, with total population of 15,845; while in 2016, there were 3,394 families registered, with a total population of 18,228 (9,382 females, 8,900 males).

Table 5.2: Population change by village in Wat Kor commune (2010 – 2016)

Village	Population		
	2010	2016	% Growth
Wat Kor	3409	4033	15%
Chrab Krasaing	348	3908	123%
Ba Liang	2239	2620	15%
Khsach Pouy	2367	2715	13%
Damnak Luong	2409	2859	16%
Kampong Seima	1938	2147	10%
Total	**12710**	**18282**	**44%**

Sources: NCDD 2016.

The table above shows that the total number of people registered as living in the commune has increased by 5,572 between 2010 and 2016. The population in Wat Kor village increased by 15%, while Chrab Krasaing village recorded a 123% increase. An increase in infrastructure construction, such as roads, and the release of land for agro-industry are some of the reasons for this increase.

A majority of the land in the village is comprised of paddy fields and *Chamkars* (mixed orchards), as well as residential land. It is not clear when the village was established, however, in Cambodia, this is usually linked to the establishment of a Buddhist pagoda. In this area, Wat Samrong Knong and Wat Sangker, on the opposite riverbank, were built circa 1707, while Wat Kor is believed to have been established in 1772 and later upgraded in the 1900s. The name of Wat Kor is derived from a pile of rocks gathered by a local resident, known as *Kumnor Thmor*. A later restructuring included another major pagoda in the village, Wat Kandeung, located close to the iron rail bridge. The monks of the temples in Wat Kor are believed to have magical powers (Personal communication, deputy Village Chief, July 2017).

However, merit-making practices in the civilized spaces surrounding these pagodas between villagers, *seima* (tutelary spirits), and *Neak Ta* (ancestors) to protecting residents from wilderness outside prevail. For instance, the village chief recalled that during the civil war, heavy fighting between the Khmer resistance forces and the Vietnamese-supported government occurred in the areas surrounding the

pagoda, however, these areas did not receive any damage. Moreover, during the *Khmer Isarak* (Khmer Free Movement) the 1960s, when bandits took over the village, it was believed that the venerable monk, So Chet from Wat Kor, who had died 30 years prior, used magical powers to deter them from harming residents.

Following the urban restructure, Wat Kor village came to cover an area of 353.9 hectares. 142.5 hectares consisted of rice paddies that were divided into 429 plots, while 88.1 hectares were classified as residential land, divided into 904 plots. The rest was considered public land and was allocated to Buddhist temples, schools, village offices, ponds, among other places. There are 800 families registered as residing in Wat Kor, totaling 4,033 people (1987 females, 2,046 males). Only seven families had rice paddies between 1 and 2 hectares, while most rice paddies ranged from 0.5 to 1 rai (800 to 1600 m^2). In 2015, more than 10 percent of the population of the village migrated for work both within and outside the country. In 2016, 555 people were reported to use this strategy with 214 individuals (119 females) temporarily migrating to other parts of Cambodia, and 322 individuals (233 females) temporarily migrating to seek employment in other countries. Those migrants primarily sell their labor, with the number of young people involved increasing in recent years. Thailand, followed by South Korea, are the most popular destinations for external labor migration.

5.3 Livelihood Systems

Historically, some village residents enjoyed privileges and a higher social status due to being associated with noble families and high ranking officials. This endured across several regime transformations, beginning with an ancient feudal society, passing through colonialism, and now in a post-colonial society. The shift of the ancient society towards feudalism was controled by a noble class of landlords, similar to a Roman aristocracy, who owned the land, whereas small farmers and marginal groups were enslaved by debt to this class (Fornas 2013). Through this, the noble class was able to take control of more estates and conscript more people into the military to protect their resources, stregthen their role as the owner of land, and implement urban development projects. Wat Kor village represented what Fornas (2013) would call a stratifed 'feudal society', where noble families owned a significant proportion of the land, creating a

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large disparity between the rich and poor. The contribution of commoners was later transformed from a duty of labor to a fee, approaching towards a pre-capitalist society.

Chuong (1974) shows that all land and rice paddies along the river were owned by aristocratic families and their relatives, with 10% of all rice crops provided to the family of the Governor. Animal raising and fishing were other typical livelihood practices. It has been recorded that the Sanger River and associated wetlands and floodplains were rich in fish resources at this time. Fish were caught for food, used to produce oil for cooking and lighting, as well as made into *Prohok* (fermented fish paste) and *Phaak* (fermented fish). Oxcarts were used to transport these products to sell in Thailand. In general, only the noble class had *Prohok* to eat. Each year, Thai citizens from *Surin* and *Boreyrom* came to Battambang in convoys of hundreds of oxcarts to prepare smoked fish and fish produce to take home. People also had the habit of eating crocodile unreservedly, often in place of pork and it was easy to find crocodile meat in marketplaces. Noble land ownership was passed down across generations. The replacement of a feudal society with colonial power preserved this, however the proceeds of the rice taxes were now paid directly to the landowner.

> *Rice tax was paid directly to landowners. Land tax was paid by landowners to provide a budget for the Commune Chief, which was subtracted from this tax as an incentive. This practice remained in place until 1975. After 1979, cultivated land and rice paddies could not be claimed back by returnees like residential land, however, his family as well as some others could get both residential and agricultural land.*
> *(Inter. Mr. Sarith, 17 Jan.2017, a third-generation noble family representative.*

He further recalled that some noble class members and relatives of the former Lord of Governors owned rice paddies of between 200 and 300 rai that employed seasonal workers and slaves. Commoners were required to provide free labor for a certain period to the family of the governor, sometimes receiving money or rice in return. However, in most cases this was to pay debt. During the feudal period, each landlord was required to pay a tax to the Governor of around 30% of the total rice harvest. During the rice harvest, the Governor would send trusted officials to oversee and estimate total rice production from each landowner. With the arrival of the colonial

period, official positions were created at the commune level, and were responsible for tax collection. The Commune Chief was able to extract some of this income to provide commune services. During this time, the land and rice taxes were paid by the landlord, not the workers. Currently, livelihoods in Wat Kor can be divided into land-based activities, primarily consisting of long-term residents, and commercial activities and urban services, conducted by newcomers and residents alike.

5.3.1 Land-Based Livelihoods among Long-Term Residents

The livelihood of the old residents in Wat Kor village were based on land resources and having government positions. This is reflective of the social class make-up among urban villagers and has been criticized as preferencing those in power who demonstrate a conflict of interest. Longer-term residents commonly reported owning land both within the village territory and in other districts and communes. These residents are characteristically represented by wealthy high-ranking officials. Their livelihoods are rooted in agricultural production and exchange, as well as official positions and relationships with property. However current trends show that while middle-class wage earners in Wat Kor may not own the mean of production, they are involved in the process of investing in a capital fix over assets and skills. For instance, bureaucrats and managers of both private and public institutions, as well as self-employed producers, have found increased power in the new form of the class system. While in the past, social class was most reflective of how power was distributed among different groups, now those who have been able to work in unity with the means of production to form relationships with property owners are able to accumulate capital, forming a new type of dominant social class (Das 2017).

Land-based livelihoods in Wat Kor are still dominated by individuals defined by the Village Chief as middle-rank officials. The social class relationships in the neighbourhood amongst relatives of the previous noble class remain strong. For instance, many civil servants report owning land in the village and using the proceeds to invest in other parts of the comune and in other districts of the province. In 2016, 455 residents (304 females) worked as civil servants in the education and health sectors, while 200 residents (146 females) provided other specialized skills. Agricultural activities such as rice cultivation and livestock raising remain a key employment sector

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for adult villagers. In 2016, the sector directly employed 5,609 residents (2,902 females), with 1,464 of these residents (800 females) coming from Wat Kor village. Based on the fieldwork conducted, livestock raising is practiced by 37 out of 69 families in the village. Cattle are now raised for sale rather than being used as draft animals due to the increased level of agricultural mechanization for ploughing, harrowing and threshing rice. In 2016 three tractors and seven *koyond* (motorized ox-carts) were owned by villagers.

Interviews with long-term residents suggest that they are also investing in a capital fix of productive assets and skills. Service provisions in the village are dominated by the informal sector, which has increased since 2010, when a ring road was constructed through the village. For instance, grocery sellers now play a key role in the local economy, providing a livelihood for 198 residents (128 females) in 74 sites across the commune. Close to half of these sites are located in Wat Kor village and employ 96 residents (58 females). This informal economy tends to be centered in Wat Kor village due to better access to infrastructure and facilities, and its close proximity to the urban core. Food stalls along village streets, in front of houses, or under the shade of trees have a visible presence in the village and are generally family-based businesses employing one or two assistants. They operate in proximity to pagodas and schools and provide flexibility to the informal labor force, operating at different times throughout the day. In 2018, there were only five officially registered restaurants in the village. For instance, Ta Ov restaurant in Wat Kor is operated by a long-term resident who is believed to be around 100 years old. The food served is typical local Khmer food. Another restaurant is of similar style, while another three have a more modernist feeling. Each restaurant has a nature-based theme, blended with Khmer architectural styles and provide accommodation for tourists.

There is also a range of local petty traders centered at Svay Por market. The market is very close to the urban core and provides a livelihood to 87 men and 224 women in Wat Kor village, Residents from Wat Kor village are also involved in petty trade in the five other major markets in Battambang city. The Village Chief, reporting that five families own stalls in markets called, Lotus Lake Market (*Psar Boeung Chhouk)*, the largest market in the urban center close to transportation and real estate zones, The market sell most of major agricultural products close to hotels, where other

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urban services are provided. Six other families are engaged in local trade at *Psar Lue* located next to Wat Kor village, along the Sankger River. This market is well known for selling local fruits, which are often displayed along the village road, adjacent to the river. Fish and vegetables are also received at this market from farmers travelling by boat upstream of the city. Two more families trade at *Psar Pou Puy*, a newly constructed market along National road No. 5 in Ou Char commune. This market was established as part of the urban development process. It was created to act as a market centre for the region, having agricultural products from all the provinces surrounding the Tonle Sap Lake, as well as from Thailand and Vietnam. This market also serves as a shopping mall, promoting a modern lifestyle. Entertainment is performed by high profile celebrities at the market stage, giving it the image of the new urban vision of the town. However, the market is not yet popular, only having a limited number of sellers and patrons. Two other families from Wat Kor village operate a business transporting goods from Thailand to local markets, comprising mainly of machinery and warehouse stocks.

The land-based economy remains strong and was subject to a systematic land registration process while the research was being conducted. Among the 800 families[1] registered in the villages, 207 families own more than a hectare of land. Among these, 148 families have additional farmland in other villages. Most people who own land also report holding other positions, mostly as civil servants, politicians, and soldiers. Many citizens, both long-term residents and newcomers, have extended their investment activities in residential and agricultural lands. This has occurred mainly in the context of development in the district, where forested land has been converted into agricultural land focused on commercial cash crops. In 2010, the National Ring Road No. 57 was constructed through the village. This was in line with the Battambang Land-Use Master Plan, which was meant to improve road connectivity in the country. At surface value, the road was constructed in order to divert traffic with heavy loads (40 ton loads of iron, cement, cassava, rice and other products) from the town center. However, there were

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[1] An interview with the village chief in November 2017 shows that Wat Kor village was comprised of 812 families, with a population of 3,934 (1995 females). The village is further divided into 27 groups. After the Khmer Rouge regime, 75 new residents married local residents and settled there. These people migrated from various provinces such as Kandal, Siem Reap, Takeo, Kampong Cham and Kampong Speu.

other hidden political aspects regarding the construction of the road. The planning of the road was used as an apparatus to punish political elites from opposing parties. For instance, an ancient wooden house belonging to a member of the Royalist party was earmarked for removal and consequently demolished in order to make way for the construction of the road. Other local residents perceived that they were not properly compensated from the demarcation and rezoning of the village territory due to political influences.

However, the ring road is also said to have improved transportation logistics and had an overall positive impact on the land value of impacted residents. For instance, Mr. Tun Roeun, who had 2,000 m^2 cut from his 1.8-hectare plot by the ring road managed to be compensated. He would later use the money to construct a new concrete house alongside the new road. Another section of his land was also claimed to establish the Wat Kor village office. This enabled his daughter to claim a shopfront to be used as a grocery shop. He also managed to sell a 1,250 m^2 plot of this land to invest in farms in the Sam Laut and Ratanak Mondul districts. In 2010, these 30 hectares of agricultural land was valued at 3,000 USD per hectare, while by 2017, this had increased to between 5,000 to $6,000 USD. On this remaining land, he was able to rent 2,500 m^2 to three different businesses at a total of 600 USD per month. Mr. Rouen was not able to access a high standard of education when he was young, but he did study in the pagoda and would later work in the family business focusing on petty trade and agriculture. He now has a sustainable livelihood with these businesses managed by his sons, as well as a daughter who lives in France. She also owns a large plot of land along this road, which she may decide to develop in the future.

Another informant experiencing a positive outcome is Mr. Ork Nge, aged 66. He is a retired agricultural technician who previously owned 50 rai of rice paddies (20 rai inherited from his father and 30 rai from his mother) during the Sihanouk Regime. This land was not located in the village and was redistributed by the State during early 1980s. His family received 3 rai of rice paddies in the villages from the redistribution program and invested more in 750 m^2 of land in 1986 at a total cost of 5,000 riel. His family now owns 1 hectare of rice paddies and rents another of 1.5 hectares. He has five children in total, two daughters were teachers and later married policemen; and three sons, a policeman, a tractor operator, and another son who is ill and lives at home. His

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family moved to the land he purchased in 2010, before the village road was constructed in 2017. He rents three more rai of paddy for his rice cultivation:

"It costs the equivalent of around 800 kg of rice per hectare to rent the land and I obtain a rice yield of about 2.5 tons per hectare, without using high inputs. In the dry season, I use rice seed from Vietnam known as IR504. I mainly invest in agricultural crops, animals raising, and establishing more diverse crops. I live in a house on 1 rai of land, which is more than a hundred years old. I wish to maintain this house for the following generations."

Mr Ork Nge , An old resident of Wat Kor and retired agricultural official

The cost to rent land for rice cultivation per season is 30% of the total harvest. His family has done well and has been able to invest in land in more fertile districts, such as Sam Laut district. His life and family economy have improved since 2010, as his sons and daughter have obtained secure government positions.

Many other long-term residents, for instance, Mr. Mao Thearith, aged 50, have access to a means of production. Mr. Thearith farms 1 hectare of land, and also owns he productive assets, such the ploughing machines. He rents a further 1.5 hectares of land, as well as 1 rai in another area. He practices rice and vegetable cultivation and has constructed a pond enabling irrigation and storing water in both the wet and dry seasons. He also raises eight cows and several chickens.

His colleague, Mr. So Vanna is a civil servant who works at the Provincial Department of Health and wishes to sell his land to order to invest in land in other parts of the district, which have access to irrigation. He was expecting that urban development would raise the value of this rice paddy to 15 USD per m^2, but currently he has only been offered 5 USD per m^2. Mr. Vanna's father used to be a government official during Sihanouk regime and then again in the Lon Nol regime. He owned 60 hectares of rice paddies during that time. His father disappeared during the Pol Pot regime and his mother remarried and had another daughter. His current house is also considered to be a traditional wooden house, which stands on 3 rai of residential land. When his mother passes away, this land will be inherited and divided between him and his half-sisters. Currently, there are eight people living in the house, including his son,

daughter, daughter in-laws and mother. The family has diverse livelihoods. His wife is a petty trader at Psar Leu next to the village. One son works as a mechanic on construction projects, operating machines, while he and another son cultivate rice, manage ploughing machine and rice mill services, and raise 70 chickens. This livelihood is complimented with civil service wages and additional farming incomes.

In recent years, the government has planned to export one million tons of milled rice per year from Battambang by the year 2015. This has led to the monopolisation of rice trading, dominated by the Baitong Company, which is owned by the *Okhna* (business tycoon) Mr. Pou Puy, who is also a chairman of the Provincial chamber of commerce. During this time, Mr. Vanna has found it more difficult to access irrigation, mill and export rice. Due to this, his plans to sell his existing rice paddies at a good price and invest in land growing other crops has been unsuccessful, in part due to the unreliability of land speculation:

> *"Urban development has increased in the area as evidenced by new roads and land being converted for residential and industrial use, as well as for prisons and military activities taking up all of the land for housing, warehouses, and government administrative buildings. This has impacted the irrigation scheme constructed during the Pol Pot regime and changed the hydrology of the creek in the village, which regularly floods now with heavy rains. Additionally, between 30 and 32 hectares of land in the village have been bought by an unknown company at 5 USD per m^2 for real-estate development, despite it being valued closer to 15 USD per m^2. As agricultural conditions have worsened for those who depend on rice cultivation, they have sold their land."*
>
> Mr. So Vanna — Provincial official and a long-term resident of Wat Kor

Villagers used to receive agricultural extension services from local NGOs, such as *Krom Aphiwat Phum* (Village Development Group), who provided technical training, materials and equipment, as well as credit and savings programs. However, many local NGOs have become less active as a result of political pressure from the ruling party and a lack of funds. Local farmers attribute their skills and knowledge to these NGOs, which have now been largely replaced with fertilizer and animal feed companies who

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instruct them on agricultural and livestock practices. Mr. Vanna identified two major problems with rice cultivation in the village:

> *"Rice cultivation is now out of time with seasonal changes. Rainfall has become irregular, and there is an increase in flood events and droughts, which occur for around 6 weeks each wet season. Normally, the rain begins in May, but it has started in June every year now since 2015. I own half a hectare of rice paddies and rent a further two, as I own machinery. Most of this land is rented from people I trust or my relatives. The rice yield in this village is low at about 2.5 tons per hectare, cultivated only once per year"*

<div align="right">Mr. So Vanna — Provincial official and a long term resident of Wat Kor</div>

Out-migration among older residents has increased. Ms. Voen Sarey, who has worked in Bangkok since 2015, suggested that many people followed younger relatives and neighbors who had previously migrated, due to a lack of suitable employment in both the village and the city. She married in 2006 and had three children. By 2015, she was not able to support her family any longer. Her family decided to move to Bangkok to follow her younger sister who had migrated four years previously. Within one year, she had managed to acquire the appropriate work permits and obtained a job as a cook with Eithchay, a business which recycles urban waste. Her husband was able to find work as a truck driver. In addition to daily allowances from their employment, they each received a basic salary of 10,000 Baht (330 USD) per month. Seven of the eight children in her family now work in different parts of Thailand.

A major motivation for migrating is investing in productive assets for the family. Her three children remain in Cambodia at school, cared for by her mother and brother. Her daughter (aged 14) was in the same grade at school as her son (aged 11), while her youngest son (aged 4) attended pre-school in the village. She has managed to invest in 3 hectares of land in *Kos Krolar* district, including a plot of 1.5 hectares at a price of only 2000 USD in *Boeng Trakuon*, with access to irrigation. On this land, they grow cassava, which can be sold for about 650-660 Riel/kg (0.15 USD), or a profit of between 1,200 and 1,300 USD/ha. She suggested that if there was similar employment in Cambodia as Thailand, no one would be willing to migrate. Outside of her salary, she receives 100 Baht/day to spend on food. Accommodation, water and electricity are provided for free

from the business owners. She can speak and understand, but not write in Thai language.

A young interviewee, Mr. Huorn Borey, also suggests that if employment was available in Cambodia, he would not have migrated. He quit studying in grade ten to train as a barber and follow his sister, who had previously migrated. Of his other siblings, one sister married and now lives in Kampong Cham, another sister works in Phnom Penh, and a third sister completed her university degree in marketing and now works at a cosmetics and telephone shop. Mr. Borey has observed an increased number of tourists visit his village; however, this has not resulted in the availability of permanent employment for many of the local youth. He is skeptical of the benefits of urbanization and road development in the village because of this. Permanent jobs can only be accessed in areas with established factories and manufacturing plants, such as Thailand, with a guaranteed wage of at least 300 Baht (10 USD) per day. These positions are considered more secure, with workers being paid even if a machine breaks down. He states:

> *"The construction of the ASEAN road is good but agricultural commodities are not processed in my village or the province. Labor work is not available, and people leave the village every day to work along the Cambodian-Thai border. There is no direct benefit from ASEAN economic integration. Wealthy nations are more advantaged. For instance, Battambang produced lots of agricultural commodities, such as red corn, which we sell to Thailand for 2 Baht per kg, who process it and sell it back to Cambodia for 20 Baht per kg."*
>
> *Mr. Hoeurn Borey — a young out-migrant for job*

5.3.2 The Commercial Interests of the Newcomers

Since the fall of the Khmer Rouge regime, at least three waves of newcomers have arrived in Wat Kor village. The first are those who arrived during the Khmer Rouge regime of de-urbanization, who were forced to move to Battambang from Phnom Penh and other urban centers. The second wave consists of those who fled during the civil war during the 1970s and 1980s, and were able to return to urban cities with support from the UNHRC in the early 1990s. The third wave are those who arrived with

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commercial interests after the Battambang Municipal Land-Use Master Plan had been approved. While some newcomers have integrated with the existing community, others are still treated with suspicion by older residents. Recent newcomers can be considered as a dominant strategic group, who purchase land speculatively for markets, hotels, guest houses, and other real estate development.

Mr. Thorm Ngy, from Tram Kok district in Takeo province fled to Wat Kor village in 1979, when Vietnamese forces attacked Khmer Rouge soldiers near his home. He later brought his family and managed to access 5 rai of distributed land (1 rai for each member of his family). In 1985, he contributed 75 days of labor to the K5 plan to create a 'bamboo curtain' along the border in Pai Lin. He also received a government incentive to work in the village militia. He was in charge of 25 households, which occupied 2,000 m^2 of land along what is now National Road No. 57. In 2017, he sold his house and land in Wat Kor village (46 m^2) in order to use the money to fill in some land along this road and dig a 4-meter-deep, 1,216 m^2 pond at the rice paddy field for irrigation and fish raising. This enabled him to continue rice cultivation as a livelihood. With the new road, he is planning to sell his rice paddies at a higher price due to access road. His daughter and son-in-law are now government officials, working in other districts where new land is available. He wishes to invest in land at these locations.

The opportunity to rent land along Road No. 57 has attracted various commercial interests, including one local business that purchases and recycles solid waste. Mr. Veang Sareth, a police officer from Prek Preah Sdach commune, started the business to gain an additional income. He rented 7 x 22 m of land in Wat Kor along the ring road. In first contract, from 2015 and 2017, he paid 60 USD per month, which increased to 80 USD per month for the period between 2017 and 2022. The landlord again increased the rent to 80 USD per month. His business has good prospects:

> *"Buying and selling old, used materials from urban areas for recycling has become a key source of livelihood among the urban poor and those whose main occupation's salary is not enough. This business is very involved and active in communications and networking with different individual waste collectors. Sometimes he goes to their houses and sometimes he waits here to weigh and buy the materials straight away".*

Mr Sareth and his wife are able to access additional benefits from this informal business, which requires strong networks with other parts of the value chain. He has managed to support his three children and provide for their education. His eldest child completed the university and obtained work in the banking sector before marrying a relative in the United States. His two other children attend high school and still require further support. Mr. Sareth has now also established a larger recycling business with his brother in Ou Kcheay village.

Others who have developed businesses in Wat Kor include Ms. Aing Sopheary, who married a man from Britain and established a hotel on 1.8 hectares of land. They are from Siem Reap, where they previously had a restaurant, considering it as a long-term business project. They wish to live on the edge of the city, where it is quieter and closer to nature, and hold the idea that Battambang is famous for having an abundance natural land available for agriculture:

> *"My husband and I were working in Siem Reap and did not plan to invest in land in Wat Kor for building a restaurant and hotel. However, on visiting the village, we became interested in the quiet setting, and its proximity to rural life and nature. We purchased the land in 2009 and by 2011 we started to construct the hotel and restaurant. The land price was not fixed and needed to be negotiated with all the families who wished to sell their land. The land price was estimated at between 7 and 30 USD per m^2, requiring a total investment of 600,000 USD, including 400,000 USD for the construction of the hotel and restaurant. When I purchased the land, there was no road access and Road No. 57 had not yet been planned. Another road connecting the village to the Provincial road through Banan district and the village center was constructed in 2017"*

Ms Aing Sopheary — a newcomer with commercial interests

The 1.8 hectares of land she owns is large enough to be subdivided into different components. These include a green space, the resort and restaurant, orchards, fishponds,

organic vegetable gardens and 3 rai (4,800 m^2) of rice paddies for organic rice cultivation. She knows that Battambang city is renowned for agriculture, with large areas of fertile land, which was one of her motivations for relocating here. Her resort is mostly booked by foreign tourists, using *TripAdvisor* and tours organized by agents from Siem Reap and Phnom Penh. She suggests that 'the world seems to be getting smaller', citing the role of technology and increased tourism. She describes the need to strengthen the provided services, such as a better website and tour experience, the tasting of local foods, and traveling to iconic tourist sites in the town and in other districts. Her resort is now hiring local residents, but there is still not many staff in place as it only has 10 rooms. As the resort has received many awards, she attracts tourists from many parts of the world. There is a peak season between November and March and a quiet season between April and May.

Another newcomer has played multiple roles in what is considered to be one of the dominant strategic emerging groups. Previously, he has taken risks on land speculation, before obtaining a role as an officer at the Provincial Department of Tourism after completing his postgraduate studies in tourism management at Surin University. He was involved in the development of the land-use survey for the Battambang Land-Use Master plan and played a key role in promoting tourism through the preservation of French colonial buildings by being able to get them on the UNESCO heritage listing. He has also strongly promoted open public spaces and a clean city to attract tourism. He has a poor upbringing and needed to borrow 2,000 USD with his wife to buy a small plot of land in Siem Reap, which later multiplied significantly in value. He then bought and sold other properties along the Cambodian-Thai border. He also purchased land in Wat Kor village with the aim of investing in the tourism market and developing 'cultural village' products. By 2018, he has increased his land ownership in the village to 3 hectares through negotiations and using his strategic position:

> *"Land prices in Wat Kor have increased. I first purchased land for 11 USD per m^2, which is now worth 25 USD per m^2. If people know how to develop home gardens, their land becomes more valuable as they can grow specialized food products for tourists. There is a need to establish community-based tourism*

projects in the village to market produce to tourists and establish tours to ancient houses that are managed to ensure good financial management, with 10% of profits being contributed to administration. We need official registration in the future. Currently, there are tourists who visit the ancient wooden houses and voluntarily make generous contributions."

Interviewed with Provincial Officer at the Department of Tourism

As the land is still relatively inexpensive, his total investment in the 3 hectares of land was 400,000 USD. Other investments included the development of the land, building construction, land-use permits, and design, increasing the amount invested to one million USD. He claims that all of the money has come from his personal wealth as a result of his land speculation activities prior to taking up the government position. In Wat Kor, there have been very few cases of land conflict in terms of outsiders coming in and making claims to villagers' lands, as they have already been systematically registered. Conflict generally arise due to issues within the family regarding who has ownership of the land title.

Another group of newcomers includes those living in informal settlements who returned to the area after the civil war in the 1980s. This group includes former soldiers' families, as well as refugees who lived in camps along the Cambodian-Thai border. The group of former soldiers started settling the area in 1993, deciding on an area that was previously close to military headquarters. These headquarters have since been redeveloped into a market (*Psar Leu*). Informal houses were established along the railroad, which has not been active since 1993. In 2018, families within 8 meters of the railway were required to relocate. Until this time, this group had been largely untroubled by the ruling because of their history as military families of the State of Cambodia (SOC) or the former PRK.

Returning refugees tended to settle along the riverbank at the tail of village. This area originally belonged to Kampong Seima village, until the bridge crossing the canal at that section was destroyed by riverbank erosion. The 200-meter-long area along the river bank was later annexed to Wat Kor, however, the names of the people living there are still registered as under the administration of Kampong Seima village. For this reason, infrastructure, such as roads in this area are not well constructed in comparison

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to the old village that is located along the newly developed 'silk road'. This group remains distant from the ruling party, as they have previously taken the side of the Khmer Movement along the border in opposition, supported by Vietnamese soldiers during 1980s. When this group returned, they no longer had access to the lands, and since that time no land has been distributed to them. Upon applying for land, they were informed by the local ruling elite that:

> *Your group, you should sleep and stay on the tree tops as there is no more land for you. You were a former enemy of the regime during 1980sThe land that they occupy is considered public land with no legal tenure. (Mr. Chum Chet, Tuk Tuk driver from the village).*

The livelihoods of these people are mixed. Younger people mostly work in construction. Some migrate to Thailand in search of work but often return facing difficulties due to their lack of education. Others place fishing nets in the river to catch fish and collect wood for cooking. Men are the members of the family who leave the home to seek work, while most women perform work in the home. Their jobs are varied and include construction work and working as 'tuk tuk' drivers. In this block, no one had reported working in the entertainment clubs in town due to women previously being affected by HIV. The houses in this block are small, made simply from wood and bamboo in a fashion that is easy to relocate.

Provision local transportation service is one of the major livelihoods activities for urban poor in transporting local residents and visitors to the town and the village. Mr. Chet who is working as 'tuk tuk' have an income. Due to the political situation in late 2017, when the opposition party was dissolved, political freedom and movement became restricted. There was a strong shift to only allow tourism through packaged tours, which restricted the capacity of these drivers to access customers. The area alongside this settlement (House Groups 9 to 11) is planned to be developed as a tourist market, as well as an area owned by the Provincial Director of Tourism. Some of the young men have managed to access construction work that pays 30,000 riel (7.50 USD).

However, livelihoods among these residents are not stable. They often move across the village, to other parts of the city and to other countries in search for work. For instance, Mr. Chum Chet, one of the former refugees that returned in 1993, has invested

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in the 'tuk tuk' business in order to provide transportation services to all types of travelers:

> *"I earn between 20 and 25 USD per day from my tuk tuk service. For tourists, I provide a tour service for one whole day to selected sites, which is priced at 25 USD. I am also part of a network of tuk tuk drivers that provides services to local and foreign visitors who often favor the opposition party over the ruling party. When I stayed in the refugee camp, I was able to study English and work as an English teacher. However, when I returned, I could not get a teaching job through the Provincial Department of Education, Youth and Sport (PoEYS). So, I found work in Thailand and other places to help build the assets of my family at home. Most of the motor taxis and tuk tuk drivers in this area have the experience of migrating to Thailand in search of work. Some managed to access legal work, while others found work illegally and were sent home."*
>
> *Mr Chum Chet — a returned refugee who now works as a tuk tuk driver*

His experience suggests that there is a need for the Provincial Department of Tourism to pay more attention to the regulation of transportation services for tourists. Mr. Chet agrees with the need for urban development and city beautification, but emphasizes that development needs to focus more on providing jobs in the informal sectors so that people like him can improve the local economy instead of the benefits of development only being directed towards small groups who are linked to urban tourism companies operating in collaboration with large hotels and guesthouses.

5.4 Urban Restructuring and the Remaking of Urban Space

The Battambang Municipal Land-Use Master Plan (2015-2030) plays a key role in determining how urban spaces are being restructured in the commune. For instance, the plan shows 14 different zones covering 2,493.7 ha in Wat Kor. Rice paddies will be reduced in area from 2011.2 hectares to 1,713.9 hectares by 2030. Mixed residential-agricultural lands will increase by approximately 50 hectares, while other mixed land-use zones will increase by approximately 60 hectares.

Table 5.3: Proposed land-use changes in Wat Kor commune (2007-2030)

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Land use type	2007 area (ha)	2030 area (ha)	% change
Residential zone	34.2	102.6	+200.0
Residential mixed with agriculture	306.6	350.8	+14.4
Other mixed used zones	70.5	131.5	+86.5
Commercial zones	0	9.7	new
Administrative zone	14.2	30.4	+114.1
Cultural zones	18.6	18.7	+0.5
Small and medium industrial zones	13.1	20.5	+56.5
Public green space	0	78.1	new
Sport and recreational zones	0	6	new
Agricultural zones	2011.2	1713.9	-14.8
Rivers and lakes	25.2	25.2	0.0
Military zone	0.1	6.2	+6100
Total	**2493.7**	**2493.7**	

Source: Adapted from Battambang Municipal Land-Use Master Plan (2015-2030)

These land classifications are general projections, which may or may not reflect actual practice. Agricultural zones refer to areas used for rice and vegetable cultivation, livestock production, plantations, orchards, and nurseries. Economic activities allowed in this zone include the small-scale processing of agricultural products, places to store agricultural tools and vehicles, accommodation for workers, and water infrastructure such as irrigation canals, drainage systems, water reservoirs, and water tanks. Some villages have had previous access to irrigation canals built during the Khmer Rouge regime, including Kampong Seima and Chrab Krasaing (but now do not?).

An interview with the commune chief suggests that urban growth is being driven by factors such as improved urban infrastructure and services, such as roads and water and electricity connections. Piped water systems and electricity are expected to be connected as road infrastructure is developed through loans and technical assistance from the ADB. Rice production here and in other villages will be connected to an irrigation system and an association will be formed to export rice collectively as part of the regional economic connectivity agenda. The commune chief had previously not realized the impact of the regional integration process, by which local production

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aligned with good practice guidelines imposed by other rice producing countries would be favored.

The construction of Road No. 57 and the provincial road that runs through the village have led urban planners to relocate the Provincial sports complex built in the 1960s, near the current airport and Prek Preah Sdach to Wat Kor. A military barrage, the Provincial prison, and a drug rehabilitation center will also be relocated to Wat Kor.

Figure 5.2: Typical traditional house opens for tourism in Wat Kor

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Figure 5.3: House owner explained to tourist visit her house in Wat Kor village (Photo credit: Mr. Vireak Sambath).

The commune has been designated as a zone for village-based tourism development. A range of tourist sites and activities have been planned for this zone, including visiting traditional Khmer wooden houses and *chamkars* (mixed orchards), and taking trips on traditional wooden oxcarts. In other villages in the commune, such as Kampong Seima and Kscach Pouy, there are 198.8 hectares of vegetable gardens and orchards. Currently, 29 houses in these villages are 100 years old and have been protected from demolition. Regulations have been imposed to prevent owners from changing the style of the buildings. Most are attached to large residential areas with orchards.

Most new buildings in the area intend to follow traditional Khmer wooden architecture or be designed with a modest style to imitate the surrounding environment. The area is comprised of mixed-use residential/agricultural zones. These zones are intended to provide space for semi-rural housing that is used in conjunction with agriculture. They have also been designated as urban tourism heritage sites, requiring an increase in trainings and awareness-building to enhance tourism-oriented activities, businesses, and services. This includes (i) small accommodation facilities such as home-stays; (ii) demonstration activities of agricultural processing practices such as orchards, wineries, and other agro-tourism ventures; and (iii) places to host small workshops for handicrafts, such as carving, weaving, basket weaving, and rice paper production.

5.5 Flooding and Informality

Wat Kor village experiences the same flooding issues that occur in urban communes in the commercial center. However, these problems have not attracted much attention from local authorities. Flood events in Wat Kor have become more intense with the increased urban development of roads, markets and upstream dams. Canals constructed during the Khmer Rouge regime have not been fully functional due to a lack of maintenance, and canals within the village that should connect to these schemes no longer have any open space, due to buildings occupying most of the land. Flood events in Wat Kor village generally last for more than seven days (Provincial Department of Public Works and Transport). The drainage system for the village along National Road No. 57 and the Provincial road have not been large enough to cater to both torrential rains and the high water flows from the Sangker River River.

During the 1970s and 1980s, a special canal that served both irrigation and transportation needs between the city and Kampong Seima commune was functional and was able to control local floods effectively. The total length of the canal was 11.84 km.. Focus group discussions revealed that the regular flooding that in the past occurred between September and October has now extended into November and December. Flooding in this 200-meter section of land is reported to have reached heights of 60 cm. Drainage in this area is blocked and attracts minimal attention from local authorities. Up to 10 households are reported to be residing on submerged lands without any solution to future wet season issues.

Residents within informal settlements frequently bring up the issue of increasing amounts of insects and poisonous snakes that enter the settlement. This is a result of the more frequent flooding that is occurring, which is now affecting a greater proportion of the village. Areas close to Wat Kor pagoda on the east side of the village road have now become more vulnerable to flood risks. Floods are believed to be caused by the release of water from the upstream *Kong Hort* flood control system, land-use changes in the upper catchment, and an increase in hard surface area in the village. For instance, the *Psar Leu* market was not constructed with a clear drainage plan and unfortunately, water is now being directed to other residential areas.

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Informal settlements and flood risks are often linked to both geographical and social marginalization. At least three sections of the village are comprised of informal settlements that were settled in the early 1990s, and which have continued to receive more in-migration recently. These settlements are located on public lands. The first is at the tail of the village, comprising house groups 9, 10, and 11 of Wat Kor village. This area is mainly made up of returned refugees from the Cambodian-Thai border. Some residents along the riverbank have no formal tenure and their history of being refugees affects their relationship with Commune and Provincial officials.

Interviews with these residents revealed that flooding had become more frequent in this section of the village, particularly as weather and rainfall patterns became less regular. Floods with depths of 60 cm have been recorded in the years 2013, 2017, 2018 and 2019. Much of the flooded area is at the village tail, to the east of the village road, and is considered to occur because of increased river flows rather than directly from rainfall events. Villagers in these sections lack a range of urban services due to their informal status. For instance, they have yet to receive any access to electricity. Children and older women are reported to be the most vulnerable in this context. For example, in late 2017 a venomous snake in the shoe of a young person bit a child who required hospitalization and an elderly lady (aged 86 years) stated that she cannot sleep during flood events and regularly moves her kitchen to higher ground whenever there is a flood. In this block, upgrading infrastructure would significantly improve the coping mechanisms of residents.

5.6 Governance and Institutions

The roles of the government and other institutions in managing urban heritage development and preservation often overlap. This includes the Department of Tourism, UNESCO, and the demands attached to bilateral aid, as well as the established power structures of political working groups, local Buddhist traditions and social relations that define village life.

