

The Quest for Social Security among the Indigenous Peoples in the Upland Areas of
Cambodia: Livelihood Diversification among Phnong Civil Servant Families

By

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ASPECA	Enfants d’Asie Cambodia
CIYA	Cambodian Indigenous Youth Association
DPA	Development and Partnership in Action
DFID	Department for International Development
EFA	Education For All
ESP	Education Strategic Paper
ESSP	Education Sector Development Program
FA	Forest Administration
FPIC	Free, Prior, and Informed Consent
ICC	International Cooperation for Cambodia
IDS	Institute of Development Studies
ILO	International Labour Organization
IPs	Indigenous Peoples
KAPE	Kampuchean Action for Primary Education
MVi	My Village Organization
MLMUPC	Ministry of Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction
MoE	Ministry of Environment
MoEYS	Ministry of Education Youth and Sport
MoI	Ministry of Interior
MoP	Ministry of Planning
MRD	Ministry of Rural Development
NCDD	National Committee for Sub-National Democratic Development

NGO	Non-Government Organization
NTFPs	Non-Timber Forest Products
NPDIP	National Policy on the Development of Indigenous Peoples
ODC	Open Development Cambodia
PLUP	Participatory Land Use Planning
PMs	Participatory Methods
PTTC	Provincial Teacher Training College
RPTTC	Regional Teacher Training College
PRK	People's Republic of Kampuchea
RULE	Royal University of Law and Economics
TBA	Traditional Birth Attendant
TL	Traditional Livelihoods
TTC	Teacher Training College
WCS	Wild Conservation Society
WB	World Bank
UN	United Nations
UNDRIP	The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
USAID	The United States Agency for International Development
VFC	Village Focus Cambodia

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CHAPTER ONE: Introduction

1. Background of Study

After I visited one of the Phnong villages in 2013, I developed an interest in their livelihoods and how they adjust to social changes. I kept hearing about their difficulties in coping with climate change, market problems, cultural loss, and particularly the lack of attention from state agencies regarding livelihood insecurity. Instead, the state is preoccupied with economic development, particularly ELCs (Economic Land Concessions) that hardly benefit the Phnong people. During my preliminary research, I found considerable numbers of Phnong families of civil servants who formed their way of life leaning towards the Khmer lifestyle while maintaining some of their origins. Having seen this phenomenon, I decided to conduct research on their social security mechanism, which includes livelihood diversification and education acquisition amidst the wider transformation in Cambodia.

In the beginning, I had trouble finding literature that is relevant to Indigenous Peoples (IPs) in Cambodia that can be used to understand their livelihood transformation and social security mechanism. Since the topic of social security mechanism is relevant to livelihood research, I decided to look into the livelihood perspectives. The perspectives put the people at the center and show strategies and interactions by focusing on the aspects of material access and ability. To compensate for the lack of sociocultural components of livelihood studies, later I looked into a conceptualization of development alternatives to conducting research with IPs. Apart from livelihoods perspectives, I also took into consideration literature from various disciplines, such as indigenous rights issues, identities, environmental protection, tourism, education, and so on.

Social security generally refers to the forms of security provided by the state in Western ideology. According to the International Labour organization (ILO), “social security is the

protection that a society provides to individuals and households to ensure access to health care and to guarantee income security, particularly in cases of old age, unemployment, sickness, invalidity, work injury, maternity or loss of a breadwinner.” (ILO, n.d., p. 1) The United Nations also defines the concept in a similar way. However, these definitions are not suitable to explain and analyze the social security of poor populations in developing countries that hardly benefit from these kinds of provisions. Instead, poor people rely on other forms of social security amidst the lack of security provided by the state, mainly through livelihood diversification depending on their geographical location. Therefore, in the course of research in a non-Western context, the meanings of social security should reflect the research context and correspond with where it departs from (de Jong, 2005, p. 14).

By underpinning the livelihood perspectives and coupled with the alternative development concepts, I was able to put indigenous studies in the context of development as well as analyze the sociocultural components surrounding their strategic behaviors, such as value, experience, and historical repertoire. Besides, I hope that the study of the locally-organized forms of social security that includes their strategies and local perspectives will provide a significant contribution to indigenous development in Cambodia. Only when we have a comprehensive understanding of various IPs social security strategies to cope with the sociopolitical and socioeconomic changes can we design policies appropriate for improving their lives.

2. Narrowing Down Research Relevant to IPs

2.1.Limitation of Research on Minority Issues in Cambodia

There was little sociological or anthropological research from the early 1960s until the 1990s in regards IPs in Cambodia. In addition, most scholars who studied socioeconomic and cultural aspects tended to focus more on the mainstream and the dominant Cambodian ethnic group, the Khmer. Not until after the 1990s did a new wave of research on minority issues emerge. These

researchers, with a mixture of NGO, development and human rights backgrounds, began to pay attention to the studies on customary land rights of IPs and impacts of development projects (Simbolon, 2002, p.3-4). Those studies are oriented towards a rights-based approach concerning the development of IPs. There are several concerns about the new wave of research concerning IPs in Cambodia. Simbolon raised two concerns. First, these researchers are mostly foreigners working for NGOs with backgrounds in the development field and human rights. The scarcity of work by Cambodian researchers on indigenous minority issues has raised concerns over the lack of interest in ethnic minority issues. Second, the studies in Cambodia need to focus indigenous ideological and cultural notions of their customary systems (Simbolon 2002, 4-5). Only a few studies narrate the livelihood experiences and security of IPs.

2.2.Types of Research in Cambodia Relevant to IPs

In Cambodia, IPs' traditional livelihoods, language, culture and traditions have long been the object of anthropologic and linguistic studies (Bourdier, 2009; Vogel, 2011). Recent drastic social and environmental degradation has led development agencies to view them as victims of development, which leads to two types of research that are relevant to them.

The first type of research and reports were mostly conducted under a human rights and livelihood approach with support from international organizations. This kind of research is necessary for promoting IPs' rights and livelihood development to reduce poverty because it informs local people of their rights, and at the same time, it draws on the community's knowledge and participation for community development. Topics are varied, including community forestry, livelihoods, gender, and education. Below are some of the examples:

- A case study about traditional indigenous legal and conflict resolution in Ratanakiri and Mondulkiri provinces (Backstrom, Ironside, Paterson, Padwe, & Baird, 2007).

- The action study research on the role of indigenous women in northeastern Cambodian provinces (Maffii & Hong , 2009).
- Identities (Padwe, 2013)
- The bilingual education project (Middleborg, 2005).

Another type of research has focused on development and its impact on IPs. It covers various topics, such as IPs' perceptions of poverty, poverty reduction strategies and contributions to the national poverty reduction efforts (Chhim, 2005), access to natural resource (McAndrew & Ouer, 2009), livelihood transition (So, Hak, Oeur, & McAndrew, 2012), the impact of ELCs on IPs (Men, 2011), land acquisition (Gironde & Peeters, 2015) and political implication for IPs (Milne, 2013). There are also a few studies that question the role of NGOs. Smith found that there was a risk of creating 'unintentional ethnocide' by NGOs. Their efficient and well-planned projects inadvertently lead to the reinforcement the sense of inferior among the Phnong (Smith, 2010).

According to Baird (2011), the concept of IPs is relatively new in Cambodia and closely related to rights issues. The flourishing of the IPs rights movement and land issues are seen as factors behind the emergence of these studies that contributed to the empowerment of IPs in Cambodia within the development framework. However, they come with insufficiencies and limitations. Some research studies are heavily influenced by the donors and development organization's side. Others tend to generate quick data because of a fixed budget and time constraints. Some long-term projects also have a limitation as they have to keep an eye on IPs and another eye on donors for the budget within a fixed period. Some research projects ended without follow-up research. When the human rights-based approach became popular in Cambodia, propelled by the arrival of aid agencies, there was a question whether the human-rights-based approach was a new additional change to the development approach. Could a rights-based approach address the issue beyond the rights realms? (Tsikata, 2004, p. 131). Similarly,

the rights-based development may echo the rights problem but overlook the sociocultural dimension. There should be another perspective to guide and propel research that can contribute to understanding their livelihoods.

2.3. Conceptualizing Development Alternatives Relevant to IPs

This research seeks literature relevant to indigenous conflict perspectives to provide the situation of the IPs in the development context. It also seeks literature based on livelihood perspectives and conceptualizing development alternatives to accumulate understanding as well as an approach to livelihood strategies and the social security mechanism.

Livelihood approaches in this context refer to the concept provided by the Department for International Development (DFID). The livelihood perspectives have six underlining principles in poverty-focused development, comprised of people-centered, responsive and participatory, multi-level, conducted in partnership, sustainable, and dynamic. In brief, from the approach principles, the sustainable livelihood approach focuses on a household's capabilities, assets, and activities required for a means of living to cope with stress and shock. Later researchers have found various forms of strategies to cope with stress and shock. Strategies involve diversification ranging from distressed to progressive diversification (Bouahom, Douangsavanh, & Rigg, 2004) and selective diversification (Turner, 2007). However, the research on access and assets for livelihood sustainability tend to center on economic aspects and may overlook the political, cultural, and social aspects, and the fluidity of livelihoods. Since the flow of livelihoods needs to be treated as a processional rather than a systematic approach, the concept of livelihood pathways can be considered as a vital addition to the livelihood study with the upland peoples because it focuses on the patterns of livelihoods and takes into consideration structural components and their culturally and ideologically embedded livelihood decisions. Livelihoods

perspectives and concept of pathways will be used to provide ideas to create a framework and analyze the findings of this research.

3. Brief Background of IPs and the Phnong in Cambodia

3.1. Brief History of IPs in Cambodia

There are 24 recognized indigenous peoples (IPs) in Cambodia and the majority of them live in Northeastern Cambodia. The population of Cambodia was around 14 million in 2013 and IPs constituted less than two percent of the total population. Poverty in Cambodia is defined as the poor who are facing hunger and have few or no assets such as land, animals etc. Other characters that define the poor are having too many children, health issues, few kinship networks, lack of microcredit and limited educational opportunities (ADB, 2002). These characteristics are seen in most IP's communities. Although the government has reduced the poverty rate to 22.9% in 2009 (ADB, 2014), the upland area of Cambodia where most IPs live still has the highest poverty rates (Moul & Seng, 2012). Though, they are considered as the most vulnerable and the poorest in Cambodia, there is little research concentrating on them, especially among local researchers (Simbolon, 2002). What has been known is that they are stereotyped, suffer from political changes and are exoticized. Discrimination and misunderstanding towards IPs remains visible in Cambodian society (ADB, 2002, p. 23). For instance, one official in Monduliri province said IPs are always facing hunger and lack of nutrition because they are not smart enough (Bourdier, 2009, p. 564). In addition, their rituals are seen as a waste of money.

IP's history and livelihoods have always been connected with the Khmer people. Khmer is the dominant ethnic group of Cambodia. The Khmer people call their country Kampuchea. The term was the official country name from 1975 to 1993. The current official name "Cambodia" derives from the word Kampuchea itself. The Khmer, who are mostly Buddhist, live in the lowland area while IPs live in the upland areas and believe in animism. The Khmer and most of

the IPs share the same language root which is the Mon-Khmer language. The two peoples shared a long history of interacting with each other such as diplomacy and trade even before the arrival of the French colonization in 1863. IPs would go to the Khmer villages and sell forest products and wild animals in exchange for salt or household items.

After Cambodia regained independence from the French in 1953, the government set a policy to assimilate IPs into mainstream society by naming them Upper Khmer to generate national unity among the majority Khmer and the peoples in the mountain area (White, 2009, p. 475). Khmer families from the lowlands were sent to live in Ratanakiri province in 1959 and Mondulakiri province in 1960 as part of a Khmerization policy in remote Northeastern Cambodia (Heang & Ek, 2009, pp. 583-584). When the civil war erupted in the 1970s, some IPs escaped into the deeper jungle. Some fled to Vietnam and Laos in 1973 and 1974 when the Khmer Rouge began to implement radical collectivization schemes, forced labor, and communal eating programs in Cambodia (Colm, 2000, p. 34). There is evidence that about 700 Phnong, mainly Catholic Phnong, fled from Cambodia to Vietnam (Bourdier, 2009, p. 549). After the Khmer Rouge regime ended, most IPs returned to their homes in the Highland area. In 1979, the People's Republic of Kampuchea was formed and embarked on new administrative reforms. IPs who historically used to move their village from one place to another were put under a village system. At that time, they still maintained their subsistence livelihoods due to the abundant natural resources and the lack of access to their territories. When the market economy opened in 1993, they began to face pressure from development, mainly the problems of ELC and land alienation (Men, 2011, p. 17). It led to two coping strategies in the upland areas: forest exploitation for commercial usage and farming of cash crops. New varieties of crops were brought into the indigenous communities for commercial farming (Van den Berg, 2000, pp. 40-47). There was a case where IPs were provided crops and equipment by a Vietnamese company

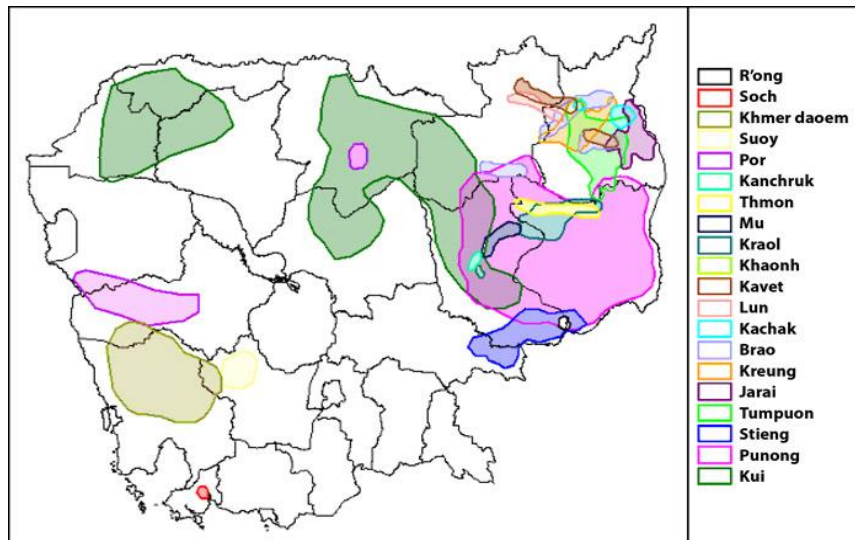
to conduct cassava farming (Milne, 2013). One study found that upland crops have generated economic growth; however, IPs also became vulnerable to the exigencies of the cassava market (So, Hak, Oeur, & McAndrew, 2012, pp. 11-14). In the late 1990s, they encountered development agencies that came to promote indigenous rights and environmental protection (Baird, 2011). Smith said the interaction between IPs and development agencies has created several reinforcing narratives, particularly the culture of silence (Smith, 2010, pp. 42-43). IPs were fed with a distinction between those who know and those who do not. The larger society tends to tell them to go to study if they want to improve their lives, while being traditional is considered as a backward lifestyle. In the early 2000s, the government established a policy to promote education in those remote areas. In addition, the government eased the procedure for trainee teacher recruitment to support and train teachers from the remote areas. The new procedure saw the requirement for a primary school trainee teacher changed from 12+2 years to 9+2 years (Phin, 2014, p. 345). As a result, there were surges of indigenous applicants who hold a lower secondary degree to study at the provincial teacher training college.

3.2.Population of IPs in Cambodia

The National Policy on the Development of IPs (NPDIP) 2009 defines “indigenous minorities/ peoples [as] genetically distinct indigenous peoples’ group who are living in Cambodia and have their own distinctive languages, cultures, traditions and customs different from those of the Khmer people who are the core nationals.” In 1998, the national census identified 17 different indigenous groups and the number has reached 24. They include Phnong, Kuoy, Tompuon, Charay, Kroeng, Prov, Kavet, Stieng, Kraol, Mil, Kachak, Por, Khaonh, Chorng, Suoy, Thmaun, Lun, Saauch, Roder, Khme, Raang, Soung, Laeun, Samre and others. Their lifestyles follow their customs and they do their agricultural and plantation work on plots of land they occupy according to the code of formulas and tradition. IPs make up less than two

percent of the total population and have been living with the Khmer ethnic groups in harmony in a number of provinces such as Ratanakiri, Mondulakiri, Kratie, Preah Vihear, Kompong Thom, Stung Treng, Udon Meanchey, Kompong Cham, Pursat, Kompong Speu, Koh Kong, Battambang, Preah Sihanouk, Banteay Meanchey, Siem Reap, and in other areas. See Figure 1 below.

Figure 1 Indigenous Peoples in Cambodia



Source: NGO Forum of Cambodia, 2006

Table 1 Distribution of Indigenous Peoples in Six Provinces

No.	Indigenous Groups	Rattanakiri	Kratie	Steung Treng	Mondulakiri	Kompong Speu	Preah Vihear	Total
1	Tumpoung	27,239	0	4	382	0	0	27,625
2	Kreung	17,683	0	278	598	0	0	18,559
3	Jarai	20,312	0	12	93	0	0	20,417
4	Brao/Bru	8,560	0	44	0	0	8	9,012
5	Kavet	2,620	0	2,710	0	0	0	5,330
6	Kachak	3,383	0	1	0	0	0	3,384
7	Lun	267	0	251	0	0	0	518
8	Phnong	270	8,306	430	23,964	0	39	33,009
9	Kraol/Kroy	0	2,389	0	597	0	0	2,986
10	Stieng	0	3,311	0	1,335	0	1	4,647
11	Thmun/Thmoon	0	669	0	147	0	0	816
12	Kuoy	0	5,216	1,644	2	0	4,536	11,398
13	Knoung	0	544	0	0	0	0	544
14	Roong	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
15	Radaer	3	0	0	0	0	0	3
16	Suoy	0	0	0	0	1,833	0	1,833
17	Pear	0	0	0	0	0	316	316
	Total	80,337	20,435	5,774	27,118	1,833	4,900	140,397

Source: Modified from Moul & Seng, 2012, p.4

According to Men, two thirds of IPs in Cambodia are living in northeastern Cambodia, such as in Ratanakiri, Mondulakiri, Stung Treng and Kratie province (Men, 2011). Mondulakiri province is dominated by IPs. In 1998, the population of Mondulakiri province was 32,407 according to 1998 census and 80 percent is said to be IPs, mostly the Phnong. According to Bourdier's research in 1995, the Phnong's population is around 20,000 based on the author's reference from various sources. The number will be higher than this if the data is collected based on mother tongue (Bourdier, 2009, p. 72). It can be said that although they are called indigenous minority groups, they constituted the majority in Mondulakiri province.

In 2008, the population of Mondulakiri province grew to 60,811 (2008 Census), but the population of IPs increased slightly to 27,118. It shows that the percentage of the IPs population dropped to 45% compared to the Khmer population. One reason for the slow population growth is IPs do not want to have many children. The Phnong remain a dominant group among ten indigenous minorities in this province. According to a report in 2012, the Phnong population is 23,964, which is almost 90% of the IP population in the province (Moul & Seng, 2012, p. 4). They have the characteristics of being honest, operating collectively, free living, being discreet about their community, and practicing animism.

3.3. Phnong Characteristics

Since this research is focused on the Phnong, I would like to take the time to give the meaning of the name. Phnong or Bunong comes from a word 'Bu' and 'Nong'. 'Bu' means human or people and 'Nong' is a name for a group of people. So together, Phnong refers to the people called Nong (Filippi, 2009, pp. 65-66). They are known for their subsistence livelihoods and rice farming. They mostly live in upland areas of Mondulakiri province in Northeastern Cambodia. Phnong children tend to stay with their families in the same house until they get married. After marriage, indigenous couples have rights to choose to live with the bride's family

first or the groom's family first. Different from other indigenous ethnicities, the Phnong groom has to live and work for the bride's family. The Phnong have great respect for their elders. These elders teach younger generations about history and their ancestors' names. The elder who can perfectly recount history and their ancestors' names is called *Gayow* (Angkoach Yaov). The Phnong house is constructed on the ground without using pillars in the shape of the back of a turtle. The house requires frequent repairs and is rebuilt every two to three years. When someone dies in the village, the Phnong have a tradition of burning the house to clean the bad omen that they think will cause disease, bad crops and death.

3.4. Phnong Subsistence Livelihoods

The Phnong have always been considered as swidden agriculturalists. They are involved in upper rice farming and *Chamkar* or mixed crop farming. They also rely on collecting forest products and hunting to sustain their livelihood (McAndrew & Ouer, 2009). They conduct their agricultural activities based on the lunar calendar. However, in practice, their farming depends on labor ability and land availability. Rice farming and paddy rice cultivation are central parts of their subsistence livelihood. The difference between rice farming and rice cultivation is rice farming is harvested with other vegetables while rice cultivation is conducted in a rice paddy. For harvesting rice, they pull the crops by hands while they use a sickle for sticky rice and paddy rice (Vogel, 2011, p. 87). For them, rice farming is the main source of food while rice cultivation is the secondary food source and vice versa depending on geographical location. Rituals relating to agriculture are slightly different among indigenous groups. For instance, the Kreung ethnic group has the most numerous and complicated process of ritual to invite the rice spirit to protect their newly planted rice. For the Phnong, this ritual is only held three or four times a year (White, 2009, p. 466).

The Phnong conduct their farming activities based on their farming calendar. The calendar consists of twelve months. The calendar is similar to the Khmer calendar, but it is one month behind. For instance, month one in the hill tribe calendar normally coincides with month two in the Khmer calendar. Hill tribe people created their calendar based on what stage people are carrying out their farming activities. For instance, month eight and month nine are said to be months when they are having a rest and eating corn. These are the months when the last stocks of rice are almost finished, and that is the reason they eat corn. From the hill tribe calendar, there are a few months when they have rest: month one, month eight, month nine and month ten. After that, they are engaged in intensive agricultural activities, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2 Indigenous Agricultural Calendar of Kreung, Tampuan and Jorai

Month (Khaet)	Kreung	Tampuan	Jorai	Tasks
1	Sariang	Tukufur	Sarr	Resting
2	Anoch	Vsoy	Dooar	Clear new fields
3	Row	Yow	Dlow	Cut trees
4	Ploong	Yerr	Back	Cut/burn trees
5	Saat	Saak	Narr	Burn tree
6	Hanoy	Riang	Nam	Plant rice
7	Gadam	Trokk	Choo	Weed fields
8	Gavoon	Schop	Bann	Rest; eat corn
9	Vung	Drair	Wabann	Rest; eat corn
10	Mag	Drair thom	Blobe	Rest; harvest
11	Ka-nrr	Barrmet	Blohesarr	Harvest rice
12	Kapuh	Mlong	Blohedooar	Harvest rice

Source: White, 2012

When it comes to trading, the Phnong have long been involved with trading with outsiders but they did not develop a business mentality. They did not conduct long-term activities and would conduct trade only when they needed to obtain particular products for their community. For example, they used to sell forest products for salt and would get involved in trade again when they ran out of salt. In the past, the Phnong would celebrate rituals after they acquired 100 *Sas* (a traditional basket) of traditional rice and spend the rest of January doing nothing. Nowadays, this mentality still exists in the indigenous community despite some changes. The behavior of the Phnong is similar to the IPs in the US, where they are considered as “target workers” in the sense that instead of working to accumulate for a long-term end, they work for a particular predetermined goal. It is attributed to their cultural behavior to work at one’s own pace, and the centrality of their community and kinship (Sandefur & Scott, 1983). This behavior has surprised many Khmer people who voice their opinion that the Phnong have wasted their time and benefits (White, 2009, p. 505).

In recent times, wage work has become a part of extra cash income generation of the Phnong. Their access to wage work depends on their geographical location and local conditions. In some communities, people are more engaged in wage work than in others. It is a short-term livelihood strategy to earn extra cash in addition to swidden cultivation and farming. Although diversification of income is visible in Phnong villages, they remain reliant on land and forest resources, mainly on swidden cultivation, hunting, non-timber forest gathering and rice cultivation (McAndrew & Ouer, 2009, pp. 114-115).

3.5. Shifting Agriculture and Moving Village

Although they conduct shifting agriculture, they are not considered nomadic because they only move a few kilometers from the previous place. When they move the village, they only move inside their ancestral land by using mountain, stream, and other geographical features to

form a border line without intruding into other communities' land (Colm, 2000, p. 34). When they decide to move to another place, they only move for specific reasons such as bad omens, excessive illness, political upheaval, government relocation, and other hardships at the current location (Colm, 2000, p. 34). However, village movement is almost impossible in the current situation because of the legislation and the policy to keep IPs in a fixed location.

3.6.Belief

From the indigenous belief, the landscape surrounding them such as mountains, swidden lands, graveyards, village lands, and other areas where they collect forest products are the places where the spirits reside. These spirits are immensely powerful, and if properly treated can protect them from illness, poor harvests and other calamities. In contrast, if the spirits are poorly treated, they will cause severe consequences to the community and the individuals. They believe that the most powerful spirits reside in the mountains (Colm, 2000, p. 35). For these reasons, they need to wait for the permission from the spirits by observing the animals' cry or good dreams before they are allowed to clear the new land. For them, any change in the landscape or any development on ancestral lands can cause anger from the spirits. Logging and hydropower dams can upset the spirits and cause illness and various natural disasters such as droughts and floods (Colm, 2000, p. 31). Their belief may be outdated to outsiders; however, it is the thing that bonds them together to sustain the environment.

The Phnong believe that when an individual causes spirits to get angry, the whole village will also be punished (Nikles, 2008, pp. 77-79). Hence, when unfortunate things happen in the village, the person who is thought to have caused the unfortunate things must perform rituals. The person may conduct the ritual depending on the type and size of the problem. For example:

A woman who had a miscarriage went to take water at the public well, but later two people died in the village, so they accused her of having sprayed malicious spirit; as punishment she had to make a big ceremony and now she is very poor. TBA in Loroumet Village (Lavoisier, 2012, p. 62)

Leas Leang or purification is the most commonly known traditional practice. When someone dies from a freak accident, the wife or the husband has to perform *Leas Leang* by giving up everything they have. The family may be allowed to keep the land for cultivation. Sometimes villagers gather necessary material for the family to rebuild their new life. In the worst-case scenario, they have to move out of the village. The practice is considered as too strict considering the difficulties of adjusting to the market economy and the slim chance of a remarriage. Widows are considered the most vulnerable because they are considered as unlucky and no one wants to marry them.

3.7. The Indigenous Village Structure since the 1980s

According to Bourdier's personal inquiry concerning indigenous village structure, he found that the average number of Phnong per village is between 100-300 people, with the average number of families between 70 and 80 (See Table 3).

Table 3 Number of Population and Families of IPs per Village

Population per village	Less than 100	100-200	200-300	300-400	More than 400
Numbers of families	28 families	84 families	70 families	34 families	29 families

Source: Bourdier 2009, p.542

From the selected villages in Ou Reang district as shown in Table 4 below, most villages have over 70 Phnong families. There are also significant gaps among villages regarding family numbers. In Pu Treng village, there are over 100 families, and in Pu Pyam village, there are almost 300 families. According to the locals, Pu Pyam is an old village and blessed with geographical conditions for upland farming as well as cultivating paddy rice. It shows that the Phnong are more concentrated in a place where they can farm well and live close to their ancestral land.

Table 4 Number of Phnong Families in Six Villagers of Ou Reang District

	Pu Treng	Pu Les	Pu Chab	Pu Pyam	Pu Rang	Pu Tru
Population	551	390	385	1237	402	310
Number of Families	125	89	97	297	64	70

Source: DPA data in 2009, Provincial Municipal data in 2009

3.8. Village Elder and Village Chief

Phnong traditional authorities are not different from other indigenous minorities in northeastern Cambodia. Their traditional authorities are comprised of a chief elder (*me kantreanh*) who derives his authority from the village spirits. He advises on customs, ceremonies and sacrifices, and with sub-elders, is involved in resolving disputes based on their knowledge of customary law (Hatchinson, Ironside, & Clark, 2008, p. 1). The traditional authorities also help resolve conflicts such as animals eating crops and boundary disputes, ancestral land claims, selling other villages' land, among others, within and between villagers based on customary law (Backstrom, Ironside, Paterson, Padwe, & Baird, 2007, pp. 23-24). However, their roles in the Phnong community has weakened because they cannot resolve cases relating to modern law or deal with powerful people. White said indigenous societies would likely fall apart if the traditional system diminishes (White, 2009, p. 484). That is because they play an important role in maintaining social continuity and order.

The village chief's position is considered as a part of government administration, while village elders are considered as wise persons and respected by the villagers. Both roles sometimes overlap and clash with each other. Village elders have knowledge about rituals, curing diseases, fortune-telling, and solving disputes under the traditional systems. The role of the village chief is to help develop the village (Heang & Ek, 2009, pp. 597-598).

3.9.The Catholic Phnong Community

The detailed information about Catholic Phnong in Cambodia was recorded in the 1970s when they had to flee to Vietnam to avoid civil war. In the late 1980s, they returned to their original village and brought with them new cultures. For instance, the written form of the Phnong language is said to have been brought to Cambodia in recent times by the Catholic Phnong families that fled to Vietnam during the war. One example is Mali met with the American Christian missionaries, who taught the Phnong writing system to him. According to Waddington (2002), “When he returned to Cambodia in 1986, Mali brought with him not only Christianity, but also hymn books, prayer books and portions of the New Testament. It was the first time the Mnong [*sic*] in Cambodia had seen their language written down.” Therefore, the Catholic Phnong who fled to Vietnam brought the written form of the Phnong language and taught each other through the Bible and learning activities. They have contributed to the changes in the Phnong society relevant to modernity.

4. Research Methodology

4.1.Research Paradigm

The interpretive research approach is based on practical orientation concerned with the actual affairs of everyday life or how the practices have been done (Neuman, 2003, p. 76). In this sense, the interpretive research approach is the opposite of the positivist approach in term of instrumental orientation. The interpretive researchers conduct research to provide a thick description based on the primary accounts given by those being studied. In that sense, the researcher’s description is a secondary account to give a closer description to the primary account. The approach is useful to conduct explorative research to understand a particular case.

This research will take on the case study to show the social security in the upland area. The case study method is one of the strategies used in the interpretive research approach. Stake said

that “Case study research is not a sampling research. We do not study a case primarily to understand other cases. Our first obligation is to understand this one case.” (Stake, 1995, p. 4) Stake also stated that the choice of the case depends on many considerations, such as which cases are likely to give understanding, accessibility to location or materials, the uniqueness and the context of the case selection. A case study may have a poor basis for generalization, and only a few can be made for generalization. However, the strength of case study is the particularity of the case being studied. The important point in the case study is to provide validity and reliability. Triangulation is a credible option to validate the interpretation in the case study (pp. 7-8). In this research, I conducted triangulation for the trustworthiness and dependability.

4.2. Analysis Methods

This study is based on ethnographic field research and secondary data. After the interview data had been collected and transcribed, an inductive and thematic analysis was conducted to get the image of historical timelines and livelihood patterns. According to Thomas (2006), “inductive analysis refers to approaches that primarily use detailed readings of raw data to derive concepts, themes, or a model through interpretations made from the raw data by an evaluator or researcher.” (p.238) Therefore, it is not from a priori expectations or models. Then a framework that contains key themes and identified processes is created. However, the findings are shaped by the experiences and assumptions of the evaluator. For this reason, the evaluator may produce non-identical findings and non-overlapping components.

4.3. Indigenous World Views and Values

Indigenous world views are markedly different from the mainstream society and possess qualities such as group orientation, group duties, consensual decision making, holistic employee development and elder empowerment as opposed to individualism, majority rules, specialized

duties, organization employee development and no elder involvement (Chapman, McCaskill, & Newhouse, 1991, p. 341). I see the Phnong world views hold most of the qualities that are mentioned above; however, there are also the features that they absorbed from the mainstream society, such as self-insurance and individualization, because they are becoming busy. Hence, I will take their world views cautiously and at the same time be aware that their cultures are constantly changing. For example, the Phnong are known for imitation and observation of their community and outsiders. In addition, I see IPs' cultural changes as a progression that is not a totally negative thing; as Cherney said "authenticity is the product of the current moment" (Cherney, 2012). Their adaptation and integration into the mainstream society is a part of their evolution that should not be taken as merely a negative thing.

4.4. Research Location and Target Group

The research was conducted in northeastern Cambodia in Mondulkiri Province. Pu Rang and Pu Treng village were selected for this research. The two villages are located in Ou Reang district, Mondulkiri province. Pu Rang village is located in Sen Monorom commune and Pu Treng village is in Dak Dam commune. Both are situated in an upland area suitable for cash crop farming. Pu Rang village and Pu Treng village are located about 15 km and 20 km respectively from the provincial town. They were selected based on two criteria. First, they are considered as vulnerable to climate change due to geographical location and the loss of their traditional livelihood to the rapid socio-political transformation in Cambodia. Second, they have gone through numerous transformations in terms of their social and cultural systems. These criteria are ideal to reveal livelihood transformation and how they form security strategies and adapt to the changes.

In terms of ethnicity, the research focused on the Phnong indigenous group. They were chosen because they are considered the most adaptive among indigenous minority groups in

northeastern Cambodia. Numerous studies have described their willingness to learn from outsiders. According to Bourdier, they are open to integrating new ideas into their culture to improve their life. For instance, they see that learning the Khmer language is important for conducting trade. In addition, the Phnong is the group that easily adapts to outside influences. For instance, the Phnong are even eager to learn the French language (Bourdier, 2009, p. 560). At the same time, they felt proud of their culture, as they said that they do not feel ashamed of their culture even though it is not as good as other ethnics. They said that at least they are good at some skills, such as making traditional crafts (Bourdier, 2009, p. 567). Having said that, these criterias apply to the Phnong groups that live close to the towns, and only a few of them have actually adapted to the mainstream society and obtained social mobility. After many years of interaction with outsiders, they acknowledged the rapid changes in their communities, as they said *Pholas Hoey*, which means their culture has changed (Smith, 2010, p. 25). Hence, the Phnong are the ideal group for this research to reveal their livelihood transformation and social security mechanism.

4.5.Ethical Considerations

I asked the interviewees for their full consent before the interviews and their permission to include their responses and life stories in the main dissertation. I used pseudonyms for participants including state officials and NGO staff to protect their identity. Also, I reassured them that the research guaranteed their privacy and would not put them in a harmful situation in anyway whatsoever, such as political chaos during the national election of 2013 and social unrest. Since I am not an indigenous Phnong, in maintaining the highest level of objectivity in discussion and analysis, I relied on multiple confirmations with the key respondents.

4.6. Research Participants in Pu Rang and Pu Treng Village

The research, including preliminary field research, was conducted three times: August-September 2013, January-February 2014 and September-October 2014. 20 participants from each village were chosen. I coded **PT1-20** for 20 respondents in Pu Treng village and **PR1-20** for 20 respondents in Pu Rang village. Table 5 below shows their background and livelihoods.

Table 5 Summary of the Numbers and Characteristics of Research Participants

	Pu Rang village Sen Monorom Commune	Pu Treng village Dak Dam Commune
Number of in-depth interviews	20	20 (8 Catholic)
Number of participants (Male/Female)	5 Males, 15 Females	9 Males 11 Females
Age range of participants	22 to 69 years old	19 to 70 years old
Number of participants with grade 9	4	1
Number of Participants with primary education level or lower	16	19
Number of families of civil servants	12	9

Source: Author, 2014

Table 6 below shows the characteristics of the ten Phnong youth who are pursuing education or working outside the village. The interviews were conducted in September and October 2014. This data does not include another six Phnong youths who remain in the village, of whom one is in Pu Rang and five are in Pu Treng village.

Table 6 Summary of the Numbers and Characteristics of Phnong Youth

	Pu Rang Village Sen Monorom Commune	Pu Treng Village Dak Dam Commune
Number of in-depth interviews	6	4 (3 Catholic)
Number of participants (Male/Female)	5 Males, 1 Female	2 Males, 2 Females
Age range of participants	23 to 27 years old	23 to 29 years old
Number of key-informant interviews	2	1

Source: Author, 2014

4.7. Research and Analytical Flow

The research was analyzed based on an inductive process. It began from the political aspect followed by the village level, group level and the family level. The numbers of participants are reduced in each level to provide a comprehensive understanding of the context: historical backgrounds, commonalities and differences, strategies and struggle, pursuit of education in terms of decisions and outcomes, and other potential findings.

Table 7 Analytical Flow

Level of analysis	Khmer informants	Phnong participants	Focuses
Macro level/Sociopolitical level	9	40	Phnong villagers, Khmer officials, NGOs
The Phnong village level		40	Phnong villagers
Civil servants level		21	Phnong civil servants
Family level	2	15	Phnong youth Khmer teachers

Source: Author, 2014

4.8. Fieldwork Methods

The study used opportunistic methods to get close to the people and understand their everyday livelihood strategies. In this ethnographic research, I used the participatory observation method, unstructured, and semi-structured interviews to get some statistical data. During interviews in the two villages, I was assisted by a Phnong interpreter who is residing in Pu Rang village. During the fieldwork, I also collected secondary data. The fieldwork method of data collection has valuable importance not only to observe the daily activities but also the network building with the Phnong community and their networks.

4.9. Research Objectives

The Phnong's locally-organized forms of social security have not been extensively studied in Cambodia and not in an integrated manner that treats them as active people with genuine

knowledge and concerns. This research aims to show that they actively get involved in livelihood activities and education acquisition to adjust to the changes based on their internal logic, strategies and the changes in their surroundings.

4.10. Research Questions

The main question for this study is how the Phnong have developed their strategic behaviors towards livelihood security in the sociopolitical transformation in Cambodia.

Sub-questions for each chapter are:

- Chapter Three: What are the conflicts of interests between state, development agencies and the Phnong?
- Chapter Four: What are the current Phnong livelihoods and what are their social security strategies?
- Chapter Five: What are the livelihood strategies of the families of Phnong civil servants? Why do some families living in the same group and structural context fare better than others?
- Chapter Six: What are their strategies to pursue education and job opportunities? How is their orientation towards education influenced by their parents and relatives and conditioned by the sociopolitical transformation in Cambodia?

4.11. Research Significance and Contribution

The research will contribute to the studies of the Phnong social security mechanism through the narratives of their livelihood diversification and education acquisition. This research selected the case of the families of Phnong civil servants in the hope of illustrating the heterogeneity of the Phnong group and their ways of obtaining livelihood security. Furthermore, it allows interpretation of the various cases of the Phnong families on the micro level. Finally, it will also contribute to IP development policy in Cambodia.

4.12. Limitations and Scope

The research was conducted only in two villages in Mondulkiri Province due to time constraint. Nevertheless, I believe that the small sample size will be sufficient to yield comprehensive ethnographic findings within the research time frame. In the future, I wish to expand the research in other areas to provide more information and a comparative stance among the Phnong and other IPs. It is possible that the findings may be useful for a similar research in other upland areas that have similar conditions and structural factors.

Regarding the research target, I narrowed the target group by focusing only on the families of Phnong civil servants. According to DPA data in 2011, they constitute 24 percent of the families in the two villages. They are considered to be resilient and have experience of interaction with states and development agencies. Besides, they can speak the Khmer language and were open to help me to learn about their livelihood experiences. The small sample of the participants may provide rich information concerning their life stories and patterns, and are sufficient within the research time frame; however, it may not produce a generalization.

Concerning statistical data, I found it was difficult to obtain the accurate income and expenditure of the Phnong. First, they do not have a culture of writing to note down their daily life activities. Second, they said they could not know what would happen in the future, so it is not necessary to have an expectation. Besides, they find it difficult to think of saving as they will likely spend the cash on immediate needs. When the cash from selling cash crops runs out, they will rely on other livelihood activities or mutual support for social security. Hence, they do not have exact information or much memory concerning expenditure. For these reasons, I decided to change my tactic by engaging more in a friendly conversation on various livelihood topics that can be converted to numbers. Despite difficulties, I could obtain some statistical data about their

livelihood activities such as cash crops, wage work and traditional livelihoods that reveal the key families' socioeconomic conditions.