5.6.1 The Provincial Department of Tourism

The Provincial Department of Tourism is responsible for promoting tourism, specifically, cultural tourism. However, in Wat Kor village, they have not had much

influence. In the planning documents provided by the Provincial Director of the department, a formal community tourism fund was to be formally established, in which 10% of total tourism income would be taxed by the department. They also stipulated the strict protection of cultural heritage through planning regulations and the restriction of housing modifications. However, the transparency of the budget was low and few improvements have been seen to the houses in question. Few of the promised services discussed by local authorities and the Provincial Department of Tourism have materialized. House owners who have opened tourist businesses under this plan expected to receive benefits through voluntary contributions, and the selling of souvenirs and local fruits, but these have not come to fruition.

5.6.2 Political Working Groups

The influence of political working groups remains powerful in Battambang. Throughout its history, residents of the village were controlled by the former noble class. This noble class included some of the most powerful positions in the country, including ministers, the prime minister, and military leaders. During the Khmer Rouge regime, the village was reported to be a model of collectivization and cooperative work, both of which greatly contributed towards the socialist revolution. Vickery (1999) reported that foreign diplomats from European socialist blocs visited the village with this view. As such, many ancient wooden houses were protected from destruction and served as a place for cooking and serving food to those who worked in rice fields, cleared forest and dug irrigation canals. In contrast, most pagodas[2] were used as prisons for those who fought against the regime.

Since the fall of the Khmer Rouge regime, not many people in the village have retained these higher positions. For instance, the few local people who held positions with the Royalist party in the early 1990s were removed from power during the coup d'état in 1997. One of the old residents in the village who owns one of the ancient wooden houses demonstrated a great deal of sadness for the villagers. He expressed a desire to separate politics and culture and suggested that the bad experiences from the

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[2] An interview with one village official suggested that Noun Chea, the second brother of the Khmer Rouge regime, lived in Wat Kor and ordered that all Khmer wooden houses in the commune should not be touched. He did not have strong religious beliefs, which is why pagodas were used as prisons.

Khmer political regimes and enforcements of social class divides should not be used to make generalizations about the cultural practices of the village. The preservation of the ancient houses and associated cultural practices of the town is an obligation that is capable of revising old Buddhist traditions of being polite, respectful and assertive.

The Cambodian People's Party (CPP), as the dominant political party, has further increased their political influence since the 1997 coup and has now controlled the country since the 1980s. Many high-ranking officials of the ruling party[3] seem to constantly visit Wat Kor in order to disseminate political propaganda and promises of community assistance. They have also promised to simplify birth registration and other official bureaucratic procedures, which have caused problems for residents in the past. Local economic development and capacity-building among villagers have generally not been discussed in these visits, as these benefits are often captured by wealthy people in urban areas.

Within the Political Party Working Group, the role of the village chief has often been central in mapping out each household, the total number of groups, and the overall population of the village. They also do research on specific households who are antagonistic towards the mission of the ruling party. Village chiefs are much more accountable to the Party than the people when compared to the past. The ethnographic work of Ebihara (1968) conducted between 1958 and 1960 shows that the recruitment of village chiefs began during the Sihanouk Regime (*Sangkum Reastr Niyum*) in order to counter the challenges of the formation of the post-colonial state. During that time, the village chief, or head of village, known as *Mei Phum*, was nominated by the villagers. The *Mei Phum* was chosen based on their educational credentials, social networks, number of relatives in the village, and the respect they held. They were able to stay in power as long as there was no conflict with the local people. The *Mei Phum* was often supported by either two or three assistants. They played a key role in (i) sharing information about policies and orders from the central government to the community; (ii) maintaining law and order through the supervision of village guards;

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[3] This includes members of the National Assembly, Provincial Governors and their entourage as well as the three *Okhna* who are members of the assembly.

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(iii) assess the character of any person who wished to reside in the village; and (iv) mediate conflicts at the village level.

In Wat Kor village, the current *Mei Phum*, Mr. Hor Phon, was previously the Deputy Village Chief between 1990 and 2000. In 2000, he was promoted and has held the role ever since. His salary up until 2017 was 220,000-riel (54 USD) per month, and due to the promotion, the salary increased to 400,000 Riel (100 USD), while his two deputies received 280,000 riel (69 USD) per month. The *Mei Phum*'s role is huge, coordinating and reporting on all activities in the village, such as who comes to buy and sell land and conduct field surveys and reports. Each weekend, the *Mei Phum* needs to work closely with the Political Working Group visiting from Phnom Penh. From 1993, community-based organizations and NGOs have also worked in Wat Kor, mostly through local cooperatives and community development. It is common the *Mei Phum* cooperates closely with these non-state actors. Since 2013, the established power of the ruling party was being threatened, and has led to a reduction of support at a grassroots level. As a result, the working relationship has shifted, whereby the *Mei Phum* and their deputies are very much accountable to the Party rather than the villagers in terms of political contestation.

5.6.3 Local Buddhist Temples

Older residents in Battambang are much more likely to be practicing Buddhists. There are two pagodas in the village that have been built by lay people throughout the town's history. These pagodas have historically served as a moral center, where monks disseminate Buddhist teachings, and offering opportunities for lay people to earn merit. They also served as a place where lay people and monks can celebrate festivals and hold large gatherings, acting as a source of entertainment for the villagers, as well as a source of education and other services, such as construction. Chhoung (1974), a native of Battambang, wrote a book about the Lord of Governors in Battambang, where it was recorded that:

> *"In every village there are men who know how to construct houses and temples, know how to saw wood, make tables and cabinets, carts, and boats. People rarely hire house builders, instead they usually help one another. Houses were*

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carefully built according to the traditional models. The style continues from the old times. Mr. On was known as having the best skills in house building, woodcarving and iron forging alike and was involved in constructing Wat Damrey Sor in 1904." (Chuong 1974:41).

Ebihara describes these various Buddhist festivals as forming a welcome punctuation to the usually drab and arduous cycle of village life. She recorded major annual ceremonies where the pagoda served as a central place for the social life of the village. Major ceremonies included the Khmer New Year, *Visak Bouchea*, *Chol Vosa*, *Pchum Ben*, *Chegn Vosa*, *Katen*, a ceremony of making mountain rice, and *Miek Boucia*, a flower ceremony to direct humanitarian efforts and financial support to specific needs (Ebihara 2018). However, Ebihara did not mention one of the most important festivals, the boat racing festival, which takes place between mid-October and November when the water of the Mekong River and Tonle Sap Lake begin to recede and flow into the South China Sea.

Pchum Ben and Katen has been popular festival. Pchum Ben is the festival to honor the dead which take place from late September or early October. This festival takes place over two weeks of offering prayers (*Bangskol*) and nourishment (*Norm Ansorm*) to the deceased, while *Katen* is a festival where offerings are made to monks who have come out of retreat between October and November. Along with the Khmer New Year and *Pchum Benh*, *Katen* is a popular and festive event. The main ceremony of the festival is to give clothes to monks, a practice initiated by Buddha, when his robe was soiled by the mud in the rainy season. Along with giving objects and money to monks, the construction of the pagoda occurs at this time. Great merit is earned by individuals or groups who organize this event. Donation to the festival often reflect social class. The host or organizers often are those from wealthy family or high ranking officials which include groups of friends, business colleagues, and families members. Some pagodas, who do not have strongly connection with high ranking officials tend to get local residents to participate and contribution. *Katen* is very colorful affair and is filled with music and the bustle of the crowd filling the air (Ebihara 2018). Besides these, there is water festival that is considered to be the most widely anticipated festival of the year, attracting millions of people in some provinces, and drawing young and old

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crowds of both genders. In Wat Kor, the political role of religion can also be observed, similar to other communes such as Prek Preah Sdach. The chief monk in Wat Kor has the highest position of all monks in the Municipality and his influence is often described as almost equal to the Municipal Governor.

5.7 Tourism Space as Strategies of Resilience and the Revival of Cultural Capital

As I mentioned earlier, tourism space has become one of the urban realities where human and nonhuman actors interact through transportation infrastructure, mappings, the narrative of meanings and individual perceptions of transformation (Farias 2010b). It reflects the nature of image narrative, the production and reproduction of meaning through visual maps, territorial classifications, zonings and spatial rearrangements (Esposito 2018). Urban tourism and heritage promotion also reflect the emergence of social class, status and gender among the urban middle class. Earl (2014) conceptualizes class culture beyond money, material possessions and consumption, extending indicators to self-improvement, lifestyle, social awareness and globalized outlook. Swartz (1997) argue cultural capital is derived from the social conflict and struggle in life as the result of social and political changes for certain social groups in creating styles, identity, and resources. Both Swartz and Earl modified their concepts from Bourdieu's approach in order to overcome the social disadvantage and benefit from exclusion of others.

This section makes two arguments. The first provides a foundation for the sociological study of urban heritage in Battambang and the development of the tourism sector, while the second deals specifically with the revitalization of the cultural village and cultural capital among residents to cope with urbanization within the village and the town as the whole.

5.7.1 Promoting Urban Heritage and the Tourist Gaze

Tourism promotion in Battambang envisions an internal recognition of the quality of a Khmer heritage that has a mixed legacy of Angkorian, French colonial, and

Khmer Rouge influences[4], and is linked to agricultural and fishing livelihoods, religious and cultural practices, creative arts and crafts, and cuisine (Carter, et al. 2016). Based on these legacies, focusing on the gaze of tourism may revive urban heritage and generate economic development and employment. This includes the revitalization of cultural villages through the preservation of Khmer wooden houses, colonial buildings, pagodas, museums, landscapes and historical landscapes.

Esposito (2018) links the promotion of local culture and heritage to an idea of colonial practice in term of emotional authenticity. This process of commodifying emotions is a result of the construction of meaning of places and objects which consist of a combination of tradition and modernity, mediation through narrative, and domestication of unpleasant aspects of the experiences of foreign places. These three forms of commodification excise the 'fearful' component of aesthetic felling for the benefit of visitors who are only seeking for pleasure (ibid: 246).

Lorentzen and Van Heur (2012) show smalls and medium cities play key role in consumption and production which also link to cultural activities for tourism gaze and business innovation within urban space.

The construction of urban heritage space is also linked to the memories that people can recall, reconstructing meaning through the times and spaces of everyday life, cultural planning and voluntary works. King (2017) demonstrates that heritage and tourism practices are inseparable. Heritage arises in memories and in turn invokes the gaze of the tourist through popular memories and imagination. Meanwhile, tours and maps play key roles in transforming places through a spatial narrative about homes and streets, for example, representing the function and meaning of certain buildings and places (de Certeau 1984: 118).

The expanding global economy and urban development strongly impact the everyday lives of individuals and families, specifically in regards to the modern worker and the unhappiness they experience within the family (Lefebvre 2014). Lefebvre looks at tourism spaces through the lens of everyday life practices, which also consists of the

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[4] The regime of the People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK) was considered a failed state, but which also needs be revived for the promotion of tourism.

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production of the erotic, beyond the bounds of family life, and where modern workers go to escape boredom (ibid)

This is relieved by the creation of global tours, where families spend and consume more and more (ibid). Urry (2009) agreed with Lefebvre that the world is now on the move. But he examines the role of mobility in cutting across the urban space and tourism practices. This is also linked to educational background, family status, work, improvements infrastructure and communication systems and the search for a better economic situation, such as migration (Urry 2009). His tourism gaze study later links to the meaning associated with places, themes, spaces, heritage and museums (Urry and Larsen 2011). Places are produced and reproduced through the performance of tourism, which is made possible through the network relationships of organized tourism packages. This conveys key messages of what should be anticipated to see, as well as what to remember about a designed building in order to invoke a sense of connectivity with the building and the community. The concept reflects the revitalization of existing cultural capital among old residents, houses, and a sense of place and social class, which can be seen in the design of Wat Kor as a cultural village.

Old buildings which include colonial architecture and local ancient houses tend to attract more white people than other ethnic groups (ibid). Jacobs (1962) advocates for these old buildings to be restored and renovated as it tends to generate a diversity of activities in the city, such as foreign restaurants, pawn shops, book stores, antiques dealers, studios, art galleries, musical instrument storing places, art supplies, and backrooms often found within older buildings in the city (Jacobs 1962). For her:

the supermarkets, shopping malls, and modern fashion, in contrast often go to new buildings with high costs. The display of traditional wooden houses for tourists strengthens the cultural value of tradition and capital among old residents and reflects the social and historical process of how social spaces have been transformed. The promoting of cultural villages and agro-ecotourism recreate a new urban space through the reviving of tradition, traditional architecture, and the ancient buildings and homes belonging to the old residents (Jacobs 1962:190-191)

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The annual report of the Provincial Department of Tourism (2018) shows that in the year of 2017, 618,138 national tourists and 98,304 foreigners from 11 countries had visited Battambang province. The key areas visited included the French colonial architecture in the center of the town, the bamboo train, museums, ancient houses in Wat Kor, the Banan, Ek Phnom and Sam Pov temples, and the bat caves. Beside these major attractions, old pagodas, ancient objects, home gardens, boating and bird watching were other popular attractions. It is estimated that each tourist spends between 50 and 110 USD[5], assuming they stay for three days and spend money on goods and servies such as accommodation, food, transport, recreational activities, souvenirs and entertainment. The income recorded by the Provincial Department of Tourism related to these activities was 38,805,190 USD per year, of which 25,991,750 USD and 10,813,440 USD came from domestic and foreign visitors, respectively.

Table 5.4: Key tourism themes and locations in Battambang

Theme	Sub-themes	Locations
Nature	River and lakes	Sanger river, Tonle Sap, Kamping Pouy reservoir
	Plains	Limestone outcrops (Phnom Banan), Central Indochinese Dry Forest (Phnom Sampov) Wetlands and swamp forests (Prek Toal Bird Sanctuary)
	Uplands	Cardamom mountains and rainforest, Phnom Samkos Wildlife Sanctuary, Samlaut Multiple Use Area
History	Pre-Angkorian	Laang Spean
	Angkorian	Wat Ek Phnom, Phnom Bannan, Prasat Bassaet and Prasat Sneung
	French colonial	Heritage precinct
	Khmer Rouge	Wat Samrong Knong, Sam Pov Mountain, Kamping Pouy
Livelihoods	Agriculture	Tonle Sap floodplain, around the Sangker river

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[5] This correlates to US$30,906,900 if each visitor spends around US$50, which increases to US$67,995,180 assuming each tourist would spend around US$110 per person.

Theme	Sub-themes	Locations
	Fishery	Tonle Sap, Sangker river
Arts and Crafts	Traditional	Heritage precinct
	Contemporary	Heritage precinct
Lifestyles	Cuisine-traditional and contemporary	Villages, heritage precinct
	Celebrations-religious and secular	Wats, temple, heritage precinct and the riverside
Religion	Historic	Wats (Buddhist temples)
	Contemporary	Temples and churches

Sources: Adapted from the master plan of provincial tourism

Tourism has become a major source of economic development for the town and the province. Most of the ethnic Chinese (known as Sino-Khmer) mostly occupy the colonial and shophouse house building located at roads #1, 2 and 3, which have formed into the urban and business centers of the town. In addition, these buildings are being proposed to be under UNESCO's list of preservation and protection sites.

5.7.2 Traditional Houses and the Reconstruction of Cultural Capital

Historically, Khmer people would spend more time and resources contributing to the construction of temples for kings and officials to worship gods and the kings themselves (Ross and Collins 2006). The practice has faded due to labor shortages and the impacts of war. In later regimes, particularly the Feudual period, when science and technology were not universally available, houses were constructed from local resources and knowledge. Thus, aristocratic houses reflect the social world and the division of class in the village.

Houses play a key role in social organization and kinship relations, reflecting the lives and fate of their owners as they are born, live, grow old, die and decay (Carsten and Jones 1995). They are linked with human bodies, which are complex, multifaceted entities, which provide different meanings with respect to their culture and the historical context. Traditional housing in Southeast Asia, including the physical structure and

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spatial layout, often reflects the rules of marriage and other social divisions in society among distinct groups. They represent a system of asymmetric alliances. The division between inner and outer, back and front, as well as higher and lower areas, each is a subdivision of a larger whole, and associated with different categories of people: men, women, kin, wife-givers, and wife-takers. The house expresses the principles of unity and difference that were fundamental to the maintenance of the social order.

They function not only to provide shelter, but also serve as a socio-symbolic space between creators and inhabitants (Waterson 1990). This also reflects the regional politics and local legitimacy over nature, as well as the local control of those with larger societal roles, such as the King. Therefore, house owners, as local leaders involved with various ritual performances, to appease nature, bad spirits and to respect those at the higher level of the society.

The revitalization of ancient houses in Wat Kor is to reconstruct these past legacies, including the family roots of the noble class; the functions of housing and class in the social world; the revitalization of local architecture; and the cosmology of traditional housing arrangements. Of the 29 ancient wooden houses that exist, two were developed as tourist attractions on display. The key themes of this tourism include the history of the families, the type of woods used, the spatial arrangement of the housing, and in particular, the social class divisions between house owners and the public. For instance, the wooden house that belongs to Ms. Bun Rouen was built in 1920, during the colonial period, and when the owner was of the noble class (*Okhna Nou Piet Phoeung*). The title of *Oknha*, in this case refers to a military commander during the period of King Sisowat. The house measures at 29 m in length and 10.5 m in width and was constructed on a surface of 5,450 m^2 in a *Pet* style (*Pet* is a type of Khmer traditional wooden house). The house has verandas at the front and two sides of the house, which itself is divided into three parts. The first comprises the front and side verandas, while the second refers to the middle of the house which consists of a large living room. At the rear left side of the living room, there is a door leading to two bedrooms and the final section refers to the front of the two bedrooms, where there is another door leading to a side veranda and a wooden staircase. At the left side, about 2 meters from the back door, there is kitchen.

Mr. Sambath is the third-generation owner of a house that had an indicated 1,000 foreign tourist visits occur between January and February 2018. There are no official records of how many tourist visits there are per month, disaggregated across domestic and foreign visitors, as there was no official in charge regarding visiting the house. Tourists were asked to provide a donation in a box at the entrance of the house. It is estimated that between 2.5 and 5 USD per tourist was contributed. Most domestic and foreign tourists come on group tours. Students often visit during school vacations in October from the Royal University of Fine Arts and Architecture. There is also handicrafts made by local villagers for sale in the house. Previously, Mr. Sambath was a lecturer in Phnom Penh but decided to retire and work as a tour guide at his house.

Mr. Sambath later discovered the monopoly that group tours, local hotels and restaurants had on the Battambang tourism market. Tourists were sent to visit the house and then return back to the hotel for both sleeping and having their meals. None of the money had been spent on any local foods or products. He decided to create a network among those families with traditional wooden houses and established local restaurants to accommodate tourists. Since early 2020, most foreign tourists who have visited his house have learned how to eat new fruits and foods, and are glad to extend their stay in the village. As he can also speak both French and English, most tourists who speak French, the former colonial power, tend to believe him and decide to spend more time and money enjoying the local foods. Sambath also plans to talk with villagers to design the riverbank in the village to support local boat services and vegetable and orchard cultivation alongside the riverbank. By doing this, he expects to attract more foreign tourists to stay in the village rather than the hotels owned by the newcomers, one of the dominant strategic groups. Sambath's actions reflect his cultural capital in coping with social and economic changes, in particular the need to compete against newcomers in capturing new urban tourism spaces and strategic resources.

The second traditional wooden house that opened to tours is known by the locals as *Khor Saang* and *Krochaom* house. It was built across two historical periods, blending two styles. *Krochaom* was built around 1902 measuring 8 x 11 m. *Khor Saang* was built as an annex in 1907, measuring 9 x 14 m. The total area of the house is 126 m^2 on an 88 x 230 m plot of land. The house is considered to be the oldest in the village and is

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owned by Mr. Tap, who was the personal secretary of the most recent Lord of Governors of Battambang (*Louk Mchas Kor Tha Than Chum*). He had the royal status of *Hluong Snorhapimon*. The ownership of the house has passed through five generations. Mr. Sarith, who is the third-generation owner, worked as the government official in charge of culture and religion. His son is currently transferring from a teaching position to be a government official in charge of civil service and administration. This department is responsible for the official status concerns and legal documents.

The house is surrounded by a mixed orchard with trees aged more than 100 years old. The owners previously offered homestay rooms and sold food, however, they stopped because of the number of insects during the wet season and because of the safety risks. A key feature of the wooden houses in this area was the walls. There were no cement used for the house's construction. Villagers mixed bamboo with another substance to construct a wall, which gave off the appearance of cement, but with greater durability. The layout and spatial arrangement of the houses were complex, having a natural cooling system that was accessed through the opening of specific windows. The interior was designed for many purposes. It included a guestroom, rooms for the families of the son and daughter, as well as those who had recently married. There was also a deceptive space designed to deter thieves.

Mr. Sarith, a retired government official, previously worked as a tour guide. Besides having significant knowledge about this house, he is also articulate about the culture and preferences of the people in Battambang. The people in Battambang have a proud history of rice production of a superior quality, as well as various foods and fruit trees. People from this village were trained to act with a calm and orderly politeness. For instance, peeling an orange in Battambang has a distinct style, food cooked in the village was better prepared and tastier than other regions, and weddings were planned around special astrological calculations. There is a large diversity of fruit trees, herbs, and vegetables being grown on the residential lands. Tourists interested in sustainability are offered a great opportunity to feel revitalized in terms of their economic and social status, which can be seen to continue across each regime.

5.8 Conclusion

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This case study provides an insight into the historical evolution that exists in the knowledge of older residents, their cultural assets and constructs of social belonging, reproduced as cultural capital. This is discussed in the context of an emerging interest in urban heritage development and preservation in conjunction with rapid urban transformation in Wat Kor village.

Throughout the historical processes such as regime change, older residents in the village have had family members who used to be senior politicians or have come from wealthy families, which have seen their status change to commoner after the Khmer Rouge regime. Family traditions and cultural assets have been revived in the face of contested democratic spaces during the 1990s and early 2000s. Many residents in Wat Kor are former noble class and political elites through generations. Their influence had fading gradually since 1997 and more consequence starting since 2008 when the royalist party obtain less support and lost the national election. The promotion of cultural village allowed some of them to revise their cultural capital, through unique wooden housing architecture, the history of family and the reconstructing cultural values through narrative and reconstructing history of the village and family. This is also implied through the economic revision of the family through their social connections with the outside world, i.e. tourism. The current process of urbanization and economic integration has at least two major advantages for older residents. First, the majority of the former officials and families still dominate most government positions relevant to the village, representing different departments and sectors at the provincial level and beyond. Second, their land assets provide them with an economic advantage in capturing the new economic opportunities by broadening their investments in other lands. However, they also encounter new waves of immigration into the village, including informal settlers who seek vacant public lands. This group will play a critical role in changing the urban landscape and economic orientation of the city. Urban flooding has increased, due to increasingly uncontrolled urban development. Increased political pressures are being felt by certain groups of older residents, which often means that they miss out in participating in urban climate resilience interventions. Drawing from this case study, the next chapter concludes via a debate about urban vison and the contested perspectives among different actors; as well as how important this is in achieving good urban development outcomes.

CHAPTER 4

Informality as Space of Resilience and Resistance for Inclusive Urban Development

4.1 Introduction

This chapter argues that urban informality and resilience, as spaces of exclusion and inclusion, cannot be achieved without addressing unequal power relations and the resistance practices of subordinate strategic groups in shaping urban space. Urban transformation in this context is seen as the process of the remaking of urban space through which land-use zoning, classification and the formalization of Urban Land-Use Master Plan were the key drivers. The concept of informality is central to understand the politics of urban space-making where equitable land sharing and low-cost housing development schemes interplay to circulate power, influence, control and exclusion. The complex interplay of the social and political institutions controlled by dominant strategic groups who seek to shape and control strategic resources has led to resistance. They have encountered challenges from various subordinate groups demanding spatial justice and an equitable share of urban land through social inclusiveness in urban development.   This chapter examines one of the selected case studies on urban informality to understand how urban space making is interplayed among both dominant and subordinate strategic groups. Interplay between formal and informal rules and different actors are examined in order to illustrate the debates and arguments around informality.

4.2. The Setting

Prek Preah Sdach is one of many urban communes in Battambang, where informal settlements and low-cost housing development schemes have been implemented. The Technical Land-Use Master Plan (2009) has the objective of allocating 60 ha of land to 66 sites classified as informal settlements by 2009.

This would go to an estimated 10,000 people within six urban communes. By 2014, the updated survey covering all 10 urban communes showed that there were more than 100 sites, with total population of 16,000, 11% of the total population.

Figure 4.1: Map of Prek Preah Sdach commune

The map above shows the product of land-use zoning and classification, creating different form of urban spaces. These tools show Prek Preah Sdach as an urban commune and administrative entity with the key function of facilitating the construction of education centers and marketplaces, small and medium-sized industrial development, city beautification, and the upgrading of informal settlements through the implementation of low-cost housing. The national technical guidelines of the district and town spatial plans stipulate the requirement to review and evaluate the land-use master plan every five years in order to learn from past accomplishments and failures.(MLMUPC 2016a).

Prior to the implementation of the plan, mixed residential and agricultural land-use zones surrounded the Battambang statue, a monument commemorating Cambodian and Vietnamese soldiers who died during the 1980s civil war. The act of this military

intervention is claimed to have brought peace and stability to Cambodia, integrating the country within one Indochinese social bloc controlled by Vietnam (Slocomb 2003). This statue is located in the village of 13 Makara, Prek Preah Sdach. This is also the area where soldiers who returned from the civil war along the Cambodia-Thai border were relocated as a result of the failed state between the 1970s and 1980s. These returnees founded the commune.

Table 4.1: Projected land use-change of Prek Preah Sdach commune 2015-2030

No	Land use type	2030	%	2015	%
1	Residential land-use	138.5	47.76	40.7	14.03
2	Mixed residential and agricultural land-use	0	0.00	135.7	46.79
3	Mixed used zones	70.3	24.24	51.8	17.86
4	Commercial zones	27.2	9.38	10.1	3.48
5	Administrative zones	27.2	9.38	24.8	8.55
6	Cultural zones	3.5	1.21	3.6	1.24
7	Small and medium industrial zones	6.7	2.31	7.1	2.45
8	Public green space	8.9	3.07	0	0.00
9	Agriculture zones	0	0.00	9.3	3.21
10	River, lake and other water bodies	4.3	1.48	6.8	2.34
11	Technical infrastructure	3.4	1.17	0	0.00
	Total	**290**		**290**	

Source: Adapted from Battambang Municipal Land Use Master Plan (2015-2030)

This commune is well-connected to major transportation routes. For instance, National Road No. 5 connects the commune to Phnom Penh; National Road No. 57, a newly developed ring road runs through the commune to the Poi Pet SEZ on the Cambodian-Thai border; and a railroad connects Phnom Penh with Battambang municipality as well as the border. Most villages in this commune are situated in low-lying areas and vulnerable to flooding during the wet season. For instance, CDIA (2010) reported that 50% of the territory in the commune has experienced seasonal flooding ranging from three to seven days in duration.

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A rapid increase in the area of built environments, economic activities, and migration to and from the commune is apparent in Technical Land-Use Survey, which was conducted between 2003 and 2009. One key indicator of this growth is the transformation of former paddy fields and wetlands in the commune to residential lots and small to medium-sized industrial zones. These formal spatial fixes have directly led to two problems: a disruption to informal settlement practices and an increase in the frequency and duration of flooding.

The mobility of residents between 1993 and 2009 was relatively free, with little attention focused on the registration of citizens and their patronage. However, from 2009 onwards, the registration of the population in the commune was strictly controlled, monitored, and recorded. This is related to the local political situation, security concerns and land claims. The population of the commune in 2009 was 12,549. In 2010 it was 13,277 and increased to 14,195 in 2016. In other words, approximately 741 people are reported to have been involved in some form of inward or outward seasonal mobility in seek for work and employment. Among these, 459 were internal migrants, while 282 are believed to have migrated far away from the commune in search of employment in other countries.

Table 4.2: Current status of population and migration in each village

No.	Village	Families	Sex			Migration for jobs		
			f	M	Total	Inside	Outside	Total
1	Prek Preah Sdach	266	694	567	1261	30	9	39
2	Prek Tatan	225	642	532	1174	85	29	114
3	13 Makara	739	2,172	1938	4,110	33	19	52
4	O Kcheay	312	1012	920	1932	120	87	207
5	Lor Eth	236	617	535	1152	50	22	72
6	Num Kreap	166	445	432	877	13	6	19
7	Baek Chan	299	948	909	1857	69	43	112
8	Chamkar Russey	318	909	923	1832	59	67	126
	Total	**2561**	**7439**	**6756**	**14,195**	**459**	**282**	**741**

Source: extracted from the Commune Database (2016)

The table above shows the changes in the population of each village in Prek Preah Sdach between 2010 and 2016. Established villages such as Prek Tatan and 13 Makara show a slight population increase due to land ownership being fully recognized, and a highly mobile population, with a core that remains stable. In contrast, Ou Kcheay village observed a dramatic increase in population. For instance, in 2010 the village comprised of 1,411 residents, which increased to 1,932 by 2016. This represents an addition of 521 people, a 36.92% increase.

Table 4.3: The population of each village in Ou Kcheay in 2010 and 2016

No.	Village	2010	%	2016	%
1	Prek Preah Sdach	1517	11.43	1261	8.88
2	Prek Tatan	1107	8.34	1174	8.27
3	13 Makara	4042	30.44	4110	28.95
4	Ou Kcheay	1411	10.63	1932	13.61
5	Lor Eth	1134	8.54	1152	8.12
6	Num Kreap	688	5.18	877	6.18
7	Baek Chan	1679	12.65	1857	13.08
8	Chamkar Russey	1699	12.80	1832	12.91
	Total	**13,277**		**14,195**	

Sources: Extracted from Commune Database (2017).

4.3 Livelihood Systems

The key sources of livelihood of urban residents are diverse, with many residents working in the informal sector. For instance, 140 residents (74 women) are listed as petty manufacturers and 823 people (469 women) are listed as local traders. In Ou Kcheay, 100 residents list their occupation as local mechanic i.e. repairing motor bikes, while 240 people are reported to operate transportation services. Approximately 302 people (110 women) work in the agricultural and construction sectors, while 270 work with NGOs and in the private sector. There is a significant number of people (2,365 people, 888 women) working in the service sectors in roles such as barbers, hairdressers, beauticians and in restaurants.

Recently, access to energy and water sanitation in the commune has improved significantly, with the exception of those involved with land tenure conflicts with the government. In Ou Kcheay, about 15 families still do not have access to piped water due to such conflicts. These residents are considered to be illegal squatters and are

subjected to eviction and/or relocation. In 2016, 343 families lived on public land in the commune, including 16 in Prek Preah Sdach village, 39 in 13 Makara, 68 in Ou Kcheay, 57 in Lor Edth, 63 in Num Kriep, 66 in Baek Chan and 34 in Chamkar Russey.

Flood events in the commune are frequently reported and have become more intense since 2013. Two type of floods are reported by local residents and officials. The first occurs when water breaches the banks of the river and exceeds the capacity of drainage infrastructure. The second type of flood is more problematic and is associated with land conflicts. The occurrence of peak river flows causes the river to overflow and inundate the town. This is considered to be a result of the degradation of the nearby watershed, where thousands of hectares of forested land have been converted into farmland via economic land concessions. Forest conversion and land encroachment have both become more intensive since 2006. In addition, a study on basin-wide river management for the Tonle Sap Lake predicts that increased flooding along the Sangker River is inevitable (JICA and MOWRAM 2007). In recent years, major flood events have occurred in 2013, 2017, 2018 and 2019. With the support of China, a dike was constructed to mitigate floods, but it has not been able to reduce their frequency. However, it has been able to serve as a mechanism of flood forecasting, regulation of water-use availability during the dry season, and distribution of water to agricultural production zones.

The urban center of Battambang is also situated in a low-lying area and vulnerable to flooding if the height of the river exceeds 12.50 m^2. In recent years, the river has regularly reached heights of between 13 and 14 m. Floods have affected economic activities in the municipality, but have most severely impacted residents living in informal settlements, whose land tenure is not clear and are restricted from preparing for these events by raising their land or modifying their houses.

The development of infrastructure such as drainage systems and roads has not kept pace with the rate at which other aspects of the built environment have developed at both the commune and city-level. Records from CDIA (2010) suggests that prior to 2010, floods in Prek Preah Sdach commune range between three to more than seven days, having water depths ranging from 30 to 70 cm. 50% of communes in Battambang municipality have experienced this degree of flooding. A similar study commissioned

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by the ADB (2015) recorded flooding in the commune. It went further to report specific data in some villages, such as Ou Kcheay, experiencing prolonged floods of more than three months duration since 2013. These floods have a depth ranging between 1 and 2 meters in some locations. Prolonged flooding in Ou Kcheay is predominantly due to a lack of a proper drainage system, linked with intensified conflicts over land tenure, and the development of infrastructure in blocking the existing drainage system.

4. 4 Informal Settlements and Low-Cost Housing Development Schemes

The upgrading of informal settlements through proposed low-cost housing development in Prek Preah Sdach was viewed as a pioneering project in Battambang. The project was to serve as a model for urban development in other secondary cities in Cambodia. The history of the area's settlement began in 1979, with an intensive influx of returning refugees from the Cambodian-Thai border. Land accumulation also began at this time, but it was not until the years 1993 and 2000 that it became more intensive. The Battambang Technical Land-Use Survey (2009) identified 60 hectares of land in five separate locations in the municipality that were there to serve as sites for the development of low-cost housing. The goal was to act as a site where the urban poor, currently living in informal settlements, could access housing and employment. Among this, 12 ha in Prek Preah Sdach were identified to be allocated to 13 communities.

During the fieldwork conducted in Prek Preah Sdach, the land allocated for low-cost housing development was estimated to be an area with dimensions of 36 x 1771 m. The land has been designated as a public park since the 1980s, but it has recently been reclassified into five large blocks as part of the land-use planning process. In total, 648 new demarcated plots were distributed between three villages in the commune. This included 374 plots in Blocks 1 & 2, 180 plots in Blocks 3 & 4, and 94 plots in Block 5. These blocks were allocated to O'Kcheay, Makara 13, and Chamkar Russey villages, respectively.

Of these land allocations, O'Kcheay village has been the most contentious and the most striking example of why planning aimed at achieving urban resilience needs to be aware of existing power relations and the contested nature of urban space, particularly in relation to resistance from marginalized groups. An interview with the

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village chief in O'Kcheay revealed that the total available land in the village was 63 hectares, largely in low-lying areas that were vulnerable to flooding. This included 2.28 hectares of land from the area previously designated as a public park in Ou Kcheay. It was now designated as part of a social land concession (SLC), targeted at low-cost housing development.

The process of redistributing these public parks as SLCs has been reliant on established institutional arrangements, which are supported by civil society mechanisms, and meant to improve the capacity of the unicipality and other key stakeholders to implement the land-use master plan. This includes support from GIZ, as well as local microcredit organizations. It is also supported by the national policy, *Circular 03*, on urban informal settlements. *Circular 03* has the objective of addressing the needs of the urban poor. It had broad support amongst local authorities and the private sector. Savings groups and youth groups were formed to build the social capital of the community that is required in order to successfully develop a new urban community. The householders settling on the new land had diverse backgrounds, with some having relocated from other provinces and others being returned refugees from the civil war during the 1980s and 90s.

Interviews with an NGO representative involved with allocating the land, identified the need to demarcate the land and re-distribute it equally to those who had been relocated from informal settlements, with each family receiving an equal share comprising of a $72m^2$ (4.5 x 16 m) plot. By 2009, 334 households had been identified as eligible to receive land in the SLC, which had been measured into 648 plots. Between 2008 and 2011, 256 households had managed to enter the negotiation process of allocated lands. By 2013, an additional 136 households received an allocated land plot, meaning that now the number of eligible households had increased to 392. As such, only a further 256 plots were left unoccupied. The intention was that these remaining plots would be allocated to households currently settled on critical public lands within the municipality. However, this became contentious when a group of 82 military families also made a claim to the land.

The management of informal settlements in Battambang is guided by Government Circular 03, which was promulgated in May 2010. The circular proposed

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to establish SLCs for urban poor households, who had previously settled illegally on public lands, such as public parks. O'Kcheay village is an example of where a SLC had been used to transfer public land into private ownership. The SLC is situated at a strategic location along National Road No.5, near the junction of the newly constructed National Road No. 57. It is adjacent to Battambang University, as well as a number of markets. However, seasonal flooding is a regular occurrence here as it is a low-lying area, 'like a frying pan'. The construction of National Road No. 57 was financed by the Chinese government and as such, was constructed with fewer social and environmental safeguards than similar projects financed by the ADB. This was deemed to be preferable, as it meant that the more stringent conditions attached to an ADB loan could be avoided. This ring road was established to divert heavy traffic entering the city from Phnom Penh. It connects this main highway with the road to Pailin province, which is located on the Cambodian-Thai border.

4.5 Group Settlement and Conflicting Interests

By 2016, four types of groups were observed to have settled in Blocks 1 and 2 of the SLC in Ou Kcheay.

4.5.1 The First Group

This first group comprised of 114 families[1] who had already settled in the area of the SLC when land allocations had been divided into 4.5 x 16 m (72 m^2) plots for each household. This group was involved with community-based organizations and had been trained in the process of community-led urban development and the practice of operating a savings group. Households in the savings group made regular payments to enable other community members to borrow money for investing in construction materials to build housing. This is a common practice in rural communities used to develop agricultural land. However, it is generally less successful in urban communities, where local government officers tend to discourage the mobilization of citizens.

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[1] By end of 2014, only 136 had agreed with land re-demarcation and re-block. Among these, 15 families from Chamkar Russey of Bloc 5, 37 form 13 Makara from Blocs 3 and 4, and 85 from Ou Kcheay of Blocs 1 and 2 (see Habitat for Humanity Cambodia report 2014).

The economic activities of residents living in this block are diverse. They work in roles such as hairdressers, beauticians, cake and sweets sellers, local traders, and those who out-migrate and send back remittances. One of the most important economic activities is local food processing, which is owned by a local military leader and a female bussiness tycoon. Interviews with local residents reveal that the original group of land grantees in the SLC were selected as part of the community-led urban development scheme, of which the savings group was the starting point.