4.13. Structure of the Dissertation

Chapter One mainly provides the background of the study, rationality and methodology.

Chapter Two discusses literature relevant to IPs, such as the perspectives towards IPs, livelihoods perspectives and alternative concepts that recognize the livelihood patterns, including strategic behavior to obtain social security such as the concept of livelihood pathways and styles. Then I will discuss how these alternatives may contribute to the research about IPs' social security in the upland areas of Cambodia.

Chapter Three provides the understanding of indigenous development in Cambodia. The ambiguity of the term development, its implementation, and the reality will be described in this chapter. The chapter will serve as an introduction to why IPs began to internalize the views of and how they need to rely on their social security.

Chapter Four provides the picture of the Phnong livelihood transformation since the early 2000s. I intend to use this chapter as a foundation to understand the Phnong's livelihood transformation and their social security before I proceed to the main argument in the following chapters. I begin by giving the description of their memories of development and strategies: their encounter with cash crops, livelihood activities and wage work. Then I provide perceptions concerning opportunities, problems, and their locally-organized forms of social security. Later, I provide a justification that the approach to understanding their livelihood transformation also requires sociocultural components to explain their strategies.

Chapter Five provides the picture of the livelihood orientation and livelihood strategies of the Phnong families of civil servants. It reveals internal factors that are grounded by their historical repertoire in addition to the structural factors. However, although they possess the similar

behavioral orientation, their livelihood strategies are varied due to various opportunities and constraints. Later, I show how socioeconomic differences emerge among the families of civil servants that comprise high income, average income, and low income groups. Then I will explain that mutual support and network differences lead to various strategies and outcomes. Lastly, I will conclude that the high-income families can generate more benefits from mutual support than the rest because they can access many networks and travel and invest in their children's higher education. On the other hand, those who struggle tend to have few networks and poor relatives, and thus could not benefit much from reciprocal actions. Hence, they need to apply short-term and risky strategies for social security for the future such as selling land. Nevertheless, most families of Phnong civil servants share similar value and orientation towards education acquisition for the future.

Chapter Six provides the pursuit of education of the Phnong youth and their job prospects. Firstly, I use the cases of the families of Phnong civil servants to show their orientation towards education. They are mostly oriented towards education regardless of their socioeconomic differences due to their upbringing and surrounding. However, only a few families of civil servants could afford to support their children. Second, I will reveal the Phnong youth's strategies to get education, such help from their families, relatives and other actors they coordinate with and reveal the outcome of their education acquisition. Finally, I will illustrate the formation of their strategies to acquire education.

In Chapter Seven, I provided the main conclusions from each chapter. First I provided the some implications for practice and new exciting topics for further research. Lastly, I offered recommendation in connection to the indigenous research and IPs development policy in Cambodia.

In conclusion, the research found that within the Phnong group, the families of Phnong civil servants was able to adjust to the sociopolitical transformation to obtain social security. It is confirmed that their livelihood pathways include patterns of coordination with various actors that form strategic behaviors to acquire social security. They possess shared experiences and values, and are under the influence of sociopolitical changes in Cambodia. These structural factors lead them to behave strategically or habitually to reduce livelihood insecurities and improve their lives, and even investing in their children's high education. Their strategic behaviors keep changing according to their historical repertoire, structural factors that form their livelihood strategies to coordinate with various actors ranging from relatives, the state, donors and development agencies. In addition, by applying alternative development concept, I could reveal the heterogeneity of the Phnong families of the same group and community and expose new exciting topics. In terms of contribution, the findings will be invaluable for indigenous livelihood studies and the IPs development policy.

The research framework as seen in Table 8 shows main events, research steps and key findings. It is intended to generate replication for future researchers who are interested in indigenous livelihoods. It can also be used in comparative research.

Research Framework

Table 8 Research Framework

Introduction and Literature Reviews (Chapter One and Chapter Two)										
Sociopolitical Changes (Chapter Three)										
Year and cassava production (tonnes) in relation to village livelihood transformation										
Y 2002	Y 2003	Y 2004	Y 2005	Y 2006	Y 2007	Y 2008	Y 2009	Y 2010	Y 2011	Y 2012
122,014 t	330,649 t	362,050 t	535,623 t	2,182,043 t	2,215,000 t	3,676,272 t	3,497,306 t	4,247,419 t	8,033,843 t	7,613,697 t
-Trial farming in Pu Rang -State and NGOs came to promote cassava in Pu Rang			-Pu Rang experienced cassava boom. -Cash income		-State and development agencies began to promote cassava in Pu Treng.			-Pu Treng experienced cassava boom. -Economic opportunities		-Uncertain future -Reliance on cassava -Seeking alternatives -Acquire education
-Several years after the adoption of Land Law 2001			-Plantations were created -Economic Land Concession (ELC)		-Recruiting trainee teacher from the remote areas. -National Policy on the Development of Indigenous Peoples (NPDIP)			-New roads and electricity -Influx of migration -Identification of poor households program		-Directive 01 -Land disputes due to ELC
Livelihood transformation since the early 2000s (Chapter Four): -Opportunities and Challenges -Solutions and Orientations										
Livelihood strategies of the families of civil servants (Chapter Five): -Livelihood orientation: Self-insurance and mutual support -Differences strategies among the group of families of civil servant and the orientation towards education										
Pursuit of education and job of the Phnong youth Chapter Six): -A few families that can afford to send their children to higher education -Strategies of the Phnong youth and families to acquire education and the outcomes										
Conclusion and recommendation (Chapter Seven)										

Source: Compiled by author from FAOSTAT, 2012 and field research findings

Chapter Two: Review of Approach Relevant to Indigenous Peoples

1. Introduction

Because there is a lack of research about Phnong, I had trouble finding literature for generating discussion and debate about their livelihood transformation and social security. Hence, in this chapter, I decided to focus mainly on the concepts that contribute to revealing livelihoods and the social security mechanism.

Firstly, I constructed the picture of IPs in the development context. Then I looked into various research disciplines that are relevant to IPs. Finally, I provided discussion on the usage of the livelihoods perspectives and conceptualizing development alternative in the indigenous research in Cambodia.

2. Multiplicities of Views towards IPs

This section provides the historical overview of IPs in relation to oppression and marginalization, the meaning attached to the term ‘indigenous peoples’, and how later it has become a movement for the recognition of rights to their practices and lands for cultural survival.

2.1. Oppression

The term of ‘oppression’ is found in literature related to colonization and post-colonization and extends to post-development literature. According to Young, oppression happens when people make other people less human. It dehumanizes people or denies them the chance to be educated and be a part of society, and denies other opportunities to be fully human beings (Young, 2004). According to the same author, there are five faces of oppression: exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism and violence. In relation to IPs, exploitation, marginalization and cultural imperialism are the most visible forms of oppression. Cultural imperialism involves taking on a dominant culture of one group or ruling group such as the

experience, values, goals and achievements of these groups. Those who do not obtain the dominant culture are constantly stereotyped. For instance, the San in Kalahari have been stereotyped because of their primitiveness by the local systems of class exploitation (Sylvain, 2008). Exploitation is conducted in the form of using people's labor without compensating them fairly. For instance, San women in Kalahari were stripped naked to perform a dance that is considered a pristine primitive dance. After they performed, they were not compensated as promised. One San woman said they were wasted (Sylvain, 2008, p. 419). In recent times, marginalization is considered as the worst form of oppression in the sense that people are excluded from any social activities such as labor and services. The dominant groups institutionalize many forms of discrimination against the minority groups such as the historical legacies of prejudicial justice systems, discriminatory schooling, and exclusionary economic systems. These lead to sustained social inequality, class levels, and stereotypes in the society (Fenelon & Hall, 2004, p. 6).

Freire's famous book "Pedagogy of the Oppressed" (1970) has gained international attention regarding oppression although he mainly pointed to the educational aspect. He said that education should allow the oppressed to regain their sense of humanity to overcome their non-favored condition. To overcome oppression, he stated that "no pedagogy which is truly liberating can remain distant from the oppressed by treating them as unfortunates and by presenting for their emulation models from among the oppressors. The oppressed must be their own example in the struggle for their redemption." (Freire, 1970, p. 57) Therefore, the oppressed needs to believe in themselves and becomes involved in the organized struggle for their liberation. Although Freire's philosophy is mainly applied to education aspect but it also provides interpretations for social action. In the next section, resistance and revitalization will be explained.

2.2. Resistance and Revitalization

The term ‘resistance’ has been used by post-development theorists. To them, the ethnocentric view and intervention from the West to the Third World countries by imposing Western values and new forms of discourse of development has created resistance (Escobar, 1995) as people became victims of the exacerbation from capitalism, such as losing their land to ELCs and land grabbing, environmental issues, and cultural degradation. Those people will rise up to protect their lands and cultural survival in a form of resistance. Sometimes, resistance can be subtle and does not cause violence (Kerkvliet, 2009).

While not opposing post-development theorists about resistance, Hall and Fenelon have suggested another way of looking into the post-development issues. Rather than perceiving IPs action toward development as a radical resistance, they provided a very arbitrary explanation that IPs resistance is a form of a revitalization of their cultural and livelihood survival. They continued to say that resistance is a term used mainly by the states, while revitalization is used by most of the IPs for social movements (Fenelon & Hall, 2008, p. 1873). It is likely that the state uses the term resistance to crack down on social movements while IPs use the term revitalization for social movements to protect their cultural and economic survival.

The term resistance that is used by the state or revitalization that is used mostly by IPs may come in different forms and degree depending on the context. It can be rebellious movements such as a movement against state policies from the IPs of Oaxaca in Mexico (Fenelon & Hall, 2008, p. 1872), movements for recognition and land sovereignty (Karlsson, 2003), movements for education opportunities, and so on. Apart from connecting IPs to social movements, there are also researchers in the field asking for recognition of IPs who are actively in charge of their lives and where their livelihood strategies are a moving target as shown in the next section.

2.3.Cultural Hybridity

Robin's research (2003) has generated two vital views relevant to IPs in the development field. He points to the importance of understanding the hybridity of culture and the role of local actors in terms of transforming their livelihoods. He said IP society is not static, and they are already calling for state services such as schools, clinics, and state resources to be used in the face of job loss, grinding poverty and neoliberal fiscal austerity (Robins, 2003, p. 281).

First, Robins's study challenges both modernization and post-development theories in which he wants research to focus on cultural hybridity of local response to development (Robins, 2003, p. 283). He sees that local responses to development are very complex and not always an act of resistance. Their responses are based on their decision after constant negotiation with the outside influences, such as NGOs and the state. He stressed that the hybridized condition of everyday life is located in local knowledge, practices, identities and accession to communication technology (Robins, 2001, p. 835). Therefore it is impossible for them to remain traditional and it is also impossible for them to be purely modernized. He warned that if development agencies prioritize the so-called pure tribal people, it will cause cultural fragmentation between the traditional tribes and the westernized or modernized tribes.

Second, from Robin's point of view, the hybridized condition of everyday life is the process of gaining a way to cultural survival. According to Robin, some IPs' traditional survival is the incorporation of modern tools and incomes from tourism (Robins, 2001, pp. 843-844). It can be said that they are adapting to modernity to survive and to revive their culture. Adaptation is an important livelihood survival strategy for IPs under the influence of exogenous forces. Robins stated that even the traditionalist community needs modern means of production, transportation and communication for their survival. Thus, their culture and practices are reconstituted and reproduced through adapting to modernity. As he said in the study of Kalahari San tribes:

...many of these groups adapt and recast their dependencies on modern means of production in order to reconstitute and reproduce their own cultural ideas and practices. Similarly, by participating in NGO and donor-driven projects, indigenous groups, such as the Kalahari San, are drawing on the modern institutions and resources of a global civil society to reconstitute themselves as a 'traditional community' (Robins, 2001, p. 843).

Past studies tend to come to the conclusion that IPs do not welcome modern technology; however, some indigenous communities do not have any principled problem with modern technology or development as long as it is not bad for their community (Robins, 2003, p. 273). The main principal of this statement by Robin is while development theorists of modernity and post-modernity see modernity as harmful for IPs cultural survival, IPs do not see development as a negative thing as long as it does not threaten their livelihood. As Hirtz said, recognizing them as IPs already solidified them in the realms of modernity (Hirtz, 2003). Hence, modernity is a part of being IPs and their progression.

Since development has already arrived in their vicinity, it is important to treat IPs as an active group of people with their preferences. They are neither willing to live up the fantasies of becoming 'Western' or ready to be recruited into the society (Robins, 2001, p. 846) because they do not necessarily see themselves as passive victims of exogenous dominance; as Robin said, "they were neither anti-development revolutionaries nor victims of Western development discourses that transformed them into depoliticized consumer-zombies." (Robins, 2003, p. 281) If we interpret Freire's ideas, Robin's view about IPs is perfectly fit because being oppressed does not limit them from actively participating in self-empowerment. In the development context, it is when we recognize the fundamental role of local groups and assist them to empower themselves through a local form of empowerment that development is successful and sustainable.

2.4.Section Conclusion

In conclusion, terms 'oppressed', 'resistance' and 'resistance and revitalization' have been used for different purpose based on political ideology. The state tends to use the term resistance

while IPs prefer the term revitalization for protecting their culture and livelihoods. The terms ‘resistance’ and ‘revitalization’ somehow treat IPs as active agents but not yet in terms of ‘development participant’ by the state because they are associated with social movements. Oppression has gained more international attention from institutions and development agencies that stress the importance of recognizing their rights as a human being. However, the term oppression can be overstated, which will likely put them in the unfavorable position. For instance, if the development institutions and the development actors treat IPs as victims of exogenous dominance, it will leave no room for appropriate development (Robins, 2003, p. 281). The way IPs are dealing with modernity is a very complex processes that needs to be looked at from a different development angle. The stereotypical image of uncivilized IPs from development actors has had ethical and methodological problems, so that in the recent development paradigm, some researchers stressed that IPs should not be viewed merely as ‘development targets.’ Derived from Freire's thinking, for development to be humanizing, people must be the subjects in, not objects of, development. Lately, international organizations have stressed the recognition of IPs’ rights, and various approaches center on human rights principles such as the rights-based approach and livelihood approach.

3. Rights-Based Approach

The movement and the recognition of indigenous rights emerged at the same time with the new policy to recognize the role of local people in participating in development planning and community development. International organizations such the World Bank and ILO began to include the notion of indigeneity and clauses for the state to abide by before funds are given.

3.1.Participation in Development

By the 1990s, there were several approaches that took into consideration local participation, such as Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA), Participatory Action Research (PAR) and Participatory

Rural Appraisal (PRA). Furthermore, the proliferation of participatory methods suggested that there are rooms for changes especially to avoid the pre-set planning, top-down approach and find a meaningful research to approach locals (Chambers, 2013). Chamber said:

We now have an extraordinary variety of PMs. The approaches of the 1990s — PRA, Appreciative Inquiry, Reflect and many others — survive but increasingly practitioners adapt and improvise their own ways of research and participation to meet their particular contexts and needs.(p.2)

In recent years, the development community has made efforts applying the rights-based approach into the development of IPs as McNeish and Eversole (2005, p.13) said that “for indigenous peoples, the concept of the right to participation is opening up the opportunity, at least in theory, to tailor development to their own interests and goals.”

However, the so-called local participatory approach is not without criticism. The approach often highlights collectiveness and solidarity as positive aspects but has little interest in highlighting the tensions within cultures in the community (Cleaver, 2001). Community is portrayed as an agent that is capable of planning and implementing collective initiatives and thus the approach has neglected other social groups and institutions (Francis, 2001, p. 79). Individuals are left responsible for their self-sufficiency while experts act as competitive providers of information and knowledge, and risk assessments in the community. As Hyatt said:

‘Poverty’ for the new subject ‘is represented not as a social problem, but as a new possibility for poor individuals to experience “empowerment” through the actualization of their own self-management.’” (Hyatt, 1997, p.219 cited from McNeish, 2005, p. 235)

Recently, the pressure for conducting cost-efficient approaches sees NGOs hardly have enough time and new skills to approach the locals. They risk losing social capital which is the trust from the local people. The lack of this attribution is one of the challenges that most donors and NGOs do not have yet (Thomas P. , 2013, p. 6). These agencies convince local people to approve an already decided project within the given time. They work as facilitators while local people need to undertake their own development by relying on their community strength.

Therefore, from the new perspective, local people are left to experience what is called self-realization. In reality, they are being left to survive amidst the encroaching of the market and political changes.

3.2. Empowerment: Social Capital and Capacity Building

From the concept of local participation, there comes the concept of social capital. The basic assumption in social capital theory is that social relations characterized by norms of trust and reciprocity have a value that people can use to achieve their interests and should, therefore, be regarded as physical or human capital (Coleman, 1988, p. 101). If the interaction facilitates a cooperation that leads to success, it is expected that there is an increase in the amount of trust among people. Thus, the probability of cooperation depends on the size of the potential gains from cooperation (Svendsen & Svendsen, 2004, p. 28). For instance, according to a study of Hmong in Thailand, they relied on their networks for knowledge verification and confirmation (Tomforde, 2006). Hmong in Vietnam used networks to provide safety and mutual help when they go to the forest (Turner, 2007). Therefore, the concept is assumed to have a significant role in anti-poverty policy, and it was quantified to have an effect on social mobility. Furthermore,, the concept has been repeated in the reports and literature of the IMF and the World Bank that aim to encourage growth and the fulfillment of social capital in the development of communities (McNeish & Eversole, 2005, p. 13).

According to Molyneux (2002), “social capital is assumed to reduce the costs of development and enhance efficiency through the mobilization of resources that are freely given and considered to be sustainable because they are in the collective interest.” (p.175) However, the concept of social capital may undermine informal networks by prioritizing social capital to equation and statistic. It may neglect informal networks such as the non-Western religious and cultural organization and leadership forms and formalized structures and networks. Therefore,

the oversimplifying concept of social capital will weaken the position of already marginalized IPs. In addition, social capital is intended to generate a social movement from bottom up, but it also has hierarchy. NGOs are slowly controlled by the government through the restriction of any activities that are seen as a challenge to the government's priorities (Molyneux, 2002, p. 176).

In recent years, several research areas stress on recognizing IPs' rights and the management of their local resources as Marschke, Szablowski and Vandergeest (2008) said:

In the area of resource and environmental management, our observations and interviews suggest that there are several research areas emerging that may be particularly relevant to indigenous peoples. These include (a) free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) and (b) livelihood and market engagement. (p.494)

These areas of development require the application of social capital and capacity building. For instance, development agencies are working to provide capacity building and reinforce the local social capital. From these efforts to build capacities and social capital, the community is said to be in charge of their communal forest, infrastructure, and most noticeably indigenous tourism. Indigenous tourism is said to provide indigenous community income as well as help to preserve their cultural identity. However, there should be precautions about the application of the concept of capacity building and social capital that are too loose. Some cases showed that what could be considered as opportunities for IPs might also reinforce stereotypes. For instance, tourism opportunities, including ethnic tourism and ecotourism, may help generate income; but at the same time, it relegates IPs performers and reinforces stereotypes (Marschke, Szablowski, & Vandergeest, 2008, p. 497). Therefore, for the people to define their development agenda and benefit in a meaningful way, there is a call for culturally appropriate development that incorporates indigenous knowledge and ownership. Therefore, for the people to define their development agenda and benefit from it, there is a call for culturally appropriate development that incorporates indigenous knowledge and ownership.

3.3.Indigenous Knowledge and Sustainability

The publication of the Brundtland Report in the 1980s hailed IPs as the guardians of nature, and the Rio Summit in 1992 has been influential in underlying the importance of IPs, especially encouraging the participation from IPs in coordination with their strategies and techniques for the purpose of sustainable development (McNeish, 2005, p. 229). Numerous well-known researchers acknowledged indigenous knowledge in adjusting to a changing environment. In other words, they are experts in the place they are living, which is a result of their constant reassessment and adjustment to their surrounding environment (ibid, p.230).