The key informant interviewed in this area was a 54 year old man named Mr. Tat Savuy, who was originally from Chamkar Samrong commune. The 12 x 30m (360 m^2) plot that he owns previously belonged to his father-in-law, who purchased the land in 1996 at a price of around 300,000 Riel (~75 USD in current value). His father-in-law had divided this land into one plot for himself, and another for his daughter and son-in-law (Mr Savuy), when they moved to the commune in 2007. It was around this time that discussions about the community-led urban development scheme to allocate land from the SLC began. His father-in-law had recently passed away leaving the full plot in the ownership of his family. Mr Savuy earns a living by raising animals, such as chickens, making incense, and caring for his grandson and daughter. His wife works as a cook at both a restaurant and at wedding ceremonies, earning 50,000 riel per day (approx. 12.5 USD). One of his sons operates a taxi service, taking passengers from Battambang city to the Cambodian-Thai border at Daun Lem (Pailin).

Mr. Savuy recalled the history of the community-led urban development scheme. In 2007, a local wealthy resident, known as Mr. Thy, owned a plot of land measuring 30 x 35 m. He lived on the same block as Mr. Savuy. Mr. Thy owned a local manufacturing business making food for weddings and other ceremonies. His wife worked with him as a cook. Mr. Thy introduced the idea of the scheme to Mr. Savuy and suggested that once they were part of the group, members could save money together and borrow at low interest rates, provided that they contribute between 3,000 and 5,000 riel every month (approximately 1 USD). Mr. Thy was appointed as the first community chief of the scheme. However, it later became clear that the intended participants in the scheme were supposed to be poor families from informal settlements. If he wished to stay in the group, Mr. Thy would need to accept the redistribution of his land, remaining with only a 4.5 x 16 m (72 m^2) plot. He left the group in 2007 as his

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existing plot measured 30 x 35 m (1,050 m^2) and a concrete house has been built on it. He produced noodle powder in a medium-sized manufacturing operation. He hired local villagers to work for him every day. He did not want to give up his business.

Other sources in the village revealed that Mr. Thy was previously a member of the opposition party, known as the Cambodia National Rescue Party (CNRP), and a soldier who opposed the ruling party, the Cambodian People's Party (CPP). A rumor spread that he would defect to the CPP as part of a strategy to retain his land. This defection did occur and he was promoted to the rank of Genera, within the provincial regional unit despite having soldiers under his command.

As a result, a second community chief was appointed by the municipal office. From 2007 until 2013, Mr. Savuy continued to make payments to a savings group, totaling 120,000 riel (30 USD). In 2013, this new community chief[2] was reported to robbed the funds from the savings group and escaped. By this stage, the number of families officially eligible to access land in the SLC had increased to 129. However, some residents were found to be occupying plots of land larger than the size originally planned and were informed that some sections of their land would be allocated to other grantees if they did not reduce their plot to 4.5 x 16 m (72 m^2). At the same time, an accusation was made by members of this group that the community leader was allowing people from outside of Battambang, who were not poor, to access land in the SLC. Moreover, another wealthy woman is reported to have purchased an additional 30 plots from the working group.

These occurrences were resisted by local citizens in an attempt to prevent the redistribution of their allocated land and ensure equal land sharing. Residents within the scheme stopped saving money collectively, when the community chief and savings group leader were not able to provide a financial report regarding the money stolen from the savings fund, it became clear that members of the group would not be able recover their money.

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[2] A savings group was established amongst some members of this group. They elected a leader to manage contributions of 3,000 riel per month (0.75 USD) to encourage members to save money to improve the concession.

In 2013, the second community chief, who was also an ex-military official, abandoned the group. He reportedly occupied an area of land measuring 25 x 40 m with a fully constructed house. He quit the group as he did not wish to lose his land and later also defected from his membership with the opposition party to become of member of the ruling party. Soon afterwards, he received a senior position in the military. The chief was also accused of corruption by local residents claiming that he was working against the community in co-operation with the local authority. Mr. Savuy identified a 30 x 10 m plot of land adjacent to his property that had concrete foundations prepared on it. The foundations had been prepared on land belonging to Ms. Yeay Khy of Toul Ta Ek, as well as overlapping with the land owned by Mr. Savuy by 1m x 30 m. He did not know who had constructed the foundations on this land, and they had not yet appeared in person. This problem was believed to have been linked to a rumor that the community chief had co-operated in selling land to outsiders who were not part of the urban poor from informal settlements. In the same year, the ruling party lost the elections in Prek Preah Sdach commune and it is perceived that they turned their strategy toward influencing the police and military as local people would no longer vote for them.

Land within this block has also been claimed by military officers from Region 5. The staff of an international NGO made reference to a lack of cooperation by these participants with apparent support by local authorities in their annual report related to Municipal and Provincial officials in the working group. (Habitat for Humanity Cambodia 2014). Of the 129 families eligible for land in the SLC, there were still 17 seeking formal land allocation in 2016. Mr Savuy expressed that he accepted the provisions of the community-led urban development scheme that limited the size of plots to 4.5 x 16 m, and was happy for his land to be redistributed. He recalled:

"When we formed into a community savings group in 2007, the land price was still low. Between 2009 and 2010, land measurement at the block commenced, with small plots of 4.5 x 16 m (72 m^2), designed without proper road access. In 2010, the value of each plot was estimated to be about 3,000 USD and land started to be distributed to eligible families. From this time onward, the value of the land began to increase. By 2018, each plot in this area was valued between 8,000 and 10,000 USD, with official tenure. My land has legal tenure

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recognized by the commune and municipal authorities, but not at the provincial level. Based on the regulations, I am entitled to access tenure to a 4.5 x 16 m plot for my family. However, currently many people have built houses larger than the plot size allocated. The community chief has never come here to manage this problem." (16 March 2018).

Since 2013, land conflicts and rumors regarding corruption by local officials has worsened and led to an emerging challenge from the opposing political party. The commune election in 2017 resulted in a large loss for the ruling party, where they only managed to win two out of ten seats in the commune. During the fieldwork period, the issue regarding the size of his plot of land had still not been resolved despite ongoing protests about unequal land sharing in the village. He currently retains his 360 m^2 plot.

4.5.2   The Second Group

The second group comprised of 82 urban poor families who were living in informal settlements on public land. They settled on the SLC with the support from Habitat-Cambodia. The NGO had been given permission to implement this project as part of the pilot project of the Land-Law framework for SLCs in the municipality. This project operated between May 2008 and March 2015 and was called 'Strengthening civil society-government for land tenure security'. It operated in partnership with the Battambang Municipality and Kredit Microfinance Institution. It was funded by Habitat for Humanity of Australia and Canada, as well as the Clifford Chance Law Firm in the United States. The land allocated to this group was smaller than the others in the concession and generally the land was of poor quality. Many households participating in the program used their land certificates as collateral to request loans from local banks. According to the signboard issued by the local authority, once a resident had occupied the land for ten years, they would be able to receive the full land title. Within six months, residents were required to construct a house and live in it. However, within this group, deadline extensions were commonly needed.

These families had been relocated from 11 informal settlements in the priority communes of Ratanak, Svay Por, Chamkar Samrong, Toul Ta-Ek, and Prek Preah

Sdach. Each family underwent an assessment and land application process prior to moving to the project site in March 2015. These applications were approved by the Municipal Technical Working Group (MTWG). To be considered for this project, the family must have been currently living along the corridor of the road, pagoda area, canal, or other prioritized areas in each target commune. Habitat-Cambodia expected these applications, construction and moving processes to be completed by July 2015. However, this process would eventually extend until 2016.

Habitat-Cambodia claimed to have helped with the construction of 55 houses. During the data collection period in 2017, another 11 were in the process of being built, while 16 were awaiting construction. Some of the families that had greater access to resources had managed to build a two-story shop houses. These are known to be the families of local traders and soldiers. However, other urban residents who had been settled in some of the best locations, such as those surrounding Wat Sangker pagoda, were reluctant to move. They often made excuses such as their family members being ill or their husband being away and not having the capacity to move and construct a house. At the pagoda compound, households were able to sell fruit, processed food, flowers and drinks to passing tourists and city residents who come to exercise in the public space in front of the pagoda.

Figure 4.2: Low-cost housing models and regulations signboard

The 82 families have mixed backgrounds, consisting of ex-soldiers, retired government officials, and those who work in the informal economy. Some migrate seasonally to access employment opportunities in other areas. Others are laborers, street vendors, and food sellers. Each group previously had different leaders and community structures, however, as part of the relocation process, official group leaders were selected and appointed by the commune chief. Currently, the community leader, Ms. Kim Manet, who relocated to the low-cost housing scheme, is the deputy village chief. As a result, she has obtained power within the ruling party. A deputy village chief currently obtains a basic salary of 300,000 riel per month (75 USD). In a key informant interview, she revealed that currently, only 31 families are permanently residing in the new low-cost housing projects, while others still need to migrate for work, or are still waiting for the construction of their house to be completed. Generally, those who live in the village permanently have businesses in the commune, or in neighboring Svay Por and Ratanak. Other residents regularly travel to Poi Pet, and even Thailand for seasonal work.

The overall cost for a completed house, built with standard materials supplied by Habitat-Cambodia, cost around 4,000 USD. There are several socio-economic categories of families that live in the low-cost housing. The first are those who can afford to build their own house; the second are in need of up to 50% of additional support from NGOs to construct the house; while the third require a subsidy of up to 75%. There are only a few families without the capacity to contribute to the cost of their home. Families who required additional funds are able to use their land certificate as collateral to borrow from a cooperative credit firm in association with Habitat-Cambodia and local authorities. This provides security to lenders to ensure that locals do not leave without paying their debts.

One family, Mr. Sohun and Mrs. Bou Sokhan, whose son and daughter come to stay with them, received support from Habitat-Cambodia for 70% of the cost of house construction, while borrowing the remaining 30%. The couple works several jobs ranging from selling their labor in a rice mill and/or factory, selling agricultural fertilizers, and other working in construction. They borrowed 860 USD to help construct a house and an additional 2,000 USD to start a business. Their initial repayments started at 180 USD per month, which would reduce to 150 USD over time.

With a proper house, they expect their lives to improve. For example, they would earn enough to send their children to school. Mr. Sohun is skilled in construction and can earn up to 80 USD per day. They hope to find employment close to their house, so they can live in town permanently.

Other villager interviewed included a street food vendor who lived with a total of eight family members. Her husband (Mr. Vin Choeu) is a retired agricultural extension worker from Wat Kor (Chrab Krasaing village). The local authority was able to offer him a plot of land in the village. Of the eight family members, four are engaged in income generating activities. The mother sells food that she prepares at home at a street stall; her husband works as a motor taxi driver; her eldest son works as a barber; and her eldest daughter who studies in Grade 8 at high school, works part-time at a restaurant in the evenings. Overall, they spend 30,000 to 40,000 riel per day (7.5 to 10.0 USD) on food. This excluded the cost of rice, electricity, water and other expenses. They moved to the new settlement in December 2017, and were provided with support for 75% of the cost of constructing their house building and are required to be an additional 821 USD (25%) back within one year. Having a house close to the market and school makes them feel more secure. They also feel satisfied with the thought that they can use their land certificate to access additional credit from a microfinance organization called Vision Fund in the town.

Many other new residents are street vendors. For example, Mr. Theany and his family use his motorbike to sell fried noodles. He sells food at specific locations in the town as well as in Banon, another district in the province. His work is flexible and profitable but requires him to have knowledge of the best places to make sales, such as at the junction of the Psar Thmey (New Market) at noon.

The manager of Habitat-Cambodia suggests that 60 out of the 82 families were supported by the organization to construct houses, while another 14 families were supported to construct a house close to the Cambodia-Vietnam solider monument. Habitat-Cambodia also worked with the provincial water supply and electricity authorities to connect water and electricity to the new settlement and raise the land. Ms. Manet, the community chief suggests that the community situation could be improved if more people were oriented toward collective work, such as managing waste. The

settlement is open and lacks a proper drainage system. As the community leader, she actively visits each household in the evening after work. She says that around half of the families who have settled have needed to migrate to access employment. She also recalls that:

"At first, as people moved from the six communes, some were immoral: smoking and forming drinking clubs along the road, making loud noises, getting drunk and cursing others. The situation was resolved after she had been officially appointed as community chief, and later as deputy village chief in charge of this block." (Ms. Manet, 16 March 2018)

4.5.3 The Third Group

The third group are the military families mentioned in relation to the first group. While a claim was made for 82 ex-military families, land was only actually allocated to 40, while the total amount of land allocated remained the same. Despite this, each site was still demarcated into 4.5 × 16 m plots, which meant there was excess land remaining. The Provincial Land Allocation Committee member also consists of officers from municipal working groups .. A military commander has used the allotment rules to obtain 82 lots in the SLC. The families of soldiers who wanted access to this land were required to pay the commander a nominal fee to obtain a land certificate and be allocated land. Some of the families who received land certificates were not from the military and were observed in the settlement to own luxury assets and expensive cars. This created suspicion among other residents. While previously willing to co-operate and share land equitably, this type of behavior ruined this goodwill.

An interview in late 2017 with these military families revealed that only 42 of the group had managed to access land during the first phase of allocations in 2016, while a further 40 were still seeking to obtain their plot. This led to a plan to re-allocate the land equitably, however the residents who has already accessed larger allotments did not want their land measured and were concerned about the re-allocation process. This scenario is common in Ou Kcheay, with problems often being caused due to land being allocated to outsiders. The former town governor, who was heavily involved with the development of the land-use plan, was later promoted to Deputy Provincial Governor, and then as Provincial Council Chief. He approved the land-use plan in 2013, at the

same time as the community chief fled with the proceeds of the saving groups, which had been operating since 2007.

The plan to sell land in the SLC as part of an intervention by some military families to make legal claims was leaked to the community. A wealthy businesswoman who ran a cottage industry produced Chinese noodles and ingredients for making tea, claimed to have bought 30 lots from the sub-working group. However, this was never proven. Another man, who lived adjacent to this woman suspected that the local authorities were trying to take land from the SLC and sell it privately.

Mr. Uy Ry, the former Municipal Governor who was involved with the Municipal Land-Use Master Plan since the early stages of development, was later appointed to the position of Deputy Provincial Governor. He was accused by a local resident of issuing 80 plots to military families in 2013. Coincidentally, the community chief who stole the money from the savings group was also found to have allocated land to outsiders, and reportedly fled from the group at this time. A report produced by the GIZ (2014) identified him as one of individuals responsible for overseeing development of the low-cost housing scheme. However, in the case of the present group of military families and land claims being made, this role has become more discourse-oriented, concealing hidden practices from the provincial land allocation committee.

Over the history of the development of the Municipal Land-Use Master Plan, there has been various changes in Municipal and Provincial leadership. For instance, Mr. Prach Chan, was the Provincial Governor between 1993 and 2013, and was known to be heavily involved the decision-making processes. This occurred at a time when many state buildings, land zonings, and market developments took place, including a plan to move the location of the bamboo train.

Between 2013 and 2017, the new Provincial Governor advocated for all French colonial buildings to be registered with the UNESCO Historic Urban Landscapes program. He was highly popular on social media platforms, directing his attention to local traders, the urban environment, tourism, and traffic congestion. He was also publicly praised as one of the best governors in the country by Prime Minister Hun Sen. The current Provincial Governor was formerly the Provincial Director of Land-Use

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Management, Urban Planning and Construction (PLMUPC) and was promoted to the role in late 2017.

At the municipal level, there have been four changes in the role of Municipal Governor since the Municipal Land-Use Planning process took place. The first was focused on the upgrading of informal settlements through low-cost housing. The second was focused on the impacts of climate change and flood mitigation. The third governor, who was promoted from deputy governor was able to hold power for three years. As the governor with background as architects, he focused on introducing modern architecture, such as building information centres in key public spaces, and discussions about urban slum clearances, such as Prek Preah Sdach. This situation has become more serious during his tenure as Governor and has led to an increase in the level of resistance, leading to the CPP losing the election. The fourth governoer is considered as soft, polies both outsiders, researchers and people in general. He tried to approach closer to people at the ground level and hope to fix the misperception from people toward the ruling party where he belongs.

In August 2017, a month after the commune elections, an open letter was distributed on the streets by anonymous soldiers in the village and commune stating:

> *Military soldiers had been deceived by their regional commanders to buy cheap land through certification without land in the village. This letter apologises to local residents for the role of these soldiers, who are supposed to protect the country and people from being harmed, rather than threatening their safety. They regret being cheated by their military leader and request local residents to remain calm and not to take their aggression out on the local authorities, who have been attempting to arrest them, forcing them to accept smaller plots of land and pay additional fines. (Excerpted from an open letter dated 5th August 2017).*

One local resident revealed that the third group has become a scapegoat by the ruling elites at the provincial level, as a way of shifting blame and concealing other deceitful practices of the former Municipal and Provincial leaders.

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4.5.4 The Fourth Group

The final group of settlers have access to larger plots of land. In most cases, these range between 1,500 and 4,000 m^2, however, one plot allocated to a politician who defected to the CPP in Block 1 is estimated to be 7,000 m^2. Some households in this group claim to have settled in the area in 1983, while others say 1997 or 1999. The 2001 Land Law has a provision that enables people who have settled permanently on land for more than five years to obtain legal tenure over the land. Most villagers had experienced the horrors of internal conflict and evacuation during both the Khmer Rouge regime (1975-78) and the regime of the PRK (1979-89) recalled the concept of land sharing and distribution equally. They show great suspicion of local authorities and the land allocation working group, claiming that they are not transparent, nor do they administer land distributions equitably.

Around 300 families across the five blocks hold larger plots of land compared to what was proposed by the Provincial Land Allocation Committee and the sub-working groups at the municipal level. An informant, Mr. Set Ra, who has lived in the Prek Preah Sdach commune since 1982, holds a plot of land with dimensions of 14 x 30 m (420 m^2). However, he was forced to accept a 4.5 x 16 m (72m^2) plot by the working group. He retired as a school principal in 2016 and has six family members living with him, including his daughter, son, and granddaughters. He chose to accept the offer and decided to reject his former claim to a larger amount of land. He lives on a pension and supplements his income with work as an ironsmith and motorbike mechanic. One of his daughters used to be a primary schoolteacher, however she quit her job and chose to seek work in Thailand where she expects to earn a higher income. During my fieldwork, she regularly sent remittances to her daughters for their daily food and other extracurricular activities at school in the commune.

Mr. Set Ra recalled that land conflicts emerged in 2013, when many people who held larger plots were forced to give them up and accept a 72m^2 plot instead. Land in his block was not able to be raised and the houses became irreparable. Since this time, flooding in the commune has intensified, with water inundating the area for periods of up to four months. In late July 2017, after the commune election, he decided to raise his

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residential land, as it has flooded every year for the last several years. A few days later, the sub-working group from the municipality sent police with a car to arrest him. Fortunately, one of the police used to be his student at primary school and got a message to him encouraging him to flee to Phnom Penh. After a week in Phnom Penh, he received a message from the former Deputy Provincial Governor who oversees the commune worked with him on a political campaign in 2017 and requested him to return.

Mr. Set Ra used to be a standing party member for commune council elections. He was trained to talk to the people of all opposing regimes including the Sihahouk and Lon Nol regimes, as well as the current opposition party, to assure people that the CPP and their leaders were good, also that they came from rural peasant families. During these campaigns he also explained to the public that during the Sihanouk regime, when officials conducted bad deeds, they would not be punished. However, during the current regime, a deputy prime minister, as well as four-star generals have been jailed for their wrongdoings.

Mr. Set Ra has one daughter who works during the weekend at the house of Ms. Yeay Chen, who is widely known as 'the Chinese lady' or 'the Khmer-Chinese'. She operates a cottage industry in the village, producing *Té Leav* (noodles). She works with about 20 other people and earns 10,000 riel per day (2.5 USD). Ms. Yeay Chen is claimed to have had a 'slip of the mouth' and said to his daughter, *"Damn it! If there was no resistance and demonstrations conducted by your father, I would have between 10 and 30 more plots of land"*. 72 m^2 land plots with fully legalized land titles are valued at 10,000 USD per plot. She reportedly purchased the land from the military commander of Region 5, General Chea Dara. Chea Dara is one of the people who signed the agreement for the allocation of 82 plots to ex-soldiers and was often observed threatening local residents. Mr. Lim, an expert in law and public administration has stated that it is unacceptable for military officials to sign off on land certificates. Only those working in the public administrative sector, such as the Provincial Governor has the right to formalize these documents. He labelled this as a 'fraudulent misuse of public administration'. Mr. Set Ra has labeled Ms. Yeay Chen as a *Neay Tun* (capitalist), a derogatory term often applied to those who wish to buy commodities, such as land, at a cheap price and sell it at an inflated price. Land

speculation and equal land sharing among the people in his block has been labelled as taking land from the poor and selling it to *Neay Tun*.

Another wealthy individual widely known as Mr. Thy, holds the military rank of Colonel. He was the first person to mobilize people into the community-led urban development scheme in 2007. He later resigned when he discovered that those who registered as part of the community would be required to accept land redistribution of only 72 m^2. He currently owns land with an area of 30 x 35 m (1,050 m^2) in the block adjacent to Mr. Set Ra, where he operates a small noodle powder manufacturing operation. Mr. Thy was previously an active member of the opposition party (CNRP) but was persuaded to join the CPP in 2013. As a reward, he was provided with the military rank of Colonel and was able to protect his large plot in the block.

Another informant, Mr. Uy Sambor[3], was a former solider during the PRK regime. He owns land measuring 14 x 29 m (406 m^2), raises four cows for income, and operates a poultry slaughtering machine. He often travels to Thailand or other districts to buy ducks and prepare them for restaurants when there are needed. He is also a de-mobilized solider, who used to fight against the Khmer Rouge along the border at Koh Kong. He decided to move to Battambang and access his current land in the early 1990s.

Another couple (Mr. Lim and Ms. Bopha) own a plot of land measuring 60 x 20 m (1,200 m^2) in the proposed public park, next to the 82 plots that are to be provided as low-cost housing for military families. Their current house is located at the front of this plot, which is on residential land measuring 40 x 40 m (1,600 m^2, or 1 rai). The couple owns another plot of land with the same measurements behind the house. This land was all purchased in 1996 for only 50,000 baht (~1,700 USD). During this time, there were no roads in the village, and when they wanted to leave the property they had to travel through the land of other residents. Mr. Lim was previously a high school teacher, who quit to work as the leader of a human rights NGO working with drug addicted citizens, while his wife worked in a primary health care NGO. They have both acquired a

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[3] Mr Uy Sambor appears to own two plots of land. One is 14 x 29 m, which is where his house is constructed. The other is within the public park with an area of 10 x 40 m. He attempted to raise this land but was prevented by police and soldiers, who gave him a warning notice. It appears that his current house was also previously low-lying, until 10,000 USD was spent to raise it.

significant amount of legal knowledge and have a strong understanding of community-led urban development.

The working group forced Mr. Lim and Ms. Bopha to accept a single plot measuring 72m^2. Instead, they ended up agreeing to share half of their land, resulting in them accessing eight lots instead. Mr. Lim and his wife were previously very active both within society and in commercial trading. They would purchase products from Thailand and sell them at a profit in the town. In 2016, Mr. Lim was involved in a car accident when traveling to Battambang from Thailand at night. He can now only walk with the aid of a walking stick for a short distance and sometimes struggles to speak at a normal volume as his tongue was affected by the accident. Due to the land conflict being prolonged well after 2013, his family has struggled to continue fighting. In early 2019, he mortgaged his residential land to access money and pay for his ongoing medical treatment. He has one son, who works as a skilled laborer in Korea, and often sends remittances to help support him. Mr. Lim also lost the ability to work as a result of his accident and his health has deteriorated. His wife has also struggled with her business and is often engaged with talking with the media and filing complaints against the local authorities.

4.6. Complex Interplay between Social and Political Institutions

Land allocation in Prek Preah Sdach has been guided by two major policies. The first is the National Policy for Housing, drafted in 2003. It has been used as the basis to trial the land-use planning process in Battambang, which will inform the final drafting of the policy before it is approved. Within this policy, low-cost housing development was used as an instrument to attract financial support and investments form multilateral development agencies, donors and the government. In 2014, a 3rd draft revision of this policy was developed, but not officially approved. The second is National Circular 03 on Informal Settlements (2010) on Informal Settlement Resolution has been officially approved. This policy provided a framework of seven steps for managing the on-site development of informal settlements. This consisted of: (i) identification of informal settlements, (ii) mapping their location, (iii) interviewing households, (iv) development options for on-site upgrading and/or relocation, (v) the implementation of infrastructure

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and basic services, (vi) developing a timeline for consultation, and (vii) participation from local residents and other stakeholders.

Mr. Lim, one of the landowners in conflict with the government has accused officials of neglecting to follow the steps in Circular 03. He suggests that they neglected to consult or interview household owners. Rather, officials are said to have relied on aerial photos to count the number of the households rather than the number of families in each house, to develop maps with plots measured at $72m^2$. Another official from the Department of Land-Use Planning and Land Management admitted that they only have the role of demarcating land on the basis of a community request or instruction from the working groups. The implementation of equitable land sharing was not the department's responsibility. He suggested that many land conflicts could be resolved by following proper procedures transparently:

> *"The problem was the distribution of land to the first and second groups, they really should have distributed land to only those who were officially recognized as being among the urban poor, living on public land in informal settlements. However, in practice, citizens would be distributed land on the basis of their land certificates that were not owned by the urban poor, nor those who were local to the resettlement area. This is a reason, why other residents, with larger plots of land plots decided not to cooperate." (Mr. Lim, 16 March 2018).*

In practice, land was not being shared equitably with the urban poor. Instead, many citizens who received land certificates were wealthy families from the center of the city. This caused residents, who held larger plots of land, to doubt the integrity of civil society, particularly the local authorities administering the scheme. One of the business tycoons interviewed, who owned land in another commune, voiced his disappointments with the local authorities of diminishing the value of the land through the conflicts being cause among the different actors involved. He also critiqued the decision to allocate land through the Provincial Committee of Land-Use Allocation, chaired by the Provincial Governor, who holds the right to sign off on land allocations to specific groups without the consultation of the Municipality working group. He suggests that the Provincial government should have ensured that land allocations were

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fully accepted by residents who occupied the area first, before dealing with the specific cases of people who owned larger plots of land.

For instance, the experience of a nearby community supported by the NGO Community Empowerment and Development Team (CEDT), proved to have a very effective process of implementation, with clear procedures and good transparency. It did not matter whether families and community members came from refugee camps or the Mekong delta (Khmer Kampuchea Krom); if a full family interview was conducted, along with their participation in a community-led workshop of proposed solutions and developments, there were no issues.

This procedure may be contrasted with what occurred in the three villages extended over the five blocks in the public lands of Prek Preah Sdach. In this case, the local authorities failed to capture the attention of the people who needed to be engaged in the process. Moreover, there was no responsibility recognized by the local official in charge. Additionally, the overall budget for the project was not cost effective, and was well in excess of what was expected in comparison with the lowly outcomes obtained. Interviews with NGO leaders working on similar issues suggested that the former Municipal Governors had shown much more commitment, however not everybody agrees to this position.

An interview with the national program coordinator of Habitat for Humanity revealed that since 2013, his organization had become much more engaged with human rights and media organizations, such as LICADHO, ADHOC, Voice of America, Radio Free Asia, the Phnom Penh Post, Cambodia Daily, and other local newspapers. This process was concerning for the local authorities as they became afraid of having their voice reported in the media. A similar claim was also made by the local chief of monks, who suggested that since 2017, most of the government officials had become very reluctant to talk with the media or provide interviews related to land conflicts. Most villagers were aware that a majority of the problems occurring in resettlement areas were caused by local authorities.

Another staff member from the same NGO referred to the lack of cooperation by local authorities, suggesting that they seemed to be more accountable to their political party. She claimed that she often was required to work on behalf of officials when

dealing with the relocation of informal settlements to proposed resettlement sites. This was a major cause of project delays and inflated costs.

From 1979 to the present, there have been 12 governors for the town. From 1980-84, the town (at that time still a district level entity) was governed by a Vietnamese man named Mr. Pen Hongha while the country was fully engaged in the civil war against the Khmer movement (mostly Khmer Rouge people) along the Cambodian-Thai border. At provincial level, eight governors have been in places. The last three Governors have been involved with many reforms that concerned the privatization of land and other state assets. During this time, land resource distribution, allocation, land swapping and speculation over other state assets were a common practice.

At the town level, between 2004 and 2019, there was a total of four Municipal Governors, each with their own distinct agenda on urban slum development. For instance, Mr. Uy Ry (2004-2011), who had been involved with the land-use survey since the early stages, had committed to improving the conditions in informal settlements. This included the formation of informal settlement support groups and saving groups, in which the concept of urban community-led development was applied.

However, when he was promoted to Deputy Provincial Governor and then Chairman of the Provincial Councilors, the process fell apart. Some governors have sided with the power of landowners, publicly blaming local residents for occupying state land. This type of rhetoric cost these governors dearly during both the commune and national elections. The CPP lost the 2017 commune elections and both the Municipal and Provincial Governors were removed from their positions. Local residents believe that this was because party officials had lost the trust and support of the community.

The working procedures of CEDT in Battambang regarding land sharing and tenure security, in contrast, was described as soft and engaging. It targeted marginalized communities, making their voices more visible through participatory planning processes. This approach was called, "*Community Mapping and Documentation* (CMD)" and was a key tool used to engage and empower urban poor communities regarding land, housing, and infrastructure issues. The approach involves:

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The creation of comprehensive hand-drawn and GIS maps and community profiles by the communities, with support from CEDT's technical team. The CMD approach focuses exclusively on the community members own spatial knowledge and provides the skills and expertise necessary to help the communities create maps, articulate their priorities and develop interventions by themselves and not by an external party. Interviews with country program coordinator have suggested this approach to be successful in mobilizing and organizing communities and building ownership over their issues. CEDT builds the capacity of community members and local authorities to carry out activities themselves. (Interviewed with Ms. Yara, 9 July 2019)

An interview with Mr. Bo, another staff member working on this issue from 2013-2016 revealed that:

"Habitat's policy is to work with the urban poor, we do not support government officials to exploit the poor. For us, we can help to mobilize funds, materials and technical support from other donors, while land officials in the government need to be more responsible. However, it is clear that the local authority is afraid of taking residents from informal settlements in other places to live here. They are also afraid of losing voting support from the urban poor. For instance, 82 families were mobilized to live in the low-cost housing scheme in 2015, however this has been delayed until 2017. To speed up the work, we often ignore need to ignore our role and policies". Mr. Bo, 27 March 2018).

One local resident who had been involved with resisting spatial fixes, accused the members of the Provincial Working Group of all 'being the same person', reflecting its lack of diverse participation. For instance, a letter dated 29 March 2018 shows a newly appointed Governor, who had previously been the Director of Provincial Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction. He was involved with Battambang Municipal Land-Use Plan since the early stages of its formation and later moved on to take on the role of Deputy Governor. By 2017, he had been promoted to Provincial

Governor, and formulated a new provincial sub-working group at the municipal level. The letter relayed a decision to establish new committee members to monitor the land development situation in Prek Preah Sdach commune. The committee was to consist of 15 members, which included the Deputy Provincial Governor as chairperson, the Chief of Police, a few soldiers, the Provincial Departments of Education, Rural Development, Environment, Public Work and Transport, Water Supply, and Electricity and the Provincial Department of Cross-Sector Development. The letter focused on both problems and solutions, however, the problems faced by local residents that needed to be addressed were not explicitly mentioned.

Political working groups have long dominated local political structures in Battambang, hindering the achievement of development outcomes. Civil servants are required to be part of the base membership of all political working groups. As a result, the concepts of community-led urban development and resource-based development have become politicized. By 2010, 13 urban youth were established out of urban informal community development. The groups were established by NGOs with an aim to provide training for community development, mobilization skills and resource mapping techniques. These networks were encouraged to have monthly meetings, exchange information about problems faced and potential solutions, and arrange visits to the successful community-led program in Phnom Penh. Various local NGOs supported this program, including the Cambodia Volunteer Service (CVS), Community-Managed Development Partners (CMDP), the Community Empowerment and Development Team (CEDT), DED and GIZ. Habitat for Humanity Cambodia has also played a key role in supporting local initiatives both financially and technically.

State program to improve land access for landless and smallholders tend to be involved with political legitimation. The study by Hall, Hirsch and Li (2011) examined four types of interlinked. The first known as the "formalization and titling," in which the former recognized only those landholders who already hold the land while the latter is more tricky as it involves formal records, registration and demarcated boundaries recognized by the state. The second refers to land reform and land resettlement. The land reform is mostly linked to land re-distribution amongst landholders and the landless, while the latter is linked to the politics of mobilizing people from one place to another, who may claim to be landless or land compensation for development purposes.

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The latter is called the "land frontier," where new land can be opened up for new land areas which resonated what is happening in this commune.

Additionally, since the early 1990s, the emergence of civil society has grown rapidly, fulfilling the role and functions supposed to be taken care of by the state. With increased pressure from democratization and market-oriented forces, the role of civil society has become more questionable for those who hold a lot of power and who most often use the state apparatus as an object of controlling and exploiting state resources, and even restricting much of them to civil society (Waibel 2014). In addition, the role and function of civil society in the country has had to deal with many challenges from government elites who have strong centralized control over the state structure (Ojenal 2014).

Civil society in the country plays key roles in the promotion of understanding formality, informality and the various norms of the country. Their role includes the strengthening their own social networks within the country and region, and providing scientific knowledge to the media for their various campaigns. Their performance with the increased role of technology of control as ruled from the state and resources dependencies and institutional development have become less relevant from the state and suspicious from the local resident (Yasuda 2015).

Although the government acknowledges the rights of freedom of speech and assembly, it has been difficult to put these rights into practice when a single political party has been able to consolidate so much power and control over the state apparatus. With this consolidated power, state actors reactivate public transcripts (Scott 1990) and legal systems that are able to repress independent media, who seek to give voice to the opposition and ordinary people who are resisting against social justice. The abuse of state power from business elites, and security and military forces were often associated with land deals and natural resources (Boer, et al. 2016). In addition, the increased logic of capitalism, capital accumulation and resource exploitation has provoked an interest in human rights approaches among civil society and local communities (Blau and Moncada 2009).

Ojendal (2014) argues that there are five types of civil society that function in a society. They range among typical development work, advocacy for human rights,

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community-based organizations (CBOs), grassroots decentralization and the revival of religious associations. In Prek Preah Sdach, there is no sense of cultural belonging, homage to ancestors, nor politics of birthplace, as most people in the area are newcomers. However, social belonging can be built through social capital, which can be seen through urban poor community development projects and the creation of savings groups, supported by local NGOs. This has been viewed as a threat to the ruling party.

However, the good intentions of these groups have slowly faded, which can be seen in the 2013 election results that showed the ruling party losing ground. The situation become worse in 2017, when 8 out of 10 communes were lost to the opposition party. As a result, the ruling party shifted their approach to mostly focusing on persuading youth groups, community leaders and NGOs workers to become part of their cliques. This approach effectively destroyed the collective action and local structures which had been developed by these civil society groups. Some leaders were offered positions at the Provincial office, others were engaged in political campaigns for the commune council elections, which led to them deprioritizing their activities in the community. CEDT, who had been active in 11 urban communities, postponed their activities between 2016 and early 2018 due to pressure from local authorities and other political issues. They have only now, in late 2019, managed to mobilize additional funding and continue working in the remaining 9 communities on private community urban development. A letter of agreement (LOA) has been prepared and is expected to get approval from local authorities if there is no sign of further political tensions on the ground.

The proposed equal land sharing and low-cost housing development schemes have lost a lot of popularity within the ruling party due to a lack of responsibility and its low capacity to be accountable to the citizens. Informal chatting with key informants revealed that in response, the CPP political working group spent up to 500,000 USD for political campaigns at the commune level. However, in the case of Prek Preah Sdach, where Mr. Set Ra resided, the campaign failed to have any impact. For himself and other citizens affected by land conflicts, it was extremely difficult to encourage them to vote for CPP again.

The current practices of political working group within the CPP resembles those used in the past. For instance, a notebook translated and compiled by Chandler, Kiernan, and Boua entitled '*Pol Pot Plans for the Future: Confidential Leadership Documents from Democratic Kampuchea 1976-1977*' suggests that political administrations were designed through (administrative) zones, where the district party core went down to the political base, and broadcasted party agendas and ideologies in order to achieve a socialist revolution (1988). Zone cadres were set up, who were responsible for going down to the base and teaching them about cooperatives, implementing the program and building cooperation for the socialist revolution. These strategies hoped to block the enemy from interfering with the perception and commitment of the local people.

Nilsson (2016) points out that money, politics, corruption, opportunism, and greed interplay throughout the whole political campaign to gain support and legitimacy. The CPP-ruling class has since the early 1990s, implemented election practices such as gift giving, pretending to share cultural symbols, and the offering of merit to commoners (Nilsson 2016). She further argues that, the CPP practice of gift-giving has inserted patronage practices within the country's democratic system. This includes the distribution of donations, small handouts, infrastructure projects at the local level, and *Chus Chuoy Molthan* (going down to the bases) (Nilsson 2016:123).

This strategy is similar to that of the PRK during the 1980s. With the support of Vietnamese soldiers, the PRK conducted warfare and propaganda against the Khmer Resistance Forces along Cambodian-Thai border (Slocomb 2003). One key narrative at this time was that the PRK was saving all of the misled people who were joining the resistance forces. Thus, the many officials who had roles that required them to go down to the base every weekend is similar the roles certain CPP party members today.

Nilsson (2016: 126) points out that:

the ruling party tends to use the strategy of Divide, Isolate, Finish, Integrate and Develop (DIFID). Which has also been used to break up civil society, the media, the urban community, and urban youth networks who are believed to be in favor of the opposition party. This situation is clearly seen in the case of Prek Preah Sdach, through the interplay of their various tactics, the control of

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strategic resources, and the imposition of discourse development in gaining legitimate votes. Of course, beyond this, the judiciary system and the armed forces are considered a priority in regards to the maintaining of power. The practice of classifying informal settlements, the dream of low-cost housing development schemes, and land tenure security distribution have all been used as legitimate strategies to secure voter support. However, there has been a loss of trust for those people that experienced the Khmer Rouge Regime during the 1970s and 1980s, who generally make comparisons between the strategies of the current regime to those of the Khmer Rouge.

In an interview with the village chief of Ou Kcheay village, he voiced concerns about the political working group operating from the national level. They often asked him about what the people want and how they can help. He suggested that land conflict is an important issue and that it was important to trust the voters, as they are voting in the booth with secrecy. A Buddhist monk from a nearby temple also show his skepticism towards the local authority in dealing with urban governance and informal settlement in the town. He said:

"Urban slums and informal settlements surrounding Buddhist temples are like paving the floating grass in a lake. Once you pave, the floating grass goes but once you leave, the floating grass has returned. This reflects the nature of urban governance and local authorities who have the right to deal with the urban slums and informal settlement. The authority should be more transparent, consistent and should not engage with nepotism or local politics."

(Chief of Monks, Kandal pagoda, January 2018).

Another Chief of Monks, Kim Manit, revealed that the CPP has shifted their position, and have moved the practice of gift-giving from people's homes to the Buddhist temple. He explained that since the commune elections in July 2017, the ruling party has used the pagoda as a place to impose their political ideology and spread their key message to local residents, in particular those who are participating in the low-cost housing development scheme.

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A diverse set of groups have also developed within Buddhist temples. Young novices and students who come to live in the pagoda while studying higher education are required to form into Pagoda Youth Associations (*Samakum Khmeng Wat*). Their aim is to build alliances, and promote helping systems among pagoda youth. Some pagoda may have around 30 to 40 youth, while in Prek Preah Sdach there are only a few. When a youth association is formed, officials from the municipal and provincial levels can come to influence them with their political strategies by training them to live simply like normal residents, so that they can get close to them. Pagoda youth associations are often involved with volunteer work. Some of them have received scholarships to continue studying at private universities within the town. For instance, Build Bright University (BBU) is one of the most popular private universities and is owned by a politician who is also in charge of the political working groups in the province. He often uses this occupation to offer scholarships to these youth groups. Youth associations have become well-established, with most of the members originating from the sons and daughters of the ruling elites and business tycoons. It is important for the youth of poor families to join if they are to be able to access jobs within either the private sector or the government once they have finished their studies. The chief monk also explained that:

"Before 2017 elections, the ruling party elite often went straight to meet people at their house and village, persuading them to vote for them and promising to build infrastructure and bring development. However, some of the gifts provided through the village chief often ended up with his relatives. The commune elections in 2017 demonstrated that the level of support from residents for the ruling party had declined. They lost the election. Now they shifted to work with youth groups and local Buddhist monks at the temple. They use the temple as the base for political propaganda." (Venerable Manit, chief of Buddhist monk, 26 March 2019).

Between June and August in 2019, there were a series of meetings at the pagoda dealing with land conflicts and other related problems. The key people in these meetings included the Deputy Provincial Governor, who is the chairman of the

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provincial working group dealing with local land allocations, and government advisors from the Council of Ministers that deal with land conflicts. Meetings with citizens have taken place at this pagoda at least three times so far. One of the outstanding questions, often raised by local community members, concerns equitable land sharing. They welcome the concept but they ask why it is applied in only their location. Why not use this practice across the whole country, sharing equally like during the Khmer Rouge regime? During the Khmer Rouge regime, people were forced to work equally, not selective practice in certain commune like Prek Preah Sdach.

Rumors and information about the land conflicts over the public land in the commune has attracted the attention of various levels of the government. It has attracted increasing amounts of political discourse among different political elites. For instance, the issues have recently attracted the newly formed committee of the Council of Ministers, who deal with land conflicts, and who provide advice to the Prime Minister. This includes Mr. Mam Sonando, a former opposition party member, who defected to ruling party. He was assigned to monitor the land management issues in the commune and report back to the Prime Minister. It is clear that local people are demanding their land back, unless others are willing to sacrifice their land as well. Negotiations and resistance against spatial injustices have continued. This has become politicized as a result of climate change impacts and the risks posed to the legitimacy of the ruling party and dominant groups.

4.7 Space of Resilience and Resistance for Inclusive Urban Development

The mainstream urban resilience framework, with its key emphasis on the importance of infrastructure development, institutions, and capacity development, has failed to see the embedded structure of the provincial political culture and social systems. Battambang, as a symbol of modernity, beautification and cleanliness in Cambodia, acts as a model of urban development for other secondary towns in the country. However, it has had to deal with many concealed practices led by dominant groups, whom have managed to control strategic resources through the manipulation of the land-use master plan and spatial planning processes. These resilience approaches have overlooked the individual and community means of resilience, as well as the competing claims over access to urban spaces, services, values and meaning. Thus, both

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the political ecology of resilience and subordinate strategic groups provide greater insights into examining urban resilience from a people-centered perspective. By examining the strategies adopted within informal settlements through the lens of the four groups profiled in this chapter, we can see that the intention of equitable land sharing imposed by dominant strategic groups has concealed hidden values of modernizing the city and controlling strategic resources, particularly in respect to land resources. These resources represent the most important source of value for urban residents. Groups who reject these values and decide to stage counter claims are known as "subordinate strategic groups". The sociology of subordinate groups demonstrates that they apply diverse set of strategies in order to resist unjust state policy.

First, those with little resource that encounter challenges pretend to show their support to the ruling party and dominant groups by installing a CPP party signboard in front of their house and wearing t-shirts that display the party logo.

Second, groups with better means and whose interests go beyond land resources, draw various support from social media, civil society, and human rights organizations. Land rights issues in the area have been widely reported on TV (Sleuk Rith, Radio Free Asia, Voice of America) as well as in the Cambodia Daily and Phnom Penh Post newspapers. Key messages to justify their legitimacy include a history of living on and owning the land. For instance, some claim to have lived in the area since the early 1980s, bring up the law that stipulates the basic rights to those who have resided on land for a 10-year period. The issue of access to jobs and livelihoods, as well as education for children is also cited. In this case, getting support from local networks was conditional on a continued pledge to vote for the ruling CPP party in elections. However, this relationship is not stable, and conflicts emerge as different informal settlements tend to compete for strategic resources within the town and amongst each other.

The latter group is more flexible and can often produce counter claims with no clear leadership. Such can be seen in the case of the distribution of open letters by a group of soldiers who had been deceived by their leaders in regards to accessing land in the area. The letter clarified the position of the soldiers, who reinforced the idea that it was their role to protect the nation against enemies and the people from being harmed.

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However, instead of doing this, they created an even greater burden on the community by threatening to take their land. In the letter, they openly claimed that their military commanders had deceived them, and were therefore apologizing for their role in the matter. The open letter was left anonymous in order to encourage local residents to keep calm and wait for the right time to take action against the dominant groups. A key message was also sent to the Prime Minster to re-examine the case. Many urban residents who protested the political working group and Provincial authorities often have similar claims but no clear leader. Local authorities often use the strategies of arresting and intimidating selected leaders into accepting plots of land of smaller sizes, or simply putting them in custody.

Labelling, personal character assassination, and false rumors are also commonly used as resistance strategies by subordinate groups. In response, dominant strategic groups often label subordinate groups as the enemy, who are stubborn and resistant, or even accuse them of being land thieves. For instance, Mr. Set Ra, a retired school principal, was labelled in a recent meeting with the dominant groups as "being stubborn and unwilling (*Akkate*)". As a former schoolteacher since the early 1980s, he is proud that many police and soldiers used to be taught by him at the local primary school and he has no problem countering this accusation;

> *"If we look at the number of members within the working groups, even if we solve the problems with land conflict in this area, we could not compensate the salary of these people. The conflict has taken place now for more than two decades and people do acknowledge equitable land sharing by taking people from other places to come, live and share the land. This practice is like the Khmer Rouge regime but the Khmer Rouge operated across the whole country, where land needed to be redistributed equally, and everybody must work equally. The government officials who are in charge of land distribution are wasting government resources." (Mr. Set Ra, 5 August 2019)*

Mr. Lim is considered to be one of the architects of resistance against dominant groups. He suggested that people in Ou Kcheay and other blocks in the commune have relatives everywhere in the town, and if they spread bad news about certain government

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officials, this will affect their capacity to attract votes and support. He suggests that now there are three national assembly members from the CPP based in Battambang. There are also the business tycoons, who own land and hotels, often coming to visit the villages to observe the problems. He suggests they should not assume that 300 families in the village could not spread bad news to affect their personal reputations. Rumors could affect your popularity, at first losing 3,000, then 30,000, and possibly up to 300,000 votes. This means your actions will attract more attention from the ruling party. In an angry manner, he also criticized the practice of equitable land sharing:

> *"Equitable land sharing is like in the Pol Pot regime. Land has been distributed equally, but why only these villages and not the whole country. The villagers ask the government representatives to conduct this practice in the whole country, in which all land in the country is redistributed"*

<div align="right">(Mr. Lim, 05 August 2019).</div>

Local residents are faced with either eviction or being forced to accept equitable land sharing, even if their current land holding is 16 times larger. Some of them have been reminded of the former socialist regime and the practice of land sharing, where everybody obtained land equally. This implies that land sharing of the former public lands should not be shared with outsiders, such as wealthy families or those from the military with no actual physical presence in the village. They even challenge the authorities to re-conduct the land survey and suggest that it be replicated across the whole province or even the whole country. Other participants who joined the meeting accuse the authorities of repeating the past practices of the Khmer Rouge.

Land conflicts commenced in 2009, and an increase in flooding since 2013, led to residents being told that they were not permitted to raise their land in response to the seasonal floods and heavy rainfall. However, if urban resilience is to be fostered amongst this informal settlement, while also taking advantage of the low-cost housing development in place, there is a need for local residents to consider the acts of resistance to see their proposed actions accepted. The equitable distribution of land must be applied equally among diverse groups and if not, at least be implemented with more transparency.

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4.8 Conclusion

Battambang municipality is a symbol of modernity, city beautification, and cleanliness that acts as the pioneer urban development model for all secondary towns in the country. However, within this vision, many concealed practices have been applied by dominant groups who have managed to establish positions, whereby they can control strategic resources. This is particularly the case for the land-use master planning process, which has been used to formalize spatial fixes. Given the nature of the political culture embedded within the social systems of the province, the best intentions of the urban development practices of equitable land sharing and low-cost housing development schemes have been constrained. The efforts of local residents, through their participation and trust in civil society, should be encouraged to participate in socially-inclusive urban development.

The study shows that while the current urban master plan aims to harmonize economic development and citizen well-being, in contrast, it has tended to frame the logic of informal settlements against the master plan to pave the way for capital accumulation (Harvey 2003). The aim of the land-use master plan was to balance land allocation between the private interests of investors, entrepreneurs, and land owners on the one hand, with the public interests of the local community and the environment on the other. However, in practice it has failed to recognize the political culture embedded within the practices of dominant strategic groups, where law enforcement and decision-making processes tend to alienate the subordinate strategic groups, whose livelihoods are much more dependent upon access to land as a strategic resource. Moreover, the nature of strategic groups is not well considered in mainstream urban climate resilience approaches, which provokes resistance from these subordinate groups. They employ various strategies, which include informal networking and the establishment of local power relations with the ruling party, as well as enhancing relationships with human rights NGOs, filing complains, and seeking forums where their voice will be heard in both social and print media. Personal character assassination, gossip, and false compliance are all also used once other forms of negotiation have failed. This reflects an everyday form of resistance against the dominant groups. The proposed equitable land sharing and distribution processes within urban informal settlements will never be

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achieved without resistance being applied by subordinate groups to reinstall the respect of local participation and trust in civil society. This represents the gaps found within the mainstream urban resilience concept.

CHAPTER 3

Strategic Group Formation and the Making of Urban Space in Battambang Town

3.1 Introduction

This chapter argues that the making of urban space cannot be realized without addressing strategic group formations and their contesting strategies in shaping, influencing and affecting the power over territory and space arrangement. Moreover, given its strategic location and positions of the town, the politics of urban space-making must examine the down's historical development and how power has influenced the struggled between internal and external strategic groups. This chapter is divided into four main sections. The first section contextualizes the historical background of the traditional Khmer concepts of space and power that were being implemented from the post-Angkorian period to colonial times. The second section discusses how urban space had been arranged, constructed and influenced by colonial administrations. During this time, modernization and urbanization technologies were established, and have continued to have influence on post-colonial government policy. This is followed by a discussion on how urban space has been used by applying the concepts of zoning, nationalism, and land-use classification. The fourth section deals with urban crisis and the dark side of Cambodia's history, during which de-urbanization and failed collective agrarian reform occurred. Conflicts among emerging strategic groups during the process of nation re-building had to deal with the burdens of war. Dominant strategic groups competed with each other to assert their control over territory, resulting in great losses in human life and social infrastructure. The final section will also discuss how this history influenced the production of urban space; the impacts of urban development, and the livelihood changes experienced by both citizens residing in informal settlements and 'native' citizens who have lived within the municipality for generations.

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3.2 Pre-colonial Space and Strategic Group Formation

Prior to colonization, cities in Southeast Asia were guided by two religious cosmologies. The first of these was Brahmanism, where the king represented a god-king. There would later be a transition from Brahmanism to Buddhism, in which the king now served as a *Bodhisattva*, or a person of merit, that was above all human beings. This transition to Buddhism occurred in the Angkor period during late 11th century, and would later spread to other cities in the region (McGee 1967, Evers and Korff 2000, Chandler 2008). During this time, there were at least three major functions of the city in regard to place-making. First, cities had the function of being sacred. They were considered as the center of the cosmological universe, and only elite groups such as religious authorities, policy makers and the king were able to reside in them. These areas served as both centers of political and religious power, connecting the spiritual elements of their cosmologies with the earth. Second, the function of facilitating trade. Some cities formed into commercial centers located on coastal zones, and served as hubs for trade, commerce and foreign exchange. Lastly, cities functioned as managers of core-peripheral (urban-rural) relationships between the provincial capital and surrounding areas (Evers and Korff 2000). Both the peripheral and coastal urban centers were vulnerable to attack from neighboring inland groups, colonial European forces, and foreign traders.

Battambang has been a peripheral Angkorian urban area since the 11th century. This is evident in the archaeological evidence of a large degraded reservoir that would have enabled the reputation of Battambang to grow in the area as a regional rice granary (Molyvann 2003). The sacred cities are known for the religious temples found in the province. These include Wat Sneung, Wat Ek Phnom and Prasat Banan, which were built between the 7th and 11th centuries (Briggs 1999; Jacques and Lafond 2007). In addition, the current archeological excavation at *Laang Spean*, located about 40 km from Battambang town, provides evidence of further historical human settlement in the area (Sophady, et al. 2016).

The traditional Khmer concept on the territorial arrangement of space was guided by these Brahman and Buddhist principles. For example, in regard to large-scale hydraulic development, kings were influenced by ancient Hindu institutions (Kent and

Chandler 2008). Between the 9th and 13th centuries, the growth of urban civilization was highly dependent on the functionality of urban water systems. In Angkor, landscapes consisted of large-scale water infrastructure and irrigation systems, spanning 1,000 km[2] and providing food to the citizens until the 15th century (Fletcher, et al. 2008).

The fall of Angkor in the 15th century provides us with three pieces of evidence concerning the processes of territorial control. The first is that Buddhism did not take root only amongst commoners, but also in elites and the royal court (Kent and Chandler 2008).   Second, the fall of Angkor led the emergence of Ayutthaya, whose influence over ideas, people and institutions had been increasing (ibid). And lastly, the decline of the hydraulic networks that supported the urban system and the mobility of citizens and elites (Kent and Chandler 2008).   When this occurred, Khmer urban elites had already planned to migrate and develop a new urban space at the confluence of Tonle Sap Lake and the Mekong River. This move was linked to the desire for territorial control of the Mekong Delta, which was thought to be more strategically located in terms of maritime trade networks in the South China Sea, and located far away from the increasingly unwieldy and restrictive urban fabric of Angkor (Penny et al 2019). In this regard, the fall of Angkor was very much related to their desire to seek for new urban spaces and territory (ibd). Phnom Penh was first founded in 1431, immediately after the Khmer kings abandoned Angkor (Molyvann 2003). The city became an urban center in the region due to the hydrological characteristics of the environment, described as the 'four faces', or the interlinked nexus of water and food production systems of Tonle Sap Lake, and the Mekong and Bassac rivers.

Social class in Phnom Penh remained rigid, maintaining the role of the king who presided over administrative officials, the noble class and commoners (Vickery 1999). Nobles were entrusted by the king to collect taxes that were then channeled back to the apparatus of the state through a court overseen by the king. Land and wealth were owned by the king, who provided officials with a salary. These officials were able to accumulate wealth through tax collection and owning large-scale properties. There was very low class mobility outside of the scenario of war, in which case the provision of labor and resources was rewarded to commoners by the king's officials. In this case male peasants that were more clever than average were able to rise up social ladders

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upon the recommendation of noble elites. This type of traditional power has been passed down in Cambodia for generations.

As the location of the city shifted, the old religious traditions were replaced. The king's power shifted from Hinduism and large-scale mobilization of the workshop to construct temples in usher a connection between heaven and earth and warrior king, to be more merit making for both officials and the peoples. A code of conduct was written by Buddhist monks to cultivate moral order, virtue and moderation within society. Buddhist traditions such as merit-making, and *Neak Ta*, or spiritual guardians of the community, became new forms of civilizing society (Kent and Chandler 2008). The king's power depended heavily on the social networks of royal the family and the noble class. These officials played key roles in the administrative function of the state, including tax collection, the mobilization of labor and the adjudication of legal cases (Vickery 1999, Chandler 2008).

Although the law postulates that all land belongs to the king, in reality much of the power rests with the high ranking officials, such as the *Chaovay Srok* (district governors) and *Okhna*,[1] who played an active role in administering the country. This included maintaining peace and order, facilitating local trade, keeping records and preventing citizens from emigrating, mobilizing armies to defend the land, levying corvée labor for civil construction work, and collecting taxes to fund both their own activities and those of the king. *Chaovay Srok* and their assistants were part of the noble class, but retained close relations with the villagers, they had to direct control of labor and economic resources in the provinces (Rungswasdisab 1995).

Since the 17th century, Khmer influence within the Mekong Delta had been continuously weakening due to the emerging pressures of the Nguyen dynasty. These pressures included conflicts over trade routes and access to marine resources, as well as the replacement of Khmer overlords by Nguyen authorities. Khmer territory would later be sandwiched in between increasing pressures from Vietnam and Siam (Chandler 2008).   By the 18th century, the situation had become worse, and the Khmer elite and royal family began seeking external support for protection (Wyatt 1984, Rungswasdisab 1995, Chandler 2008; and Kasetsiri 2015).

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[1] At that time, *Chaovay Srok* and *Okhna* referred to ministers which were in charge of specific territories within the kingdom.

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By 1794, king Ang Eng, who was khmer royal raised by Thai King as step farther, was appointed to the throne by the Siamese King in Bangkok. Meanwhile, a Khmer officer by the name of Baen was moving up the military ranks and making a name for himself. Both Baen and Ang Eng favored Siamese rule and played key roles in recruiting troops against the Tay Son Dynasty in Cambodia. However, Baen did not have good relations with the new Siamese king, but due to his many years of service and loyalty the Siamese king felt obgliged to reward him. He was provided with the title of First Minister to prevent the occurance of a civil war breaking out between noble factions loyal to Baen and those loyal to the king. Afterwards, he was rewarded with the rulership over the large and prosperous *sroks* (provinces) of Battambang and Mahanokor[2], becoming responsible for recruiting and mobilizinig a labor force for Thai king to build a new city.

After his death in 1809, his descendants across five further generations were appointed by the Thai king to progressively inherit power in Battamabang province. These elites ruled over Battambang as the *Sdach Tranh*, or Lord Governors between 1795 and 1907. Each successive Lord Governor in Battambang had at least fifty wives and hundreds of children. Soon later, a small royal palace similar to the one in Phnom Penh was constructed in Battambang. During this period, Battambang was controlled by Khmer elites within Khmer territory, but in favor of Thai court (Chandler 2008).

When the French colonial government sought references on how and why Battambang belonged to Siam, they could not acquire any written evidence from the Khmer royals. They decided to take back not until the last Lord Governor, (Lok Mchas Kathathon Chhum), otherwise known as Chhum Aphaiwong, was forced to return to Thailand by French colonial forces that the province was returned to Cambodia in 1907.

Before the arrival of the colonial powers, these provinces served as vassal territories for the Siam state, providing them with substantial opportunities to expand their extraction of natural resources in Cambodia, and extend their trading relations with China and Europe. It also facilitated the mobilization of labor from these subordinate territories for the rebuilding Siam, while at the same time weakening the power base of the king in Cambodia. This provided significant advantages for Siam in their mission to

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[2] Mahanokor, or 'the Great City', would later become Siem Reap, the location of the famous Angkor ruins.

consolidate both power and territory against intrusions from Vietnam (Rungswasdisab 1995).

3.3 Khmer Elites and the Making of Urban Space

Internal conflicts and influence from foreign actors was a constant presence among Khmer elites. From 1795 to 1907, Battambang and Siem Reap were governed by the Khmer elites, who placed their loyalty with the Siam king in Bangkok. Baen was the first ruler, describing himself as the greatest ruler of the Khmer people with the exception of the king of Udong. (Chhuong 1974). In exchange for his loyalty to Siam, he and his family were granted protection and power over the territory by the Siamese king. With these protectorates in place, both Battambang and Siem Reap came to serve as the bases of which to expand Siam's control over other nearby towns and those provinces to the west of the Mekong River. The cities also served for regional trade, labor conscription, and buffer areas to mobilize troops against attacks from Phnom Penh and Vietnam (Rungswasdisab 1995).

Chhuong (1974) calculates that over 100,000 laborers were mobilized from Cambodia during the Baen reign. They were sent to make bricks and dig canals in Bangkok and were later granted the right to permanently settle there. By the 1930s, this population had grown to 30,000, most of whom were Khmer-speaking. They mainly focused on rice farming and monastic life, while other minority groups handled industrial tasks linked to cross border trade. People of Chinese descent operated market gardens and foreign trading, while a Muslim minority was engaged in cattle raising, weaving, and commercial fishing. This minority is believed to have originated primarily from Malaysia and Champa (ibid).

From the 1830s, Battambang began to rapidly increase in size and density. This was primarily due to the influence of Siam. Access to Battambang from Siem Reap became easier with the construction of roads that supported both military expeditions and defense actions against intrusions from Udong and Vietnam. The road also gave Khmer elites greater access to the provinces and natural resources under their control.

3.3.1 The Spatial layout of Battambang from 1795-1907

Fort   White elephant pagoda   Landing port   Market   Piphet Pagoda

Sangké River
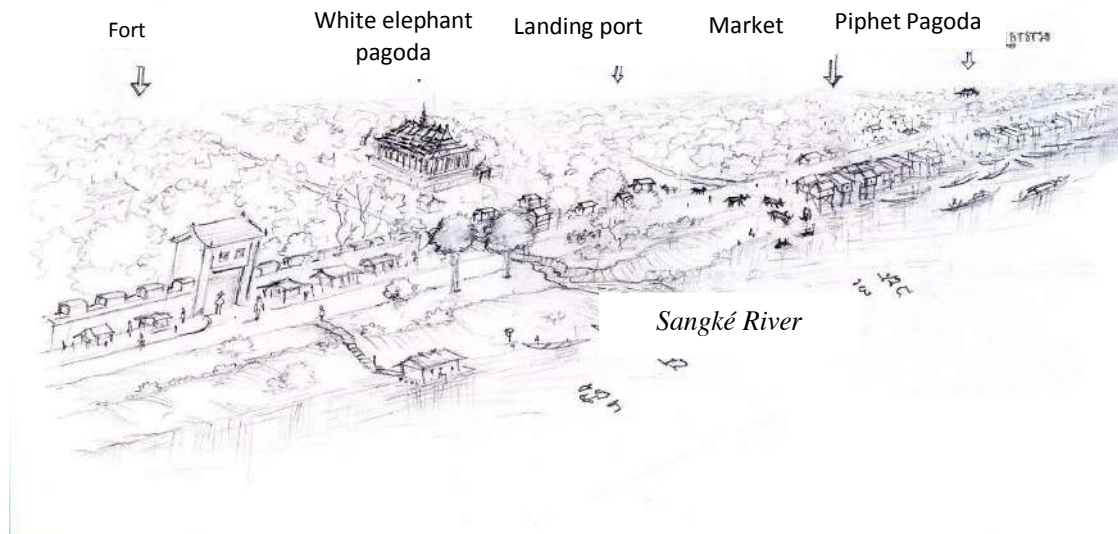
Figure 3.1: Spatial layout of Battambang prior to 1907

The city layout of Battambang extends outward from a village along the river. It was replicated after traditional villages in Siem Reap, with a rural-city landscape and dominated by Buddhist temples along both sides of the river bank. Residental buildings constructed from wood and bamboo surrounded these temples, eventually forming neighborhoods (Ang, Prenowitz and Thompson 1996).

There are multiple sacred places, where 'black magic' was used to keep the city safe from evil spirits and which now serve as preservation areas for wild animals. In the village of Kampong Seima, currently located in Wat Kor commune, there are magical letters engraved in the river beds which traditional belief states protect villagers from ghosts and crocodiles that have come from Tonle Sap Lake along the Sangker River. Stone boundary markers were also placed around the city for the protective purposes. Many of these stones remain in place to the present day such as Wat Kampong Seima (Chhoung 1974: 28).

Chhuong (1974) found that the city layout was divided into two major sections. The first was the area 'in front of the fort', while the second is the marketplace at Svay Por. These areas remain close to the urban center of present day Battambang. The fort was known as Kampheng, which included the temple of Wat Kampheng that still exists today. It is a large temple (720 x 480 m), which was constructed from bricks in the 1880s. Kampheng also included the palace of the "Lord of Governors", or *Lork Machas*. Opposite of the fort were residential areas for housing the families of the noble elite. During this time, bridges and wooden houses were constructed haphazardly, packed together along the roads. Many houses were built with a rear column driven into river, in effect leaving the rear section of the house suspended above the water. The second major section of the town was located near the north gate of the fort, where a market was established and residents gathered to exchange products. Chinese stores were generally situated to the east of this market along the riverbank. Beyond the boundaries of the market, there was the *Sala Amphoe*, a cluster of buildings consisting of the district office, courthouse, and post office. Opposite of Wat Sangké, a temple on the eastern bank of the river, there was a floating building called a *phae*, or dock, where women from the palace would come to bathe in the evening.

3.3.2 Social structure and governance

During these times, we could say that Battambang was a feudalist society in which the aristocracy were the sole owners of the land and people. From 1890, an increasing amount of people started to settle down along the Kampong, Sangker and Mongkul Borei rivers (Chhoung 1974). This increase in settlements along the river is linked to the development of trade in the area. Market sites along the river comprised of multiple types of businesses, and facilitated social interaction between administrative officials, low-land residents and those who lived in forest. The ethnic Chinese tended to live adjacent to the Kampong River, whereas ethnic Khmer people would live in the surrounding villages that cultivated rice. Ethnic Khmer groups in rice growing villages would rarely have contact with officials residing near the Kampong, except in cases of the local exchange of products and tax collection. Mon-Khmer-speaking tribes resided

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in the forested areas, and would commonly collect and exchange of forest products for other essential goods.

Four social classes were recorded by Chhuong (1974). The first is the noble or aristocrat class, comprising of high-ranking officials belonging to the family of the 'Lord of Governors'. This class was considered to be the highest social class, owning slaves and most of the paddy fields along the river. Every year, they would conduct religious performances both in their homes and for the public. Commoners were required to demonstrate appropriate behavior when in the presence of this class or risk punishment. The second class is comprised of peasants and commoners. This included rice producers, fishermen, manual laborers, and businessmen. Members of this class were obliged to pay tax-in-kind, mostly in the form of agricultural products, as well as provide labor to the governor in the form of hunting for food and participating in ceremonies. The third class comprised of the slaves of the aristocratic families. This class generally consisted of prisoners of war, criminals and those in debt to the nobles. Slaves worked for noble families and were compensated with food and clothing. Citizens were either temporarily or permanently in this class and provided much of the labor required by the nobles. The final class consisted of foreign immigrants who had settled in the province. These were predominantly of Chinese and Vietnamese descent.

By 1884, about 104,000[3] people resided across the entire province (Chhuong 1974). This included a diversity of ethnic groups, including Khmer, Siamese, Lao, Kula (Shan), Javanese, Vietnamese, and Chinese diaspora. However, a systematic survey in 1921 shows that 307,000 people — a three-fold increase — were living in the province just thirty years later. This suggests that the first calculation of the population may have been underestimated.

The ethnic Chinese have settled in Battambang for generations. Chhuong (1974) argues that the Chinese diaspora had a strong degree of involvement in the business and trading activities of the city, in particular the importing of tools and special foods from abroad. They lived within the city and had an amicable relationship with the 'Lord of Governors' and other high-ranking officials. Chinese migrants rarely brought their families to Cambodia and tended to intermarry with the local population. In contrast, the

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[3] A Thai researcher estimated a population of 200,000 at this time.

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Vietnamese diaspora tended to live along the river in separate communities and worked as fishermen and craft workers. They generally converted to the Catholic faith and rarely intermarried with the Khmer population (ibid).

The 'Lord of Governors' and their families' alliances in the province were very powerful and were able to amass a significant amount of wealth held in their lands, buildings, and family treasures. Generally, the children of the Governor were given the right to collect taxes on certain items, however this led to conflicts when transitions to new provincial rulers occurred and previous agreements were nullified (Chhoung 1974; Rungswasdisab 1995). Despite this, the family descending from Baen had enjoyed uninterrupted control of the region through the protection of the Siamese military and royal court for over a century. In 1907, the French colonial forces paid a large sum of money to the descendants of the Baen family to relocate to Prachinburi, Siam, 150 km west of Battambang.

Chhum Aphaiwong, the last Governor of the province before it was ceded from Siam to the French, was offered the opportunity to remain in Battambang with the same position. However, he rejected the offer citing the risk of political revenge from the Khmer court. Thus, he had his one hundred oxcarts of valuable belongings transported to Prachinburi and left the province with his immediate relatives. Meanwhile, most other nobles remained in Battambang.

During the reign of King Chulalongkorn of Siam at the beginning of the 20th century served to benefit the political strategy of the elites who had previously controlled the vassal state of Battambang. Vickery (1970) demonstrates that there were two families that greatly benefited from this economic and political restructuring. The first family was the *Bunnag*, who had previously controlled the Siamese provinces in the southern gulf region, and served as Non Thong Royal Commissioners. The second was the *Aphaiwong*, who had previously ruled Battambang. They were able to maintain their status under the new political reforms of Khuang Aphaivong, the son of the last hereditary Governor of Battambang. Khuang Aphaivong received an education in Europe and served as the Prime Minister of Thailand on three occasions[4], right up until

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[4] During World War II, Khuang Aphaivong led the military commission (King's guard) to fight against the French-led army in Cambodia to reclaim Battambang. He later became the prime minister of Thailand on three separate occasions. First from 1944-1945, second from the 31st of January to the 24th of March,

his death in 1968. He would hold power between 1944 and 1948 and was a symbol of success within the new political system of the country.

3.4 The Making of Urban Space during Colonial Times (1863 - 1953)

Under the protection of the French, Cambodian borders were stabilized and the encroachments from Siam and Vietnam gradually decreased (Chandler 2008; Kasetsiri 2015). The French enforced the territorial and political boundaries of Cambodia, effectively making it a modern nation state. As a result, the development of 'rational' institutions was imposed on the country. The Indochina union was established under French rule with colonial forces serving as the patron of Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam. In this context, the making of urban space was driven by two major forces: the search for industrialization and plantation expansion, and the construction of an urban center driven by the concepts of modernity and urbanism.

3.4.1 Territorial integration and industrialization

French colonialism was first concentrated within the area known as Cochin-China, or the Mekong Delta. It would later expand to throughout Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam through investments in infrastructure development, and with the intention of accumulating wealth through agricultural intensification, the development of cash crop plantations and mining activities. During this period, the French constructed railways, road networks, as well as inland and marine ports. Communications infrastructure was also improved. Chandler (2008) outlines that by the 1920s, car travel across the country could be achieved within a few days. This enabled Cambodian citizens to travel by roads and railways to find markets for agricultural and other products. This was widely considered to be the start of significant social change within the country.

French Indochina was considered as one of the most flourishing colonies when compared with other places being colonized by the French (Robequain 1944). Rice

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1946 (45 days), and third from the 10th of November, 1947 until the 8th of April, 1948. Khuang continued in politics as the opposition leader and leader of the Democratic Party until all political parties were banned in 1958. He is one of the founders of conservative democratic party, advocating for democratic development in the country (see also David Wyatt 1982, 1984).

cultivation and other agricultural activities were highly productive during this time and tourists, researchers, explorers, and investors were attracted to the region.

In 1860, Henri Mouho, the French naturalist, visited Battambang by boat to study the Khmer temples of Wat Ek Phnom, Bannon and Wat Basaet. He extened his research to the Angkor ruins for three weeks and travelled all around the areas alongside the Mekong River and Tonle Sap Lake. He conclucded his trip by travelling from Battambang to Bangkok by oxcard, which took nearly a month (Pym 1966). His research came to the conclusion that:

> *For a country to be rich and powerful, the production and commerce extended to other nations must be presumed. Doubtless to say, Cambodia was formerly favored as such and would be in the present day under a wise government. If labor and agriculture were encouraged instead of despised; if the ruling powers exercised a less absolute despotism; and above all, if slavery — that miserable institution, which is a bar to all progress, and reduces man to the level of brute, preventing the cultivation of land more than sufficient for his own actual want — were abolished; the greater part of the land is surprisingly fertile and the rice of Battambang is superior to that of Cochin-China. The river of Battambang is not less plentifully stocked and I have seen a couple of thousand taken in one net."* (Pym, 1966: 114-115).

According to Slocomb (2010), it was Henri Mouhot who first introduced the ruins of Ankgor to the world, He predicted that the Cambodia had the capacity to recover and restore the country to its glorious past. For this to occur, he suggested that good governance, investments in agriculture, and respect for human rights was necessary. However, this suggestion contrasted with the policies of the French colonists. The intentions of French colonial power was to compete with the British and impose a faith of progress, superiority of the white race, civilization, and the rationality of science onto its subjects. The development objective was to modernize, instruct, and civilize Cambodians. In exchange, the French would profit from labor forces (Slocomb 2010). Indochina, as with the rest of Southeast Asia, was heavily focused on the exploitation of mineral resources and the production of crops for metropolitan powers. These

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metropolitan cities played key roles as administration, transportation, and processing centers, where raw materials from the countryside were collected and exported to other parts of the world. The location of many cities, particularly those that were newly established, was dictated by its accessibility to water and shipping routes, which created a nexus between natural resources, labor, and production zones (McGee 1967).

According to McGee (1967), there are three common characteristics of colonial cities. First, the urban layout of the built environment was planned to exploit the cities' natural water systems to better enable the transportation of goods and increase trade with other cities. This was often followed by the establishment of communication networks linking these ports to areas of production. Second, the administrative center of the city was established to facilitate the rapid growth of mining activities, urban markets, and the development of residential settlements for diverse ethnic groups. These groups were often dominated by Chinese communities, who played a significant role in commerce and trading. The third was to mobilize rural labor through imposing education and a modern healthcare system which were meant to control and stabilize potential political situations. This was intended to facilitate greater levels of resource exploitation and profits (ibid).

Yeoh (2014) shows colonial city model was not intended to destroy traditional buildings, instead they prefer to remain, but modern buildings and system have been constructed as co-existing and as comparing of superiority. The colonial has introduced modernized building, practices, commercial centers, cultural contacts through land use zoning classification. the process is implemented through the creation of production zones, the formation of urban centers and labor concentration, which lead to world market competition. Many scholars' discontent with colonial powers who were driven by private gain, adventure, conquest and to evoke national pride in comparison with other colonial nations. For instance, Murray (1980) labeled French colonization in Indochina as 'parasitic', and contradictory, citing the role of the French in supporting the economic development of the region and at the same time depleting local resources and exploiting local labor. However, the French were successful in shifting the focus of the natural economy towards industrial mining, plantation expansion, labor force management, and the collection of taxes and levies. In this context, a link to world markets was imposed upon rural farmers and laborers which sought the production of

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cash crops as a function of the colonial city[5] (McGee 1967). Thus, urban services and commercial functions were restructured by the impacts of colonization. This resulted in a new class structure with clearly identified social divisions emerging within urban areas (ibid). These divisions created many conflicts within colonial society and led to a revolt against the colonial system, which concluded with a disruption in the class structure and enabled social mobility and the intermingling of diverse ethnic groups. This suggests that the shift towards colonial rule tended to favor existing local elites, aristocrats, bureaucrats, military and political leaders, and entrepreneurs, enabling them to establish themselves as part of the dominant classes (ibid). These groups tended to have high incomes, and cultural values aligned with modernization and Westernization.

Slocomb (2010) demonstrates how the returning of Battambang and Siem Reap to Cambodia also resulted in new administrative restructuring through the creation of the *khum*, or commune level governnance, in 1908. The *khum* was established to function as an administrative link between the moral law of the village and a selected Chief, or honorable and capable leader, who was acknowledged locally by followers. This Chief was under the bureaucratic control of the *Choavay Srok* (District Chief), who was appointed by the Provincial Governor. The *khum* was an elected body, where registered men and women had the right to vote.