Anthropology and economic anthropology have contributed to finding information about the logic and techniques of the non-Western economic system, which has lately contributed to a debate about the liability of top-down strategies, and then a call for the recognition of local knowledge. Now local participation and local knowledge in development planning have been recognized by international development organizations and found their way into the development planning and policy (McNeish, 2005, pp. 230-231).

Cavalcanti said “traditional economic thinking does not offer a sound basis for reaching ecologically sustainable solutions in the long run.” (Cavalcanti, 2002, p. 40) In addition, she stressed the understanding of the local economic system, such as how local people maintain their economic system through exchanging gifts, their interests, notions of wealth, and so on. She said “there are a few studies that investigate or integrate indigenous concepts of ‘nature’ or ‘environment’ as factors in the maintenance of healthy, long-lasting economies.” (ibid, p.52) Despite this recognition, IPs’ initiatives and strategies remain largely invisible because the government and development agencies are driven by the development of anti-poverty programmes, funded by donors (McNeish, 2005, p. 231). Subsequently, there is a call for another view of the economic process in a sustainable way.

The concept that recognizes human-centeredness and local knowledge is not something new. The promotion of human-centeredness in managing livelihoods in a sustainable way under the name ‘concept of sustainable livelihood’ became the center of attention of development agencies after the adoption of the MDGs. The concept became prominent in the research paradigm because it touches the livelihoods in the rural and upland areas where most vulnerable people live, such as rural people and indigenous groups.

4. From Sustainable Livelihoods Approach to Livelihood Pathways

4.1. Sustainable Livelihoods Approach

Views regarding people-centeredness and livelihood adjustment were emerging from the early 1970s. During the 1970s and 1980s, economics and geographical studies began to take an interest in the informal sector and survival strategies of the poor and coping strategies in the studies of hazard and risk. Some researchers took the field to examine the changes in the rural context and began to stress the importance of the role of locals and copying strategies in transforming their lives. These were mainly advocated by Robert Chambers and several schools of study such as the actor-oriented approach and peasant studies. Chambers has been influential in the expansion of the livelihoods approach at the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) of the University of Sussex (Chambers, 1987; Chambers & Conway 1991). Similarly, Long’s school of study has developed an approach called the actor-oriented approach. Amartya Sen’s school of thought has developed a ‘capability approach’ in regards the assessment of poverty issues by focusing on a person’s capability and perceptions of what is considered as desirable (Dreze & Sen, 1989). Later the term ‘sustainability’ came into the spotlight, “the environment and development movement of the 1980s and 1990s threw up in particular concerns about linking a focus on poverty reduction and development with longer-term environmental shocks and stresses.” (Scoones, 2009, p. 174).

Chambers and Conway provided a definition of livelihoods that is mostly applicable to household-level studies:

A livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (stores, resources, claims and access) and activities required for a means of living: a livelihood is sustainable which can cope with and recover from stress and shocks, maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets, and provide sustainable livelihood opportunities for the next generation; and which contributes net benefits to other livelihoods at the local and global levels and in the short and long term (Chambers & Conway, 1991, p. 6).

They said that some people are more or less involved in livelihood changes depending on the degree of desperation in the form of the social, economic, and ecological environment. They mainly focus on the long-term flexibility to sustain livelihoods by stressing capabilities.

Along with the development of sustainable perspectives, Scoones (1998) created a holistic framework to address problems, assets and the entitlements of the community and individuals and provide an analytical understanding how their livelihoods can be made more productive and sustainable. Apart from the analytical framework described by Scoones, adaptive strategies in which local people make the adjustment and changes in their system has also gained much attention. Recently, livelihood diversification is becoming a central focus of attention of livelihoods research in rural and upland areas. Diversification is said to help to sustain their livelihoods and to cope with stresses and shocks, such as seeking a new source of food and diversifying working activities or sources of income. For example, villagers need to change their way of living by diversifying their livelihoods in the face of immense pressure from the social changes (Bouahom, Douangsavanh, & Rigg, 2004). They continued that diversification is propelled by different forces that result in progressive or distress diversification. Distress diversification is a way to overcome barriers and withstand shocks and stress based on the basic survival needed. Progressive diversification can be a strategy for enhanced economic growth and expansion (ibid, p.614).

Turner suggested another type of diversification. Selective diversification is undertaken when the opportunities arise, and the decision-making process results in temporal engagement in commodity chains. It can be construed to be a form of progressive diversification; however, it can be more complicated than the progressive diversification (Turner, 2007). Livelihood diversification of all forms suggests that local people diversify their livelihoods through evaluation of their resources and assess their past, present and the future needs.

Zoomers (1999) found several strategies in her research in the Andes such as accumulation strategies, consolidation strategies, compensatory strategies and security strategies. Accumulation strategies involve the application of the minimum resource base and preparing for future expansion. Such strategies are guided by a long-term future view and involve migration, land acquisition, and labor recruitment. After achieving a level of affluence in social mobility, wealthy families apply consolidation strategies. Consolidation strategies involve investment to stabilize well-being and improve quality of households in the short term. Another strategy is compensatory strategies wherein farmers battle the problems of stresses and shocks, and the shortage of labor or land, by relying on family social security, migration, economizing, selling capital, and borrowing and bartering. The final security strategies include diversification strategies such as multi-cropping and multi-tasking, exploring non-farming opportunities, shared crops and stockpiling (p. 48-51). This approach is commonly found in villages at higher altitudes. From her research, Zoomers acknowledges the role of structural components within the strategies, such different geographical location and access to labor and opportunities. Such structural components tend to have geographical and demographic characteristics. Her research provides alternative views towards the structural components of livelihood strategies in the high altitude areas.

Although livelihood studies have developed into what we know today, it has faced challenges and was under criticism and faced new challenges for its narrow view, economic framing, and politics. First, the main entry point of livelihood analysis is limited to the poor and their strategies. Second is the issue of people-centeredness and a narrow vision by depicting a person to be occupied with using assets to obtain specific economic goals. Thirdly, livelihood studies need to incorporate the current developments and catch up with a rapidly changing world (Kaag, et al., 2003, pp. 4-5). One of the solutions to these challenges is to consider a processual perspective as they said:

The challenge is not to lose sight of the structural environment that may constrain their initiatives. In view of this, a processual perspective that puts people and their actions at the centre of the analysis but that at the same time considers these actions as the result and the constituent of broader and longer-term processes can be valuable. (p.5)

In addition, using themes as a departing point for the livelihood research will bring about exciting and interesting research. Scoones said “the themes of knowledge, scale, politics and dynamics will offer an exciting and challenging agenda of research and practice to enrich livelihood perspectives for rural development into the future.” (Scoones, 2009, p. 191) Therefore, livelihoods need to maintain contextual, trans-disciplinary and cross-sectoral insights to reveal the significant differences of ideas between the local people and the experts over the practices and livelihoods that are ‘sustainable’. Also, livelihoods should be considered as a process rather than a system.

4.2.Livelihood Pathways

The livelihoods approaches mainly favor the analysis of access to and assets for livelihood sustainability. Thus, the context of the fluidity of livelihoods has been largely missing. The way livelihoods constantly refashion and negotiate in a broader economic context is underestimated. The recent transformation in opportunities and patterns of mobility in many areas of the global South has affected research on livelihoods. Various scholars and practitioners have extended

their research beyond sustainable livelihoods to focus on livelihood pathways and trajectories (de Haan and Zoomers, 2005; Scoones, 2009). Therefore, the recent research has increasingly focused on individuals' livelihood experiences and the structural components that formed their livelihood strategies.

De Haan and Zoomers, who focus on sociocultural components in their livelihood research, considered pathways as a step or procedure that is constantly reassessed by individuals with a view of new unstable conditions based on their experience and coordination with other actors (de Haan & Zoomers, 2005, p. 41). De Haan and Zoomers define it as follows:

A pathway can be defined as a pattern of livelihood activities which emerges from a co-ordination process among actors, arising from individual strategic behaviour embedded both in a historical repertoire and in social differentiation, including power relations and institutional processes, both of which play a role in subsequent decision-making. (p.45)

In this explanation, past experiences and the surrounding conditions ground the individual strategies and decisions. Furthermore, pathways reflect strategies but not necessarily a device to attain a pre-set goal as actors constantly reassess their preference and procedure facing new unstable condition. Scoones & Wolmer said, "livelihoods emerge out of past actions and decisions are made within specific historical and agro-ecological conditions, and are constantly shaped by institutions and social arrangements" (Scoones & Wolme, 2002, p. 183). Therefore, these scholars have a similar opinion about the temporality of livelihood activities as decision making and strategies emerge from coordination processes among actors to adjust to the changes. However, one aspect has not been resolved regarding the outcome of the livelihood activities. There are different opinions regarding the orientation of the outcome. One group said livelihood patterns should be considered as a step rather than a structural category to accumulate the intended outcome, while another group thought that livelihood patterns are non-linear and non-deterministic, as actors might start from different power positions and have different ways of accumulating the resource endowment (de Haan & Zoomers, 2005, p. 43).

Along with pathways, the concept of styles also focuses on livelihood patterns; however it focuses more on a group's livelihood feature such as their livelihood orientation and strategies to obtain social security¹. It is used to analyze sociocultural components of livelihoods that local people do to obtain social security such as historical repertoire, shared experience, knowledge, behavior, an integrated set of practices, and of the interrelations with the market, institutions, and policy. Nooteboom said that "style is a coherent and distinctive manner of acting and doing things." (Nooteboom, 2003, p. 217) It is an integrated set of practices or institutional patterns to acquire social security, including the attitude toward a particular livelihood and strategic behaviors. This behavior is grounded by historical repertoire, and it leads people to act unintentionally. For example, "Villagers may be caught in a social security style because they were raised in a family with an orientation towards strong ties with neighbours, relatives, mutual help, and reciprocal relationships." (ibid, p.218). Nevertheless, the concept of styles does not disregard the individual strategies. Styles are not easy to shift for social and economic reasons because they are embedded with a history and legacy. However, it is possible for style to change through disruptions. For example, traveling and education are often considered as disruptions to obtain a future different from their parents (Nooteboom, 2003, p. 218). From his observation, he said that "I witnessed villagers reacting to events in a habitual, customary, and pre-set pattern of reactions, closely watching and following what others did." (p.276) It is a result of the habitual repertoire provided by the style of the family or group. Also, some social security styles are vulnerable to risk more than others because those styles do not respond well to new challenges. Therefore, the concept has contributed to the analysis of sociocultural components in relation to a livelihood orientation which is merely mentioned in the livelihood research.

¹ The term social security in this research uses Nooteboom's definition. See Nooteboom, 2003, p.33

“Styles and pathways are used as concepts that try to disentangle regularities.”(de Haan & Zoomers, 2005, p. 45). In this research, these concepts will contribute to the explanation from sociocultural aspects concerning livelihood patterns in regards various livelihood orientations and livelihood strategies to obtain social security in the upland area.

5. Theoretical Perspectives of Adaptation

After describing the development concept in the livelihood research, this section is intended to provide a theoretical perspective on adaptation. Livelihood adjustment processes and strategic behavior are a continuous interaction and transformation (internally and externally) in various domains, particularly when local actors are exposed to different knowledge, markets, constraints, and so forth, and internalized into their culture for cultural reproduction and survival.

5.1.Cultural Transmission

The economic behavior of indigenous societies cannot be explained solely based on cost-benefit because it will undermine their cultural context and risk losing important information that could be provided ethnographically (Henrich, 2002, p. 253). Hence, Henrich stressed the behavioral strategies that are associated with the role of cultural transmission. For example, IPs in the Andes started to grow new crops that have strong resistance to environmental changes, but they still retain some of the traditional crops which have weak resistance. One of the explanations suggested is the cultural preference of corn cultivation. In another example, some indigenous farmers copy individuals in their community concerning the numbers of children they should have. Similarly, Coleman raised the example of how IPs in the Pacific maintain rituals which seem to be economically burdensome (Coleman S. , 2005). He said there is no clear border between economic value and cultural value in their society (ibid, p.351). It is a matter of a moral obligation to perform rituals. In this sense, the “culture” of rationality is localized in one culture that directs people to do something that is not always based on cost-benefit.

According to Henrich (2002, pp.275-287), humans rely on cultural transmission to make decisions and it could be biased under an enormous number of ways. He focused on prestige-biased transmission and conformist transmission.² Prestige-biased transmission is commonly practiced because humans behaviorally copy and imitate one another while conformist transmission is practiced when individuals preferably adopt cultural traits. These biased transmissions also allow people to recombine different rules. For instance, some people became more successful after they included their knowledge and experience in this practice. Therefore, individual variations and the differences of rules allowed these traditional societies to form novel rules and transmit them from one to another; as Henrich said, “biased transmission takes advantage of the individual variation in a population, and allows for different rules to be recombined to form novel rules.” (Henrich, 2002, p. 286)

In IP society, profound cultural transmission has influenced the decision making for a well-integrated adaptation and strategic behavior for security (Henrich, 2002). Polier described the culturally embedded strategies that allowed small farmers to confront uncertain prospects, including the risk of ecological change, market shock, and the risk of unemployment (Polier, 2000, pp. 198-199). Polier described the kinship role of the Min peoples in Papua New Guinea, in which they shared goods and gifts as moral obligations that function as a safety net. For example, Min men who went to work in the mining company shared their paycheck with their village members as an act of appreciation for taking care of their wives and children. This act is also considered as a form of social security in case they lose their job. Their protective strategy is a well-adapted process based on their cultural transmission.

² He said “Humans possess a strong propensity to preferentially copy the ideas, behaviors, values and opinions of particularly prestigious or successful individuals in their social group—I term this cognitive mechanism prestige-biased transmission.” (p.280) and “Under conformist transmission, individuals possess a propensity to preferentially adopt the cultural traits (ideas, beliefs, values and behaviors) that are most frequent in the population.” (p.282)

In the globalized era, cultural transmission has become a form of adaption process. IPs acquire belief and traditional knowledge from their upbringing on the one hand, and they acquire social skills through socialization in a large society on the other hand (McCaskill & Rutherford, 2005, p. 152). Cultural transmission from the family and from the society will provide them with identity and survival tools as well as influence their behaviors to adapt to changes.

5.2.External Influences

Apart from cultural transmission, external forces have also been the instigators of IP adaptation. They were under two forms of exoticization that have influenced the way they think and make a living. First is an exoticization in the form of a negative stereotype, and another is an exoticization in the form of nostalgia, which sees tradition as unspoiled and unrecoverable (Theodossopoulos, 2012). The exoticization in the form of a negative stereotype is responsible for the decline of the Embera people's attire in the second half of the twentieth century, mainly in the last quarter of the twentieth century. They were told to cover their upper body by Panamanian law, and they were influenced by social changes such as education and market economy. This kind of exoticization has led them to adapt to modernity. On the other hand, the exoticization in the form of nostalgia sees indigenous tradition as an unspoiled and unrecoverable asset by the modern state and NGOs. This kind of exoticization started at the dawn of the millennium. The modern state, with the assistance from NGOs and tour agents, introduced cultural tourism or indigenous tourism to the Embera community. The introduction of indigenous tourism has changed the way they see their traditional attire. They see their traditional attire as a tool for generating income. They will wear their traditional attire during activities such as cultural performances and selling souvenirs. Also, they started to feel proud of their traditional attire. Thus, they slowly gained back their sense of pride in their traditional dress (Theodossopoulos, 2012, pp. 593-598). Some even stated that it is more pleasant to wear

traditional attire than modern clothes. Therefore, the decision to revive the traditional attire ranged from ‘personal political strategy’ or ‘strategic dissembling’, to a less strategic decision such as practical concerns about the lack of job, conforming with the non-indigenous rules by modifying the way they dress and design, personal preference, and finally exoticization in the form of nostalgia (ibid, p.608).

The exoticization in the form of a stereotype and exoticization in the form of nostalgia is always in constant debate as one tries to bring modernity into the community while the other one tries to bring back the lost tradition or something on the brink of being lost. Thus, exoticization is related to both the decline and the revival of their identity (Conklin, 1997, p. 712). One thing that is clear is that both forms of exoticization have influenced IPs’ behavior and attitude. As mentioned before, they may need to adapt to modernity and conform to the state’s rules, and they may revive their cultural attire to make a living by performing for tourists.

5.3.Progressed IPs

Research on the Sakai people in Indonesia found that their perception of being progressed and not progressed is fed from the broader society, that being progressed is an ideal goal. They began to create self-applied terms with a more acceptable economic explanation for those who remain poor and those who are wealthy. In the present-day term, *kurang maju* refers to the people who are not progressed enough, *orang maju* refers to progressed people, and *orang modern* refers to the modern people (Porath, 2010, pp. 285-286). They tend to associate being poor or wealthy with how much they have progressed. For them, the goal is to become progressed or modern. To be progressed, there is a process that they need to undertake. The progressed groups are politically eager to be involved in further education to become modern and progressed. To acquire a good education, they rely on networks that can link them to information, resources and aids. Most of them are from the already-established families of civil

servants or merchants that have various connections. In contrast, it is difficult for those who are not from the already-established families of civil servants.

Similarly, in Cambodia, the interaction between the Phnong and development agencies has created several reinforcing narratives, particularly the ‘Culture of Silence’ (Smith, 2010, pp. 42-43). The Phnong were fed with a distinction between those who know and those who do not. The mainstream society tends to tell them to go to study if they want to improve their life. Also, being traditional is considered as a backward lifestyle. Furthermore, they are told they could not rely on traditional livelihoods forever in the midst of declining of natural resources. Therefore, they perceived education as a way to improve life and status. However, only a few Phnong can achieve higher education and get a job in the mainstream society. From the above interpretations, education is considered as a means to be modern and escape from exoticization, to be progressed, to be accepted in the mainstream society, and for livelihood improvement when they cannot rely on traditional livelihoods.

6. Discussion and Conclusion

IPs’ interdependency within and beyond their groups is a way to construct their ways of living to obtain social security. However, research tends to focus on their economic aspect and see them as poor without acknowledging that they are active agents with preferences and strategies. Besides, being poor does not prevent them from applying strategies to solve the problems or access help. Therefore, if we can see IPs’ sociocultural components beyond their structural constraints, we will learn more about what they can do and what they prefer to do.

In livelihood studies, there is a chance that the context of structural poverty that made them poor is overlooked. In this sense, learning about their livelihood experiences will provide the analysis of sociocultural components, such as their conditions and strategic behavior, and links their behavior to the wider transformation of the country. Rather than seeing them as poor, it is

better to treat them as the people with a target. While the term ‘the poor’ is universally accepted to categorize a group, there should be another way to look at the poor beyond the indicators. It is possible to learn from their experiences through livelihood pathways.

Concerning the social security mechanism, the success and the struggle to adjust to changes are reflected in their livelihood patterns of making a living. By tackling the sociocultural components that shape their livelihood patterns, it is possible to reveal the social security mechanism used by both a group and individual families.

Regarding Scoones’ concern over knowledge and long-term studies, I relate to his concern and take this opportunity to apply the livelihood pathways to open up new livelihood agendas, particularly in the indigenous research context, and how to relay the findings to the political sphere. Finally, researchers should not fall into the trap of misconception about being poor and unintentionally beautifying the conditions of being poor as something to be prioritized and ignore their capabilities and preferences. Therefore, an alternative development concept will contribute to understanding the people’ social security in the upland areas.

Chapter Three: Overview of Indigenous Policy in Cambodia

1. Introduction

This section will begin by describing the concept of IPs from the viewpoints of international organizations and the Cambodian government, and how the term has given them rights as well as limited their access to their traditional livelihoods. Then I will provide an argument that the Cambodian policies tend to neglect the IPs' rights and needs. Besides, IPs could only express their disappointment. They resolve to adjust to the sociopolitical transformation by relying on their locally-organized forms of social security.