During this period, rubber and rice paddies were not the only agricultural cash crops. By the 1930s, farmers were clearing land for maize production, which led to a lack of labor in the country and effectively constraining the colonial power. The colonial administration promoted agricultural cooperatives which were based on the specialized production of certain crops in each province. For instance, Slocomb (2010) outlines how 3,000 hectares of red soil were prepared for rubber, maize and cotton crops, as well as experimental model farms for coffee and other crops in Kampong Cham. Other model agricultural cooperatives were also set up for sugar palm production in Kandal and rice paddy production in Battambang (ibid).

Colonial rulers were strongly driven by an interest in developing cash crops for capital accumulation because they were in constant competition with other colonies in the world market. Key destination of market for the colonial include Siam, China and

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[5] For more context regarding this situation in Battambang, see Slocomb (2010), Chhuong (1974), and Molyvann (2003).

global which pushed them to focus more on the expansion of transportation infrastructure and communication.

The French's economist, Robequain shows that the railroad system developed in Cambodia was one of the most advanced among all French colonies at the time (Robequain 1944). By 1935, this railway connected Phnom Penh to Battambang. Railway travel in this period was divided into four classes. The first three had individually allocated seats with varying degrees of quality and were generally more private. The fourth class was for native Khmer, where people could walk around, carry large amounts of luggage, and create spaces where people could rest. This class was popular and undefined; passengers could make noise, hang chickens and transport small livestock such as pigs. There were also many food and drink vendors passing from one end of the train to another. This presented a colorful situation which amused travelers.

Chandler's (2008) research shows that Battambang was transformed into a rice production zone, which managed to produce 100,000 metric tons of rice per year by the mid-1930s. It was reported that about 100,000 tons of rice from this province was exported to France at this time, rice whose quality was considered the best within the whole of Indochina (Robequain 1944).

3.4.2 Urban Development during the Colonial Period

During pre-colonial times, existing infrastructure such as temples and wooden houses were constructed along the roads. The colonists perceived this practice as 'primitive,' especially how housing was being constructed with wood and bamboo. The colonists had a clear intention to impose modernization and civilization on the town. However, the existing buildings were viewed with fascination, providing a reference point for a comparative, logical understanding of cultural meaning in the town. The French did not remove these buildings, but expanded on the pre-colonial style of urban development, combining it with the concept of modernism in relation to infrastructure development and urban design. This included the arrangement of the city into blocks of straight, tree-lined streets, and the addition of buildings in newly conceived districts.

Wright (1991) also examines how the basic concepts of French colonial urban development and design in Battambang. Wright argues that the colonial administration

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simply extended the infrastructure that had already existed, but with the addition of road grids and grand boulevards. The town was envisaged to have expansive boundaries, emphasizing the development of commerce, modern administration, health, and the arts as highly visible components of progress. The urban models predominantly reflected a model of positivist urban environment, using the arts and ethnographic works to generate growth from the cultural differences between native and colonial civilizations. The restoration of the local buildings and native culture helped to minimize local resistance to colonial development. In her study of the impacts of French urbanism on the former colonial state, he argues that the French perceived their role as a white men and civilized nation in search for universal rules of urban design and policy development by using colonial states to test urban planning concepts. The intention was to apply these ideas within a context of different cultural meaning, artistic traditions, and environmental and social characteristics. These factors that were specific to the place were perceived to have the potential to influence change in the governance on the town.

A recent study by Han and Lim (2018) clearly shows that the architecture and urban design of Battambang were heavily influenced by French colonization, but fails to explain how and why. In contrast, Wright (199:9-11) looks more critically at the logic behind French colonial urbanism, modernization and modernity. For her:

> *Urbanism refers to the practice of urban design and policy, which is most often influenced by architects, social scientists, and historians. Modernization refers to the process of developing infrastructure in urban areas to influence the human experience. It occurs alongside a shift from a local market base to global markets and capitalism; and from self-sufficient production to an exchange system that responds to the distant consumers. Together with this transition comes systemic change, where highways, railroads, factories, plantations, banking, and insurance firms arrive geared toward large-scale production and trade. Modernity links the diverse experience of people across time, space and different generations through the process of urban transition. It refers to the interaction between the natives and newcomers through social life. Together, modernization and modernity create modernism, which is a self-conscious*

concept that is represented by art and architecture, which depicts a certain standard of living, acting, and behaving.

Drawing from these ideas, Battambang can be observed as having transitioned through two distinct phases of urban development and expansion during the colonial period. The first phase started in 1917 and is characterized by the mobilization of labor from the Mekong delta region, coupled with agricultural modernization. During this time, key buildings such as the district administration offices, shop houses in the center of town, and a commercial zone were constructed on the west bank of the river (currently known as street number one, two and three), of which about 750 dwellings remain. During this phase, two bridges were constructed as well as multiple canals surrounding the city, which were meant to cool the urban environment. The second phase began in 1926 and included the development of rail transportation that connected Battambang to Phnom Penh. This occurred alongside the construction of *Psar Nat*, the current central market located along the residential dwellings in the new villages, which served as a foundation for the creation of new neighborhoods. Many of the buildings and structures constructed during the colonial period remain as iconic landmarks in the city today.

3.5 Post-colonial Nation-Building

The process of achieving independence began in 1940, but took a further thirteen years to realize due to the Second World War when Japan took control of Indochina with the support of Thailand, who again claimed the provinces of Battambang and Siem Reap. This claim was short-lived and ended when Japan lost the Second World War. However, French colonial forces returned, albeit now facing considerable challenges within each native country of Indochina.

The French appointed King Sihanouk to the Khmer throne when he was 18 years old, with the expectation that he would be too young to be manipulated by the locals. During this time, the movement of labor from Annam[6] to Cambodia continued to be

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[6] Annam is a French protectorate that is located in present-day central Vietnam.

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justified by the French, who accused Cambodian workers of being lazy. Sihanouk resisted these pressures and managed to mobilize a nationalist movement against the colonial administration. It took this movement thirtheen years to gain complete independence from the French. The young king pioneered a new national identity, where the people of Cambodia maintained the integrity of the colonial style, albeit with a populist agenda. He revived interest in Khmer cultural heritage through music, the arts and sport, extended agricultural modernization beyond that of colonial influence and introduced industrialization to Battambang. This was something that was overlooked during French colonial rule. He took on the persona of a symbolic father through his populist economic agenda of development, industrial expansion and cultural production. This was used to contest the colonial mindset of Khmer laziness, and promote a new national vision for the country. During his reign, Sihanouk adopted the national motto, *'Sangkum Reastr Niyum'*, or the people's socialist community. His approach to leadership promoted nationalism and the creation of national identity. He asserted that:

> *"The effort of the Khmer people to restore Cambodia since it was liberated has been directed towards establishing a modern society, embedded with the Dharma of the Buddha. The nation's socialism is based on the application of Buddhism in the struggle against social ills, injustice, and inequality. It extols the spirit of fraternity and mutual aid; and the will to sacrifice and transcend individual desires, in order to help the community. Buddhist socialism inspires our national effort towards a straight and true path"* (Ross and Collins 2006: 9).

Ross and Collins (2006) contend that King Sihanouk initiated the renaissance of the country through modernization, the extension of educational devlopment, the preservation of forests and promoting the respect and dignity of manual labor. He led the country towards a simple life, which earned him great popularity among people living both in the cities and rural areas. He strategically conducted tours around all of the provinces, and promoted development programs in each district and town among diverse ethnic groups. He promoted agricultural development, education, health, sports, the arts, music, tourism, infrastructure and industrial development. Between 1953 and 1970, two ideologies were used to guide the contruction of this national identity. The

first was the practice of Buddhist socialism. The second was the development of a new modern style of Khmer architectural practice.

This modern urban architectural movement started when the country obtained full independence and extended to Battambang in 1967 (Ross and Collins 2006). The construction of new buildings were intended to reanimate traditional practices and bring the city's cultural heritage back to life. Thus, modern Khmer buildings constructed post-colonial era were often linked to the mythology of gods associated with Hindu and/or Buddhist practice. For instance, *Bisnuka*, the Khmer patron of architecture is derived from the widely known legend depicting Angkor as a transition between heaven and earth. Angkor is said to have been built by *Bisnuka's* half god, half human son *Ketmelea*, when *Indra* ordered *Bisnuka's* divine architect *Vishukarma* to design the City of Angkor as a replica of *Bisnuka's* palace in the sky. The legend transforms the name of the Hindu god *Bishnulok* to *Bishukar*, who is the god of all construction. This is a primordial element in Khmer ritual practices across the country to the present day (Ross and Collins 2006:241).

Bishuka is symbolized as having eight hands with different attributes. The left hands hold a saw, ruler, chisel, and axe, while the four right hands hold a mallet, rasp, set square and plumb bob. *Bishuka* represents the construction profession in Cambodia. *Preah Bishuka* is also known as a god in Hinduism, who is invested with the skills of all types of construction. He is the patron of architects, smiths, and all types of artisans. In the everyday practice of construction in Cambodia, the practice of worshipping or offering gifts to *Bishuka* is observed as a necessary practice to ensure success in Khmer society (ibid).

Modern Khmer architectural practice draws heavily from ancient religious architecture. Much of these religious traditions represent an idea of egalitarianism as well as demonstrate the unique architecture of Angkor. This arhitecture is unique in that Buddhist beliefs advocate for spiritual perfection through merit-making; and the contruction of temples to celebrate the divine is one manner in which to do so. This concept is reflected in the history of Khmer people tending to devote more time, labor and resources into building temples than building their own house.

The ideology of Buddhist socialism is also represented in urban architecture as a means to guide societal practice. *Sangkum reastr niyum* was not created by Sihanouk as a political party but as a social movement. The word, *sangkum* is derived from the sanskrit word *singama,* which is defined as an association or movement. *Niyum* is derived from *ni-yama,* which means a determination or agreement. These two words can be combined to form the meaning of socialism in terms of Western understandings. The term *reastr* is derived from the Sanskrit word *raj* or *praja-jan,* meaning peoples or nation. The combined phrase may be translated as 'popular socialist community'.

The emergence of nationalism and the reconstruction of national identity can be observed from the 1930s, through the establishment of Buddhist institutes and the Khmer Youth Movement. For instance the formation of the Royal Socialist Youth in 1957 has roots in the Khmer Boy Scouts movement from the early 1930s. This youth movement grew large and could be found represented at every official occasion, such as inaugurations, national sport tournaments and political rallies. The youth movement was embraced by Cambodians of both genders, urban and rural citizens and officials, businessmen, workers, and farmers. Students usually started engaging in politics from the age of eight onwards. Members of the movement benefited from an improved well-being, educational opportunities, and the prospect for a future in an economy that appeared to be growing stronger with the inauguration of every school, university, factory, and development project by the king Sihanouk (Ross and Collins, 2006: 51-52).

"Sihanouk encouraged the members of the movement to practice at least one good deed every day and as result, were well-behaved, helpful and modest in character. Young Cambodians were eager to access a share of the exciting possibilities offered by the contemporary world. They possess the precious gift of optimism and faith in the future of the national plan. Sihanouk proclaimed that socialism as a Buddhist ideal had strong humanitarian merit. He suggested that this ethic of giving other countrymen the greatest possible assistance at the government, judicial, financial, economic, and personal level; so that they may enjoy happiness, comfort and dignity was the greatest ideology. The youth movement also promoted the principles of a healthy body and mind through participation in sport, an ideology, which began to align Cambodia with many advanced countries.

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Khmer modernist architecture, urban beautification and modernization were imposed throughout Cambodia under the guise of nationalism. Battambang became the pioneer of these reforms in terms of symbolic culture, art, music, education, and industrialization through modern architectural development. This was a period where the country attempted to rediscover its potential through the construction of a national identity. The urban architecture movement started in 1953 in Phnom Penh. before being extended to other provinces. It reached Battambang by 1967 through the construction of a specialized university. During this time, modernism was also extended to the development of urban fucntions and key buildings. This has continued in Battambang, where modernism has been extended five times beyond the original French colonial legacy. However, new Khmer modernist architecture and infrastructure has been implanted in each extension. For instance, the revised Master Plan 2015-2030 for Battambang states that:

> *"Sihanouk turned Battambang into a modern provincial city through both commercial and industrial development. Key buildings constructed under the Cambodian modernization program include the court house; public administration buildings to the west of the river; and the garment factories built and operated by the joint French-Chinese businesses near the railway station in Toul Taek commune; and the airport built to the east of the river. The railway was also extended to Poi Pet on the Thai border." (Source: Battambang Municipality 2015:39).*

The master plan also recorded key buildings that were symbolic of this regime. This included schools, a university, museum, exhibition center, and sports complex. Many of these buildings remain, although some have been demolished and replaced by new urban functions, such as modern markets, real estate, or commercial centers. Additionally, many of the natural canals used in the past for flood retention have also been filled and replaced by concrete drainage systems and road infrastructure.

Slocomb (2010) shows that export-oriented rice production and agricultural modernization were the main priorities of the colonial administration, whereas industrial

development only emerged in Cambodia until after its independence. During this period, rice mills and distilleries became more dominant. Factories producing woven products and using imported materials such as silk or cotton thread were enhanced in order to produce women's clothes for local consumption. Printing presses were imported to produce newspapers and books, while foundries were developed to work foreign hard metals. However, not all of these industries were foreign-owned. For instance, local citizens of Chinese heritage owned the majority of the distilleries and usually owned and operated rice mills and ice factory spread throughout the country. Meanwhile, the practices of silk weaving and cloth dyeing remained as traditional family industries operated by Khmer people. During this time, Khmer artisans excelled in carving marble, working with leather and silver-smithing, allowing them to obtain a livelihood beyond traditional occupations.
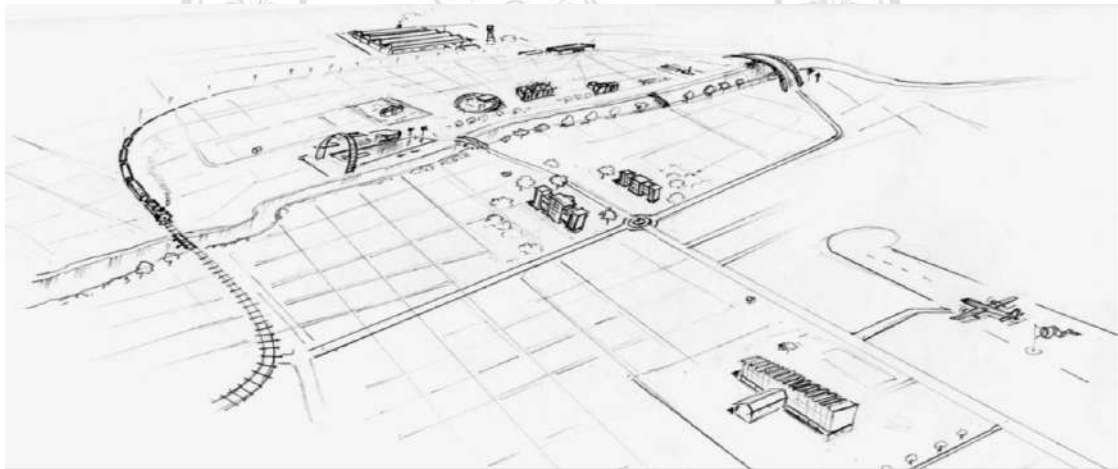
Figure 3.2: Battambang master plan (1953-1970), 3rd phase

Battambang town is now five times larger than what it used to be under French colonial rule. According to the third urban development plan for Battambang, a large expansion area has been planned for the north of the city called *'le quartier vert de Sangkum Reastr Niyum'*, with similar plans for the east and south of the city. These expansions are well-planned, both aesthetically and technically. The planned urban layout of that time was an ambitious, long-term approach, featuring significant public

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access and corresponding to the existing urban layout prior to colonization. The area covered by this plan has still not been completely developed and is currently being occupied by largely unplanned informal settlements (Battambang Municipality 2009).

Battambang has since evolved into a modern provincial capital, acting as the industrial and commercial center of the region. Significant infrastructure and public facilities were built under the modernization program of the Cambodian government of Prince Sihanouk. Several provincial offices, a courthouse and other buildings used for public administration were set up on both sides of the river. Textile and garment factories were built by French and Chinese investors, an airport was constructed, and a railway line connecting the city with Poi Pet had been developed. Numerous schools and a university were built, as well as a sports center, museum and an exhibition hall to serve the cultural needs of the growing population. Several open canals were converted into more modern sewage systems.

Ross and Collin (2006) describe the modern architecture of this regime as highly progressive, bearing witness to a 'golden age' of architecture, urbanization and modernity in Cambodia. Songs, art, and novels were composed about the province, illustrating how the memories of this period are romanticized with a sense of nostalgia. In particular, the enriched livelihoods, specialized production and skills, culture, people, temples, and tourism present during this period are all fondly remembered. At least 84 key buildings and infrastructural buildings were constructed by the regime during this time. Each construction reflects characteristics of Khmer culture, modern architecture, urban functionality and a symbolic identity of both the country and the province. Unfortunately, the regime did not last long.

Sihanouk's claim to have a neutral policy towards international and regional conflicts also did not last long. The U.S., through the provision of aid and military support started to gain more influence on the regime, which was later resulted in Sihanouk's overthrow by a military general in 1970. From this point on, the country fell into conflict, with one of the participants being a mass grassroots movement. This movement started much earlier in Samlout district, Battambang. Peasant farmers began to rebel against *Sangkum Reastr Niyum* because they were discontented with how land ownership and modernized agricultural production was administered by the regime.

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This rebellion was one of the root causes of the establishment of the *'Democratic Kampuchea'* (DK), which would later attract more support and evolve into the Khmer Rouge socialist revolution.

The Khmer Rouge obtained control of the Khmer Republic through the toppling the royalist regime. This scenario lasted only five years, in part due to the vast military influence of the U.S. bloc, who were opposed to the emergence of an insurgent communism. Initially, the conflict manifested as an ideological war between capitalism and socialism. The capitalist and feudalist classes were most often associated with the Sihanouk regime, while a working class movement was mobilized by Lon Nol to topple the king. However, the regime that would be led by Lon Nol would gradually transform into a more extreme form of a working-class movement. This movement would spread the idea that all people needed to be equal and work towards socialist ideals, as well as engage in cooperative agricultural production in rural areas. This implied a cessation of urban expansion and a rapid transition towards agricultural development. Policy at this time focused on the development of rural agriculture and the construction of irrigation infrastructure through the use of manual labor.

3.6 Battambang during the Civil war (1975-1990): The Great Embarrassment

Between 1974 and 1989, Cambodia was flung into a civil war by two extreme regimes: *Democratic Kampuchea*, or more widely known as the Khmer Rouge who held power between 1975 and 1979, and the *People's Republic of Kampuchea* (PRK), who held power from 1979 to 1990.

The Khmer Rouge regime was labeled as cruel and resulted in millions of deaths. Battambang, along with other provinces in the country experienced the worst of these revolutionary practices, most specifically the de-urbanization of the city based on socialist ideals. All urban residents were forcibly relocated to the countryside to work on developing agricultural cooperatives, tending rice paddies, and constructing irrigation infrastructure. This was intended to create an equal society. The Khmer Rouge believed that citizens in urban areas such as Phnom Penh were an exploitative class, who created inequality by controlling the productive resources in rural areas. It is claimed that this resulted in a nightmare scenario of de-urbanization, causing massive

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urban-rural violence (Rice and Tyner 2017), and becoming the victim of its own urban planning practices (McIntyre 1996).

The 1976-1977 master plan of the Khmer Rouge aimed to revive Battambang as the 'rice bowl' of the country (Chandler, Kiernan and Boua 1988):

Cooperative of the socialist idealism introduced by the Khmer Rouge regime, where all people were forced to work collectively on constructing dykes and canals for rice cultivation. The intended aim was to achieve double cropping, with a yield of 3 tons per hectare each season. The master plan also emphasized the need for a progressive shift from a democratic revolution to a socialist revolution. The system was swiftly built, with its ideology defined by the key slogan: 'independence, mastery, self-reliance, and the rejection of foreign aid'. (ibid:37).

The master plan shows that the Khmer Rouge justified the need for an agricultural revolution by utilizing statistics from the 1960s and 1970s to show the extremely low rice yields in areas affected by war or natural disasters. At the time, the total area of cultivated paddy fields was about 2.4 million hectares. By 1977, 1.5 million hectares of this area generated a yield of 3 tons per hectare, with 200,000 ha being double cropped. The plan led to an increase in the value of exports during the 1979/1980 financial year by US$1.4 billion, at a milled rice price estimated at US $200/ton (Chandler, Kiernan, & Boua 1988:37).

During this period, Cambodia territory as a space was restructured into three major administrative zones[7]. This included: (i) the Northwest zone, comprising of Battambang and Pursat; (ii) the East Zone, comprising of Kampong Cham, Prey Veng, Svay Rieng, and part of Kandal; and (iii) the West Zone, comprising of Takeo, Kampot, Phnom Penh, and the remainder of Kandal (Chandler, Kiernan, and Boua 1988; Vickery 1999).

In the master plan, the Northwest zone is comprised of 400,000 hectares of cultivated land, of which 60,000 hectares were double cropped in 1970. This would increase to 200,000 hectares by the year 1980. Of the remaining cultivated land,

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[7] Each zone was further divided into regions. For instance, in the Northwest zone, Battambang province was contained within regions 1, 2, 3 ,4, and 5; while Pursat province was contained within regions 2, 6, and 7.

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140,000 hectares were still considered to be unproductive or fallow, while the status of the remaining 60,000 hectares was unknown. Soon afterwards, the new regime returned to a policy of three tons per hectare for a significant area of the cultivated lands. The master plan aimed to achieve an annual rice export volume of 1,000,000 tons. By 1977, this figure had reached 450,000 tons, which increased to 850,000 by 1980. The revenue earned from rice exports in 1980 was US$ 520 million, equivalent to 60% of the national revenue. Half of this rice was provided to the state as the gift (ibid).

The master plan shows that Khmer Rouge leaders still envisaged the Northwest zone to be the rice bowl of Cambodia, even though this term originated from colonial administration. To maintain this status, one million people, predominantly from Phnom Penh, were mobilized to this location, working alongside 200,000 long-term residents of Battambang. Newcomers were put to work under cruel conditions and were always under the suspicion that they were traitors to the socialist revolution. In contrast, the long-term residents of Battambang were considered to be more trustworthy in regards to achieving the great leap forward towards socialist ideals. Vickery (1999) reveals some contradictions in the rice production model used within the Northwest zone. For instance, the areas to the north of the Sangker River had access to Tonle Sap Lake, yet they never had enough rice to eat. Meanwhile, other areas such as Banteay Chmar and Samlout, the original sites of peasant resistance against the former regime, were not subject to the same level of government control. Peasants from these areas led a revolt against the government in 1940s, and later against the Sihanouk regime in 1967-68. On the other hand, Wat Kor, a temple in Battambang where the former 'Lord of Governors' and noble class lived, had become a safe zone that attracted foreign visitors. The most significant figures of the noble class from this area include Noun Chea, the first Chairman of the Assembly and Penn Nouth, the Prime Minister of Cambodia from 1975 until 1976 (Vickery, Cambodia 1975-1982 1999).

With respect to urban development, the Khmer Rouge regime was vehemently against urban livelihoods and as such, pursued a process of de-urbanization. The regime mobilized people to work in agricultural collectives located in rural areas. During this time, the urban landscape changed very. The Khmer Rouge's master plan prioritized agricultural development for the first phase of the revolution, which was intended to precede industrial development in the Northwest zone. The regime would fall short of

this ambition due to its harsh treatment of urban residents and strong discrimination against the people of Vietnamese ethnicity, both within the country and among those who lived along the Cambodian border.

The Khmer Rouge regime ended in January 1979 and was replaced by the People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK) with the support of the People's Socialist Army of Vietnam. The PRK regime was in place from 1979 to 1990. During this time, civil war broke out and quickly intensified. This was due to the installment of a new regime that was supported by Vietnam. Fierce and extensive psychological warfare became a common occurrence as political groups competed against each other at gaining the trust of the people, while at the same time destroying opposing ideologies. This conflict had been a continuous feature of Khmer politics since the 'Lord of Governors' period in Battambang.

In a critical analysis on the PRK, Slocomb describes the two main groups involved in the civil war (Slocomb 2003).The first was the 'old guard,' who were still strongly committed to the socialist revolution. One of the old guard leaders accused the Pol Pot regime of destroying the economy, requiring that Cambodia be rebuilt from ground up. He promoted a movement and practice termed *'Prolong Pronang,'* which was based off the national slogan, 'loving your country'. The key tenets of this movement were:

> *First is to attack the enemy cleverly. Second is to be productive and work well.*
> *Third is to fulfill the obligation of the state. Fourth is to have a high awareness*
> *of the need to care for each other, and finally, defend and conserve the assets of*
> *the state and the people. Exert from Slocomb (2003:163)*

This movement competed with other cadres and educated people determined to develop a concrete path towards realizing greater self-reliance and assisting in the revolutionary aim of developing the country in a manner that would realize its full potential. For instance, Pen Sovann, who was the prime minister and secretary general of the party that accused the Pol Pot regime of linear thinking, when promoting an administration where it was believed that having water and rice was to have everything. Sovann argued that if the country planned to only have a 'rice bowl,' then all this would

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result in for the country is a bowl of rice. He believed that the country could progress more effectively with the development of scientific and technological knowledge (ibid). Sovann was later jailed for promoting and appointing only those who he considered to be knowledgeable, while ignoring the requests made from the patronage government.

Between 1981 and 1984, the Cambodian economy is believed to have recovered due to a continual progress in collective rice production, which was subsidized by the state. However, poverty, corruption, and a lack of trained and qualified personnel in the country had created a system in which social welfare provisions were not sufficient to meet the needs of the people. External assistance was required from the Vietnamese and Soviet bloc. At this time, a Vietnamese newspaper editor and advisor to the regime made the following analogy regarding the Pol Pot regime:

> *"Three million people were killed, the mass killing of the people is like removing the skeleton from a person. The intelligentsia was killed, the skilled were killed, the economy destroyed, and society thrown into disorder. For the regime to restore this society, families and villages need to be built, where everything needed by the people is provided, including clothes, household goods, and medicines. Every village needs to start a literacy class, supported by cadres, volunteers, soldiers, and teachers."*
>
> Exert from Slocomb (2003:163).

By 1986, Hun Sen was also advocating for a socialist program that was based on the moral argument of mutual obligation between the state, people and state enterprises. He was quoted as saying:

> *"The state should make sure that people have access to the essentials to support their livelihood, including food, clothing, shelter, education, travel and medical care. For their part, the people, in particular farmers should sell their rice and agricultural products to the state to serve industrial development and export income. We should bring production and consumption together and erase unnecessary and corrupted middlemen. Women's associations are the institution to ensure that efforts are mobilized to maintain a contribution to state sanctioned trade from every Sangkat and Commune."* (ibid: 213).

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However, corruption, mismanagement, and poor weather continued to undermine the policy framework that the government had planned. The situation became even worse when the K5 policy framework was imposed, requiring thousands of civilians to be recruited both voluntarily and by conscription as workers and soldiers to combat the Khmer resistance movement along the Thai border. By 1984, *Le Duc Tho*, a military and political advisor, presented a plan to eliminate the Khmer Resistance movement (consisting mostly of former Khmer Rouge members and soldiers) and integrate Cambodia into the *Indochina Socialist Bloc*. The K5 policy framework was a Vietnamese blueprint comprising of five phases: (i) the destruction of border bases; (ii) sealing off the border with Thailand; (iii) mapping resistance units in a sweep operation; (iv) consolidation of the People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK); and (v) withdrawal of Vietnamese troops from Cambodia by 1990.

The K5 scheme required the labor of approximately 32,000 people to be mobilized from each province. Between 100,000 and 200,000 workers were mandated to serve at the border for two or three times per year. These workers would be required to work with soldiers from both the Kampuchean People's Revolutionary Armed Forces (KPRAF) and the People's Army of Vietnam (PAVN). On the 4th of September, 1985, a decree was announced that required all able-bodied men aged between 18 and 30 serve in the army, while female citizens aged between 16 and 55 and male citizens over the age of 60 must work with the military and defend against resistance units. The compulsory period of military service was five years. Those who completed this service would receive a certificate from the state as a souvenir for defending their country.

Heavy fighting along the Thai border lasted up until 1984. However, the conscription of citizens, both to the military and as workers of the state, continued until 1987 even though the construction of barrages along the border was complete two years earlier. By 1985, the total number of people conscripted through the K5 scheme reached 380,000 people. By 1986, 50,000 people were reported to have died during their service from malaria alone. All of those who were conscripted as part of the K5 scheme, both workers and military personal, obtained a certification from the state for their *'labor to defend the motherland'*. In December 1986, a high-ranking official reported that:

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"Among the 2,956 workers sent to the border, 745 returned ill, requiring hospitalization, with 52 of these people wounded, 602 retuned ill but receive treatment outside of hospital, 32 had died, 145 had deserted their post, and among the 1,433 citizens that remained, illnesses were reported, although they continued to working, while receiving treatment." (Slocomb 2003:233).

Overall, Slocomb (2003) shows that the K5-based revolution led by the PRK was considered an embarrassment rather than a case of national pride. The PRK failed to gain support from the people of Cambodia. They failed to impose collectivized agriculture, and the regime instituted policy that led to an increase in out-migration and defections to resistance groups along the border. The regime was also accused of causing the deaths of thousands of Khmer nationals. In total, the scheme engaged around one million civilians, either as volunteers or through conscription.

Chandler (1985) compared the regime of the 1980s to the situation that had occurred in Cambodia between 1811 and 1845, where the Vietnamese court heavily influenced the administration of the country. This particular historical scenario closely reflects the later practices of the PRK. Slocomb (2001) concluded that this revolution was considered to be an embarrasment due to the number of civilian deaths and the damages that occurred from the use of psychological warfare. The impact of the civil war and class-based revolution with socialist ideals can clearly be seen through the urban development that occurred between the 1970s and 1990s. The first regime was clearly focused on achieving universal access to water and rice by turning Battambang province into the rice bowl of the country. The practice of de-urbanization and the development of agricultural collectives strongly contrastsed with the idea of urban development. The regime that followed the PRK was also not too interested in urban economic recovery. Rather, the regime's focus had shifted to the construction of military barrages that surrounded the city and urban areas and protected them from resistance groups.

Despite this, by the early 1980s, urban development in Battambang town had extended to east of the river along National Road # 5, which connects Battambang and Phnom Penh. The key infrastructure developed during this time was the development of

a new market called *Psar Thmey* ('new market') along this road. There was also a large public park planned in Preak Preah Sdach commune. However, this plan for an expansive public green space has yet to be realized due to the civil war and a lack of commitment on the part of the government. The plan also faced challenges as a result to the large number of refugees returning from the camps on the Thai-Cambodian border.

3.7 Battambang as Space for National and Regional Connectivity

Since early 2000s, Battambang has been viewed as the center for re-growth poles. By 2017, about ten business tycoons emerged in which most of them involved with construction, real estate and land speculation within the town and those associated areas at the border gates. However, at least two approaches have been used to create urban space. Land-use zoning and classification have been key driving forces in designing the current land-use master plan for the municipality, and the spatial plan for the provincial level as the whole.

3.7.1 The Municipal Land-Use Master Plan of Battambang

The new master plan classified Battambang as a city with great potential for the development of a process-oriented export industry. This was due to its capacity to produce quality rice and specialized agricultural products, as well as mine valuable natural resources. The city is located along one of nine nodes of the Greater Mekong Sub-region Economic Corridor. This node includes other places in the region such as Yunnan province and the Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region of China, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam.
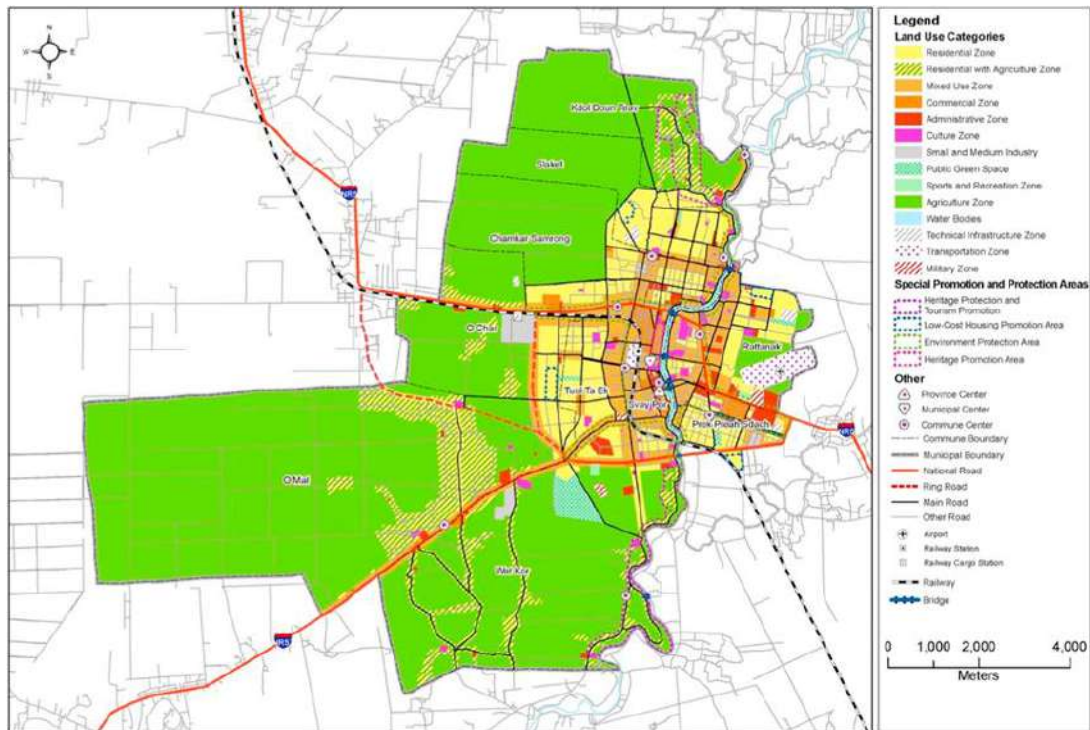
Figure 3.3: Land-use Master Plan and Land classification for Battambang town

Formal economic agreements have been established with Thailand and other neighboring countries. Agricultural production, trade, and small and medium-sized businesses have progressed continuously since the early 1990s. The rapid development of the education sector through state and private schooling is of great importance for the municipality and for the development of its local economy. New buildings have recently been constructed, which cover the area planned for urban infrastructure development both during the independence period and since 1980. These buildings include hotels, markets, private schools and private residences. However, the settlement area itself has not dramatically expanded beyond the borders of these development plans.

The town is located in northwestern Cambodia, approximately 280 km from Phnom Penh. It has a population of about 170,000 people and covers an area of 115.44 km^2. Approximately 30% of this area is urbanized. The city receives an annual rainfall of 1,656.9 mm/year and is connected to Tonle Sap Lake by the Sangker River. The main commercial and government centers lie on the west bank of the river. Urban development planning frameworks have been heavily influenced by the colonial and

post-colonial periods between the 1920s and 1960s. During the colonial period, urban development was heavily concentrated on the west bank of the river, only extending further to the east bank during the post-colonial period. Uncontrolled urban development in recent decades has resulted in frequent flooding between October and December each year. Since 2007, the municipality has transformed rapidly as a result of urbanization and regional economic integration. Two major plans are considered to be the key drivers of these changes.

The Municipal Land-Use Master Plan (2015–2030) was developed with technical and financial support from the Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ). The spatial plan commenced with a land survey in 2004 and was later accepted for internal consultation in 2009. The plan has been developed in collaboration with the municipal government departments, the private sector, and development partners. It was officially approved by the Ministry of Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction in February 2016.

The delay in approving the spatial plan was a consequence of wanting to provide enough room and time for dominant groups to invest in cheap land and acquire control over strategic resources. The development vision for Battambang (2008–2022) is one of a competitive city that is a regional economic center for trade and investment in agro-industrial goods and services along the Great Mekong Subregion Southern Economic Corridor (ADB 2012). This corridor intends to maximize economic benefits through increased businesses, traffic, and commodity flows through the municipality.

Table 3.1: Projected Land-Use Changes for Battambang Town 2015-2030

Land-use category (ha)	Existing 2007	Future 2030
Residential land	456.7	1267.9
Residential with agricultural land	1379.6	975.3
Mixed-use zones	584.5	1040
Commercial zones	42.1	124.9
Administrative zones	132.6	181
Cultural zones	104.4	99.2
Small and medium industrial zones	65.5	81.1
Public green spaces	17.6	178.1

Table 3.1: Projected Land-Use Changes for Battambang Town 2015-2030 (Continued)

Land-use category (ha)	Existing 2007	Future 2030
Sports and recreation zones	9.1	15
Agriculture zones	8557.5	7353.4
Water bodies	89.9	81.6
Technical infrastructure zones	10.5	22.1
Transportation zones	64.2	104
Military zones	29.6	20.3
Total settlement area	2,896	
Total area of Battambang municipality	11,544	11,544

Source: Adapted from the Battambang Master Land-Use Plan 2015-2030

Initially, the urban planning of Battambang was based on a large-scale land survey. In 2009, development guidelines for a Municipal Land-Use Plan 2015-2030 were established in order to safeguard the sustainable development objectives of the municipality and promote beneficial public outcomes (Battambang Municipality 2015).

Building off the land-use master plan and classification system, the town has set its vision towards 2030 with six major goals: (i) create a city of good governance and administration, (ii) create a green and healthy city, (iii) develop the town into a regional center for commerce and services, (iv) develop the town into regional center for agricultural products, processing and trade, (v) develop into regional center for education, and (vi) accumulate the traditional knowledge, heritage, and culture of the city.

Initially, the urban land-use planning process did not take into serious consideration the hydrological impacts of extreme-weather events. Urban land-use planning was mainly focused on the technical and administrative aspects of urban planning. The application of a formal 'spatial fix' to informal settlements has created multiple conflicts among diverse groups within the town and province. Much of the urban development in the municipality has expanded into areas that were formerly

flood-prone wetlands, and are vulnerable to extreme-weather events such as floods (ADB 2015). From early 2008, the interrelated nature of climate change impacts, informal settlements, migration, and urbanization has become more evident. Climate change has been projected to have a significant impact on land-use practices as hydrological flows through the city are gradually altered (ADB 2012; 2015) Notwithstanding, the spatial planning process has taken eleven years to gain approval, and significant areas of land have been purchased speculatively by local elites and their connections.

Between 2009 and 2014, a survey of informal settlements by the municipality was conducted in collaboration with the technical and financial support of the GIZ. This survey covered six major urban communes and found that 10,000 citizens lived in informal settlements, comprising of 3,400 families and living within 66 defined areas. In 2009, this was equivalent to 7.4% of total population (Municipality 2010; GIZ 2016). In 2016, an additional survey was conducted by the local NGO, the Community Management and Development Program (CMDP), which extended the survey to all urban communes. The survey identified more than 100 sites classified as informal settlements, representing more than 10% of the population. The number of people living in informal settlements has increased rapidly and is expected to continue. Despite this, accurate results from the survey have yet to be publicly released due to the ending of technical support from the GIZ in 2016, as well as the arrival of national and commune elections. Political tensions were high due to the ruling party only managing to win two out of ten urban communes in the 2017 commune elections. This results was also reflected in the national elections across the entire province.

Most of the survey was focused on core urban areas surrounding the railway station and along both sides of the river bank. The plan was to transform these areas into public spaces and parks as part of an urban beatification agenda. One issue is the presence of informal settlements. These informal settlements are concentrated in areas that designated for public parks, along canals, outside pagodas, and right-of-the-way areas designated for future roads. The proportion of the population residing in informal settlements has extended beyond ten percent and poses significant governance challenges in terms of managing evictions, compensation and relocation.

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3.7.2 Provincial Spatial Plan and Regional Economic Integration

Figure 3.4: Battambang Provincial Spatial Plan 2010-2030

The Battambang Provincial Spatial Plan (2010-2030) is another driver of urbanization in the municipality. It has been developed to assign specific functions to different areas of the province (MLMUPC 2016b). These include: (i) the development of human settlements; (ii) the creation of open spaces for habitat and ecosystem preservation, especially in regards to forests and watersheds, as well as the creation of spaces to balance the need for land among agricultural and extractive industries, flood management, tourism, and recreation; (iii) the development of suitable transportation corridors to enable access to resources, mobilize people and goods for economic development and enhance social networks, while at the same time minimizing

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ecosystem fragmentation; and (iv) designate key functional areas such as social land concessions and SEZs, while also mitigating land-use conflicts.

Alongside land-use zoning and classification, the concept of town function was also developed and applied to determine a town's potential in regards to natural resources and human labor power. The concept of town function divided urban space and centers into three categories: the high, medium and low level centers.

Table 3.2: Classification of urban center in Battambang

High-level center	Medium-level center	Low-level center
Battambang municipality	1. Muong Russey 2. Thmar Koul 3. Bavel 4. Sampov Luon 5. Kam Rieng	1. Sam Laut 2. Ratanak Mondul 3. Ba Nan 4. Sang Kae 5. Ek Phnom 6. Rokha Kiri 7. Phnom Pruek 8. Koas Krola

Source: Provincial Spatial Plan 2010-2030

The high level center includes social infrastructure, administration and services. These include hospital and private clinics, health specialists, higher education, marketplaces for clothes, fashion, electronic production, construction materials, district administrative headquarters and public access to the internet.

The medium level town highlights key indicators which respond to at least the basic needs, as well as additional needs such as a health operational center, places for sport events, banking branches, more than one secondary school, and a variety of restaurants. The medium level also considers access to roads that connect to provincial capital town or other national roads.

The low-level center is comprised of basic needs such as social infrastructure, administration and services. These include health centers, medical practices, primary

and secondary schools, post offices, communication, places for hosting cultural events, food, and a stable market.

The Battambang Provincial Spatial Plan maps out the infrastructural needs, tourist and cultural sites, and key natural resources for the province, especially in regards to the districts located along the Thai border. It examines the status of existing natural resources, the potential of the land to implement specialized agricultural production, and the potential labor requirements. The plan has been developed on two scales. At the cross-border trade level, there is an economic agreement in place with Thailand, which outlines the business relations between the two countries in terms of trade and investment, food processing, and tourism, as well as private incentives for the development of other key economic sectors. It also outlines the development of the GMS economic corridor, sub-regional economic development centers, short-term economic development zones, and natural resource management zones (Provincial Committee for Land Use Master Plan 2011). At the municipal level, Battambang is meant to act as the strategic center of the province. It is expected that Battambang experience rapid urbanization, economic development, and become a regional connecting point that can capture economic flows between Thailand and Vietnam, and more broadly, economic flows originating or heading towards Japan and China.

Key existing infrastructure includes: (i) National road No.5, which connects the municipality to Phnom Penh and Thailand, (ii) National road No.57, which connects National road No.5 to other urban areas, and (iii) the national railway, which connects Battambang with Phnom Penh and other parts of the country as well as Bangkok. Battambang also has its own airport situated close to urban center, but which has not operated since 2003 (ADB 2012; 2015). While spatial planning is important for managing the impacts of climate change and regulating land-use to produce balanced economic growth, there has yet to be any serious consideration of the climate change-induced hydrological impacts on the urban poor. The plan has primarily focused on the development of a modern environment with large public spaces, and urban vegetation along the riverbanks.

3.8 Conclusion

Battambang has evolved dramatically since the post-Angkorian period in the 11th century. It has been transformed from a small fishing village on the Sangker River, to a Thai feudal outpost, then to a French colonial city, and today representing a regional center for education, agro-industry and business in the country. Once the urban development practice was established through the integration of modernism with traditional temples and housing styles, people have tended to experience a sense of belonging. Among the five major phases of urban planning in Battambang, colonization by the French seemed to have transformed Khmer society the most with the introduction of modernity and urban reform. However, more significantly, the post-colonial period of independence brought a more robust system, where industrialization and manufacturing emerged and aligned with the expansion of the town to a city-scale. Up until the present, little has changed in regards to the structure and content of urban development master plans. However, since the late 1990s, the town has experienced a more rapid transition toward urbanization with an increase in trade activities and the emergence of a small to medium-sized businesses. Furthermore, the growth of the education and tourism sectors has helped to enhance regional cooperation, trade, and investments.

Since the early 2000s, Cambodia has become more open to free market activity, shifting its economic ties from the Communist Bloc nations to the Western Bloc countries operating under a democratic free market. At the same time, formal trade agreements were established with Thailand and other neighboring countries. Alongside this trend, the Municipal Land-Use Master Plan was completed, despite the progress being uncharacteristically slow and never having obtained public consultation. However, it is clear that a vision of re-modernization, beautification of the city, and the intention to link with the global economy exists. This is evident in the country's increasing openness about the country's colonial legacy, its cultural heritage, and the potential to register a greater amount of sites through UNESCO. The municipality is active in promoting a unique urban heritage that blends traditional and modernist architecture. It also plays the role of connecting the city to the surrounding regions, as well as assisting the city in recognizing its potential to become an export-oriented, specialized agricultural processing zone.

However, key challenges remain. This includes the role of local politics and how this impacts good governance and the capacity of government institutions to develop and manage infrastructure to facilitate the flow of commodities; an increase in the number of informal settlements; conflicts over land-use planning and management; impacts of climate change; and the desire to maintain and build upon an identity based on the municipality's cultural heritage, while at the same time meeting the demands of the national and regional economy. Thus, the next chapter will specifically discuss urban climate resilience in the context of urbanization and national and regional economic integration. Two detailed case studies will be used to justify the key arguments of the thesis and develop a narrative about urban resilience policy. These case studies are focused on the complexities of managing informal settlements and conserving urban cultural heritage.

CHAPTER 2

Theoretical Framework for the Politics of Urban Space Making

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the approaches in urban studies that seek to analyze the formation of strategic groups and how they shape urban space. The chapter is divided into four sections. The first section discusses the foundations and historical development of urban studies in Southeast Asia. The second section examines current models of urban systems theory, drawing mostly from structural functionalism. The third section discusses an emerging approach of urban studies known as actor-network theory influenced by science and technology studies (STS). The section will discuss the politics of urban space-making using an urban Marxist approach in order to demonstrate how strategic groups shape urban space. The final section proposes a conceptual framework based upon the literature above and emerging urban political ecology research that can be applied to analyze the politics of urban space-making.

2.2 Historical Perspectives

Early work on urban studies in Southeast Asia can be traced back to the classical work of McGee (1967), Evers (1973), and Evers and Korff (2000). McGee (1967) examines Southeast Asian cities from the pre-colonial period to colonial times. He elaborates on *Deva-raja*, a concept that can be associated with kinship, or refer to gods that watch over religious practice and the construction of sacred cities. During pre-colonial times, the city was the center of the world and/or social order which organized society into various hierarchies, which included kings, officials, specialized groups and craftsmen. Some of these roles included administrative and religious duties, while unskilled laborers generally worked in agricultural production and transportation services.

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The visual materialization of power through space can be seen in the construction of temples, palaces, thrones, and tiered umbrella and lingam structures. These umbrella and lingam structures were traditionally associated with the territorial aspects of water and land and acted as sacred sites of worship where the divine spirits live. With the advent of social, economic and technical progress, the need to create new cities emerged. Two types of cities emerged during this time before the arrival of colonial powers in the early 19th century: the sacred city and market city. The sacred city, as McGee (1967) demonstrates, represented the center of a cosmological system, in which the worship of *Deva-raja* connected the heavens with the earth and would lead to abundant agricultural surpluses and peaceful labor relations with the countryside. On the other hand, market cities were mostly associated with sea trade and maintaining commercial relations with the traditionally dominant Chinese and Indian traders. Market cities were generally the result of royal families' desire to extend their control over important sea ports, thus being able to deny or allow access to foreign traders. Being on the coast, these market cities were generally very ethnically diverse, with Chinese and Indian traders taking up the most politically and economically dominant positions. However, during this time there were many ethnic conflicts that were taking place, leaving the region vulnerable to invasions by European powers which would later established colonial systems all over the globe (McGee 1967; Evers and Korff 2000).

Urbanization in the colonial period was driven by industrialization and plantation development, mostly taking place in a few areas that were rich in natural resources, but would later intensify as new infrastructural and transportation technologies developed. Due to shortages in skilled labor, most industrial took place on urban areas rather than rural with diversified occupations (McGee 1967). Meanwhile a clear social class system had developed. The upper class was made up of the European elite, local aristocrats and wealthy entrepreneurs (mostly Chinese businessmen), government officials and civil servants served as the middle class, while the majority of unskilled workers, laborers and farmers were classified as lower class. The colonial administration was inspired by the prospects of private gain, the spirit of adventure and conquest, and national prestige (Murray 1980). Their economic approach was also motivated by the exploitation of natural resources in order to produce commodities for export and discipline the native work force (ibid).

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The colonial administration found itself in a very vulnerable situation during World Wars 1 and 2. This is due to an emerging nationalism inspired local aristocrats, teachers and farmers that found colonial governance unjust. After some time, this new group of nationalist leaders took control over the government, but decided to maintain the colonial ideals of modernization and economic development. Many Chinese entrepreneurs and lower-class groups became unhappy with these newly formed elites.

Evers (1973) and Evers and Korff (2000) researched the influx of ethnic groups, in particular Chinese migrants, arguing that these groups were often left very vulnerable throughout these regime transitions. However, these Chinese migrants would later form quasi-groups and associations to support specific political leaders in return for the protection of their businesses. They would later come to have great influence over the entire political system.

2.3 Urban Systems Thinking and Resilience

With an increase in the frequency of floods and climate change impacts, systems approach has reactivated in order to assist in coping with the increased need for urban perspectives in structural, institutional and capacity development. The system is expected to respond to the current discourses of sustainability and resilience. The costs and benefits of infrastructure projects are predominantly justified by using physical and empirical models that can predict the likelihood of an urban system being able to recover from specific external shocks or pressures. These models are selected on the basis of how well they are perceived to understand certain urban ecosystem functions when coping with these extreme events.

Fainstein (2014) defferentiates the concepts of resilience and sustainability for urban development. The first refers to the ability to prepare and respond to exernal shocks in the short-term, while the latter focuses on how urban systems can maintain their functions continuously for longer time. However, current literature suggests that urban resilience has become the guiding principle for urban planning when dealing with flooding and other climate change-related phenomena.

The resilience framework is made up of three interrelated components. These include the role and function of the infrastructure system, the capacity of the institutions, and the agents associated with these systems (Tyler and Moench 2012). This approach was later extended by Bébé et al (2018). First, the role and function of physical systems include the built environment, the ecological system and topographic features. Second is the carrying capacity of the system and the functions of a city's governance, and finally is the need for institutions to have a more flexible capacity in order to deal with external shocks such climate change impacts (ibid). This framework proves very useful for policy makers and expert groups, and is now known as "systems thinking" (da Silva, Sam and Luque 2012). Systems thinking has been accused of favoring rational cost-benefit analysis within infrastructure development, while paying less attention to different social groups, in particular the well-being of the urban poor.

Systems thinking within urban planning tends to favor physical infrastructure interventions which are directed and managed by experts. This approach is often blind to the resourcefulness of diverse urban groups, failing to recognize the benefits of social cooperation with them while ignoring the negative impacts on them by system failures (McKinnon and Derickson 2013). Systems thinking overlooks the hidden power which plays a significant role in influencing urban spatial arrangements and urban system functions (Castells 1977).

De Angelis (2017:79) defines the urban system as a social system in which power and influence penetrate into everyday social practices and the urban commons. The urban commons is a shared set of values held by multiple communities, who reinforce local regulations using place-based institutions. Individuals within urban systems tend to be unaware of how these values impose a governance structure on the behaviors and practices of people in urban spaces.

Negative shocks against resilient social system include ecological degradation, investment and labor fluctuation in the world system. To mantaining social resilience, social cohesion and productivity are often seen as strategies(De Angelis 2017). Unfortunately, unequal local power relations have often seen as constraints in promoting urban resilience and equitable access to urban resources (Taylor 2015). There

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is need to create a bounded community that can provide spaces of resistance against capitalist penetration into urban system as the common (Stavrides 2016).

Rigg and Oven (2015) apply the concept of neo-resilience to understand the dominating influence of market-based approaches on urban development. These approaches most often favored by mainstream institutions such as Multi-Development Agencies and banking institutions, as well as the current emerging of Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) project. It has been argued that once strong infrastructure and markets have been established, benefits will be redistributed towards local development and poverty eradication (Rigg and Oven 2015). However, experience from other countries shows otherwise, usually resulting in a lack of local participation, and sometimes even further marginalizing vulnerable groups in urban areas (Rigg et al 2016). Market-based approaches to development have also been criticized for assuming a linear path of development that all societies pass through, while in practice this is hardly the case. This prioritization of the upper classes of society taking control over a predetermined path of development generally leads to the marginalized groups of society being further ignored and left out of the decision-making processes (Friend and Moench 2013). This is clearly demonstrated in regards to urban informality and informal settlements, where the negotiation and participation processes are largely absent from development interventions (Roy 2009). Urban development needs to be treated as a negotiable discourse that cuts across various key issues such as economics, values, knowledge, power, and politics (ibid).

To summarize, the urban systems thinking approach tends to favor the knowledge of specific experts and other dominant groups such as policy-makers. It fails to consider marginalized groups and their struggles against urban spatial injustices. This approach is strongly influenced by the structural-functional aspects of urban systems theory. It does not effectively conceptualize how urban space becomes socialized and assembled into social network(s). Thus, the emerging debate between strategic groups and ANT should not be overlooked.

2.4 Strategic Groups and Actor Network Theory (ANT)

Urban scholars have not paid much attention to the concept of strategic groups. The early work of Evers (1973) examines how these strategic groups emerge throughout

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the processes of social change, while social class is less resilience, through power struggles for many post-independent countries in Southeast Asia. Strategic groups emerge as a result of transformations that occur during a country's modernization process, in which development interventions are largely concentrated in urban centers and are still influenced by the economic and political administration models of the colonial era. In Cambodia, these groups included local aristocrats and wealthy businessmen from various ethnic groups. They distributed the national wealth amongst themselves, created large networks, and muscled control over important resources, eventually forming into the ruling class. Evers and Korff (2000) later examined the role of ethnic groups and cultural diversity within the country, focusing particularly on Chinese migrants and businessmen. Throughout the various regime changes, these groups would often confront many obstacles to their business interests. To alleviate this issue, they would later form into associations and lend their support to various political leaders and parties in exchang e for the protection of their capital. Although they did not have any official positions or power, their abundance of economic capital political connections had great influence over the country's leaders. Evers (1973) suggests that the dominant strategic groups were generally made up of key actors such as civil servants, military personnel, teachers, professionals and ethnic businessmen.

Key actors listed by Evers (1973) and Evers and Korff (2000) tend to fall into dominant groups, reflecting structure-agency relations suggested by Giddens (1984). Giddens argued that within society, social agents and their actions tend to operate within a social structure with a variety certain functions. In other words, society is governed by a structure of rules, where social agents develop strategies, capacities, resources, and social relations in order to influence the social structure in distinct ways. Giddens conceptualized structure as having rules and resource. The first is dominated by both normative framework and code of signify where certain authory and functions applied and the second is ability of the social agent employ to capturing of resources which include allocative resources and authority or the ability of agent to alter the structure (Giddens 1984).

However, Evers (1973) and Evers and Korff (2000) did not include the agency of the urban poor and other marginalized groups that have struggled against dominant groups in a variety of ways. Marginalized groups take on different roles and utilize

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distinct strategies when attempting to gain access strategic resources. They build their own alliances, use social media, and participate in civil society to gain access to urban space and land resources. These groups can be referred to as, *subordinate strategic groups*, where everyday forms of resistance are used against dominant groups (Scott 1984,1990).

There has been discontent with existing urban studies approaches. This has led to the adoption of Actor Network Theory (ANT), an approach originating from Science and Technology Studies (STS). ANT has come to reject three established urban studies approaches. The first approach rejected was influenced by human ecology of the Chicago school of thought, which conceptualized urban studies as the analysis of the relationship between urban spatial forms and complex systems associated with urban life, neighborhood adaptation and cooperation. The second approach rejected was influenced by Marx Weber, who viewed the city as the basic unit of economic analysis and development, and the cultural diversity within urban areas (Farias 2010a).

The third approach ANT is fertilized by Latour (2005) who was discontented with is the structure-agency approach of Giddens (1984). The structure-agency approach tends to favor human agency, while largely ignoring non-human agents such as animals, things, and materials that are the products of science and technology (Ritzer and Stepnisky 2014). ANT approach was first applied on urban studies in 2007 by Farias (2010a) with three established ontologies. First, the city is part of reality and can be treated as an object without influence from human action. Second, the city is not socially constructed, but is made up of an associated network of bodies, materials, technologies, objects and human-nature relations. Third, the city has multiple roles and functions.

ANT was first used in the 1980s to understand society as a totality, treating social groups and associations as units of analysis which are influenced by both human and non-human actors. Non-human actors generally refers to objects with their own agency that emerged due to the development of new science and technologies (Latour 2005). Latour argues that social groups are not fixed entities but are interwoven with a variety of other groups and networks. In the same way, the city is made up of various urban assemblages that include infrastructure, streets, transportation, and buildings.

In the 1960s, before the emergence of ANT, another theorist by the name of Herbert Marcuse was already examining the influences of science and technology on social life. In his seminal work, *One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Societ* (1964), Marcuse acknowledges how the influences of science and technology increasingly transform traditional institutions and the social life of individuals and groups into rational forms of thought and action. He later warns that science and technology should not be considered as universal givens, changing the individual into a 'one-dimensional man' that promotes a singular idea of human progress. Marcuse argues that the one-dimensional man is being manipulated by capitalism to enhance economic growth, resource exploitation and the control of labor. Instead, science should be free from the exploitative and dominating tendencies of capitalism and be used to advance economic justice and better the livelihoods of the working class (Marcuse 1991).

Wallerstein (1983/2011) refers the emerging capitalism to the flow of capital through law of accumulation, the increased specialized ethnic groups in gaining favor from state mechanism and the creation of binary opposition. Braudel (1977) shows capitalism emerges out of specialized work which include the conversion of land into systematic commercialization, the creation of safe investment for capital flows and social distinction.

Therefore, emerging technologies have been deeply integrated into neoliberal practices of urban transformation. These technologies are driven by rational calculability and economic growth objectives and are used by a special administration of experts to manage populations within a particular space. Clear examples of this type of space are SEZs and zones of exception (Ong 2006).

The field STS, and with its ANT, has not been without its critics. Feenberg, for instance, criticizes STS for not being able to explain social forces that play a role in defining, selecting and applying new technologies (Feenberg 2017). Consequently, ANT's boundary of studies between human and non-human actors becomes blurred once they are networked into the technical system. ANT approach ignores social agent and group's neutrality inspired by social action and values. The approach is seen as

more hybrid of study between human actors and technical world where social interaction among social members should be an interest.

In comparing model of city development between those from North America and Western Europe with those in Asian cities, McKinnon (2011) shows technically advanced infrastructure, as the result from scientific and industrial transformations since the 19th century, have made these countries to encompass with time and space in terms of transportation and communication, while in Asian cities, the push for technological advancement is to bridge the globalization in which economic development, urbanization and nation-state buildings remain their foundations. Experience from Europe showed town were born out of labor division revolution and wok which links to both market and industrial revolution that affect and influence over everyday life of people.

Although ANT continues to have a great influence in urban studies, the approach has not been able to account for the influences of various social groups. Thus, the concept of strategic groups proves useful in accounting for this absence and examining how social groups shape urban space. Key scholars of social group strategies continue to have a human-center approach to action when analyzing social structure.

Bourdieu defines strategies as the ability of individuals and group to understand specific rules, and using this knowledge to employ various strategies to influence the structure of a society (Bourdieu 1990b). Instead of being directed by the cultural elements of structure that are within our unconsciousness, humans can act to manipulate these rules and structures. To achieve social goals, individuals and groups act through their *habitus* (cultural practices that are based off certain rules and norms), which influences what types of tactics and strategies are employed within a given 'field' (ibid). Meanwhile, De Certeau (1984) examines the differences between strategies and tactics. For him, strategies are the domain of the dominant actors, such as property owners, companies, city administrations, and institutions that have a definite 'place' in the social landscape. Strategic actions establish calculated relationships with other actors, which allow them to gain access to the 'field of force', which assists them to assert control, manipulate policy, plan future actions, and preserve advantages they have acquired. He later defines strategies as the art of calculation, manipulation of power relations. As for

tactics, De Certeau states that they are mostly used by subordinate groups. It is a space of other or power of invisibility (de Certeau 1984).

The concept of tactics and strategies plays a key role in understanding forms of everyday alienation that arise from urbanization and modernity. (Lefebvre (2014:293) defines, "tactics as an everyday fact about social structure reality, while strategies encompass the domain of actions and decision-making. Strategies perceived as minor magic in everyday life associated with survival strategies". On the other hand, Bourdieu argues that strategies are conditioned by human interests and actions, not only towards the maximization of economic and symbolic profit, but also for prestige and honor that have unique values within a group (Bourdieu 1990a). He defines these types of interest as social captial, where individuals are supported in building careers through affiliated professional associations and kinship relations. This approach proves useful to understand how actors influence urban space-making by gaining access to special employment and promotion opportunities through their use of accumulated social capital (Cveticanin, Spasic and Gavrilovic 2014).

In Cambodia, most political strategic groups (PSG) are dominated by the ruling elite within the Cambodian People's Party (CPP). Over time, these groups have developed a complex web of power relations that concern the control of military power, the creation of off-budget political and business mechanisms to finance political actions, and a mass patronage system that functions through the exploitation of strategic resources (Craing and Kimchoeun 2011). Milne, Pak and Sullivan (2015) argue that there are two functions played by these PSGs. First, they exist to support the ruling party establish a loyal base amongst the general populace through the practice of gift-giving. This acts to institutionalize a system of mass patronage. In this case, the practice of mass patronage would be classified as a strategy due to it being implemented by the elite in order to increase voter support for both commune and national elections. Second, the formation of PSGs is used to gain the support a diverse number of groups, within the institutional frameworks and leadership of the Cambodian Red Cross, and youth groups at the local level. What is often the case is that the membership of these groups is derived from the families of civil servants and newly emerged business tycoons. These groups have formed into their own dominant class and often takes on the dual-faced role of political representative and businessman. A large number of

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Okhna, or business tycoons of Sino-Khmer descent, have acquired privileged access to strategic resources, extractive industries, and other informal economies.

To mobilize funds and political support, PSGs establish relations with various actors such as NGOs, civil servants, foreign investors, and international development agencies. Rather than contribute to the development of the nation, the logic of their approach is to legitimize their power. Ferguson (1990) identified this process as the 'anti-development machine'. The role of PSGs is to weaken the formal role of state institutions in order to maintain a formidable nexus of elite interests, create a space that allows for the regime's survival through the exploitation of resources, and facilitates a mass patronage system to serve elite interests (ibid).

The existence of *Okhna* roles in Cambodian society is a long-held practice that has occurred since feudal times. In the past, their role was to serve as political authorities for the aristocracy. They were appointed by the King to be in charge of a specific territory. The power of the King was very much reliant on the *Okhna* during these times (Chandler 2008). However, within the current regime, the role of the *Okhna* has evolved to encompass the formation of patron-client relationships that are based largely on economic interests. Recent work on this topic (Verver 2015; Verver and Dahles 2015) has demonstrated that the bestowal of *Okhna* titles has been used to reconcile the mass patronage system of the ruling party.

However, there has been little attention paid to the role of subordinate strategic groups during these processes, especially in case of secondary towns. This includes those living in urban slums and informal settlements, media groups, and NGOs. These groups tend to organize into networks and have their own strategic practices in order to gain legitimacy within the dominant structure.

2.5 Strategic Groups and the Making of Urban Space

The concept of urban space originates from a missing manuscript of Marx about land, money and labor operated to alienate social class and the creation of withering state power while writing the capital. Lefebvre (2016) argues that once urbanization and industrialization had already taken off, the concept of urban space emerged as central concept for urban studies and planning. Land, which used to be nature, becomes a

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'great laboratory', where raw materials, technologies and labor can be located. The transition from 'nature' to 'land' implied that land, or space, could now be quantified and thus sold in measurable quantities. This gave 'space' a exchangeability quality becoming increasingly important within the transformational process of the city. For instance, architecture is restricted to lot size while purchased land is further broken down into smaller sizes. Land is later replaced by the city, leading the disappearance of the 'earth laboratory' and most agricultural production (ibid).

Lefebvre's work inspired Castell and Harvey, who view there was no theory of space except social relation within urban system. Castell (1977) explored the distinctions between spaces for production and reproduction, leading to the localized concentrations of specific activities, such as industry, transportation, residential areas, recreation, retail, and finance. These spaces later become sites of struggle among different groups seeking to realize their goals, interests and values within urban areas (Castells 1983). Harvey (1973) see spaces as the interrelationships amongst spatial forms, social processes and human practices. In other words, urban spaces are viewed as containers that represent various social relations and human activities within a certain spatial context.

Stanek (2011) shows Lefebvre sees the production of urban space through the triad of perceived, conceived and lived spaces which can be translated into spatial practice representations of spaces and space of representation. He later argues that the operation of urban space is conducted through three spheres of planning practices: the material, balance sheets, and knowledge of place (Brenner and Elden 2009). Through these planning practices, the creation of new space becomes a means in which capitalism bases its survival strategies and strengthens its resilience (Lefebvre 1973). To counter these capitalist tendencies, Lefebvre proposed the production of spaces oriented around socialist ideals such as collective ownership and management of the commons. Influenced by Lefebvre, Harvey examines urban space as a built environment, which is meant to attract investments, as well as create new surplus values through urban development. These development interventions include the creation of physical infrastructure required for production, product circulation, consumption, and the reproduction of a labor force (Harvey 1985). Lastly, the process of urbanization leads to

transformations in the socio-spatial nexus, allowing for new opportunities to emerge for capital accumulation as well as social justice (Harvey 2003) and (Soja 2010).

Labbé (2014) draws experience from Vietnam, arguing that the production of urban space is the product of urban transitions, involving more than the redistribution of people from rural to urban spaces, but also the restructuring of administrative, economic, physical, socio-cultural, and political dynamics. She later argues that broad urban transitions are very much influenced by regional transformations, which are strongly linked to the control of land and livelihoods. These transformations cause specific urban spaces to go through transitions that are determined by urban master plans. These plans entail strategies for urban growth and other important variables, such as the area's density. They are facilitated by new areas of built environment, administrative processes, and the reclassification of space from rural to urban. Urban space is remade through urban expansion and restructuring, where contested strategies and rights among different groups are continuously being played out. Urban restructuring can be seen through territorial order transformations, zoning, and the contestation certain meaning and values.

Harvey (1985) argues that urbanization is influenced by flows of capital, which alter the physical landscape in search for new surpluses of land. Capital is circulated through capitalist agents, moving alongside social relations, and restructuring urban spaces through infrastructure development. He later examines the role of SEZs, where new forms of industrialization and highly concentrated urbanization are taking place (Harvey 2012). Harvey (2018) later accuses the practice of capital circulation and commodities exchanged through geographical expansion let to capital overaccumulation and labor surplus which hold people life as hostage.

To understand urbanization, Lefebvre (2014) identifies three levels of conceptual understanding. The first is an upper-level superstructure of the state and capitalism. There is also a bottom level of society, which refers to the social reality and terrain where the practices of everyday life take place. A middle level can also be conceptualized as the process of urbanization, which operates between the superstructure and the the social base (Lefebvre 2014). This framework represents a shift away from Marx's grand theory of labor and alienation in understanding society.

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Lefebvre specifically advocates examining the practices of everyday life in the context of urbanization to better understand society as a whole.

In their re-reading of Lefebvre, Brenner and Elden (2009) demonstrate that the practices of everyday life that Lefevbre identified, reflect the bottom level of society where movements over collective ownerhip and the right to the city have emerged in order to counter the privatization of urban space. Lefebvre (2014) also advocated urban spatial policy that promoted the inclusion of diverse spatial plans, and the particiation of diverse socio-economic groups in the planning processses of neoliberal urban development. Thus, he calls for the creation of socialist urban spaces (Lefebvre 2016).

The practice of urban zoning is one form of remaking urban space where practices of exclusion and inclusion interplay. Urban zoning is a set of knowledge and power relations that are utilized by both dominant and subordinate groups. The traditional Khmer concept of zoning relates to the arranagement of water and land, known as *Tuek* and *Dey*, together forming *Tuek Dey*, or territory. Moreover, traditional Khmer urban planning was arranged according to the water systems, which determined where the urban center, spaces of administration, production zones and religious areas were positioned.

In the modern Cambodian city, Molyvann (2003) shows the need for human-environmental relations through zone classification and preserving of urban spaces. The concept of zoning was further elaborated upon by Esposito (2018). She shows that the concept of zoning was first introduced by the colonial powers in late 19th and early 20th centuries. For instance, the zoning of Phnom Penh occurred in the 1890s, and by the 1920s legislation was passed that re-organized space to what the colonial administrators perceived as less disorderly. Alongside this, districts that were classified by the residents' ethnicity were created in 1890s and later codified in the 1920s. The process of zoning is linked to the principles of order and discipline, progress and hygiene, standards of practice, and sets of norms and regulations that adhere to worldview of urban planning experts and modernity (ibid).

Soon afterwards, zoning policy would begin to be manipulated by the state and other dominant strategic groups. For instance, the conversion of paddy fields into real estate, the creation of informal settlements and tourism spaces are all processes linked to

actions of dominant strategic groups. This research refers to these actions as practices of zoning. However, these practices of zoning come up against two major problems. First, it tends to favor modernization and city beautification, as well as lead to the exclusion of the urban poor and the creation of informality. Second, in the common context of political uncertainty, social capital among the urban poor is viewed as a threat against the ruling class and dominant strategic groups.

In many third world cities, the urban space that is utilized by the poor generally hold communal access rights. These areas are occasionally referred to as the urban commons (Brown 2006a, b; Brown and Rakodi 2006). They include formal squares, roads and streets, vacant lands, and other spaces 'on-the-edge' of the city. Those whose livelihoods depend on these urban commons are vulnerable to shifting modes of urban governance and transformation, in particular the conversion of communal access areas to enclosed, private lots (ibid).

However, the urban poor have not been passive. To mitigate these problems, they have developed various urban survival strategies, the most effective being the forming of local networks. These survival strategies can be thought of as practices of social capital enhancement in order to overcome structural constraints (Lin 2001; Field 2003). Bourdieu treats social capital as a capital of social connection, honorability and respectability that can be converted into economic, political and social advantages (Bourdieu 2002). Accumulation of social capital can be achieved through voluntary work and/or being part of a civic association (Putnam 2000). Social capital is facilitated through social groups, kinship relations, and the collective well-being of the community (Stark 1974). The sense of 'neighborliness' is one strategy used to accumulate social capital (Schwirian 1983). A socially-diverse neighborhood with an abundance of social capital is known to experience less discrimination amongst the various social classes. In these neighborhoods, low-income groups can elevate their family through better opportunities of employment (Harding and Blockland 2014).

The social capital employed by subordinate strategic groups is generally not sufficient to overcome the rigid power structures controlled by dominant groups. Subordinate groups' struggles to be included within the urban spatial planning process should not be overlooked. In his work, *Weapons of the Weak* (1984), James Scott

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exmines the various strategies adopted by subordinate groups within contexts of authoritarian state power and injustice. The strategies have also been adopted by the urban poor which include backbiting, gossip, character assassination, rude nicknames and oaths of silence, are meant to minimize direct confrontation with dominant groups. Scott refers to these stagies as 'practices of everyday resistance.' Within the power-laden setting of urban spaces, the everyday resistance practices of the weak need to be clear and calculated, particularly when dealing with the dominant class or public authorities.

Scott later examines the power exercised by dominant groups against the weak. This consists of the use of both public and hidden transcripts that are displayed within the cultural practices of the elite and the judicial system (Scott 1990). He argues that power cannot rule by force alone but needs to engage in the public perception through strategies such as performance. In other words, cultural performances and public transcripts are tools utilized by dominant actors in order to obtain respect, admiration, and adoration from subordinate groups. This is in contrast to suborinate groups' strategy of gossip, which draws its power from the use of hidden transripts. Gossip is a strategy of the weak that is used to attack the reputation of dominant groups by circulating negative information publicly, thus countering dominant groups' strategies of obtaining the public's respect and admiration.

In urban development, Scott argues that the role of the state and high-modernist architecture have not improved the human condition and well-being but have rather acted as forms of domination (Scott 1998). He provides four elements that are characteristic of this failed logic of utopian social engineering. The first is at the state level, the practice of simplification by state administrations in providing social welfare often fail to incorporate the concept of human freedom. Second, high-modernist urban architecture is strongly influenced by urban modeling and science that are aimed at ensuring the efficient calculability and use of resources. However, this often fails to comprehend diverse human needs. Third, the imposition of high-modernist architectural frameworks by the state overlooks existing local knowledge and alternative values of resources. Finally, the roles of local participation and civil society that are often used to resist the injustices of high-modernist development schemes often weaken authoritarian states, but also have the tendency to serve elite interests and the ideology of

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neoliberalism. Scott (1998) also analyzes how modern urban planning influences the formation of informal settlements. One aspect is that aesthetic standards, social discipline, and spatial order require that modern city administrations work ruthlessly for the disappearance of these informal settlements. Another aspect is that within modern urban planning frameworks, informal settlements are perceived as dangerous, noisy, unsanitary and disease-ridden, as well as a potential site where threats to urban authorities can emerge.

With the failure of human ecology to address the negative impacts of neoliberal urban planning, Castell (1983) advocated for a grassroots urban social movement that would struggle for better urban spaces and material conditions. This also included the search for a common cultural identity within these urban spaces. This idea was later supported by Harvey when he advocated for a social movement that would fight for reducing the unequal gaps of capital accumulation made by the capitalist class within urban development and transformation (Harvey 2012). Furthermore, Harvey argues that social movements need to have the demand of the collective right to the city, where respect for diverse cultural practices, human rights, improved livelihoods and social reproduction are viewed as the objectives of urban struggle.

Urban resistance from subordinate groups refers to their capacity to resist unjust urban development through 'everyday forms of resistance'. It is the ability to claim deep-rooted rights to access resources, such as employment and urban services. In these cases, resistance implies strength, self-determination, and supportive networks, rather than the extremely violent nature of the civil war that Cambodia experienced between the 1970s and early 1990s. From a sociological perspective, resistance is often understood as a power relationship, or the creation and/or expansion of space that enables decision-making power. Resistance can come in a variety of forms, resembling Scott's (1984) 'everyday forms of resistance,' the hidden, informal, and non-confrontational. Strategies of resistance often reconstruct local knowledge and culture in order to mitigate failures of modern urban planning, as well as contest future interventions (Scott 1998).

2.6 Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework used in the thesis is drawn from urban political ecology. This approach examines environmental changes in the urban landscape through the lens of power relations between different actors (Benton-Short and Bennie-Short 2013). Pioneer work by Swyngedouw (1996) utilizes an urban political ecology approach to examine the politics of water within the urbanization process. His work nicely demonstrates the complex interplay between human and non-human interactions, power relations, and social class. The effects of urbanization on water management is seen as a central issue circulating across urban physical spaces and social systems. This is especially the case due to water being an important source of wealth and power, and generally leading to the development of a social class structure once its benefits have been unevenly distributed. Swyngedouw (2003) shows within capitalism system, water circulation is seen as metabolic system of circulation of money and commodities which operated and structured through social interaction and relations of capital flows and exchanges.