The term IP does not have universal agreement and has been interpreted differently in different contexts. In The United States of America, the term IP refers to an ancestry that goes back to the pre-Columbian populations. Still, in America, issues surround the term in the face of population movement, intermarriage, and so on. In Africa and Asia, the concept of indigeneity is very controversial because it was only introduced in recent times, and is politically sensitive. Kingsbury suggested that the meaning of indigeneity should be explained with reference to specific contexts (Kingsbury, 1998, pp. 414-416). The term also embedded with political movements as Marschke, Szablowski, & Vandergeest (2008) said:

Indigeneity also refers to a set of political responses to this predicament which aim to resist and transform it. It should be noted, however, that both indigeneity-as-marginalisation and indigeneity-as resistance are dynamic and evolving processes following ongoing historical trajectories in different parts of the world. (p.485)

Generally, the term indigeneity tends to be associated with being marginalized and resistance when their existence and identity are denied in the country or specific context they live. Indigenous marginalization is mostly a result of state and nation-building. Marginalization tends to be pervasive and institutionalized in the sense that people carry the assumption that IPs are

backward peoples that have a weak identity compared to the dominant groups that have institutionalized policies (ibid, pp.485-486). There are four institutionalized forms of marginalization that intertwine with being IPs. They consist of lack of knowledge, negative or paternalistic stereotypes, disregard for indigenous specificity, and deliberate assimilationist or marginalizing policies (ibid, p.486). As a result, transnational IP movements span from international to nation movements aiming for legal recognition of their indigenous territorial governance and self-determination. Self-identification is a process that is important for IPs to get their legal identity and rights recognized. The process of self-identification will help IPs to get the attention and protection from organizations such as World Bank and development agencies that come to implement programs in their territories (ibid, p.487). Besides, it will serve as a measure to counter marginalization.

2. The Indigenous Concept from the Standpoint of International Organizations

2.1.The International Labour Organization

ILO has been in the forefront in recognizing the rights and the protection of IPs. In 1989, ILO adopted Convention 169 that recognizes the existence and the rights of indigenous and tribal peoples. In Article 1.1 of this convention, the indigenous and tribal peoples have common characteristics, as follows:

a) tribal peoples in independent countries whose social, cultural and economic conditions distinguish them from other sections of the national community, and whose status is regulated wholly or partially by their own customs or traditions or by special laws or regulations;

b) peoples in independent countries who are regarded as indigenous on account of their descent from the populations which inhabited the country, or a geographical region to which the country belongs, at the time of conquest or colonization or the establishment of present state

boundaries and who, irrespective of their legal status, retain some of their own social, economic, cultural and political institutions (ILO, n.d.).

The ILO uses the term indigenous peoples and tribal peoples in their conventions and reports. Despite using both terms simultaneously in their documents, ILO only describes the conditions rather than a definition of these peoples (Kingsbury, 1995, p. 21). Nevertheless, Convention 169 is a legally binding instrument which provides a mechanism to protect IPs' rights. Though it has no specific connection with the UN's declarations, these instruments are mutually compatible concerning IPs' rights and the development realm.

2.2.The World Bank

The World Bank previously used the term 'tribal people' in its reports, but later the Bank included the term 'indigenous peoples' to extend the inclusion of other ethnic minorities (Kingsbury, 1995, pp. 16-17). It is seen as a response to criticism for its narrow definition regarding IPs. The Bank promulgated an Operational Directive in September 1991 by stating that:

The terms "indigenous peoples," "indigenous ethnic minorities," "tribal groups," and "scheduled tribes" describe social groups with a social and cultural identity distinct from the dominant society that makes them vulnerable to being disadvantaged in the development process. For the purposes of this directive, "indigenous peoples" is the term that will be used to refer to these groups. (World Bank, 1991, p. 1)

The characteristics of IPs from the Bank are described as follows:

- (a) a close attachment to ancestral territories and to the natural resources in these areas;
- (b) self-identification and identification by others as members of a distinct cultural group;
- (c) an indigenous language, often different from the national language;
- (d) presence of customary social and political institutions; and

(e) primarily subsistence-oriented production.

The concept derived from the World Bank's policy is to protect the groups based on their vulnerabilities, special needs, and to reduce unwelcome development. For example, the Bank requires borrowers to conduct an initial assessment of whether or not their project affects IPs (Kingsbury, 1995, p. 20). Nevertheless, the Bank's criteria are more applicable to the project-related purposes of the Bank.

2.3.The United Nations

Any United Nations-system body has never adopted a definition of IPs to avoid over- or under-inclusive of a single definition that may make sense in some societies but not in others (NCVI, 2010). In practice, the commonly accepted understanding of the term is written in Jose R. Martinez Cobo's *Study on the Problem of Discrimination against Indigenous Populations* (1986). Martinez Cobo has given the criteria most likely to be acceptable to indicate indigenous peoples, read as follows:

- (a) Occupation of ancestral lands, or at least of part of them;
- (b) Common ancestry with the original occupants of these lands;
- (c) Culture in general, or in specific manifestations (such as religion, living under a tribal system, membership of an indigenous community, dress, means of livelihood, lifestyle, etc.);
- (d) Language (whether used as the only language, as mother-tongue, as the habitual means of communication at home or in the family, or as the main, preferred, habitual, general or normal language);
- (e) Residence in certain parts of the country, or in certain regions of the world;
- (f) Other relevant factors (pp. 378-380)

Regarding the UN's definition of IPs, any Declaration on the Rights of IPs adopted by the UN General Assembly will leave a reasonable margin of appreciation to states with regard to the details of national definitions (Kingsbury, 1995, p. 28).

The UN has given general provision guidelines to support the rights of IPs. From there, IPs need to exercise their rights of self-determination collectively. However, despite the existence of self-determination, the recognition criteria for IPs are varied in different countries. For instance, only scheduled tribes are recognized by the Indian government as IPs. In some cases, self-determination is not exercised for a political reason. For example, the Tibetan ethnic group does not want to be called IPs because they do not consider themselves as indigenous or a tribe, which would put them under the Chinese government's control.

In 2007, the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) was adopted. It is a symbol of the success of the movement to promote indigenous rights. The declaration still does not define the term IPs and it does not have a legally binding effect on states. However, along with ILO's Convention 169, it has become an important provisional guideline for the signature states to follow before the funds are given to them.

2.4. The Indigenous Concept in Cambodia

The social construction of IPs in Cambodia has evolved with the trajectory of Cambodian history from the early age until the present day and the influence of international organizations. The construction of the definition for IPs depends on the changes of the Cambodian political landscape (Padwe, 2013). The term as known recently is not commonly used, as the majority of Cambodians prefer to call them 'Upper Khmer.' This term was put into use after Cambodia achieved independence from the French in 1953 to generate solidarity among the lowland Khmer and the peoples who live in the upland areas of Cambodia. The words have been used widely in Cambodia, but they also attached stigmas and stereotypes that are mostly negative towards their

culture, such as primitive and savage. Throughout history, they have been called tribal peoples, upper Khmer, highland people, indigenous minority peoples, or people have used a well-known group name such as ‘Phnong’ to refer to the original groups who mostly live in the upland areas of Cambodia. Still, a definition to recognize their existence and their unique culture was not approved in any legal form until 1993.

In 1993, their existence and identities were recognized fully by the Cambodian government (White, 2009, p. 475). The Cambodian Constitution in 1993 guaranteed the civilians rights equally regardless of race, color, sex, language, and religious belief. However, specific recognition and policies dedicated to IPs have not been adopted.

The first and formal definition of IPs has been established after the adoption of the Cambodian’s Land Law in 2001 (Baird, 2011, p. 164). During the process to formulate the Land Law, a suggestion was made to distinguish between *Chun Chiet Daeum Pheak Chraoen* or “Original Ethnic Majority” and *Chun Chiet Daeum Pheak Tec* or “Original Ethnic Minority” to ease the term usage. The former refers to the Khmer people and the latter refers to the indigenous minorities (Baird, 2011, p. 166). Still, the concept is considered in its infancy with room to be improved with a sufficient participation from the stakeholders (ibid p.170). After Cambodia joined UN’s UNDRIP in 2007, the government established a National Policy on the Development of Indigenous Peoples (NPDIP)³ in 2009 based on the model of UNDRIP. It gave a definition of IPs as follows: “Indigenous minorities/peoples are groups of genetically distinct indigenous peoples who are living in Cambodia and have their own distinctive languages, cultures, traditions and customs different from those of the Khmer people who are the core nationals”.

³ NPDIP sets out government policies related to indigenous peoples in the fields of culture, education, vocational training, health, environment, land, agriculture, water resources, infrastructure, justice, tourism and industry, mines and energy. Together with the Land Law (2001) this policy gives recognition to the rights of indigenous peoples to traditional lands, culture and traditions. <http://theredddesk.org/countries/policies/national-policy-development-indigenous-minorities-cambodia>

According to Article 24 of the Education Law of Cambodia 2007, the term used to indicate the indigenous peoples in Cambodia is “Khmer indigenous peoples”. Strategic Plan 2009-2013 used the term ‘ethnic minority people’, referring to those who inhabited particular and remote areas (MoEYS, 2009). In short, the term is used to differentiate the indigenous ethnic minorities who have lived in Cambodia since a long time ago and the newly arrived ethnic minorities, such as the Chinese and Vietnamese.

Therefore, this concept is less controversial than in other countries’ cases as it fit perfectly with the livelihoods of IPs in Cambodia. The Cambodian government recognizes IPs mainly based on the special feature of traditional farming mobility. This feature points to the indigenous groups who live in the upland areas of Cambodia, and so far the government has recognized 24 groups as indigenous. Therefore, the definition of IPs in Cambodia is less controversial and straightforward than in other countries. In countries such as China, India, and Bangladesh, they have strong opposition towards the concept of IPs (Kingsbury, 1998). Taking China, for instance, they believe that the question of IPs is the product of European countries’ recent pursuit of colonial policies in other parts of the world (ibid, p.417-18). In Cambodia, the government and the public have a common view about the highland peoples who are believed to be the original people of Cambodia. They conduct swidden agriculture, have different cultural practices, different languages, and possess their ancestral land. These features fit perfectly with the concepts provided by Jose R. Martinez Cobo.

Recently, the term ‘indigenous’ has often been associated with marginalized and vulnerable groups within the boundary of states, including those who are not the original peoples from that place (Baird, 2011, p. 156). Being original habitants and being marginalized and vulnerable has become a dominant discourse associated with the idea of ‘indigenous peoples’ for political and emancipatory purpose (ibid, p.157). In other words, the terms ‘indigeneity’ has become a

political tool as well as a voice of freedom acclaimed by those who are facing constraints under a nation-building policy as well as the impact of development. Regarding the implications of the usage of the term ‘indigeneity’ in Cambodia, Padwe describes them in his research as follows:

When scholars, policy-makers and human rights advocates in international settings speak of Indigenous People, Indigenous identity or Indigeneity, the terms carry specific meanings. The word ‘Indigeneity’ has resonances that distinguish it from a concept like ‘ethnicity’, and an ‘Indigenous Peoples’ is not the same thing as a ‘tribe’ or an ‘ethnic minority’. The translation of the term ‘Indigenous Peoples’ into Khmer thus represents a point of articulation, where local understandings of social relations are made to connect to new ideas in the service of creating new social categories (Padwe, 2013, p. 285).

Similar to the concept of indigeneity, the concept of FPIC was relatively new in the Cambodian development context. One of the significant articles in UNDRIP is Article 19, which requires states to respect the rights of the community before undertaking any project, legislation and administration measures. In reality, the concepts were rarely applied in the upland areas of Cambodia.

3. The Rights of IPs in Cambodia

The term and definition of IPs were introduced by the international organizations that came to promote indigenous rights in the early 1990s. At that time, the term did not have significant rights and any special privileges attached to it. After the adoption of the Land Law in 2001, as a result of constant lobbying of the government by NGOs, IP rights were recognized. They provide them the right to communal land ownership, understanding their customary law, and recognize the importance of their subsistence livelihoods. Poverty reduction and education policies have also addressed the IPs’ rights and issues. The IPs’ rights and the policies related to IPs will be described below.

3.1. Communal Land Titling Before the Adoption of Sub-Decree 2009

Following the adoption of Land Law 2001, indigenous communities have been encouraged to apply for indigenous communal land titling. The process is under the authority of three ministries,

while donors and lead NGOs play a supporting role at the local level. The communal land titling is said to be a painstaking process. The process has been slow due to the lack of funds and lack of political motivation from the government.

Before the Sub-decree on the procedure of communal land titling was created in 2009, the Ministry of Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction (MLMUPC) initiated a pilot project for communal land registration processes from 2003 to 2007. Two villages in Ratanakiri province and one village in Mondulakiri province were chosen for the pilot project. Other institutions involved in the project were the Forest Administration (FA), the Ministry of Interior (MoI) and the Ministry of Rural Development (MRD). The pilot project and the current process of communal land titling were not possible without the active facilitation from the lead NGO supporters and donors (Men, 2011, p. 17). In the process, the most important tool for communal land titling is Participatory Land Use Planning (PLUP). The PLUP team was facilitated by the government provincial land use and allocation committees, and land dispute resolution commission with the collaboration from NGOs and donors. This process had 13 steps that mainly focused on mapping the boundaries of indigenous community land. Each step is said to be complicated and takes a lot of time, which slows the progress of the implementing agencies.

3.2. Communal Land Titling After the Adoption of Sub-Decree 2009

The recognition of communal land titling that includes swidden or agricultural land in Cambodia is said to be the first example of this in mainland South East Asia (Baird, 2013, p. 273). The communal land titling does not mean that everyone has a share of land usage. In practice, swidden agricultural is not conducted jointly. Each family holds a plot of land that they leave fallow and return to after several years (Baird 2008, cited in Baird 2013, p. 274).

The procedure is mentioned in the Sub-decree on the procedure of communal land titling 2009 and in the circular adopted on 22nd July 2009 on Development and Indigenous Community

Identification. According to the procedure, there are three main steps: indigenous community identification evaluation, community regulation evaluation, and finally the approval of community regulation (Men, 2011). As of 2011, only three villagers has been grant collective land rights and most villages are in the first and second steps. The process is said to be a time-consuming and costly.

From here, I will only briefly describe the procedure of indigenous community identification conducted by MRD because most villages are at this early stage. To be eligible for communal land ownership, the community must be identified as an indigenous community. Articles 23 and 28 of Land Law 2001 have defined what an indigenous community is and defined the rights to collective land ownership. To identify potential indigenous communities, the government adopted the decision on 6th March 2009 concerning the establishment of lists of areas prone to environmental impacts and a list of IPs. It was put forth as follows:

1/ The areas prone to environmental impacts and the indigenous families reside in highland and lowland areas in 455 villages, 175 communes, nine provinces including Mondulkiri, Ratanakiri, Stung Treng, Kratie, Preah Vihear, Kompong Thom, Kompong Speu, Battambang, Pursat, Udon Meanchey, Siem Reap, Kompong Cham and Sihanouk Province.

2/ Proclaim self-determination in which the community is 1) acknowledged from the neighboring communities and 2) recognized by the local authorities.

3/ Have vernacular language, have no written system, using the national written system and national language for formal communication

4/ Have traditional administrators, ‘elders’, and a collective system for making decisions

5/ Communal lands consist of residential areas, land for farming (a farm or rice field), reserved land necessary for shifting cultivation, and spirit forest land and burial forest land.

6/ Believe in animism and have traditional justice system for solving disputes. They live together as a collective community. Each indigenous community has distinctive village management and house construction styles.

As mentioned in the previous section, the lesson learned from the pilot project is they should identify indigenous community first before communal land registration. Hence, at the moment, MRD in collaboration with lead NGO supporters is working on the identification of indigenous communities. Below are the criteria for the identification of an indigenous community that are used by the Department of Ethnic Minority Development of MRD.

- Ethnicity
- Society
- Culture and tradition: language, folktales, gatherings, customary conflict resolution, rituals, arts, wedding, funeral, fasting, communal land usage and agreements (to keep the communal land for the next generation by not selling land, not cutting trees and exploiting the forest, selecting the community representatives, joining the community for communal land registration and listing members' names).

When the community has met with all criteria as stipulated by the Article 23 and 24 of Land Law 2001, the community will be identified as an indigenous community. A community that has been identified as indigenous has to form a Communal Commission and hold a public Village Congress before registering with MoI for approval as a legal body. Then the community needs to wait for the land measurement and mapping that is under the authorization of MLMUPC.

As of the time of this research, MRD and ILO have been working on community identification. So far a third of the potential indigenous communities have been identified. The communities that have been identified will enjoy initial legal protection before being registered as legal entities by MoI. However, it does not give them immunity from land-related problems.

Also, the communal land titling process has been slow, causing civil society to start to question the government's commitment.

3.3.Improving Education

According to the 2008 census, 95% of the Phnong population is illiterate in the Khmer language. Recent movements have tried to link education with livelihood improvement by suggesting that education is important in elevating the Phnong's livelihoods. In the Asian Development Bank (ADB)'s policy, any development project for poverty reduction should consider the role of education. In this sense, ADB recommends project implementation that can ensure equitable access and quality improvement of the Northeastern area, such as improving teacher quality, multi-grade classes, reducing the direct and indirect cost for parents, and so on (ADB, 2002, p. 42). That is because ADB reports found that indigenous children are less likely to go to school than average Cambodian children in the formal education system. According to the ADB, IPs standard of living and school distance are some reasons that caused indigenous children not to go to school (ibid, p.29). Following these reasons, state officials or development agencies come to the IP villages, build schools, send teachers to remote areas, and inform them about the role of education for livelihood improvement. There are also development agencies that strive to find ways to enable IPs to access the education system (Thomas A. E., 2002) and bilingual education (Middleborg, 2005). As a result, the policy and projects have changed the landscape of IPs' everyday life. The Phnong began to live close to a newly constructed school that changed the relations between them and land usage (Refugees International, 2004). They began to live in a fixed location near the public infrastructure and reduce their shifting livelihoods and began to understand about the role of education.

3.4. Identification of Poor Households and Equity Cards

In the past, different organizations used different methodologies to identify poor households in Cambodia. This method was costly and caused a burden on communities. In addition, the data was not comparable. Therefore, a multi-cooperation program to create a unified, transparent and equitable way to identify the poor households was established.

Since 2005, Cambodia's Ministry of Planning (MoP) has developed a standardized questionnaire and procedure to identify poor households in rural areas. The standardized process is known as 'IDPoor' and it is specified as follows:

The IDPoor Program's main objectives are to reduce duplication of effort and resources by different institutions and organizations in identifying their target groups for various poverty reduction interventions, and to ensure that assistance is provided to those households who most need it. When your institution or organization uses this data for targeting services and assistance to poor households, local authorities and local populations will also more easily accept your selection of beneficiaries, because the Lists of Poor Households have already been approved and accepted by them in the participatory identification process that was conducted. (MoP, 2015 a)

This information can be used by policy decision makers, government institutions, and NGOs to plan poverty reduction programs and pinpoint poorest areas or households in Cambodia, such as female-headed households, which are statistically poorer (Papenfuss, 2013).

The procedure to identify poor households is based on transparency and participation. The communities will elect representatives from among the community members. The elected representatives will help to identify the poor households. Then a list of poor households is created for each village under the criteria for the poor households after a public discussion with the communities. The elected representatives then check these lists, make a final decision on the poor households, and participate in publishing the results.

After the poor families are identified, MoP will issue the cards to the poor families. The cards are called Equity Cards. The cards contain a photograph of the household members, a household code, poverty level, validity period, and general information to use the cards. Households that

possess the card can use it to access a range of social services provided by the government and other organizations such as public health, education scholarships, access to public works programs that give cash or food, and food aid (Papenfuss, 2013, p. 2) .

The program only reached Mondulhiri province in 2011. Since then, the government and NGOs have used this data to access poor households to implement social services or projects. In the education sector, NGOs use this data to help indigenous girls from poor households to get scholarships and other benefits so they will stay in school.

3.5.The Government's Commitment and Concerns

According to NPDIP 2009, the government has a long-standing vision to construct Cambodia with social solidarity, advanced education and a vibrant culture, without poverty, illiteracy and poor health. This vision is based on the Cambodian Millennium Development Goals, particularly the first goal is to reduce extreme poverty and starvation and the second goal is to realize overall fundamental education.

According to NPDIP 2009, the government has provided several sectoral development goals in relation to IPs, as follows:

- IPs shall have a living standard beyond starvation and extreme poverty
- IPs shall be provided at least nine years of fundamental education and appropriate vocational skill training courses according to their needs and based on the geographical areas in which they live.
- IPs shall be provided good healthcare services.
- The culture of IPs shall be carefully protected and safeguarded.

To achieve the goals mentioned above and to ensure proper development management, the government has general and sectoral policies for IPs, wherein the main sectors include: culture,

education, vocational training, health, environment, land, agriculture, water resources, infrastructure, justice, tourism and industry, mines and energy sectors.

Although the development sectors have been identified, few activities have been conducted to fulfill the goals. For instance, MRD can only implement the indigenous community identification that is a part of the communal land titling because of the shortage of funds. Other development sectors have not been prioritized in the indigenous communities. In most cases, these jobs are given to development agencies. Furthermore, few recommendations have been outlined to target other development sectors because of the lack of cooperation between stakeholders and the target group.

4. Constraints from Laws and Regulations

The existing conflict between the state's economic obligations and IPs' rights to their land is commonly visible in South East Asia. Xanthaki said:

This sluggishness is demonstrated by the lack of practical measures to enforce positive provisions for indigenous protection, legislation that contradicts favourable provisions in other domestic laws, limited information provided to indigenous communities about these new measures, and dependence on local authorities. All of these factors indicate a lack of political motivation and obstruct the improvement of indigenous land rights. (p.496)

The points raised by Xanthaki are obvious in the Cambodian context. I will describe how the policies and regulations have also restricted IPs customary laws and traditional livelihoods. I will follow up with a discussion of how the policies are merely cosmetic and applied only on paper. Not much progress has been made for the benefits of IPs.

4.1.Land Law 2001

The Cambodian Land Law 2001 is said to be modeled on ILO's Convention 169, although Cambodia has never ratified the convention (Xanthaki, 2003, p. 469). Article 23 of the Land Law of 2001 provides a clear legal definition of indigenous communities based on four criteria: (i) residing in the territory of Cambodia; (ii) manifesting ethnic, social, cultural, and economic

unity; (iii) practicing a traditional lifestyle, and (iv) cultivating the lands in their possession according to customary rules of collective use (Simbolon, 2002, p.22). It can be said that indigenous rights are mainly recognized in indigenous communal land ownership and customary land use practices.

A series of provincial consultations were conducted in 2004 to develop and implement the indigenous land provisions in the Land Law 2001. Many IPs in different parts of the country supported the implementation of communal land titling because their individual land use rights are protected under the communal land ownership. With the support from NGOs, the UN, and several international financial institutions, the road to development and implementation of communal land titling looked very promising (Simbolon, 2002, p.15). In compliance with the support of communal land titling, three villagers were chosen to be pilot villages for communal land titling in Ratanakiri and Mondulakiri province. The two pilot villages in Ratanakiri province were La'In Village in Toeun Commune, Kon Mom district and L'eun Kreang Village in Ochum commune. The pilot village in Mondulakiri province was Andong Krolung village in Sen Monorum Commune, Ou Reang District (McAndrew & Ouer, 2009, p. 98). According to the Land Law 2001 Article 25b, communal land ownership is essential to the protection of their customs for sustainability. It stated that "the lands of indigenous communities include not only cultivated lands but also reserved lands necessary for the shifting cultivation that is required by the agricultural methods currently practice and which are recognized by administrative authorities." In addition, the Forestry Law in 2002 reaffirmed the protection of IPs' traditional user rights to collect forest by-products, especially the law that prohibits the cutting of trees that the locals have tapped to extract resins for customary use.

To implement the law, a Sub-Decree stipulating the procedure was needed. However, the process of drafting and adopting the Sub-Decree on Communal Land Titling was delayed until

2009. Without this Sub-Decree, IPs ancestral land continued to be affected by outsiders (McAndrew & Ouer, 2009, pp. 98-99).

4.2.Protected Area Law 2008

The law provision somewhat suppressed the IPs by limiting their ability to expand their land usage except within their communal lands. Moreover, some laws and provisions are contradictory to their customary laws.

The Protected Area Law was designed to classify the forest land for the purpose of sustainable social and economic usage. According to Protected Area Law in 2008, under Article 11, protected areas are divided into four categories:

- The core area
- The protected area
- The sustainable usage area
- The community area

According to Article 18, in according to the decision by the Ministry of Environment (MoE) and following the Cambodian Government's Policy, the Protection and Preservation Action Team has to prepare an action plan. This action plan has to be done in consultation and discussion with the local authority and the IP community (Ministry of Environment, 2008). In Article 22, the government recognized land usage rights for their beliefs and cultural and traditional purposes of the IPs. The traditional usage of nature by the IP community can be done only in the sustainable usage area and the protected area, according to the decision of MoE.

This law mainly restricts their access to a resource, the spiritual forest and cemetery forest. In Article 24, slash and burn agriculture is also prohibited in the core and protected areas. IPs are allowed to access the sustainable usage area; however, there are cases that when they entered the

area, they encountered a company that got ELC. These companies stopped them from accessing their resources for making a living.

In Article 25, the indigenous community may obtain a portion of the sustainable usage area given by MoE for the establishment of a natural preservation area community under the clause of a ‘no more than fifteen-year agreement’. It cannot be renewed if the community does not obey the agreement. It is also stipulated that the community that is located in the sustainable usage area is prohibited from damaging the land for agricultural usage or converting it into private property.

4.3.Sub Decree on Procedures for Registering of Land of Indigenous Communities 2009

The Sub-Decree on Procedures for Registering of Land of Indigenous Communities was eventually adopted in 2009. According to this Sub-decree, only the following types and quantities of land can be registered for communal ownership:

- 1- Residential land or land that is reserved for building residences.
- 2-Traditional agricultural land, cultivated land, farm land and reserved land necessary for shifting cultivation recognized by administration authorities and neighbors.
- 3-Spiritual forest land (one or more places for each community) with the total land size not more than seven hectares.
- 4-Forest cemetery land (one or many places for each community) with the total land size not more than seven hectares. (The Royal Government of Cambodia, 2009)

According to Article 6 of the same Sub-decree, the registration of the spiritual land and cemetery land are only allowed for not more than seven hectares. This regulation has extremely limited the land accession and usage of IPs, as in the past some IPs had at least 100 to 200 hectares to perform their traditional activities. As a result, when the government staff come to identify the community for the communal land registration, they do not register the spiritual and cemetery

land more than the actual size. Hence, by accepting communal land, it means that IPs also have to accept that the non-registered forest land belongs to the state. Although IPs community can apply to control the community forest for customary uses, it is under strict conditions and renewed after 15 years under the control of the Forest Administration (FA) (p. 275). Hence, they lose most of their rights to the land they used to control.

4.4.Directive 01

Directive 01 is a process of private land registration conducted by volunteer students when the prime minister called in late 2012 for a rapid private land registration to cope with the land-grabbing issue. However, the purpose and process have undermined their communal land ownership, that is, the rights and the means to preserve IPs' identities and livelihoods as stipulated in the laws. It also causes fragmentation between community members who want to have private ownership and those who stay in the community. As Milne said, Directive 01 has produced 'an ideology of use' where lands that were not actively farmed such as fallow and spirit forest will be labeled as unused and unclaimed lands (Milne, 2013, p. 336). The problems with community members over private land ownership also contributed to the failure of the social security system. In this case, the state's policy has contributed to this strategic behavior and has harmed IPs.

5. Natural Disaster and the Problem with ELC

This section will describe the sociopolitical and socioeconomic transformation that has a great impact on the livelihood of IPs. Not many solutions from the state's side have been undertaken to help IPs to cope with these problems.

5.1.Natural Disaster and Coping Strategies

According to research conducted in 2009 to map the hazard and vulnerability of Mondulkiri province, it was found that local people reported four droughts within five years, in 2004, 2005,

2007, and 2008 (Try & Haynes Sumaylo, 2009, pp. 55-56). The district is also prone to insect infestation more than other districts. According to the local people, the critical years of insect infestations were in the years 2000, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, and 2008. It means that insect infestations became more frequent since the beginning of the new millennium due to farming intensification and forest exploitation to raise cash crops.

Research by Try and Haynes has identified three practices by the Phnong in Mondulhiri province to cope with food shortages (Try & Haynes Sumaylo, 2009, p. 70). First is the practice of rotational farming to counter crop failure. Four principal crops that are grown and intercropped in upland rice include hill rice, corn, cassava, and yams. Second is the expansion of cash crops such as cassava, rubber, corn, peanuts, soybeans and green beans in response to a rice shortage caused by pests. However, this practice may diminish basic food crops necessary for household consumption. Last is the cultivation of paddy rice. Some villagers grow paddy rice in another area, when necessary. Those who remain in the village tend to rely on relatives who can afford to cultivate rice. They can also ask relatives in another district, who have a surplus, for help. Recent commune data showed that the Phnong have slowly become involved in off-farm activities to generate income. According to Van den Berg, two striking coping strategies are forest exploitation for commercial reasons and cash crops. He continued to say that forest products are exploited differently from their traditions. A new variety of crops was brought into the indigenous communities for commercial farming (Van den Berg, 2000, pp. 45-46). Economic opportunities come at a price, as they have to work harder to maintain their livelihood with few interventions from the state.

5.2.The Impact of Agribusiness in Ou Rang District

As of 2006, the government has granted ELC to two companies within the Phnong communities in Ou Reang and Keo Seima district. In 2005, the government granted 10,000

hectares of forest land to a Chinese company called Wuzhishan L.S Group Co Ltd to plant pine trees in Ou Rang district (COHCHR, 2007, p. 24). In 2006, the government granted 7,600 hectares of forest land to a Vietnamese company called Tai Nam BPM Ltd to conduct agribusiness such as cassava, rubber and cashew in Keo Seima district, not far from Ou Reang district. The establishment of agribusiness has sparked more cassava cultivation among local people. However, the Phnong have expressed mixed feelings toward the new economic opportunities. ELC has taken a large portion of their ancestral forests, and it restricts them from conducting traditional livelihoods. There was a record that they sent letters of protest to local authorities and blocked roads to ask for intervention when the company took their lands without their consent. They also suspected that chemical pesticide from industrial plantations is the reason for the appearance of a new type of insect that destroyed their crops (Try & Haynes Sumaylo, 2009, p. 68). Although the parties have resolved their disputes, the Phnong have already been affected by the loss of natural resources, and they have to adapt to a new economy to maintain their survival. (McAndrew & Ouer, 2009).

The gap between the first implementation of ELC in the mid 1990s and the adoption of ELC law in 2005 was large enough to cause irreversible damage to the indigenous territories and livelihoods. Although the law stipulated that ECL is allowed on not more than 10,000 hectares, reports show that there are many irregularities. Some NGOs claimed that close to 2 million hectares of land were granted for ELC although data provided by the government demonstrated it was only around 1,204,750 hectares (ODC, 2014). Due to a lack of transparency, there are many problems where some ELCs were given allowances exceeding the 10,000 hectares. Some ELCs did not conduct operations according to their contracts. The most problematic is the land conflicts with IPs. IPs claimed that ELCs took their cemetery and ancestral lands, and they could not access the forest to collect resources for living. At the same time, Land Law, Forestry Law

and proceeding regulations reduce the size of their forest lands. They claimed that their community used to have hundreds of hectares (Men, 2011, p. 17). In 2012, the government announced that ELC will no longer be given because of its problems. In 2012, the government issued Directive 01 to accelerate private land registration, but in turn, it ran counter to the indigenous culture of communal land ownership. The late response and the new policy that counter IPs culture and tradition are obvious evidence that negligence towards IPs persists.

6. The Relations between IPs and NGOs

This section will describe the historical relations between NGOs and IPs in the Cambodian context. It is worth reminding that the history of NGO activities in Cambodia concerning IPs is very new. The impacts of NGOs' activities are shown to provide understanding and illustrate shortcomings to achieve improvement rather than to denigrate their humanitarian activities.

6.1. Culture of Silence

According to White (1996), the Phnong have no written form for their language and their isolation in the forest makes them perceive themselves as culturally inferior. Their cultural inferiority was reinforced even further when they encountered and interacted with NGOs. According to Smith, the Phnong culture is in a vulnerable and weakening condition in the face of strong external forces because the deterioration of traditional leadership which functions as a measure to sustain the community and to counter the imperative of changes (Smith, 2010, p. 31). He concluded that the force is unstoppable, and there should be a model of modifying their cultural forms rather than the adoption of local forms of modernity from Khmers. He further explained that the Phnong have been silent toward participatory approach projects. IPs perceived themselves as educationally lower than NGOs staff (ibid, p.34). So whenever there is a requirement of opinions from IPs, they tend to stay silent or agree to whatever the NGOs staff suggests. Smith said this will lead to a 'false consensus', or 'mirroring the NGOs'. NGOs have

created cultural inferiority because of their status and efficient agenda-based project planning (Smith, 2010, pp. 41-42).

The historical stereotype of Phnong primitiveness and isolation, and encountering NGOs reinforced cultural inferiority. It has created a 'culture of silence' according to Smith. If the 'culture of silence' and the cultural difference persist without a solution, a community development-based project has little chance of success because IPs do not play a role in their community development.

6.2.NGOs and their Implications on IPs

In Cambodia, NGOs have worked in close collaboration with international organizations and the government to promote indigenous consciousness and to promote IPs rights. Combined with technical work, some NGOs have worked on resource management and community mapping with advocacy in law and policy reforms. Health and education policies are also the focus of NGOs (Plant, 2002, p. 50). In particular, NGOs protest the negative 'development' affecting IPs, including illegal land grabbing, deforestation, and more, and the rights of IPs to ancestral land and traditional livelihoods.

Unfortunately, there are also issues surrounding the NGOs' agenda and their activities. One of critics is NGOs come to the IPs community with a fixed agenda, overlooking IPs' roles. Furthermore, the cultural differences between NGO staff and IPs also have been pointed out as a part of the problem. Problems associated with the participation of IPs have been summarized as follows:

1-Some problems emerged when IPs received their workload from the project. There are cases where some research projects have caused fatigue among IPs because of the overload of activities. There are cases that indigenous parents received heavy workloads from the projects, such as the commitment to participation in the projects. Consequently, IPs did not participate in

the development of their community. To limit this problem, the community resorts to limit the numbers of the NGOs that have similar development purposes (Middleborg, 2005, p. 42).

2-The IP participation does not necessary reflect their genuine participation. In the case of one project in Mondulkiri province, an indigenous community was given rice for their participation. Only a few participants remain involved in the community activities when the program ended. This food-based encouragement model calls into question the genuine participation of the IPs in the development of their community.

3-There are cases where development projects used unsuitable approaches for the indigenous community. The previous example shows that development caused discontent among the community members as the Community Councils tried to introduce a mainstream development approach to the community. When the villagers were requested to contribute money to build wells in their community, they refused to do so (Chhim, 2005, p. 37). The approach overlooked the fact that indigenous villagers do not have a tradition of contributing money compared to the Khmer people. Moreover, the villagers do not trust the village chief, who was not from the community. They felt that the village chief did not understand their community needs and lacked leadership experience. Similarly, when NGOs tried to implement education-based development projects, indigenous elders expressed their worries about the loss of the balance of knowledge in the community when the youth are more educated (Middleborg, 2005, p. 43).

4-There are cases when an indigenous community feels that it is called to participate in the community development project but not in terms of decision-making. For example, they were only called to participate and informed about the prospective development project without asking for their approval. As a result, the community-based development has turned into the creation of hierarchy between the NGOs as the dominant player and the IPs as passive actors.

Historically, community-based projects in Cambodia are in the infancy period. IPs expressed their excitement and high expectation when a project was first implemented in their community. However, those expectations decreased when they found out later that it was mainly a false expectation. As one young Phnong man from Mondulkiri explained:

The commune council decides top down and builds roads that indigenous communities don't need. Roads have bad impacts and outsiders come along them. The state system does not address indigenous peoples' needs and indigenous people don't participate fully. They go and see and accept the plan but not from the heart, because there are no other choices 12 October, 2008. (Ehrentraut, 2011, p. 97)

The problems with the approaches suggest that IPs' sociocultural aspects are undermined in the development of their community. Similarly, the ADB's approach in the early 2000s seems to have prioritized structural measures rather than taking into consideration the structural context of IPs. The measures are described as follows:

The program includes measures to improve social stability in the rural areas, enhance farmers' access to markets and market information, increase farmers' access to inputs, enhance access to finance for the rural population, and promote the most efficient use of government's budgetary resources in rural areas. (ADB, 2002, p. 35)

The programs mentioned by ADB reflected a contradiction and potential consequences because IPs are not ready for some of the mentioned measures. Likewise, Hammer criticized ADB's project for failing to understand IPs, leading to the exclusion of IPs from development (Hammer, 2009). As Griffiths (2005) said:

There is a widespread feeling that so-called "participation" in Bank projects is partial and usually restricted to village meetings in which consultants "extract" information about development "needs", more to fulfil their own requirements than to address the genuine priorities of indigenous communities. (p.14)

Furthermore, the inclusion of merely IPs' knowledge, practices, and sociocultural and socioeconomic background does not mean that the project is culturally sensitive. Hence, there should be alternative ways to empower IPs at the local level by changing the so-called one-size-

fits-all assumption and approach. The alternative depends on understanding the local perspective and the realization that they are the active actors.

Finally, most NGOs' approach is a rights-based approach that focuses on promoting basic rights to fulfill the unfulfilled human rights in the modern society. Although promoting rights have been able to help IPs to tackle socioeconomic and political issues, it has also affected the indigenous cultural system. Fieldworkers have been preoccupied with the rights-based approach and they approached the locals with the expectation that that IPs would be ready to be recruited for the program and absorb the knowledge. However, locals did not respond positively because they did not find relevancy between the rights and their cultural system.

In the next section, I will provide practical cases of the perceptual differences between the state and development agencies and the Phnong villagers concerning development.

7. State and Development Agencies' Perceptions about the Phnong

To strengthen my argument about the conflict of interest, I will provide the perceptions from the state and development agencies towards the development of IPs. Then I will provide the Phnong perceptions towards the state and development agencies activities that are relevant to their livelihoods. Also, this section will help to confirm that disappointment with state and development agencies' activities may lead IPs to maintain and rely on their social security to reduce livelihood insecurities.

7.1.The State Officials' Perceptions about the Phnong Development

According to Mr. Sam, drastic changes began after the year 2000. In the past, it was common to hear that the Khmer was chasing after the Phnong to the forest; however, now the Phnong are chasing after the Khmer. He referred to the Phnong, who try to imitate the Khmer people. They play Khmer music with orchestras, and dress beautifully like the Khmer people during ceremonies such as weddings and the New Year. Some Phnong live a better life and dress more

stylishly than the Khmer. Sometimes they go to the supermarket and karaoke, especially wealthy Phnong who live close to the town. He continued that young Phnong indirectly state that they prayed for their elders to die early because they did not want to follow the strict traditions, such as moving from one place to another and sacrificing their property. Regarding education, some Phnong parents began to see the importance of education and sending their children to school. Furthermore, there are Phnong who converted to Catholicism because they see the benefits after the promotion from the Catholic Church.⁴ However, his view towards Phnong development is limited to the wealthy Phnong families who can to enjoy the Khmer lifestyle. He also saw development as equivalent to live in a place with good infrastructure such as roads, electricity and possessing what most Khmer people possess. He also praised the development policy, but he did not specify how the policy helped or affected the Phnong.

Similarly, Mr. Mon sees Phnong development as equivalent to the availability of modern infrastructure. Most Phnong villages lack proper infrastructure, such as new roads and electricity. In addition, they need a village organization map because they still build houses anywhere they want. They need to have a permanent address for administration purposes. In addition, they need to learn not to leave their animals walking everywhere.⁵ It seems indigenous development has been interpreted as having a modern lifestyle rather than development and preservation of their cultural identity.