The urban political ecology approach has been applied by Heynen, Kaika, and Swyngedouw (2006) to examine unequal power relations, the contestation of meaning, and the strategies used by strategic groups to shape the urbanization process. The key drivers of urban development and transformation include emerging urban geopolitics, spatial planning, land-use zoning, and land-use classification. Both dominant and subordinate groups contest each other in order to gain access to new strategic positions and resources. This encompasses the process of regional integration and the application of spatial fixes that influence the urbanization process in Cambodia. Urban political ecology is also interested in examining the processes in which urban space is made and remade under the influence of neoliberal market mechanisms.
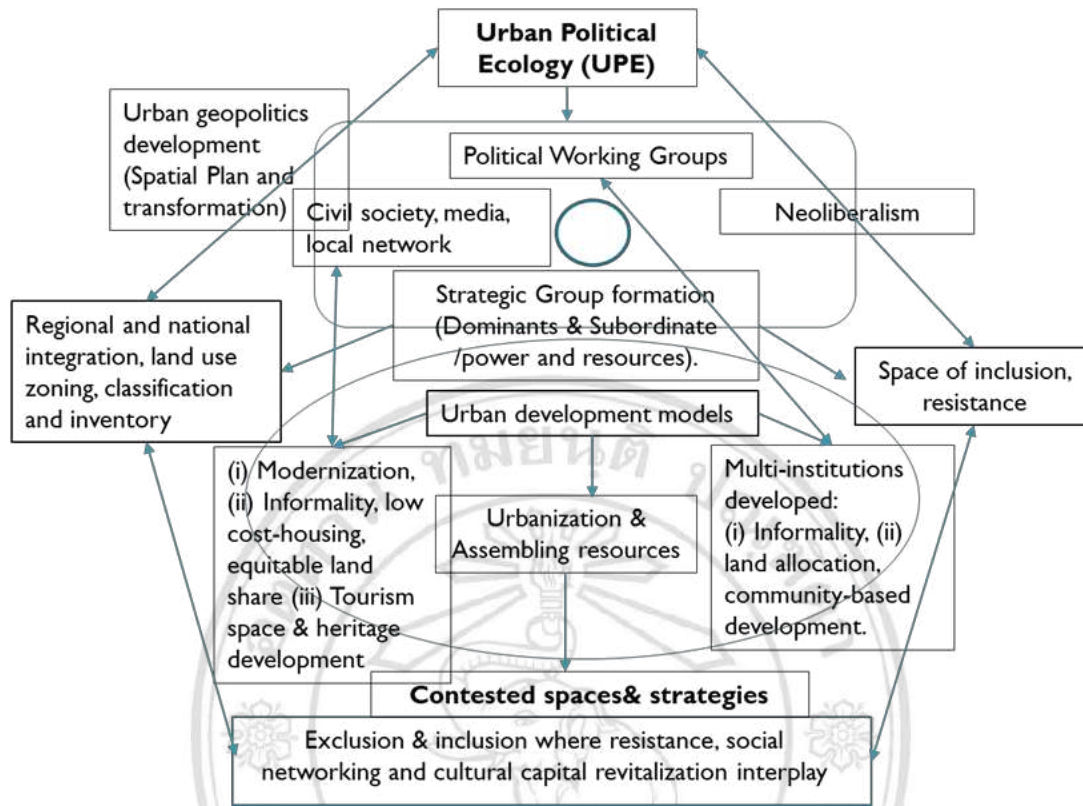
Figure 2.1: Research Conceptual Framework

It is inevitable that urban residents will pursue strategies that attempt to contest access to specific urban spaces and strategic resources. The emergence of strategic groups that seek to influence the planning of urban space and associated political and economic systems has been conceptualized through a scalar-analysis which examines the national, regional and geopolitical transformations occurring in the region. Actors such as foreign investors, bilateral donor governments, and multilateral international development agencies, such as the UN, all influence these processes. This in turn affects how social classes and structures have developed within the country. Strategic groups emerge through a process of rapid transformation, urbanization and democratization, and in turn influence the shaping of policy, the spatial arrangement of the urban environment, and the control of strategic resources.

These groups play a key role in facilitating both state and foreign direct investments in the city. They provide support to political parties in order to secure

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access to strategic resources and protection from subordinate strategic groups. Investors make up the majority of actors working throughout Southeast Asia. These investors have the objective of applying a spatial fix in order to open up new urban spaces and modes of production that will expand their capital investments beyond their existing administrative boundaries. Key investments for these groups include hydropower projects, irrigation schemes, agricultural production, real estate, business development and manufacturing hubs. Dominant strategic groups are not confined to urban elites but consist of members from across the class hierarchy (Evers and Gerke 2009). However, these dominant strategic groups tend to have existing access to extensive strategic resources, significant capital and up-to-date technologies. This tends to create greater levels of social inequality.

Meanwhile, subordinate strategic groups apply coping strategies to sustain their livelihoods and access to urban spaces, services and strategic resources. They act to resist the loss of urban services and strategic resources, most particularly land. Other objectives held by subordinate groups include forming a sense of social belonging in a particular urban space, a common sense of neighborhood, reinforcing social networks, and obtaining equitable land-sharing policy. This includes the development of social and cultural capital through the preservation of urban heritage and tourism spaces and the transferring of power over the urban commons to local kinship networks.

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THIS THESIS HAS BEEN APPROVED TO BE A PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
IN SOCIAL SCIENCE

Examination Committee: **Advisory Committee:**

………………………………….Chairman   …………………………………..Advisor

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(Lect. Dr. Chayan Vaddhanaputi)   (Prof. Dr. Yos Santasambat)

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(Assoc. Prof. Dr. Karuna Raksawin)

…………………………….Member

(Asst. Prof. Dr. Chusak Wittayapak)

17 January 2020

b

To

My late mother

To whom I owe everything

c

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This thesis was only able to be conducted through the support of various scholars, friends and the funding institution.

This work has partially grown out of my personal journey of working as a professional researcher. This pushed me to become further interested in the humanities and social sciences. During my study, I increasingly realized the importance of researching the human and non-human practices characteristics of social suffering and differentiation among emerging social classes in Cambodia. The opportunity to engage in this PhD study has been one of the most rewarding periods of my life.

First of all, I wish to thank my supervisor, Ajarn Chayan Vaddhanaputi for encouraging me to work independently since the beginning. His suggestion for me to conduct a full bibliography on existing resources, articles and books related to urban studies in the university libraries proved very beneficial in obtaining an overall view of the subject. Although he has multiple important tasks to attend to, he often finds time to talk and listen to what I have read and written in order to provide feedback and suggestions, some of which were spiritual and ethical in nature. At the final stage, he advised me to contemplate on how I approached key informants and build rapport among research participants. He also encouraged me to engage in the debate between strategic groups and social class, how I came to take on strategic groups as the central concept to study the politics of urban spaces.

I would also like to thank my external examiner, Professor Emeritus Dr. Philip Hirsch, from the University of Sydney, Australia. After reading my draft manuscript, Dr. Hirsch brought up critical questions to unlock my limits in dealing with the research problems I was trying to address and develop a conceptual framework that effectively joined the dots within the whole thesis structure.

I wish to thank my co-advisors and external advisor. Professor Dr. Yos Santasambat has been very resourceful and assisted me throughout my time contextualizing and problematizing the research subject. He encouraged me to layout the urban geopolitics of Cambodia and address the emerging role of the ethnic Khmer Chinese in shaping the urban development of Phnom Penh and other coastal provinces.

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These suggestions are reflected in the rationales behind the research site selection and justification. I wish to thank Dr. Karuna Raksawin, associated professor from the Faculty of Architecture, for her very kind and supporting nature. Although, she does not subscribe much to urban social theory, she suggested me to look at spatial and land-use plans, as well as readings from an architectural point of view relating to urban places and public spaces.

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Voreakmonibotr and Try Sereymonidora, have been an inspiration for our family's commitment and my intellectual journey.

Try Thuon

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หัวข้อดุษฎีนิพนธ์	การเมืองของการสร้างพื้นที่เมือง: กรณีศึกษาเมืองพระตะบอง ประเทศกัมพูชา
ผู้เขียน	นาย ตรี ตวน
ปริญญา	ปรัชญาดุษฎีบัณฑิต (สังคมศาสตร์)
คณะกรรมการที่ปรึกษา	อาจารย์ ดร.ชยันต์ วรรธนะภูติ อาจารย์ที่ปรึกษาหลัก
	ศาสตราจารย์ ดร.ยศ สันตสมบัติ อาจารย์ที่ปรึกษาร่วม
	รองศาสตราจารย์ ดร.กรุณา รักษวิณ อาจารย์ที่ปรึกษาร่วม

บทคัดย่อ

ดุษฎีนิพนธ์นี้มุ่งศึกษาการสร้างพื้นที่เมืองและความยืดหยุ่นในการปรับตัวของเมืองและ
ชุมชน ผ่านมุมมองการสร้างกลุ่มเชิงยุทธศาสตร์ ภายใต้แรงกดดันจากการพัฒนาเมืองอย่างเร่งด่วน
การเชื่อมโยงทางเศรษฐกิจในระดับภูมิภาค และผลกระทบจากการเปลี่ยนแปลงสภาพภูมิอากาศที่
รุนแรงมากขึ้น พระตะบองในฐานะสัญลักษณ์ของการสร้างความทันสมัยและการปรับรูปโฉมให้มี
ความสวยงาม ท่ามกลางเมืองใหญ่อันดับสองอื่น ๆ ของกัมพูชา พระตะบองจึงถูกจัดวางโดยกลุ่มที่มี
อิทธิพลเชิงยุทธศาสตร์ให้เป็นเมืองน่าอยู่ เมืองตลาด และศูนย์กลางการค้าของภูมิภาค พร้อมด้วย
ศักยภาพทางการท่องเที่ยวที่สำคัญ ซึ่งเกี่ยวพันกับมรดกทางวัฒนธรรมของเมือง ทั้งวัดเก่าแก่
สถาปัตยกรรมสมัยใหม่ในยุคอาณานิคม บ้านไม้โบราณ และมรดกจากยุคเขมรแดงที่มีความเป็น
เอกลักษณ์เฉพาะตัว เพื่อให้บรรลุอุดมคตินี้จึงมีการกำหนดเขตการใช้ที่ดิน ภายใต้กระบวนการนี้มีการ
นำเสนอโครงการต้นแบบริเริ่มสำหรับพระตะบองและเมืองใหญ่อันดับสองอื่น ๆ ของประเทศ เช่น
โครงการพัฒนาที่อยู่อาศัยราคาถูกและการพัฒนาหมู่บ้านวัฒนธรรม ตามแนวคิดการจัดสรรที่ดินอย่าง
เป็นธรรมสำหรับผู้อยู่อาศัยยากจนในเมือง ตามชุมชนที่จัดตั้งอย่างไม่เป็นทางการ โครงการนี้
ดำเนินการควบคู่ไปกับกระบวนการจัดระเบียบการใช้ที่ดินในเมืองและการจัดการปัญหาเชิงพื้นที่ ทั้ง
ในระดับเทศบาลและระดับจังหวัด มีการทดลองใช้กรอบการทำงานเชิงนโยบายในเทศบาลพระ
ตะบองเพื่อเป็นต้นแบบในการพัฒนาเมืองให้ทันสมัยสำหรับเมืองใหญ่อันดับสอง

อื่น ๆ ของประเทศ เช่น ยุทธศาสตร์ส่งเสริมการท่องเที่ยว นโยบายระดับชาติสำหรับจัดระเบียบชุมชน
ที่ก่อตั้งอย่างไม่เป็นทางการและการยกระดับชุมชนแออัด รวมถึงร่างกฎหมายเพื่อการมีที่อยู่อาศัยราคา
ถูก

       การศึกษานี้มีสองกรณีศึกษา กรณีแรกคือการสร้างพื้นที่เมืองผ่านการจัดประเภทความไม่เป็น
ระเบียบของเมืองและการกำหนดเขตการใช้ที่ดิน พร้อมกับโครงการพัฒนาที่อยู่อาศัยราคาถูก และการ
ใช้ที่ดินร่วมกันอย่างเป็นธรรมในฐานะ โครงการต้นแบบ กรณีที่สองคือการสร้างพื้นที่การท่องเที่ยวใน
เมืองผ่านการส่งเสริมหมู่บ้านวัฒนธรรม การศึกษาแสดงให้เห็นว่าเมืองเป็นพื้นที่แย่งชิงผ่าน
ปฏิสัมพันธ์ในแผนการจัดการเชิงพื้นที่อย่างเป็นทางการและกับดักทางสถาบันของความไม่เป็น
ทางการ ซึ่งมีผลต่อความสัมพันธ์ทางสังคมระหว่างกลุ่มต่าง ๆ เช่น กลุ่มที่มีอิทธิพลครอบงำและกลุ่ม
ที่เป็นรองในประเด็นความยุติธรรมเชิงการใช้พื้นที่และการใช้ที่ดินร่วมกันอย่างเป็นธรรม รวมถึง
ระหว่างผู้อยู่อาศัยเดิมกับผู้มาอยู่ใหม่ในประเด็นการเก็งกำไรที่ดิน การลงทุน และการรื้อฟื้น
วัฒนธรรม

       การศึกษามีข้อสรุปว่าการสร้างใหม่ของพื้นที่เมืองและความยืดหยุ่นในการปรับตัวไม่สามารถ
บรรลุเป้าหมายได้หากขาดการพิจารณาในโครงสร้างทางสังคมที่ยึดโยงกับกลุ่มผู้มีอิทธิพลเชิง
ยุทธศาสตร์ ซึ่งมีโครงสร้างทางการเมืองเกื้อหนุนอยู่ ในขณะที่การสร้างพื้นที่เมืองและความยืดหยุ่น
ในการปรับตัวกลับเน้นไปที่ปัจจัยเชิงกายภาพและระบบสาธารณูปโภค การสร้างองค์กร สถาบัน การ
กำหนดเขตการใช้ที่ดิน การจัดประเภทต่าง ๆ เป็นผลของแผนการใช้ที่ดินและการจัดการปัญหาเชิง
พื้นที่ ซึ่งกระบวนการนี้ถูกควบคุมโดยกลุ่มผู้มีอิทธิพลเชิงยุทธศาสตร์ และกระบวนการนี้มักละเลย
การมีส่วนร่วมของกลุ่มคนชายขอบและการเกิดขึ้นของทุนทางวัฒนธรรมที่ได้มาจากการรื้อฟื้นมรดก
ของเมืองผ่านการพัฒนาหมู่บ้านวัฒนธรรม ทั้งหมดที่กล่าวมาสะท้อนให้เห็นว่าแนวทางการสร้าง
ความยืดหยุ่นในการปรับตัวแบบกระแสหลักนี้ได้ละเลยการเกิดขึ้นใหม่ของพื้นที่ อัตลักษณ์ และการ
สร้างความเป็นเจ้าของทางสังคมร่วมกัน และด้วยการแย่งชิงพื้นที่และการสร้างความยืดหยุ่นของ
ท้องถิ่น การศึกษาพบว่าองค์กรอิสระของรัฐ ภาคประชาสังคมของความไว้วางใจ การจัดวางตำแหน่ง
แห่งที่ใหม่และการมีส่วนร่วมของท้องถิ่น มักถูกละเลยในกระบวนการวางแผนและการสร้างพื้นที่
เมือง

Dissertation Tittle	The Politics of Urban Space Making: A Case Study of Battambang Town, Cambodia	
Author	Mr. Try Thuon	
Degree	Doctor of Philosophy (Social Science)	
Advisory Committee	Lecturer Dr. Chayan Vaddhanaphuti	Advisor
	Professor Dr. Yos Santasambat	Co-advisor
	Associate Professor Dr. Karuna Raksawin	Co-advisor

ABSTRACT

This study examines urban space making and resilience through a lens of strategic group formation, under pressure from rapid urbanization, regional economic connectivity, and intensifying climate change impacts. Battambang as a symbol of modernization and city beautification among other secondary towns in Cambodia is often viewed by dominant strategic groups as a livable city, market town, and regional trading center, with significant tourism potential related its urban cultural heritage. This heritage includes ancient temples, modern colonial architecture, traditional wooden houses, and unique legacies from the Khmer Rouge era. In achieving this ideal, land use zoning has been conducted. Within the process, the concept of equitable land allocation to the urban poor in informal settlements through a low-cost housing development scheme and the development of a cultural village has been proposed as a pioneering model for Battambang, and other secondary cities in the country. This has been coupled with a process to formalize informal urban land plan and spatial fixes applied at both the municipal and provincial level. Policy frameworks such as a tourism promotion strategy, National Circular 03 on Informal Settlements and Slum Upgrading and the Draft Law on Affordable Housing are being experimented within Battambang municipality as urban model development for other secondary towns within the country.

Two case studies were selected for the study. The first is the production of urban space through urban informality classification and land use zoning with low-cost housing development and equitable land sharing as model and second is the urban tourism space through cultural village promotion. The study shows that urban space is contested through interaction surrounding a formal spatial plan and institutional traps of informality, which affects social relations between different groups: dominant and subordinate over spatial justice and equity land share, as well as old residents and the newcomers, in relation to land speculation, investment and cultural revitalization.

The study concludes that the remaking urban space and resilience cannot be achieved without addressing the embedded social structures of dominant groups, which are consistently reinforced on the ground by political structures. While the production of urban space and resilience tend to focus on urban hardware, infrastructure systems, the development of institutions, land use zoning, classifications as the result of land use plan and spatial fixe, this process often controlled by those dominant strategic groups. The process ignored the participation of marginalized groups and the emerging cultural capital achieved through reviving of urban heritage through the development of a cultural village. This reflects how the reconstruction of space, identity, and social belonging, is regularly omitted in mainstream resilience approaches. Through encountered space and local resistance, the study suggests for autonomous state institutions, trust civil society and reposition and local participation are often missing out in the planning and the making of urban spaces.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATION

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ADHOC	The Cambodian Human Rights and Development Association
AFD	The French Development Agency
CBD	Commune Data Base
CDIA	Cities Development Initiative for Asia
CEDT	Cambodia Empowerment and Development Team
CMDP	Community Managed and Development Partner
CMP	Community Mapping and Documentation
CPP	Cambodian People's Party
CNRP	Cambodian National Rescue Party
CVS	Cambodia Volunteer Society
DED	German Development Service
DIFID	Divide, Isolate, Finish, Integrate and Develop
DK	Democratic Kampuchea
ICEM	International Center for Environmental Management
IMF	International Monetary Fund
GIZ	German Corporation for International Cooperation GmbH
GMS	Great Mekong Sub-Region
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
K5	Five blueprint strategies: Destruction of border areas, sealing off the border with Thailand, mapping resistance units in a sweep operation, consolidate the People Republic of Kampuchea into Indochina socialist blocs and withdrawal of Vietnamese troop from Cambodia by 1990.

LIST OF ABBREVIATION (Continued)

LAs	Local Authorities
LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender
LICADHO	The Cambodian League for the Promotion and Defense of Human Rights
LOA	Letter of Agreement
NCDD	National Committee for Sub-national Democratic Development
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OBOR	One Belt One Road
PRK	People Republic of Kampuchea
PGS	Political Strategic Groups
PWGs	Political Working Groups
SGs	Strategic Groups
SLC	Social Land Concession
UCRSEA	Urban Climate Resilience in Southeast Asia Program
UNDP	United Nation Development Program
UNESCO	United National Education and Scientific and Cultural Organization
UPE	Urban Political Ecology
WB	World Bank

ข้อความแห่งการริเริ่ม

ผู้วิจัยขอรับรองว่าเนื้อหาของดุษฎีนิพนธ์ฉบับนี้เป็นผลงานของผู้วิจัยดุษฎีนิพนธ์ฉบับนี้มิได้เสนอเพื่อสำเร็จการศึกษาในระดับอื่นๆ

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STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY

This is to certify that the best of my knowledge, the content and analysis of this dissertation is my own work. This dissertation has not been submitted previously for any degree.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.1 Background and Rationale

Current scholarship on urban development in Cambodia tends to focus on both the spatial and territorial transformations that are influenced by neoliberalism. Traditionally, the urban planning of Khmer civilization tended to value the roles of water (*Tuek*) and land (*Dei*), or *T6uekdei*, meaning 'territory.' We can see the importance placed of water and land through their development of complex water systems in which hydraulic connectivity served as a source of livelihood, community and religious devotion. Molyvann, a Khmer architect who focuses on urban modernism, argues that the hydraulic networks of various Khmer cities were constructed alongside well-planned water management systems. These water management systems consisted of a network of carefully maintained lakes (*Boeung or Trapeang*) and canals (*Preks*) located within the city territory, and which had designated areas for flood protection, retention, and transportation (Molyvann 2003). This complex system also served for water supply, recreation and food production (Friend, et al. 2015). However, its most important aspect was its cultural association with sacred temples and religious life (Esposito 2018).

This traditional Khmer knowledge seems to be rather overlooked by the various competing interests within contemporary neoliberal development as well as within the emerging geopolitical context of the country and the region more broadly. In his work on neoliberalism, David Harvey argues that the practice is ignoring the traditional Khmer knowledge and is driven by "overaccumulation by dispossession", a process in which the promotion of privatization, financial circulation, crisis manipulation and resource reallocation by the state are some of its main identifiers (Harvey 2003).

In regard to urban planning, this process generally relates to land-use concentration and zoning regulations that benefits market mechanisms (Allmendinger 2009). Overaccumulation by dispossession originates from Harvey's work on the relationship between neoliberalism and the capitalist mode of production. He argues that the capitalist mode of production requires continual geographical expansion (Harvey 2018). To achieve this, it creates new forms of transportation, communication and technology as well as seek out new sources of cheap labor, resources and untapped markets (Harvey 2001). The various transformations that occur due to this process lead to the creation of a new urban space that Harvey terms a "spatial fix" (ibid:2001, 2018). Earlier theorist of this process, Henri Lefebvre, defines this process as 'the politics of space" (Brenner and Elden 2009), arguing that the production of space is not a neutral phenomenon, but is rather continually being influenced by state strategies and ideology (Lefebvre 2016).

Similar to other cities in Southeast Asia, Cambodian cities at the capital and provincial levels are finding themselves having to deal with various land issues, conflicts over access rights and zones of exclusion. Various studies have demonstrated that most urban schemes that seek to improve the human condition often fail as a result of oversimplification of administrative intervention plans, as well as ignoring local knowledge and the participation of civil society (Scott 1998). On the other hand, other theorists, such as James Ferguson, reject these claims, arguing that it is never the intention of state-led project interventions to overcome human poverty, but rather to justify and legitimatize the state's power (Ferguson 1990). This argument has been founded within most of the development projected being implemented both at the urban centers and those at rural areas, like in Cambodia.

The increase in China's role in urban development and investment has made the situation much more complex, adding a new factor into an environment in which a powerful state tightly controls investment, while also facilitating decentralized market production through state entrepreneurs and partnering companies. With the arrival of China, the established mode of neoliberalism introduced by the West has gradually begun to wither. Meanwhile, there are at least two major policies that activate the Chinese influences.

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The first is the approval of the Five Principles of Peace and Co-existence in 1955. Its objective was to increase Beijing's outgrowth and has served as a blueprint for peace and co-existence to all states. These principles include the need to respect a country's sovereignty, non-aggression and interference, equality, mutual interest and peaceful coexistence (Burgo and Ear 2010). Although many countries have had conflicts with China during 1970s and 1980s, Cambodia is often seen as one of China's main strategic partners to defend against the hegemonic powers of the West as well as other regional actors such as Vietnam and Taiwan. China maintains these strategic partnerships through financial support, providing loans and becoming trade partners to resource-rich countries all around the world. Financial support is directed towards infrastructure development, natural resource extraction, and the search for fertile land for commercial crops and cheap labor for export-oriented production (ibid).

The second factor contributing to the rise in Chinese influence in the region is the development of the *One Belt, One Road (OBOR)* project and the *Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)*. These two projects have intensified greatly since 2013 where alliance, investment, financing and trading partners are sweetening (Lim and Cilbulka 2019). In 2018, Cambodia became part of BRI's Indo-Pacific region, located along China's 21st century maritime Silk Road. The participation of Cambodia in the BRI demonstrates the principle of mutual interest applied over a cooperative zone of development. Development investment went towards infrastructure, real estate and satellite cities. For instance, Koh Pich (Diamond Island) used to be a swamp but now consists of over 250 acres of residential area (Yamada 2018), while the coastal province of Koh Kong now contains a deep port, naval base and airport within the industrial zone of Sihanouk Ville (Yamada 2019). In return, China interests in Cambodia includes natural resources, as a trusted member state within ASEAN, as real estate developers, minerals exploitation and diplomatic support.

Furthermore, the social and cultural roots of Chinese migrants and settlements should not be overlooked. Their presence has been recorded by a Chinese envoy who visited Angkor as far back as 1296, however their economic visibility only became noticeable during the arrival of colonial powers in 1863 (Edwards 2002). Some Chinese migrants were classified as political refugees, who would later establish trading

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relations and intermarry with the local community (ibid). During the colonial period, the French thought of Chinese migrants as the most industrious and with an exceptional talent for making profits, while viewing the natives as their counterparts who were lacking off (Robequain 1944).They were allowed to operate businesses and monopolize various key products such as alcohol, opium, salt, fish and rice commercialization (Murray 1980). Up until the 1940s, Chinese migrants managed to acquire ownership of approximately thirty percent of the rice processing machines in French Cochin-China (ibid).

Cambodia's experience with capitalism has often had to confront the problem of social inequality. During the time of the Khmer Rouge (1975-79), society was classified into three classes: the feudal class, the capitalist and petty bourgeois class, and peasant/farmer class. During this time, each class was forced to work as equal cooperative agricultural producers, but due to the capitalists' suspicion of the regime (which included all of those who owned cars, brick houses, and factories), the Khmer Rouge could not achieve their utopian socialist ideal (Chandler, Kiernan and Boua 1988). Those who opposed the regime consisted mostly of ethnic Sino-Khmer, who from the beginning seemed to hold doubts regarding the revolution (Heder 1997). It is believed that during the civil war in the 1970s-1980s, many ethnic Sino-Khmer migrated to other countries, such as Thailand, and others began taking up trade on the Cambodian-Thai border in 1980s.

In 1991, all of the conflicting factions came together and signed the Paris Peace Agreement (PPA). This gave the opportunity for all refugees to be repatriated and integrated into society. The issues of peace and country restoration were central points that had the objective of transforming the battlefield into the ballot box and marketplace. At least 22 associations were established in the provinces, with 140 offices located at the district level (Siphat 2017). The Khmer-Chinese or Sino-Khmer are a very diverse ethnic group that can be differentiated by their distinct dialects. However, the most interesting characteristic of their culture is their tradition of creating associations in which the chief obtains the special title of business tycoon (*Oknha*). This title is not restricted to the group, but also other Cambodian ethnic groups such as the Khmer-Vietnamese and Khmer-Muslims. As the political regime changes, these groups and

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titles often become associated with the ruling party, Cambodia's People Party (CPP), in order to establish reciprocal relationships and elite pacts amongst the ruling party leaders. Here, various agreements of loyalty, contributions and protection are interplayed (Verver 2015). This practice reflects the social norm of the patron-client relationship, in which *Oknha* receive protection as well as various privileges that assist them in their business ventures, while in return promising loyalty and financial contributions to the ruling party (Verver and Dahles 2015).

In a study of the rise of Chinese capitalism in the Mekong region, Santasambat (2015) examines the emergence of the "zone of exception," and demonstrates how the central government controls and supports Chinese businesses while at the same time allowing for decentralized market operations and the circulation of products. This system produces a specific space that allows for special administrative technologies and interwoven organizational networks among various ethnic groups to develop (Santasambat 2015). From a cultural perspective, various social and cultural norms are embedded within Chinese business networks, leading to the establishment of their own business practices through various special connections, relationships and networking with overseas Chinese communities and associations (Santasambat and Cheng 2017).

The arrival of Chinese capitalism in Cambodia has led to the creation of special economic zones (SEZ). These zones support various multi-sectoral operations such as water infrastructure development, garment factories, mining, and real estate. There have been both critiques and praise directed towards SEZs. One critique is that the business practices of SEZs are often viewed as maintaining outdated Fordist practices, which favor productivity and labor concentration for disciplinary purposes over social and environmental safeguards. The Chinese capitalist class claim that these actions are required in order to facilitate local economic transformation, while the West accuses their actions as an act of human right abuse and resource exploitation (Pal 2013). This is because the investments and loans from the Chinese government are generally free of any legal strings attached, unlike those provided by the West, thus allowing stakeholders to ignore various safeguard policies (Pheakdey 2012). In the case of hydropower development, the creation of special hydropower zones within resource-rich areas generates conflicts between conservation, logging, science and technology

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interests, continually transforming the power dynamics in regards to resource exploitation and exclusion. This has led to the development of a neo-patrimonial practice of resource exploitation and a mechanism of exclusion within overlapping zones of Chinese businesses (Kakonen and Thuon 2019). If we refer back to Harvey, the emergence of these zones of exclusion nicely reflect the processes of primitive accumulation and profit-making. Local business tycoons are allowed to accumulate ever-increasing profits, but only in return for their political loyalty and significant financial contributions to the ruling party (ibid).

1.2 Research problems

In contemporary urban studies, there has yet to be a clear understanding regarding the traditional roles of urban planning and cultural systems that are embedded within local elite practices during the production or urban spaces. Since the early 2000s, foreign experts and international aid organizations have urged the Cambodian government to become more democratic and reduce inequality among low-income groups through the promotion of civil society projects. However, while inequality has decreased, local ruling elites and business tycoons have been able to increase their power. During these transitions, laws are institutionally weak, allowing emerging strategic groups to organize the capture of strategic urban resources and positions. These strategic positions are then played out in the politics of urban space-making, which generally consists of infrastructure, regional connectivity and various urban development interventions that originate from urban land-use planning and land-use classification policy.

The production of urban space plays a major role in regards to the development of urban spatial plans. It can be used to understand the layout of monuments, as well as the process of heritage and non-heritage space-making for both conservation areas and economic tourist enclaves (Esposito 2018). Sack (1986) applies human territoriality to understand the production of space. Drawing from human territoriality, space can be understood as a continual process in which various sources of power influence spatial strategies that concern the control over resources, people and territory. Human territoriality is a triad of social forces consisting of the classification of areas, the boundaries of communication, and the acts of control and enforcement (Sack 1986).

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This definition refers to power of the state to enforce its laws within a given territory. However, the various emerging groups that participate in the state formation and transition process are ignored in this analysis. Another study conducted in Ha Noi, Vietnam (Labbé 2014) examines how urban space is the result of land-use zoning policy, which can be seen in the state's urban master plan and New Urban Areas classification. Urban space is realized once the laws and regulations are able to be effectively enforced within the given zones (Labbé 2014). However, similar to Sack, this study focused solely on state power, and did not touch upon the role of emerging strategic groups in the shaping of urban space.

This study examines the nature of urban space making within Battambang, one of Cambodia's secondary towns. This town is relevant because strategic groups have been able to emerge and capture urban strategic resources, and in the process undermine proposed urban development plans put forward by both foreign and native experts. Furthermore, Battambang has had an extensive amount of influence on development models in the country since the post-civil war restoration period.

Recent scholarship on small and medium-sized cities with populations less than 500,000 are often neglected among urban scholars and policy makers and are in need of more attention. These cities often receive less political attention than megacities (Daniere, Garschagen and Thinphanga 2019). They have very limited financial resources and low-level capacities in terms of human capital and administration. These authors further argue that secondary cities work very differently in terms of social realities, human and financial resources, political autonomy, and so on.

Over the past decade, Battambang has been used as the pioneer model site for urban development models and has been replicated in other secondary towns and urban centers throughout the country. Its selection criteria include a broad range of the site's legacy in terms of pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial influences. Examples include Hindu temples, traditional houses, colonial architecture, ethnic diversity and natural resources. Agricultural products such as rice have been perceived as particularly beneficial since the colonial period and this attitude has continued on through the post-independent states, including the Khmer Rouge regime and the current one. In the early 2000s, the government began to conduct its own land-use surveys. These surveys have

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been and continue to be used as the basis for many policies and urban development models being proposed today. Many of these policies propose to use Battambang as the testing ground for pioneer models that have the potential to be applied on a larger scale. This includes urban land-use mater plans, cultural heritage and tourism, low-cost housing development, equitable land-use sharing among organized informal settlements and provincial spatial plan formulations.

Figure 1.1: Battambang's Strategic Location within national and Regional Context

Another unique characteristic of Battambang is the influx of internal displaced people from the two decades of the civil war (1970s-1980s). The war left many people in seek of new settlements, space and livelihood security, many deciding to settle in Battambang due to its proximity to the border. By 2009, the technical land-use zoning and master plan recognized more than 10,000 people who resided in informal

settlements, around 7.4 percent of the total population of the city, and consisting mostly of migrants. Seven years later, the 2015-2030 land-use master plan was approved by Ministry of Land (dated February 5, 2016). This land-use plan is technically and financially supported by the German International Development Agency (GIZ) and is the first of its kind to be approved (two similar land-use plans have yet to be approved in the larger cities of Phnom Penh and Siem Reap). The plan has become the foundation for the structural planning of urban spaces, being used to develop urban spatial plans, land-use zoning policy, and inventory and classification systems. Infrastructure such as water management, roads, drainage systems, river embankments, market towns, informal settlements, low-cost housing development, and tourism development are generally prioritized.

Given this urban transition, this study sets out to understand the politics of urban space-making in Battambang. To do so, I adopt the concept of *space through zoning* as the core lens to analyze this process. I modified strategic groups as social agent from Evers (1973) and Evers and Korff (2000) as an emerging role in shaping and constructing urban space within Southeast Asian cities. Evers and Korff (2000:13) argue that the process of urban development is shaped by the rules and regulations that are imposed by the state and municipality, the alliances between planners and architects within the relations of urban space production, and the struggle between strategic groups over urban strategic resources and positions. In other words, urban development plans are based on a political process that allows various markets to emerge, thus opening up new opportunities for strategic groups to gain control over important positions and resources. These newly acquired positions and resources are used to influence politics, policy-making and the production of urban space.

1.3 Research Questions

- How do different strategic groups perceive, conceive and contest the production of urban spaces in Battambang throughout different periods of transformation?
- How does the formalization of urban land-use planning and spatial fixes affect marginalized groups and social inequality, and what are the marginalized groups' strategies of contestation?

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- To what extent do different groups of actors develop strategies to capture the benefits of emerging heritage spaces created from newly zone created?

1.4 Research Objectives

- To examine how the strategies of contestation from different groups shape the production of urban space in Battambang.
- To map out the process of urban land-use formalization and examine how this impact marginalized groups and their resistance against spatial injustice.
- To examine the formation of strategic groups that have the objective of capturing the benefits of emerging urban tourism spaces through promotion of cultural villages.

1.5 Problem Statement

Over the last few decades, Cambodia has transformed rapidly from its deadly civil war in the 1970s, to foreign occupations in the 1980s, and now within the transition of country restoration and regional integration since the 1990s. The latter period has consisted of various forms of external supports and donor assistance, which have been used for capacity-building, and increasing accountability and responsibility at the institutional level. Consequently, since the early 2000s, the country's urban economy and population have observed sustained growth. These changes are said to be a result of urban spatial transformations, which include a newly emergent group of actors (urban entrepreneurs, local elites and those with professional skills) that have been able to capture strategic resources and accumulate wealth through various structural reforms, as well as the various influences from foreign direct investors and multi-international development agencies.

Current urban planning tends to focus on the growth of demographic and economic factors, which serve for basic city classifications and investments in the country. For instance, according to population criteria, Phnom Penh has the highest population in the country with over one million, while secondary towns have populations ranging from 150,000 and 500,000. Urban centers with populations ranging between 50,000 and 100,000; or 10,000 and 20,000 are classified as tertiary cities and

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small towns respectively (Kameier, Sochiet and Makathy 2014). Due to this focus on these factors, Phnom Penh and other secondary cities in the country have been prioritized for infrastructure development and economic growth interventions. Areas of interest include the trade, manufacturing, accommodation, food and beverages, education and urban services sectors.

By 2008, there were 27 urban centers with populations larger than 10,000 people. In total, the 27 urban centers consist of 3.6 million people, or 30% of the total population. By 2030, it is projected that the Cambodian population will reach 18.4 million, with 44% of the population living in urban environments. Improvements in education and specialized professional training will be required in order to meet the new labor demands of a diversifying economy. Urban centers located in the border areas, such as Siem Reap, Banteay Meanchey, Battambang and Poi Pet, are projected to grow rapidly due to cross border trade, increased tourism, and the cultivation of specialized agricultural products (Kameier, Sochiet and Makathy 2014).

Most of Cambodia's secondary cities are located along the Greater Mekong Subregion Southern (GMS) Economic Corridor and are well-positioned to be 'growth poles', These growth poles act as hubs that increase regional economic flows, infrastructure development, and the mobilization of goods, labor, and capital. McGee (1995) has identified some common spillover effects associated with the free market economic development of this nature, identifying them as increased investments in the built environment, rapid urban expansion and resource exploitation. Douglass (1995) links these 'growth poles' to resource exploitation and labor concetration, experiencing greater rates of urbanization and economic development than larger cities. Bulkerley (2013) extends this further by adding an increase in population densities, infrastrucrual projects and economic acitivies.

Battambang is one of the leading secondary cities located on western part of the country, about 300 km from Phnom Penh and 120 km from Thailand. The town is the provincial capital and holds a strategic location that allows it to act as one of these growth poles. Culturally, the town continues to act as a place full of ethnic diversity and migration, continuing its links with its Angkorian past (Chhuong 1974; Molyvann 2003). However, during the Khmer Rouge regime the town experienced periods of de-

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urbanization (Kubota 2011). De-urbanization continued until after the civil war, in which an influx of migrants seeking urban spaces to live and economic survival in Battambang began. This new stage of urbanization has only intensified due to the formalization of urban land-use planning in late 2000s.

With its strategic location and cultural heritage, Battambang is considered one of the most suitable cities to achieve the long-term goal of liveability with social and economic inclusiveness. This goal remains a key interest amongst all stakeholders involved. Battambang's cultural heritage include thousands of colonial-styled buildings, Khmer temples and ancient houses. This ideal location has attracted the interest of the Asian Development Bank (ADB), who have promoted infrastructure development and connectivity within the GMS and ASEAN economic corridor regions. During the civil wars, Battambang became isolated, but due to ADB initiatives, it has now become a center of connectivity with neighboring countries and other provinces within the country through trade, communications technologies, and mobility. This has led to much more bilateral cooperation among the neighboring countries of Thailand and Vietnam. Infrastructure remains a priority due to its key role of facilitating the flow of commodities and mobility.