From these views, development is limited to merely wealth and infrastructure. These normative views remain engraved in the state agencies' mentality. Subsequently, these views continued to slip into the annual report and strategies. For example, according to the 2011 annual report prepared by the MRD, they repeatedly said that the indigenous communities need a health system, education system, crop diversification for export and public infrastructure. While it is

⁴ September 2, 2013 with Mr. Sam, Director of Provincial Department of Rural Development

⁵ August 20, 2013 with Mr. Mon, staff of MoI

important to address IP needs, the report will misinterpret IPs as people that wait for generous help. Consequently, the state will go to the community to deliver aid and neglect addressing IPs capabilities.

7.2. Development Agencies' Perceptions about Phnong Development

Mr. Hean said NGOs helped the Phnong to understand about their rights; particularly they encouraged villagers to join a discussion about their participation in community development, and in case there are problems, NGOs will help find legal assistance for them. He said NGOs had helped the villagers with legal assistance during the dispute between the villagers and the Chinese company.⁶

Another NGO staff member said NGOs tried to provide a new technique to improve their farming productivity in the sense that the Phnong would not be able to sustain their life for long if they keep traditional farming. At the moment, they have already lost most of their lands, and they cannot expand their farmlands. Therefore, it is the role of NGOs to provide them with the most suitable solution. NGOs believe that if the Phnong learn about home economics, choosing seeds and preserving them, they will be no longer be starving. In other words, they want to introduce new skills so the Phnong can improve their livelihood and not depend too much on the forest. The NGOs are aware that the Phnong do not want to produce something that is time-consuming so they are planning to bring a three-month-rice crop to the community so they can harvest two times a year.⁷

Therefore, the role of NGOs is to advocate for rights and assist the Phnong to cope with climate changes and reduce insecurities. The Phnong are seen as in need of these two forms of assistance to improve their life. However, their knowledge and assistance mostly focus on inputs, while outputs and follow-up programs are rare because of lack of funds and time.

⁶ September 4, 2014 with Mr. Hean, an NGO staff, in Pu Rang village

⁷ September 2, 2013 with Mr. Om and Mr. Vu in Sen Monorom city

7.3.Perceptions about Difficulties in Working with the Phnong

Ms. Kun is an NGO staffer. She said it is important to be aware of the cultural differences when working with the Phnong. She acknowledged that sometimes she overlooked or forgot about these points. For instance, a Phnong family was asked to soak their rice seeds in the water in order to produce more productivity. However, when the Phnong followed the guidance, the family became sick. The family assumed that they became sick because they disobeyed tradition that prohibited them from soaking traditional rice seed in the water. The story is an example of the unawareness of Phnong tradition that led to an unfavorable outcome. Furthermore, the Phnong were afraid of failure. Once they failed, they were not eager to try to change the situation.

There was another misunderstanding between the NGOs and the Phnong. The respondent said the Food Security Program was created to help Phnong adapt to climate change. The purpose is to provide Phnong with skills and knowledge so they can sustain their livelihoods even after the project ends. However, the Phnong misunderstood and tended to rely on aid without investing in long-term goals. Another difficulty working with the Phnong is they are not accustomed to discussing matters with NGO staff. When the staff members asked them whether they understood and agreed with the project, they were quick to agree. In addition, they rarely accomplish the tasks that NGOs want them to do. The interviewee said “This time they did it 100 percent, but next time they might not even try at all”. Their participation and motivation are also under question because they always come late to the meetings. They always gave an excuse about being busy. The staff have to remind them all the time, but it seems that it only provokes discontent among them. NGO staff tend to remind them to think about the future, such as about the climate change, forest land loss and the long-term benefits. For example, the Phnong mostly produce only 300 kg from 60 kg of rice seed. The staff explained to them that they could get 100 kg of rice from 3-4 kg of rice seed if they follow a new technique by removing logs from their

farm and putting them to the side to keep the soil nutrition from drifting. But the Phnong did not follow the advice; instead they wanted to keep it the traditional way. Because they kept the old logs on their farm lands, termites destroyed their crops. Ms. Kun thinks that they need to learn how to increase their productivity by changing their old practices. In the past, they could rely on slash and burn to remove the pests, but now they cannot do that anymore. Nevertheless, she said there are the Phnong that learned to speak logically, to grow vegetables, and have contributed to the completion of the project, but only very few.⁸

Mr. Om and Mr. Vu said that the Phnong rarely complete what they promise to do. They constantly change what they do halfway. For example, they stop learning in the middle of training. Some Phnong do not participate in the information integration meeting. When the project was almost completed, those who did not participate in the meeting showed up and opposed the original project plan, and said they wanted to build their way. There are also misunderstandings between NGOs and the Phnong. Some Phnong complained that when NGO staff come to teach them about planting vegetables by saying “If it is that good, why don’t you learn and do it by yourself?”⁹

Another difficulty is the Phnong will not participate in a community meeting or program unless they get incentives. If the incentives do not meet their expectation, they will not join. They will join other NGOs’ projects that provide better incentives. The villagers have become obsessed with incentives rather than acquiring skills. For example, there was a two-day training program about vegetable planting in the provincial town. Only one of the three members in Pu Rang village joined the training. A traditional weaving lecture provided by the provincial department office also faced a lack of participants. Among 20 students, only 10 came to study in

⁸ February 2, 2014 with Ms. Kun in Sen Monorom City

⁹ September 2, 2013 with Mr. Om and Mr. Vu in Sen Monorom City

the end after a three-month lecture. Incentives have become criteria for participating in the development projects.

8. Villagers' Perceptions of Development Activities

8.1. Perceptions of Pu Rang Villagers about Development Agencies

“I am used to growing this rice, but now they give me this rice”

PR4 said that she wanted to conduct paddy rice farming, and she was willing to accept the project. But she complained about the new seeds. She spoke from her personal experience; the seed brought by a newly arrived NGO called *Sen Pidoea* was not suitable for farming in her area. If she were to choose between the two types of paddy rice, she still preferred to grow a rice seed called *Phkar Doung* that she got from an NGO called International Cooperation Cambodia (ICC) in the late 1990s. At that time, she got two types of rice from ICC, 10 kg each. They also taught her about and gave her pesticides. She grew it for more than ten years, so she felt attached to this kind of rice. She said she struggled to grow paddy rice when the pesticides ran out, but she somehow she managed to grow it until 2012. She was asked by another NGO to grow another type of paddy rice, but she declined. She said she observed her neighbor, who struggled to grow it. She expressed her frustration about why NGOs always give a different type of rice.

Regarding farming techniques provide by NGOs, she expressed her difficulties with NGO guidance. For example, she said that some guidance was too complicated. They told her to put the timber horizontally to reduce water from exhausting the soil's fertility, counting crops, measuring the gap between plants, keeping a distance between the plants and many more processes. She said she could follow the NGOs' instructions if the plots were small. But in reality, the Phnong had vast lands and many places, and it was very difficult to follow all the

guidance. Sometimes she got blamed for not following their instructions when the crops were damaged.¹⁰

“They only come to advocate about land rights”

PR8 said he witnessed many NGO activities in his community. He said he became accustomed to NGOs activities, and he felt gratitude for them helping his community. But later, he realized that they mostly come to talk about community forest and land rights. He wished they could provide more crop assistance because this is something that the Phnong need.

PR8 said although he wanted NGOs to provide livelihood assistance, he did not want to grow paddy rice because it was not possible to grow it in their village. So he rejected the NGOs’ request to grow paddy rice because he did not want to waste the rice seeds. At the moment, he concentrated mostly on farming cash crops to buy rice. He still relies on mixed crop farming for daily needs.¹¹

“They told me to cut my mango trees.”

PR11 is a farmer in her late 40s. She recalled in her testimony that for the past two years, she stopped doing cassava farming because of sickness. For this reason, NGOs approached her to do a home garden. They asked her to remove old plants and plant new ones. They explained to her a lot about the economic benefits of melons and other plants. They said, “Think again. This plant is valuable in the market.” Finally, she agreed, but she feels pity for her mango trees.¹²

“They rarely visited our farm and they blamed us for the failure”

PR2 recalled the time when NGOs came to ask them what month they started farming. They told the representatives that they started from March and April. But when that time arrived, the NGO people never come as promised. Furthermore, they only give instructions, but they never went to see the farmlands. She also recalled NGOs told her many things, such as to grow

¹⁰ All PR4 interview were conducted on September 15, 2014 in Pu Rang village

¹¹ All PR8 interview were conducted on September 16, 2014 in Pu Rang village

¹² All PR11 interview were conducted on September 16, 2014 in Pu Rang village

vegetables, using natural fertilizer, and about making fences. But she was unable to do it. She needed labor to help making fences. But NGOs blamed her by saying that “Don’t blame pigs for eating your vegetables. It is likely that you are lazy”. She said she understood the NGOs’ frustration, so she did not feel angry at them. To avoid the same problem she moved her vegetable garden to the farmland in the mountain. She also built a fence to protect the garden. She said that NGOs told her to farm a home garden so that she did not have to travel far, but ironically she ended up farming vegetables in the distant farmland.¹³

“I prefer to listen to the radio”

PR3 admitted that she preferred to listen to the radio broadcast of information about farming rather than going to meet NGOs. Similarly, her husband also kept listening to the radio for new knowledge although he was trained about farming by the Vietnamese. She said it was easier to follow than what is taught by NGOs, so she felt that it was not necessary to join the program. In addition, she had more freedom to plant new crops without pressure from the program.¹⁴

“How can the villagers conduct fish farming on the mountain?”

Sen Monorom commune chief, Ms. Ko said that there was a fish farming project several years ago. But it failed. The villagers complained that the fish did not grow. She questioned why they asked villagers to conduct fish farming in an area prone to drought and in the upland area. In addition, villagers are not accustomed to finding foods to feed the fish, referring to how the Phnong usually left their animals run freely without much care.¹⁵

8.2.Perceptions of Pu Treng Villagers about Development Agencies

“They are not doing it right”

PT2 openly criticized the NGOs about their approach. He said they should understand the different geography of upland areas and lower areas. For example, he said, “The upland area is a

¹³ All PR2 interview were conducted on September 13, 2014 in Pu Rang village

¹⁴ All PR3 interview were conducted on September 13, 2014 in Pu Rang village

¹⁵ The interview with commune chief Ms. Ko was on September 25, 2014 in Dak Dam commune office

cool place, so you can't raise animals that are from the hot place. In addition, the grass and the soil for raising animals are different. NGOs should not blame the Phnong, whenever the Phnong could not raise the animals." His comments highlighted the longstanding misunderstanding and fatigue of the Phnong in his village because of the pilot projects that tended to introduce new animals and plants to the villagers.¹⁶

"I have too many expectations"

PT9 said that NGO staff frequently come to ask her to join home gardening activities, making pesticide and fertilizer, and provided some equipment. She had many expectations in the beginning that NGOs would help improve her life. But it did not help changing her life much. So she started to have low expectations of the NGOs, and little motivation to participate in the programs.¹⁷

"What they told me was very complicated"

PT11 expressed her opinion that NGO training was too difficult for her. First, she could not follow NGO instruction well because of her language problems. Second, the process was very complicated for her. For instance, making natural fertilizer is very difficult. In comparison, what they told her was more complicated than the traditional ways of farming. She said she did try to make it during the program, but she never tried to make it again because it is too complicated and requires finding materials in the forest or purchasing them from the market.¹⁸ Another respondent, **PR6** said that she could not follow NGOs' instructions even though she wanted to because she was old and lacked materials.¹⁹

"I followed the instruction and still failed"

¹⁶ All PT2 interview were conducted on September 21, 2014 in Pu Treng village

¹⁷ All PT9 interview were conducted on September 23, 2014 in Pu Treng village

¹⁸ All PT11 interview were conducted on September 23, 2014 in Pu Treng village

¹⁹ All PR6 interview were conducted on September 15, 2014 in Pu Rang village

PR9 complained about the low rice production from the new seed she got from an NGO. Initially, she had high expectations that the new seed would give good yields, but the production was still low.²⁰

Similarly, key informant **PR6** said that she used to participate in NGO projects and got assistance to raise chickens, but the chickens died from diseases. In addition, although mentally she wanted to do her best, she was too old to take care of her vegetable farm. However, when compared to her other statement, she seemed to prioritize cassava farming and mixed crops farming.

“In the end I need to rely on my relatives”

PR5 said that there were several NGOs that came to meet her. For instance, they came to survey her, and after that they introduced her to lowland plants. Initially, she thought her life would get better if she joined the project, but it was not as she expected. She later became particular about choosing projects because she had to pay attention to her other activities. She said, in the end, she would still need her relatives for assistance.²¹

8.3. Disappointment with the State Agencies

Pu Rang villagers expressed the most complaints between the two villages. They mainly showed their low expectations towards state agencies' rescue efforts. **PR1** expressed her frustration: “We told them that animals got sick, and we needed urgent help from the medical teams to stop the spread of disease, but no one came. We informed them very early, so the disease would not spread, but they only arrived two months later. It was too late.”²²

PR8 felt that he was excluded from obtaining information. There were many changes in the commune, but he did not get any information. He did not even know who the new village chief was. He expressed his opinion towards state and NGOs as follows: “I have never seen them

²⁰ All PR9 interview were conducted on September 16, 2014 in Pu Rang village

²¹ All PR5 interview were conducted on September 15, 2014 in Pu Rang village

²² All PR1 interview were conducted on September 13, 2014 in Pu Rang village

come to consult or ask about our situation. NGOs only come to advocate about land rights and the community forest. After the crops are damaged, I have to depend on myself to survive.”

Regarding health issues, they do not trust the public health service. They said the doctor did not pay attention to their conditions. Although they went to see a doctor, their conditions have not changed at all. As **PR2** said “Every time I go to the public health office, they told me that I had malaria. I felt that they ignored me because I am Phnong.”

Those who have an Equity Card are entitled to special public service. It can be used in health centers and hospitals. They are exempt from paying for medical service. In some case, NGOs will pay for them. However, respondents said that apart from the medical check, they rarely got medicine or other assistance. They indirectly accused the commune officials of not delivering the assistance to them.

The villagers also mentioned the lack of interest in their livelihood issues. **PR9** said that many state agencies come to the village only before the national and commune elections. They came to provide advocacy about their rights and how to vote. In another case, they only come when they need villagers to participate in a meeting or ceremony, nothing else. The corruption issue was also raised by some villagers. **PT2**, who live in Pu Treng village, said he used to be a forest patrol police. He said he worked hard to protect the forest. But every time he caught illegal logging, the culprits always got released through a command from the top. Thus, he quit his job and focused only on farming.

8.4.Reasons for the Lack of Phnong Participation

Faced with constraints, the most important thing for them is finding food for survival. The Phnong in Pu Rang village do not want to spend time investing in skills to improve their life, although some of them understood the benefit of training. Villagers have developed negotiation

methods within the mushrooming of NGOs activities as well as a way to avoid conflict with their daily priorities.

The commune chief, Ms. Ko, she provided insight into how and why villagers showed the lack of participation. She reasoned the lack of participation in her commune was for the following reasons:

- Lack of water
- Spending a lot of time to dig the pond, find food for the fish, etc.
- Lack of success that leads them to lose confidence and trust
- Without incentives such as money and food, they will not participate
- Cultural differences
- Distance from one village to the meeting location. For instance, Andong Kroleng is located approximately 40 km from the meeting location in Pu Pyam village.

The commune needs to inform them at least five to six days before a meeting.

For these reasons, she said that the commune may avoid projects that involve fish farming and other technical training. It is very difficult to encourage them to plant vegetables because they faced problems with water.

The commune always welcomes any project to support community development; however, lack of success leads to the lack of participation from the villagers. At the moment, she has to be selective, and she needs to inform these NGOs in advance. But most NGO projects are already decided by their donors. Ideally, the commune wanted NGOs to provide animals because the area is suitable for raising them, rather than providing them with only technical training.

Hence, the Phnong prefer physical assistance rather than technical assistance. They would not believe in something they have not seen with their own eyes or been reassured about by their relatives. Besides, the development agencies should not provide them with technical skills

without solving the water problem. It is not possible for villagers to plant vegetables without solving the cause of the problems first.

8.5.Looking for Livelihood Security

Their relations with development agencies and the economic opportunities are very connected to everyday livelihood activities. The introduction of cassava has received an affirmative response from the Phnong. However, it does not mean that they wholeheartedly integrate it into their system. For instance, they knew that particular paddy rice and animals from the lowland were not suitable for cultivating and raising in the community but they complied with the state or NGOs offers. They said, “It is better to get something rather than nothing”. Hence, compliance has become one of their everyday policies of day-to-day survival.

Most of them have other desirable crops for farming different from those of the development agencies, and the kind of crops that development agencies could not provide them due to budget and time constraints. Ideally, they preferred to grow diverse crops and crops that were easier to farm than cassava. In Pu Treng village, villagers wanted to try planting oil papaya. They heard that they could get 400 USD for a ton of oil papaya. They wanted to grow pepper and rubber trees. Although they would like to plant rubber trees, they did not have enough capital and time. Hence, they mostly wait for the opportunities given by outsiders that meet their plans. Similarly, according to the Pu Treng village chief²³, recently there was a Vietnamese company which came to lobby the villagers to plant sweet potatoes. The company would like to have a three-year-contract for a trial farming of sweet potatoes with the villagers. They would help the villagers with everything ranging from pesticide, tools, and crops, and they would buy the yields from the villagers. Upon hearing the news, they were very interested. They seem not to ask questions about the problems afterwards because they saw other Phnong had done these activities before in

²³ The interview with Pu Treng village chief Mr. Tha was on September 20, 2014 in Pu Treng village

other areas where the Vietnamese had come to support and buy the yields. In Pu Rang village, villagers preferred to grow paddy rice. As mentioned earlier, they could not cultivate rice in their village, so it is the most desirable crops to maintain their livelihoods.

The desire for farming new crops is of their cultural ideology to observe the change of nature and their surroundings. Most villagers have adjusted their farming to reduce workloads and failure. First, instead of clearing new forest, they preferred to clear fallow lands because it is not labor-consuming and does not require performing rituals. Second, they want to try new crops to regenerate the soil fertility as they began to notice that their farmlands started to lose fertility from cassava farming. From their local knowledge, they want to regenerate soil loss by changing to different crops. As they need land for farming annually, the rotation period remains only two to three years. Hence, the period is not enough for the soil to regenerate, which also leads to low yields. Third, they wanted to try to farm new crops that have economic potential to substitute for crops that fail. They learned from their relatives about the economic potential of crops other than cassava. Finally, they preferred crops that have less labor requirement, such as rubber trees, oil papaya, and peppers.

Although they could leave the farm for two years for cassava to grow bigger, they still face labor problems and lack of harvest equipment. Hence, they want to grow a little bit of everything. One key informant, **PT6**, gave the reason that livelihood security is why she wanted to grow a little bit of everything. She believed that when one crop is damaged, she can depend on another crop. She gave the example of rice farming:

I farmed rice this year because I got rice from an NGO, as part of the project. However, after I met this respondent again a year later, she said that she got only 5B (around 160 kg) of rice production. The production is still low. She did not understand why the production was low because she followed their instructions. To cover the loss, she relied on cashew nuts, of which she planted three to four trees on her farm. Cashew nuts can be sold for 4,000 Riels per kilos (around 1 USD).²⁴

²⁴ All PT6 interview were conducted on September 22, 2016 in Pu Treng village

Nevertheless, cassava farming is still important for them to reduce insecurity, although farming cassava decreases annually. At the same time, they are looking for alternatives and waiting for the assistance of the state and NGOs. However, the lack of attention from the state and NGOs, and failed expectations, led the Phnong to rely on mutual support to obtain social security.