The rapid urban development changes that are occurring alongside the river are causing various environmental impacts. Land-use changes both downstream and upstream of the river in Battambang, combined with increasing urban expansion are causing the town to experience more frequent flooding. Floods have been recorded in virtually every commune, and will only worsen due to an increase in expected average rainfall and maximum temperatures by the year 2050 (ADB 2015). Beginning in 2008, the city has seen more wetland areas and ponds being filled up and taken over by land developers for real estate development, agricultural processing factories, market centers, and government offices. Moreover, many symbolic buildings situated in the inner city, such as the national stadium, government departments, factories and the provincial prison, have been deconstructed and moved to other areas in order to pave way for real estate developers (Han and Lim 2018). Consequently, floods have increased in intensity within urban areas as a result of increased water flows from the Sangker River and rainfall. Since 2013, frequent floods within urban area have been taken places.

Migration and informal settlements have also increased during the past few years. Some of this can be traced back to the early 1990s, when the peace agreement was signed and all conflict affected-people were able to return to their homes. These internal refugees were encouraged to settle in different provinces where they would be allocated land, but the majority of them chose Battambang due to its employment opportunities, livelihood diversity and proximity to the border. Further migration took place in 2000 and 2008 when flooding in the countryside caused many to migrate to the urban centers.

Informal settlements were first surveyed in 2009 as a result of the formalization of the urban land-use master plan. The land-use master plan survey took place from 2003 to 2009. By 2009, the technical report was complete, but the surveyors encountered difficulties while attempting to account for the many urban squatters who occupied key urban areas such as reserved lands and public buildings, canals, pagoda compounds, and right of the ways (ROW) such as main roads, railway stations and along the train tracks. The first survey covered only six urban communes, and found a total population of 10,000 people (2,250 families). Ten years later, the survey extended its analysis to all 10 urban communes and found 16,000 residents (11% of the total population of Battambang) living around approximately 100 different locations.

Battambang is designed as Cambodia's corridor town within the GMS, representing the historical, social, cultural and economic values of Cambodia and with the objective of pushing towards national and regional connectivity. Meanwhile, ADB's Urban Development Strategic Program 2014-2022 consists of many development models, such as corridor town development, SEZs, and Cross-border Economic Zones (CBEZs) (ADB 2015b). Among these models, the corridor town remains a central focus for investment from ADB, especially in infrastructure and environmental management. The other two are bilateral aid, and growth poles, which are meant to facilitate foreign direct investment (FDI) from China, Japan, South Korea, Thailand, Vietnam, and UN agencies.

There are various development agencies that provide foreign aid to Cambodia. One key development agency is the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), which has mostly focused on initiatives such as drainage and water sanitation systems

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and National Road No.5 which connects Battambang to the town of Poi Pet, located along the Thai border. They have also supported agricultural productivity, irrigation efficiency and helped create a water development plan for all of the provinces located around Tonle Sap Lake, one of which is Battambang. China remains one of the dominant investors, supporting in the construction of a multi-purposed flood dam along the Sangker river (providing irrigation water for both wet rice and commercial crop cultivation in three neighboring provinces), Ring Road No.57 (connecting Battambang town to the towns of Pailin and Poi Pet in order to deter heavy traffic within the core zones of the town), and a border belt road from Samlaut district to the Koh Kong coastal zone. The Chinese have also invested in cassava starch and cement production. ADB remains active in urban infrastructure development, focusing on drainage systems, roads and rice commercialization. Another big investor is the German International Development Agency (GIZ), who have been assisting in the implementation of land-use development master plans at both the municipality and provincial levels.

The Sangker River (tributary) is the only source of water that flows through the town. It divides the city into west and east banks, before flowing into the Tonle Sap Lake. The river plays crucial role in supporting the cultural life and livelihoods of the town residents. Urban infrastructural development that has been implemented alongside the river has opened up opportunities for different key strategic groups, both urban elites and marginalized groups, to search for the new lucrative urban spaces and the growth machines.

1.6 Methodology

The methodology used in this study includes the process of building up rapport among persons-of-interest and developing a research design and conceptual framework. The first part consists of associating myself with the town, selecting key informants, and data collection. The second part deals with developing a research design that will be used to develop ethical guidelines for the research, select relevant case studies, and collect and analyze data.

1.6.1   Rapport Building Process

Before I started my PhD, I was fortunate to have already developed relationships with the town and province during three continuous projects implemented there. The

first project started in 2004, in which I was working as a core team member for the civic network, Cambodia Citizen Net for Social Development (CAN). This network was funded by the Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom (FNF), a German organization that promotes social democracy and capacity-building among the Cambodian youth, and collective action among different groups. Most of the core team members were professionals, experts and activists from various organizations that ranged among civil society organizations, private companies, human rights-based advocacy, donor agencies and social media. We obtained training in group leadership, social and political issues, and individual freedom. During this time, a co-worker from Battambang took the team to his town in order to extend our work and training. Our work mostly consisted of conducting various workshops and trainings for the youth and those who had just graduated from high school. The trainings included critical thinking about development, social issues, positions within the country and their visions of the future.

From 2006-2008, my worked began to have an increased focus on water and irrigation. I managed to obtain a research grant from the Mekong Programme on Water, Environment and Resilience (M-POWER), hosted by the Unit for Social and Environment Research (USER) based in Chiang Mai University. The research program was managed by various groups of network members from Mekong countries. During this period, water and irrigation development was a priority in the country for both the government and partner development organizations. My study was a comparative analysis of three provinces focusing on the type and history of irrigation and farming systems, as well as the geographical landscape covering Tonle Sap Lake and the Mekong floodplain. Through this research, I have been able to develop relationships with provincial representatives from Battambang, Kampong Thom and Prey Veng. These three provinces have been selected as the case studies for irrigation and water governance practices. I have accumulated much relevant knowledge and skills related to various sectors in these three provinces, in particular the institutional and technical capacities of the officials in charge of the schemes, the capacity of farmer water-use groups to mobilize collective action, water allocation practices, irrigation service fee collection, and external pressures such as market and agricultural extension services. Through this research, I obtained an abundance of knowledge concerning the provincial landscape, rural livelihood practices, and water resource management.

From 2013-2014, I had the opportunity to work as a national specialist dealing with climate change policy. The project, entitled 'Building Urban Resilience in Battambang town' was funded by the ADB, and implemented by the International Center for Environmental Management (ICEM), a consulting firm. During this project, I managed to mobilize large support from a high-ranking official in the Ministry of Public Works and Transportation, who is in charge of all infrastructure development for corridor towns in the country. At the provincial level, the team managed to mobilize provincial departments, municipalities and all commune council representatives from the urban communes. The team was asked to review the existing land-use master plan in order to ensure that climate change adaptation and mitigation capacities were fully addressed, as well as develop technical guidelines and propose alternative approaches where needed. Three urban systems were identified. One is to upgrade existing irrigation canals and transformed as Green Belt for the urban center cutting across six urban communes on the west side of the river. Second, the conversion of a wetland lake near the railway station to a public park for urban residents and third, the upgrading of river embankments at the town center. They are all linked to the promotion of urban tourism, economic development and informal settlement assistance. During my time at this project, I was able to build relationships with municipal officials and NGO staff.

In 2013, I and my colleagues from the Faculty of Development Studies (FDS) of Royal University of Phnom Penh (RUPP), were invited to attend a development project proposal in Bangkok. One year later, the project was accepted under the title, Urban Climate Resilience in Southeast Asia Partnership (UCRSEA). The project was co-managed by the University of Toronto from Canada and the Thailand Environmental Foundation (TEI) with various consortium members from the Mekong countries. The project aims to enhance advanced knowledge on urban climate resilience among partners and selected graduate students by targeting secondary towns along the ASEAN economic corridor. Criteria for town selection included clarity of climate issues, rapid urbanization, regional connectivity, available background information, and history of government engagement with various projects and on project initiatives.

1.6.2 Data Collection Techniques

From 2016 to 2017, I visited the town periodically to assist the project team. This included conducting situation analysis, facilitating exchange visits, and participating in trainings and assessments related to urban resilience. However, from late 2017 to 2018, I started my field work with more intensity. In 2019, I re-visited the town periodically to follow up on some of the key informants' interviews and reflect on my past observations. Data collections techniques included: participant observation, focus group discussion and key informant interviews.

a) Participant Observation

Selecting key informants was very time consuming and involved a lot of negotiation. One of the challenges faced was the contentious local politics from 2016 to 2017 which has continued up to the present. My role has shifted from a consultant to a PhD researcher, changing the nature of the data and the methods in which it is collected. For this research, I attempted to isolate myself from certain project meetings in order to avoid misperceptions of my role from local officials. During my fieldwork, the political situation had become worse because of the 2017 commune elections in which the ruling party lost much of their support among urban areas, including Battambang. This resulted in a tense situation in which NGOs workers, researchers, human rights organizations and media organizations were all deemed suspicious by the government. Some local NGO leaders cooperated with the ruling party, while key media and human rights organization were shut down or criminalized.

During the first three months (October-December 2017), I was not able to conduct many interviews. At this time, I focused on conducting participant observation, mainly observing the character of the community, their actions and their physical surroundings as suggested by Yin (2011). In November I came to talk with Mr. Seoung and his colleague at the municipal office. They were working on land issues and cadasters and have an abundance of knowledge regarding urban issues and transformations. They have been involved in various trainings, participated in urban land-use zoning projects with the technical support from GIZ, and often attend various project meetings organized by external donors and local experts. During our many conversations, I began to map out various urban strategic groups which included an

emerging business tycoon, real estate developers and the growth of urbanization in each commune.

Through them, I managed to create a list of key informants, the most important being the village and commune chiefs. I was able to contact them and request some of their time to discuss urban development work, flooding and other issues they might have. Most of the information obtained was too positive to be the truth. One village chief claimed that there was no urban poor, although data indicates the presence of many informal settlement groups and an increase in youth drug addiction. After this experience, I reflected upon the work done by Bryman and Cassell (2006) regarding how to make sense of the obtained data, impression management and the ambiguity of roles. During my fieldwork, I represented myself as a graduate student with an official letter from the program translated into the local language and submitted to the town governor for his approval. He also issues another letter supporting this by clarifying my role, research purpose and target areas. With these permission letters in hand, I decided to visit land conflict areas more often. However, the letter from the municipality made me suspicious for the residents involved in the land conflicts and some of them believed me to be a government spy. Some of them were not willing to provide interviews. Zaman (2008) demonstrates that obtaining legitimate information is like chasing butterflies, the more we get closer, the farther they escape. After a certain time however, I found that hanging around with the locals and attending their local drink and chat gatherings were very beneficial in building up trust and rapport amongst each other. Some who at first showed mistrust towards me were later happily willing to share information, including video clips and voice recordings that they took during a meeting, and various legal documents that they have kept.

In the end, I managed to narrow down the list to six key informants. Two of them are municipal officials who have been involved in urban development at the ground level, working directly with the local residents. One is an NGO staff member who often helped me with transportation, communication, and administrative works. At the village level, where the three research sites are located, I was assisted by three key informants. Two of them reside in an informal settlement and have organized collective action towards low-income housing, and fair land sharing among the urban poor. The third informant is based in the cultural village of Wat Kor and owns an important

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traditional wooden house. The first informant from the first case study used to be high school teachers and local NGOs leader. He lost his working ability after car accident in 2016. The second informant was a retired primary school principle. He used to stand for commune council election for the ruling party in 2017. Both of them have faced land conflicts within the informal settlement committee and have been forced to accept the proposed equitable land sharing like others. The third key informant from Wat Kor cultural village used to be a lecturer at the university in Phnom Penh, later becoming an officer at the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MOYES). He decided to quit due to political reasons and has now become a tourist guide for his aunt's houses at the cultural village.

b). Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

Three focus groups were conducted. One was conducted in Prek Preah Sdach commune (Ou Kcheay village), in which the village chief, and various residents facing land tenure conflicts participated. Here the main topic was the proposal of equal land sharing allocation. The discussion covered various topics, including the history of the settlement, who owns the land and how many groups of people came to settle down in the block, the history of floods, the livelihood system, legal contestation, and dominant groups in the province, which at this time included relatives of the former lord of governor. Another topic of interest was the resistance strategies that were being applied due to land pressures coming from the government, political parties and flooding. Two more FDGs were conducted among the urban poor living in informal settlements in Wat Kor. Similar topics were discussed with the addition of livelihood changes after the village had been designated as a cultural village for tourism. Issues regarding to land allocation and promised land as legal tenure were also discussed. These two groups of FDGs were known as the third wave of migration to the village starting from the Khmer Rouge regime. One group consisted of soldier families affiliated with the ruling party. They have a strong network and various informal relationships with military seniors. The other group mostly consists of former refugees of the civil war. Both groups migrated to their current location after the 1991 Paris Peach Agreement.

c). Key Informants' Interviews (KII)

Key informant interviews involved different groups of people. At the village and commune level, 27 informants were interviewed, some included those identified from focus group discussions while some were discovered through participant observation and key informants. Key questions for village level informants concerned the general population, the type of economic and livelihood activities practiced, group conflict, flooding, land speculation, migration, livelihood changes and local strategies to cope with urbanization and acquire new economic of tourism resources.

One group consisted of three monks who were active in the town. Most of the questions directed towards them concerned their perspective of urban slums, informal settlements, collective action, education and the role of Buddhists monk in the social order.

Another group consisted of those who were involved in the private sector. This group consisted of one Okhna, one hotel owner and an employee of the local waste collection company. Interview questions were more structured for those involved in the private sector, concerning the history of investments and development ideas in the area, the business concepts used for their enterprises and house designs, the strategies and various political and social connections required in order to purchase land in the village, strategies to cope with the government's legal system, regional integration, and their perspectives on urban development and the future of the country.

The third group consisted of government department employees. There were seven government departments in total that were relevant for the research. These included the department of water supply, electricity, land management and urban planning, the department of public works and transportation, the planning department, the department of environment and the department of tourism. Questions were relevant to the department that the informant worked in, addressing topics such as urbanization, regional economic integration, urban development and public services.

The last group consists of local NGOs working in the town. This includes staff working with Habitat for Humanity (Cambodia), the Community Managed Development Program (CMDP) and the Community Empower and

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Development Team (CEDT). All three of these organizations work with the urban poor in informal settlements, mainly promoting community mobilization through participatory mapping tools. Interviews often discussed the history of their work in the area, their roles and activities, their relationship with the local government, and community mobilization. Another organization, the GIZ, were very active until 2016, when many foreign staff completed their mandates. However, I was fortunate enough to have had the opportunity to talk with some of their technical staff back in 2014 and 2015. Before my official field work started, the GIZ were supporting the CMDP, the Cambodia Volunteer Service (CVS) and the Urban Youth Resource Center (UYRC). Overall, these NGOs focused most of their activities on urban youth mobilization and community development in urban poor areas.

d). Secondary Data Collection

There are two main sources of secondary data collection. The first source consists of official documents and planning policy collected after the interview from the representative of the provincial departments. The second source is documents collected through personal request and online searches. Important documents collected include:

Technical reports and planning documents supported by development agencies: the technical report on the Land-use Master Plan for Battambang Municipality, the Battambang Municipal Land-use Plan (2015-2030), the Provincial Spatial Plan (2011-2030), and the informal settlement report on land tenure among informal settlements.

Key technical reports produced by JICA: the Basin-wide Basic Irrigation and Drainage Master Plan Study and the Feasibility study on the new water treatment plan for Battambang. Other important documents collected related to National Road No.5, which links Battambang to Poi Pet town, and the urban road and drainage systems in town.

Development project documents produced by the ADB: technical plans relating to infrastructure development and environmental management for all surrounding towns of Tonle Sap Lake and along the national highway, documents relating to corridor town development, flood control feasibility, local economic development, and urban climate resilience and vulnerability studies concerning the

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proposed upgrading of river embankments (later replaced by local private investment), flood controls (later replaced by Chinese development aid) and sewage waste and water treatment areas. The ADB is currently working closely with the French Development Agency (ADF) to develop four secondary towns, one of which is Battambang; emphasizing the towns' urban heritage, the development of scenic walkways at the proposed urban heritage sites (mostly French colonial buildings) and local economic development training.

Many other documents include strategic policy plans for tourism, spatial plans, and land-use master plans. These were collected from the provincial departments of tourism and land management. The provincial department of planning proved to be very resourceful, providing access to multiple databases and provincial development profiles. Reports were also collected from local NGOs, such as technical guidelines on urban development work from the CEDT, ICEM, CMDP, GIZ and Habitat for Humanity (Cambodia).

1.6.3 Data Analysis

Data analysis is based on a conceptual framework in which the strategic group is the central concept to understand the politics of urban space-making. One approach to data analysis is through reviewing field notes and transcribing interviews so that data can be classified based on the emic and etic perspectives. The emic approach is to focus on the participants' perspectives, what they state, and the meaning of their statements (Maxwell 2013), while the etic perspective is the knowledge generated by researchers as outsiders (Creswell 2013). However, data classification based on what key informants stated was not sufficient without taking into consideration their social life (Churton and Brown 2010) and their relationships with the community and the general social structure (Alvesson and Skoldberg 2009). Evers and Korff (2000) have demonstrated that dominant strategic groups play a key role in producing the emic nature of urban space through their influences in shaping the production of the spatial structure, and constructing the symoblilc meanings associated with it that are meant to overcome pluralism.

With the concept of strategic groups in mind, I divide the data into three levels of analysis. The first level focuses on the process of urban planning and urban space-

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making at the provincial level. The second level examines the process of land-use zoning, particularly in regard to practices of inclusion and exclusion. The third level of analysis is to examine tourism and non-tourism spaces as effects of land-use zoning and urban space-making practices. This level will examine how emerging strategic groups compete for tourism resources within the process of urban space-making.

1.6.4 Research Ethics

The interview protocol was often applied before asking permission for an interview. Official letters from the program were translated into the local language and submitted to the local authority. I followed protocol by requesting a supporting letter from the municipal authority to indicate that I am a post-graduate student from Chiang Mai University who has come to conduct research. The letter entails my name, program of study, research topic, and research objectives. I often carried this letter with me and presented it to key informants. Most of the informants agreed to have their interviews recorded. However, there were a few government officials who chose to not be recorded due to the topic's sensitive and political nature.

Key issues relating to the governance of informal settlements, the formation of strategic groups, and how these groups come to acquire strategic urban resources remain sensitive. I respect key informants' choice to not be recorded and their names were also falsified in order to avoid any political consequences and dangers to their safety and security. I am fully aware of this ethical issue and intend to avoid all potential risks of harm to the research participants.
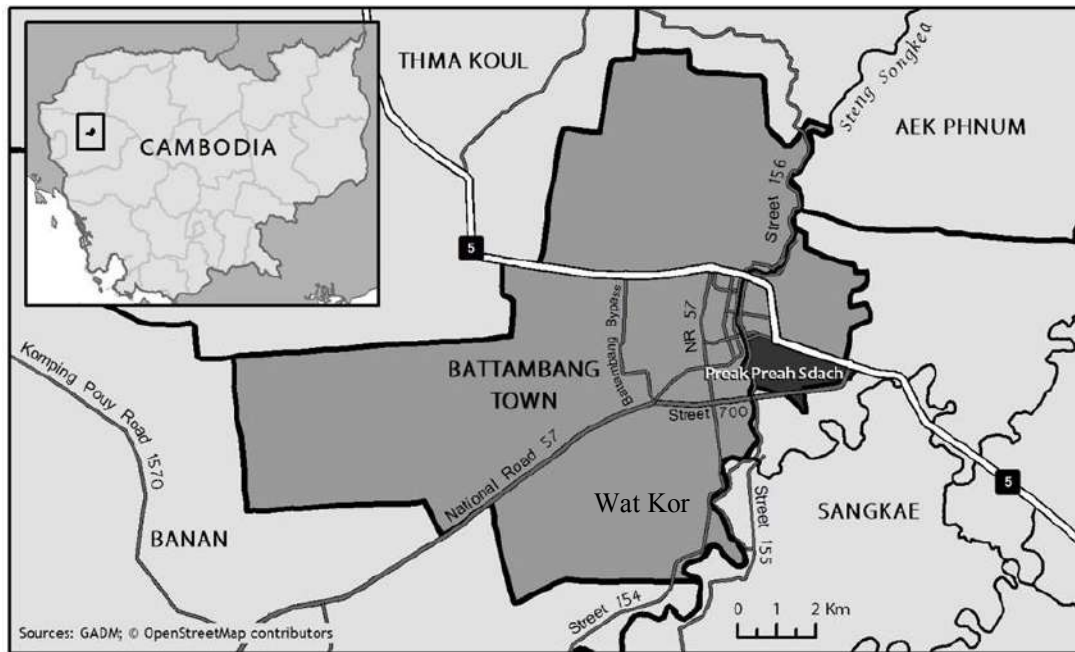
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1.6.5 Site Selection for Case Studies

Figure 1-2: Map of Studied Sites

Case studies in the form of qualitative research have been used by social scientists for a long time in order to justify their research objectives and approaches (Creswell 2013). They are considered as an empirical approach and have been used to validate theoretical frameworks (Castells 1983). They have also been used to study social groups and their interactions within the community (Loseke 2013). To understand how the formation of strategic groups influences urban space-making, two case studies with distinct issues relating to urban space-making were selected.

The first case study has the goal of demonstrating the politicization of urban space-making through conflicts between dominant and marginalized strategic groups over land-use zoning and classification policy. Prek Preah Sdach commune was selected as the research site to demonstrate this process because it has an informal settlement that is inhabited by various marginalized groups, and has the issues of equitable land-use sharing and low-cost housing present in its local politics. An examination of the various local and migrant groups that have come to occupy the lands within designated informal settlements had been conducted in order to demonstrate the politics of zones of

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exception, exclusion and inclusion, as well as the resistance coming from affected marginalized groups.

The second case study focuses on Wat Kor commune, comprising of six villages. One of these villages, also named Wat Kor, was selected for the main research site. Prior to colonization, Wat Kor commune was classified as a district, with the majority of the residents originating from the noble class. Many of these residents have continued to inhabit their traditional houses and residential lands until the present. Currently, the village covers an area of 253.09 hectares; 142.46 hectares designated for agriculture, 88.91 hectares designated for residential-use, and around 4 ha used for public services, such as schools, pagodas, government offices, and commercial centers. Wat Kor village has a population of 4,000 people comprising of approximately 800 families. Key livelihood strategies in the village include construction work, rice cultivation and other agricultural activities, petty trade, and migration to Thailand in search of work (approximately 200 residents). About 200 families have members who work for various government institutions at the provincial and national levels. The village is known for its 'authentic' cultural identity and urban heritage, represented by the various ancient wooden houses that are equipped to facilitate tourism activities. The village was designated as a cultural village in the Municipal Urban Land-Use Master Plan (2015-2030), based on the knowledge that these houses were constructed as far back as 1890. Economic activity is planned to focus on cultural tourism, specifically homestays, agroforestry and fruit tree plantations. There are three key areas designated for the preservation of cultural heritage. The first is the upper section of the Sangkat administrative subdivision, located adjacent to the Sangker River. This area includes 'ancient' Khmer houses built in between the years 1890 and 1910. Recently, the entire commune was designated as an agro-tourism zone. Additionally, Wat Kor is famous due to a former Prime Minister and head of the National Assembly coming from the area (Vickery 1999). The recent master plan outlines that many government departments and a provincial sports complex are planned to be relocated to this commune as land becomes available.

1.7 Thesis Outline

The thesis is divided into six chapters. The first chapter introduces the research topic and theoretical framework. This will include the research rationale, the objectives of the research, its theoretical relevance, and the thesis outline.

The second chapter provides an overview of popular approaches within urban studies, and a theoretical discussion about urban systems and urban space-making within the field of urban political ecology. This chapter will act as a guide to my operational framework regarding the politics of urban space-making and how it is influenced by various strategic groups. The concept of strategic groups will be elaborated upon, as well as its position in urban studies in relation to other actor-oriented approaches applied in urban development practices. The chapter will apply the concept of urban space to analyze the processes of land-use zoning and inventory, the types of resistance practices used by local residents, and the distinct contesting strategies used by strategic groups, in order to understand how they shape urban land-use planning and spatial relations, and determine which communities become designated cultural villages.

Chapter 3 examines the historical development of various spatial arrangements, urbanization, and both pre- and post-colonial settlements. More specifically, this chapter is divided into four main parts. The first part provides a historical description of the social and economic life of the residents in various eras beginning from the Angkorian era. The second part examines the colonial era, which includes the introduction of modernity and urban planning, while the third parts reveals the turbulent times that Cambodian society experienced from the 1970s to 1992. The final part positions Battambang as an emerging city at the center of connectivity. It will discuss the current trends within both the national and regional contexts, the merging of urban spatial plans, conflicts over land-use access and tenure, the prioritization of urban development values such as beautification and modernization over the urban poor and informal settlements, as well as the impacts of climate change and the various adaptive strategies of urban residents coming from distinct socio-economic backgrounds.

Chapter 4 discusses the production of urban space through land-use zoning and classification policy. Key issues here include informal settlements, equitable land sharing and low-cost housing development interventions. The chapter will review the

various legal frameworks and institutional practices that are used to manage these issues as well as the resistance made by marginalized strategic groups. The chapter also argues that the Subordinate Strategic Groups (SSGs) provide distinct meanings to urban spaces than dominant groups. There is a need to understand urban transformations from the perspective of these marginalized groups. Dominant strategic groups also need to be analyzed from the urban sociological perspective, taking into consideration their perspectives of urban development, climate change, and urban land conflicts.

Chapter 5 examines urban tourism spaces where strategic groups compete with each other in capturing and defining newly created spaces that have been designated as cultural villages. The different waves of migrants and other strategic groups are closely examined, in particular the emergence of newcomers with commercial interests such as land speculation, real estate, and tourism accommodations, as well as the native residents who have also developed close networks and various strategies amongst each other in order to capture new economic benefits from tourism and the cultural revitalization of the city.

The final chapter returns to the theoretical framework and discusses it alongside the research findings. From these findings, the chapter will outline my attempt to construct an urban political ecology approach to understand the politics of urban space-making, hopefully providing a nice contribution to the current strategic group literature. The data of this study will contribute to the knowledge of policy makers by assisting them in untangling the knot of ongoing dialectical complexity of the politics of urban space-making and to better understand the differences of ecological and social niches of urbanization, industrialization, regional economic integration and the emergence of climate change impacts within urban areas.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

LIST OF KEY INFORMANTS INTERVIEWED

KII	Date	Location and KII	Key areas of discussion (key words)	Tap recorded allowed
Wat Kor village				
	27/07/2016	Deputy village chief (i)	General information about Wat Kor: Cultural aspects of people in Battambang: singers, novelist and song composers, celebrities	Yes
	09/02/2017	Chief of commune, Wat Kor commune	Overall information about the commune, the potential development and urbanization and infrastructure development, ASEAN economic integration	No
	17/01/2017	Mr. Sarith and his son	Khmer ancient house owner and former noble family: Family background, livelihood change, land and urban land use changes, urban heritages	
	05/01/2018	Mr. Moeun Chhoeun and his wife (age 78 and 75 respectively)	Native villager of Wat Kor Family livelihood history through generation, flood, urban landscape change, and land investment.	yes
	05/01/18	Mr. Thorn Ngy (deputy village chief and his wife	Takeo native lived in Wat Kor since 1985. Deputy chief of village. Land ownership, livelihood change and investment, flooding and urbanization perspectives	Yes
	05/01/2018	Mr. Veang Sareth and Mao Barum (couple)	Urban waste collecting and buyers. Newly arrived in 2016 setting up urban waste collecting and buying in village along NR.57. Urbanization and livelihood change and opportunity	No
	06/01/2018	Ms. Ban Leuk (mother) and her son, Mr. Huot Borey	Native Wat Kor villager. Livelihood change, migration and youth perspective on urbanization and regional economic development integration.	No

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KII	Date	Location and KII	Key areas of discussion (key words)	Tap recorded allowed
	06/01/2018	Ms. Voen Saren and Mr. Ny Noy (couple)	Migrant workers, working in Bangkok with legal working passport. (livelihood change and investment).	
	23/03/2018	Ms. Aing Sophary	Battambang resort owner	Yes
	07/06/18	Mr. So Vanna	Official of health department and farmer(old resident)	Yes
	07/06/18	Mr. Mao Thearith	Farmer and local resident	Yes
	07/06/18	Mr. Ork Nge	Retired agricultural machinery technician and farmer	Yes
	10-11/11/17	Mr. Hor Phon Village chief	General information and historical perspective of the village Native vs. newcomers, livelihood different, key areas of urbanizing.	No
	12/06/2018	Sugar can juice seller	Wat Kor village, livelihood and increased tourism and local consumption	Yes
	17/01/2017	Mr. Vireak Sambath	Nephew of traditional house owners and local tourist guide at his traditional house	Yes
	15/03/2018	FDGs with informal settlement living along Sangke River, Wat Kor	Floods, informal settlement Livelihood strategies, migrations and informal settlement, former refugee groups	Yes
	19/03/2018	FDGs (Chay Pov, Chan Sophy, Leak Lén, Chan Sokha)	Informal settlement living along railroad in Wat Kor village Former solider families who lived along railway line and plan to be relocated but need land for compensation (in-place development)	Yes
16	19/03/2018	Mr. Chum Chet	Tuk Tuk driver, floods, informal settlement, transportation for tourism and urban issues (former returned from refugee camp).	Yes
Prek Preah Sdach Commune				
	13/11/2017	Mr.Pék Poey Village chief	General information about village, land conflict, floods and migration. Land issues and conflict with	

KII	Date	Location and KII	Key areas of discussion (key words)	Tap recorded allowed
			designated informal settlement areas	
	13/03.18	Ms. Ky Bopha and Vor Pheap	Female group advocate for urban justice, land allocation and land ownership defending.	
	16.03.18	Ms. Kim Manet	Chief of newly established settlement areas (82 lots)	Yes
	16/03/18 08/03/20 19 05/08/20 19	Mr. Nget Sareth (three times interviewed)	Retired primary school principle, land conflict, informality, flood and livelihood survival strategies and resistant against eviction on his land and local politics and ideology across different regimes	Yes
	16/03/18	Tuy Savath	Flood, land tenure, livelihood strategies	
	16/03/18	Ms. Ky Bopha, Mr. Iem Luom	History of land conflict, livelihood strategies, floods and resistance	
	07/06/ 2018	Mr. Sohun and Bou Sokhan	Informal settlement livelihood strategies and floods	
	06/06/20 18	Vin Chhoeu and his wife	Motor taxi driver and street vendors, construction workers and labor seller at the agricultural fertilizer company basd in town (mixed livelihoods)	Yes
	06/06/20 18	Ms. Pal Kina (called Yeay Porng)	Street vendor (urban live and impacts from urban floods)	Yes
	06/06/20 18	Mr. Theany	Street vendors (selling fried noodles by using his motorbike from places to places)	Yes
11	06/08/20 19	Mr. Iem Lim	O'Kcheay village, Prek Preah Sdach, urban politics, land conflicts and resistance, subordinate strategic group	
	NGOs			
		Mr. Ponakar	National program manager of Habitat Cambodia (history of projects and program in Battambang)	No
	27/03/20 18	Mr. Vannouen	Program manager of Habitat, Camboda based in Battambang (informal settlement and community led development)	No
	27/03/20 18	Mr. Bo	Officer from Habitat Cambodia based in Battambang (informal settlement)	No

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KII	Date	Location and KII	Key areas of discussion (key words)	Tap recorded allowed
		Mr. Nimol	Coordinator of CMDP (informal settlement and registration)	No
		Mr. Seung Bora	Program coordinator of Aphiwat Srey	No
	09/07/2019	Ms. Sat Kayara	Director of Community Empowerment and Development Team (CEDT), discussed overall project on informal settlement and community mapping and local engagement	Yes
	Government officials			
	23/03/2017	Mr. Ham Arun	Official in charge of tourism, provincial department of tourism (tourism behaviors and tourism activities in the province)	Yes
	23/03/2018	Mr. OuchPhy Zara	Director of provincial department of tourism, tourism plan, vision, clean city, and UNESCO heritage registration process	Yes
	28/03/2018	Mr.	Director, provincial department of planning (overall perspective on urbanization, land speculation, and development)	Yes
	Since 2016-2019	Mr. Song Soeung	Municipal official in charge of public work and often getting involved with informal settlement solution (long term consultation)	No
	Since 2016-2019	Ms. Sok Kinna	Land registration and land issues in the town (long term consultation)	No
	15/03/2017	Mr. Ny Sophannara	One window, one service of Battambang municipality	No
7	22/03/2018	Mr. Mok Sophannara	Provincial spatial planning and practices (provincial department of land management, urban planning and construction)	Yes
	Buddhism Monks			
	11/01/2018	Keo Sampong	Chief of monk in Kandal pagoda (overall perspective about informal settlement and those people who come to occupy pagoda compound)	No
	08/01/2018	Vi Sovichea	Deputy chief of monk of Por Veal pagoda and chief of chief of the Preah Sihanouk Reach Buddhism University,	No

KII	Date	Location and KII	Key areas of discussion (key words)	Tap recorded allowed
			Battambang, Wat Damrey Sor pagoda (role of Buddhism and religious in urban development and education)	
	26/03/20 19	Kim Manit (chief of monk) and his assistant	Informal settlement, land conflicts and local politics in Prek Preah Sdach	Yes
	Private sector			
	20/03/20 18	Mr. Heng Tola	Local business tycoon, land, real estate and entertainment investor	Yes
	28/06/20 16	Program manager	Program manager of Centri waste collection company	No

Total:27 at villages and ground level, 3 FDGs, 7 governments department representations, 3 monks and 3 private sectors

27 villagers, 3 monks, 3 private sectors, 7 government officials

CURRICULUM VITAE

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Education Background

2004   : MA in Sustainable Development (social sciences) Regional Centre for Social

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Scholarships

1. August 2015-July 2019: PhD Scholarship awarded through Urban Climate Resilience in Southeast Asia Partnership (UCRSEA) project, funded by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) of Canada, under the International Partnerships for Sustainable Societies Grant (IPaSS). The Thailand Environment Institute (TEI) is the recipient of the IDRC funding (grant number 107776-001).

2. August-December 2018: International Visiting Graduate Student (IVGS) with Munk School of Global Affair and Public Policy, Asian Institute, University of Toronto, Canada.

Conferences and Publications

Thuon, Try. 2020. How urbanization and formalization of urban spatial plan affect
         marginalized groups and climate resilience practice in Cambodia secondary
         towns, a revised paper being responded to peer reviews for the Journal Regional
         Science and Policy in Practice.

Thuon, Try. 2020. Contested Strategies Among Emerging Strategic Groups in Shaping
Urba

Space and Resilience in Cambodia Secondary Towns. A paper presented to Kyoto Internal Workshop on Consumption and Sustainability: Past, Present and Future, Kyoto University, 17-21 February 2020, Japan.

Thuon, Try. 2019. Emerging Urban Social Movement in Cambodia's Secondary Towns. A paper presented in the 6th ICRID conference on Topic: A New Global Network: What's Next of "The International Turns" in International Relations Development, hosted by Mae Fah Luang University, Thailand.

Thuon, Try. 2019. Interplay of urbanization and regional connectivity in shaping urban climate resilience practices in secondary town of Battambang of Cambodia. A paper presented at the 16th Pacific Regional Science Conference Organization Summer Institute: New Landscape of Data and Sustainable Development (PRSCO 2019), Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand, July 25-27, 2019.

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Thuon, Try. 2018. Strategic group formation and capital accumulation in shaping urban climate resilience: Case study from Cambodia. A paper presented at the annual conference for the Canadian Association of Geographers (CAGONT), organized by the Department of Geography and Planning, University of Toronto, St. George campus, October 19-20, 2018, Toronto, Canada.

Käkönen, Mira and Thuon, Try. 2018. Overlapping zones of exclusion in a resource frontier: carbon markets, corporate hydropower enclaves and timber extraction in Cambodia. **The Journal of Peasant Studies**. DOI: 10.1080/03066150.2018.1474875.

Lebel, Louis, Mira Käkönen, Va Dany · Phimphakan Lebel, Try Thuon and Saykham Voladet. 2018. The framing and governance of climate change adaptation projects in Lao PDR and Cambodia**.** *Int Environ Agreements*: https://doi.org/10.1007/s10784-018-9397-x.

Experiences

2014-Present: Adjunct Lecturer and Researcher with Faculty of Development Studies, Royal University of Phnom Penh. Cambodia. Current research projects:

- Lead researcher for a joint research project entitled, "Bringing more than food to the table: precipitating meaningful change in gender and social equity-focused participation in transboundary Mekong Delta wetlands management", from 2021 to 2022.

- Senior researcher with project entitled, "Water and Vulnerability in Fragile Societies (WATVUL), funded by the Academy of Finland". The project is being led by the University of Helsinki, Finland with collaborator from the Faculty of Development Studies, Royal University of Phnom Penh (component A) from October 2019-December 2021.

Other training obtained

- Kyoto International Workshop on Consumption and Sustainability: Past, Present and Future from 17-21 February 2020, Kyoto University, Japan.

- Attended training course on Writing and Reading a Scientific Articles, Photography and Sciences from 17-21 June 2019, organized by Institut de Recherche pour le Dévelopment (IRD), France and Regional Center for Social Sciences and Sustainable Development (RCSD), Faculty of Social Sciences, Chiang Mai University.

- Attended post graduated curriculum development on "Urban Climate Resilience in Southeast Asia" conducted by the University of Toronto (May 14-18,2018, Chiang Mai).

- Urban Policies & Planning Strategies for Achieving Prosperity in Cities, organized by International Urban Training Center (IUTC) and UN-Habitat, South Korea from 13-17 July 2015.