9. Discussions

9.1. Negligence towards Indigenous Interests

The communal land ownership registration is taking too long. Since it began as a pilot project in 2003, only a third of the potential 300 villages has been identified as an indigenous community by MRD up until 2013. Among those villages, little more than half have established internal rules and less than half of these villages have approved the internal rules by the MoI. Finally, only six villages have been given communal land ownership after the approval of the mapping from MLMUPC. The rigorous and time-consuming process has been mostly blamed on a lack of funds, and in between, the indigenous communities have been affected by the opportunists who came to take away their ancestral lands through various means. Most noticeably is land alienation by the Khmer from the lowland and the powerful few who came to take the land illegally. The long period between the 2001 Land Law and the 2009 Sub-Decree on Procedure of Land of Indigenous Community was caused by the high-ranking officials involved in the registration procedures who declined to process the registrations for whatever the reason (Baird, 2013, p. 272). Baird stated “The communal land rights in Cambodia should not be considered adequate, as communal land titles so far do not include the provision of communal rights over forests, an issue of great importance for those whose livelihoods are heavily dependent on forest resources.” (Baird, 2013, p. 279). Based on this statement, there has been some progress to support indigenous rights; however, there is no real willingness to support IPs

rights. These communal rights to the forest are constantly ignored either deliberately or through the lack of understanding of IPs. Therefore, it shows that the policies are not genuine towards IPs.

The related law was adopted too late to protect IPs. The gap between the first implementation of ELC in the mid 1990s and the adoption of ELC Law in 2005 was enough to cause irreversible damage to the indigenous territories and livelihoods. Although the law has stipulated that ECL is allowed not more than 10,000 hectares, reports show that there are many irregularities. Due to lack of transparency, there are many problems where some ELCs were given excess the allowance of 10,000 hectares. In 2012, the government announced that ELC will no longer be given because of the problems associated with it. The late response to ELC has received applause from activists and development agencies; however, the motive behind this decision is seen as to gain attention rather than benefit the IPs. It was evident that the negligence towards IPs persists because, in late 2012, the government issued Directive 01 that is intended to accelerate private land registration that in turn runs counter to the indigenous culture of communal land ownership.

9.2.Paradoxes Regarding the Policy Implementation

Stereotyping and exoticization still exists in Cambodian society. These views are reflected in some policies and project implementations. Both state and development agencies viewed development for IPs as equivalent to modernity, such as poverty reduction, having modern infrastructure and being educated. Hence, they tend to perceive that IPs are in need of modern skills and infrastructures. Deriving from stereotypes and exoticization, another term to identify the condition of IPs is the term ‘vulnerable’. The term has been applied to various groups of people, including the children from disadvantaged areas, poor families, ethnic minority children, and immigrant children, for example (MoEYS, 2014, p. 23). In relation to IPs and vulnerability, policy implementation is based on indigenusness or backwardness that makes IPs a vulnerable

group. Paradoxically, the government is still romanticizing indigenous livelihoods as part of a harmonious society and strong bond. IPs' culture is something to be protected so it can last forever (Nooteboom, 2014, p. 290). From the policy paper, the state believes that communal land ownership is the priority to tackle vulnerability, and it suffices for them to survive and last forever. Another ironic thing is the state adopted laws that took most portions of their ancestral lands and limited their shifting cultivation practices that have given IPs livelihood security for generations. In practice, the state has no clear intention to provide the utmost benefits to IPs but they need to abide by the law and international declarations regarding IPs lobbied by development agencies, particularly IPs rights and the communal land ownership.

The state's self-assertion is that it knows everything and paradoxes exist because of negligence or unwillingness to understand IP culture and context and prioritize growth and dominant ethnic groups. At the moment, IPs are confused and concerned about their uncertain future. IPs should be seen from another perspective, and their culture, preferences and context of structural constraints should be taken into consideration.

9.3.The Phnong Everyday Political Economy

From the everyday politics perspective, the Phnong's perceptions reflect their discontent towards state and development agency activities that do not take into consideration the context of their structural constraints. When they felt disappointed with the outsiders and witnessed many project failures, they began to negotiate or avoid the projects or other livelihood activities brought by outsiders. Later they developed negotiation methods to adjust to unfavorable situations. They would pick among NGOs that provided them more incentives or had a better success rate. From the NGO perspective, the Phnong are preoccupied with benefits. But for the Phnong, it is a form of negotiation resulting from their adjustment process for self-benefits and politics of showing dissatisfaction with the project. Therefore, the conflict of interest is obvious.

The Phnong everyday life and appropriation are what Long mentioned regarding the local inhabitant's form of livelihood adjustment to the ever-changing surroundings for their own interests. He said "The relatively 'powerless' appropriate, manipulate and subvert outside authority in their struggles to defend and promote their own interests and projects." (Long, 2001, p. 84) Taking the case of Mexico's street children, for example, they behaved in a bad manner so the police would capture them and give them food and shelter at a police station or hostel (p.86). State and development agencies are more focused on achieving a target result; but for the Phnong, their everyday political economy also involves reciprocal activities of 'give and take' to maintain social relations that act as a social security in a long run. They show their everyday support and compliance with their community more than with the state or development agencies because it provides them a much-needed social security.

10. Conclusions

The Cambodian government started what is called the "Khmerization" policy in the indigenous territories in Northeastern Cambodia after independence from the French in 1953 (Bourdier, 2009, p. 538). Until the first national election in 1993, the government still maintained its policy to exploit the abundant natural resources and fertilized land in those areas. In addition, the government encouraged the inflow of migrants, agricultural business and the introduction of paddy rice cultivation into the IP territories. Reasons for these actions were said to be development and providing public services such as health and education. However, uncertainties loomed in IP communities because they were not familiar with the government policies, nor was there appropriate information distribution (White, 2009, pp. 511-512). White has voiced her concerns that the lack of research into the understanding of IPs' culture. IP culture is merely associated with playing traditional gong, singing, and dancing (p.512).

The policies seem to hide unwillingness towards the development of IPs. This is evidenced by the lack of interest in speeding the procedure of communal land registration, the restriction of their cultivation lands and access to forest resources. The development is also biased towards the ethnic majority and neglects IPs specificity. Most notably, there is a lack of social security provided by the state. The state provides assistance and builds infrastructure that do not reflect what the Phnong prefer for their livelihood. Sometimes, state agencies only come to promote election propaganda. The development agencies only come to advocate rights and provide technical assistance that is not the main interest of IPs. Disappointment led to a lack of participation from the Phnong. Sometimes, they felt that state and development agencies do not help them to improve their lives. As a result, they keep relying more on their relatives for social security to cope with climate changes, land loss and the unsuitable policies.

From the state's perspectives, indigeneness is the reason that IPs remain poor. They need to be taught and educated to improve their lives. Also, researchers tend to focus on what they own and what they do not have, and the accumulated data is analyzed to find a solution. Thus, IPs are merely treated as passive actors waiting for the outsiders' intervention. The lack of understanding of local perspective and sociocultural components embedded in IPs livelihoods will not help to pinpoint their real needs. Now it is an appropriate time to view IPs as non-passive actors who possess strategic behavior and tactics to adjust to opportunities and constraints. Zoomers stresses that instead of classifying farmers based on what they own, it is better to classify farmers based on their objectives and priorities (Zoomers, 1999) because the same person may shift their preferences and apply strategies based on various factors. When the policy does not work for the IPs, they have to shape their locally-organized forms of social security, which can be traced through their livelihood transformation.

Chapter Four: Livelihood Transformation since the Early 2000s

1. Introduction

This chapter will describe the livelihood transformation of the Phnong in Pu Rang and Pu Treng village. I will provide the villagers' livelihoods from the early 2000s until 2014. It serves as a foundation to understand their livelihoods before I have sufficient understanding to discuss the group and individual families' livelihood strategies in the following chapters.

The chapter begins by presenting two village backgrounds, livelihood conditions and experiences in the past 15 years amidst their sociopolitical and economic opportunities and constraints. Then I will reveal the problems and challenges as well as their locally-organized forms of social security. In the end, I will show that their livelihood transformation is not explained sufficiently by structural factors alone. Also, group differences and their strategic behavior have not been understood at a group or individual level. In particular, their orientation towards livelihood activities to obtain social security requires more understanding of sociocultural components.

2. Overview of Ou Reang District and Communes in Monduliri Province

Monduliri province is located in northeastern Cambodia. It is the biggest province and abundant in natural resources. This upland province is home to numbers of indigenous groups, particularly the Phnong, who constitute roughly 40% of the total population. However, the province is also considered as one of the poorest in Cambodia. The combination of level 1 and level 2 poor households is 40.2 % (MoP, 2012, pp. 48-49). Those poor families are mostly from the indigenous groups, particularly the Phnong.

Ou Reang is one of the five districts in Monduliri province, along with Keo Seima, Koh Nhek, Pich Chreada and Sen Monorom. Ou Reang district has the most poor households identified by the government. The district is divided into two communes, Dak Dam commune

and Sen Monorom commune. The populations of Dak Dam commune and Sen Monorom commune are 1,452 and 2,519 respectively.

Figure 2 Map of Ou Reang District, Mondulkiri Province, Cambodia



Source: Author, 2014

The district has a total land area of 133,465 hectares. Forest area covers 110,339 hectares, and the cultivated land area is 23,126 hectares (NCDD, 2009, p. 7). Geographically, Ou Reang district is located at the highest altitude in Mondulkiri province with the altitude ranging from 450 to 950 meters. This geographical feature is ideal for upland crops, but it is not suitable for paddy rice cultivation. Shifting cultivation for upland farming and non-timber forest products (NTFPs) are the two main livelihood activities the area. However, the traditional livelihood is being replaced by the cash crops and natural resources exploitation. Foreign companies as well as the Khmer from the lowland who migrated to live and farm in the areas introduced cash crops. Hence, those processes have changed the landscape of the areas.

This research focused on two villages in Ou Reang district, Pu Rang village and Pu Treng village. Both villages are considered Phnong villages. Pu Rang village is located close to the main road. When development began to spread from west to east, the village also introduced cassava into their cultivation system. On the other hand, Pu Treng village is located further to the east near the Vietnamese border, so the village encountered cassava several years later than Pu Rang. The background of both villages will be explained later.

2.1.The Introduction of Cassava Farming into the Phnong Villages

Cambodia witnessed a rapid increase of harvested land and production of starchy roots and tubers. Harvested land increased from 23,000 ha to 108,000 ha between 1996 and 2006 (FAO, 2008). Cambodia's annual cassava production increased 35 times from 122,014 tonnes in 2002 to 7.6 million tonnes in 2012. Cassava production reached its peak with 8 million tonnes in 2011 before it decreased to 7.6 million in 2012 (FAOSTAT, 2012). In 2010, Cambodia ranked 35th in the world among top root and tuber producers (FAO, 2013, p. 164).

In general, cassava can be harvested when it is about 8 to 10 months old if it is used as food. If farmers want to produce higher starch yields, they need to grow the cassava longer than eight to ten months. Hence, harvesting of some varieties of cassava can be at any time from six months to two years. It can also be harvested any time based on the needs of the farmers. Those attributes have made cassava one of the most reliable food security crops for farmers (FAO, 2013, p. 4). Cassava farmed in northeastern Cambodia is mostly brought from Vietnam. For cassava to produce higher yields, it is favorable to leave it for nine to ten months on a good soil quality with the application of fertilizer and weeding (Sopheap, Patanothai, & Aye, 2012, p. 424).

Cassava is considered as a vital food source because more than three-quarters of production is used for food and feed (FAO, 2013, p. 217). However, IPs in Cambodia do not eat cassava. They do not have a tradition of preparing cassava for consumption. They normally sell to the

middlemen who will market it to buyers. In Mondulakiri province, the introduction of cassava began in the western part of the province when the government began to allow ELC in the Keo Seima area. The area was designated as the Seima Biodiversity Conservation area due to its ecological importance and later was declared in 2009 as Seima's Protected Forest (SPF). The area is home to the Phnong, who rely on subsistence farming and collecting forest products. Hence, the area has both ecological and cultural importance. The area is also suitable for paddy rice cultivation and the Phnong mostly cultivate in this area (McAndrew, Mam, Hong, & Ky, 2004, p. 9). However, the area became a target area of agribusiness for cassava and cashew nuts. In the early 2000s, the area also encountered rapid transformation, such as the influx of Khmer people from the lowland, forest land clearance and land intensification for cash crops. The expansion of cash crops saw the Phnong in that area get help from a Vietnamese company with crops and equipment to conduct cassava farming (Milne, 2013). As a result, it led to the widespread expansion of cassava farming among the Phnong in that area.

Hence, the expansion of cassava farming began in the western part of Mondulakiri province and gradually moved to the eastern part. The agro-industrial plantations that came to the areas to farm cassava have influenced the locals to farm cash crops. They stirred the interests of the locals by providing roots and equipment, and then they buy the products from the locals. Gradually, forestlands were converted to farmlands for cash crops.

2.2.Cash Crops and Poverty Level in Dak Dam Commune

Only a few livelihood studies have been conducted that are relevant to the Phnong. One study carried out in the Dak Dam commune in 2012 found that upland crops have generated economic growth. Household income increased from 24.8% in 2003 to 38.4% in 2012. The cassava production value accounted for 22.9% of total household income. In contrast, the cash value of upland rice dropped from 10.3% in 2003 to 5.9% in 2012. Similarly, the cash value of forest

products and hunting also decreased respectively from 44% to 26%. The research also found that Phnong women have experienced livelihood transformation differently. Some women showed their contentment with cassava cultivation and enlarged their land for cassava cultivation. Other women expressed that they were no longer able to rely on forest resources as they have to engage in wage work as agricultural laborers to maintain household food security. The research concludes that the expansion of the market has led the Phnong to shift from subsistence agriculture to cash crops production of cassava (So, Hak, Oeur, & McAndrew, 2012, p. 11). The research concluded that the Phnong in Dak Dam commune met with economic opportunities and also became vulnerable to the exigencies of the cassava market. Most importantly, the economic growth did not reduce the poverty level in Dak Dam commune, as the poverty level rose from 54% in 2003 to 65% in 2012. The high number of poor households suggested that their well-being and deprivation co-exist in the commune (ibid, p.11-14). However, the research did not explain the reasons for this phenomenon nor specifically explain the local people's perceptions behind the strategy and decision to engagement in the market economy.

3. Overview of Pu Rang and Pu Treng Villages

3.1. Population and Livelihoods in Both Villages

Both villages are considered Phnong villages due to a high concentration of the Phnong. Although both villages are located in the same district, some variations create the differences between the two villages, such as the period of cassava introduction and demography. It was found that Pu Rang village encountered cassava at least five years earlier than Pu Treng village. Pu Treng village is located in the far western part of the district, so it did not encounter development until the late 2000s. Late development has seen a large number of migrants from the lowlands to Pu Treng village in 2010. Despite some differences, the Phnong hold and preserve values and practices.

Table 9 Demography of Pu Treng and Pu Rang Villages

	Pu Treng		Pu Rang	
	Year 2011	Year 2013	Year 2011	Year 2013
Number of families	127	162	98	98
Population	624	698	528	507
Number of male and female	314/310	343/355	236/292	215/292
Sex ratio	0.97	0.97	0.80	0.74
Number of 18 years old and above	272	291	278	278
Number of people aged over 60 years old	16	22	N/A	15
Number of woman household head	12	13	13	N/A
Number of illiteracy 15 years old and above	134	N/A	91	N/A
Number of families of civil servants	16	N/A	38	N/A

Source: Compiled from DPA's report in 2011, Pu Rang and Pu Treng Statistic book 2013

According to the 1998 Population Census of Cambodia, the female ratio is more than the male ratio in both villages. At that time, the sex ratio of Pu Rang area is 95.2 or 0.95, and the sex ratio in Pu Treng area is 92.9 or 0.93 (NIS, 2002, p. 164). However, the sex ratio in Pu Rang village continued to drop to 0.74 while Pu Treng village climbed to 0.97 in 2013, which was mainly caused by the influx of migrants in 2010.

The population in Pu Treng village grew from 624 to 698 between 2011 and 2013. The geographical location, public services and infrastructure such as electricity and road construction have contributed to the influx of the Khmer migrants. In contrast, the population in Pu Rang village decreased from 528 to 507 between 2011 and 2013. From 2011 to 2013, the number of the Phnong males in Pu Rang village declined by ten while the number the Phnong female remained constant. In comparison, the percentage of the female household heads in Pu Rang village is more than in Pu Treng village. Most in Pu Rang village are widows.

Table 10 Farming and Food Shortage in Pu Treng and Pu Rang Villages

	Pu Treng	Pu Rang
Number of families involved mainly in agriculture in 2011	127	95
Number of families involved in rice farming	127	10
Number of families involved in cashew nuts	55	91
Families involved in cassava farming	More than half of all families	Almost all families
Average rice production/ha	500kg	150kg
Number of families with shortage of food supply for more than three months	55	53

Source: Compiled by author from DPA's report in 2011

Pu Rang village's land is not suitable for paddy rice cultivation. As a result, their rice production is very low compared to other areas. Most villagers do not farm rice annually. They farm it when they can clear new land. Instead, they farm cassava and cashew nuts to replace rice farming. Some Pu Treng villagers remain reliant on rice farming. Because Pu Rang villagers rely only on cash crop farming, they are in poorer condition than Pu Treng village. Based on 2011 DPA data, half of the population in Pu Rang village faces food shortage for more than three months (See Table 10 above).

3.2. Phnong Populations in Both Villages

The Phnong is the dominant ethnic group in both villages. The number of Phnong families in Pu Treng village grew from 125 to 145 between 2011 and 2013. In contrast, the number Phnong families in Pu Rang village has stagnated since 2011. There are also a considerable number of widows, and most of them are household heads. There are 15 Phnong who are older than 65 years old. Most of them regard those who are aged over 40 years old as an old person. The Phnong population in both villages is shown in Table 11 below.

Table 11 Phnong Population in Pu Treng and Pu Rang Villages

	Pu Treng		Pu Rang	
	Year 2011	Year 2013	Year 2011	Year 2013
Number of Phnong family	125	145	71	71
Phnong population	N/A	656	N/A	412
Number of Phnong male/female	N/A	326/330	N/A	N/A
Phnong sex ratio	N/A	0.99	N/A	N/A

Source: Compiled from DPA's report in 2011, Pu Rang statistic book 2013, Pu Treng statistic book 2013

3.3.Poverty Level

The Equity Cards are given to poor households by MoP after the related provincial departments evaluate the household conditions. The evaluation is done by questionnaires based on observable and verifiable assets such as poultry, houses and household equipment, and many other issues such as dependency ratios, school attendance, crisis and shocks, and household composition. The card has an expiry date and can be renewed after a reevaluation.

According to MoP data in 2014, in Pu Rang village, there are four families holding Equity Card type 1 and 23 families hold Equity Card type 2. In Pu Treng village, 11 families hold Equity Card Level 1 and 39 families hold Equity Card Level 2 (MoP, 2015 b).Therefore, the number of families holding Equity Cards in Pu Treng village is more than in Pu Rang village.

3.4.Farmlands

Villagers in both villages use land between 1-2 hectares, and they can expand by clearing more spaces for farming. They prefer to clear fallow land rather than new forest because it is easier to clear and does not require performing rituals. Their responses are similar to previous research that there are no limits set for how much land a family can use for swidden cultivation. The average land size for cultivation is also similar to previous research that the land-usage is

around 1-2 ha for cassava or upland mixed crops and some fruit trees in Rattanakiri province (Fox, Vogler, & Poffernberger, 2009, p. 321).

The size of the cleared land depends on the availability of family members. If they clear land alone, it will take weeks to do. If they have family members to help, it will only take two weeks. Those who have a small family size and those who are sick or busy cannot clear much land. Thus, the land size tends to be small and can be as small as 0.5 ha. For example, a middle-age Phnong woman owns 0.5 ha to 1 ha of land for cassava farming.

3.5. Village Chief

In Pu Rang village, there were three village chiefs between 2000 and 2014. The most recent village chief was designated in 2010 and he is Khmer. In Pu Treng, the village chief has been in his position almost a decade. He said the villagers loved and voted for him. In general, village chief's activities include calling villagers to meetings, relaying information from the government, encouraging villagers to go to vote during election campaigns and collecting villagers' names for getting donations.

3.6. Types of Houses

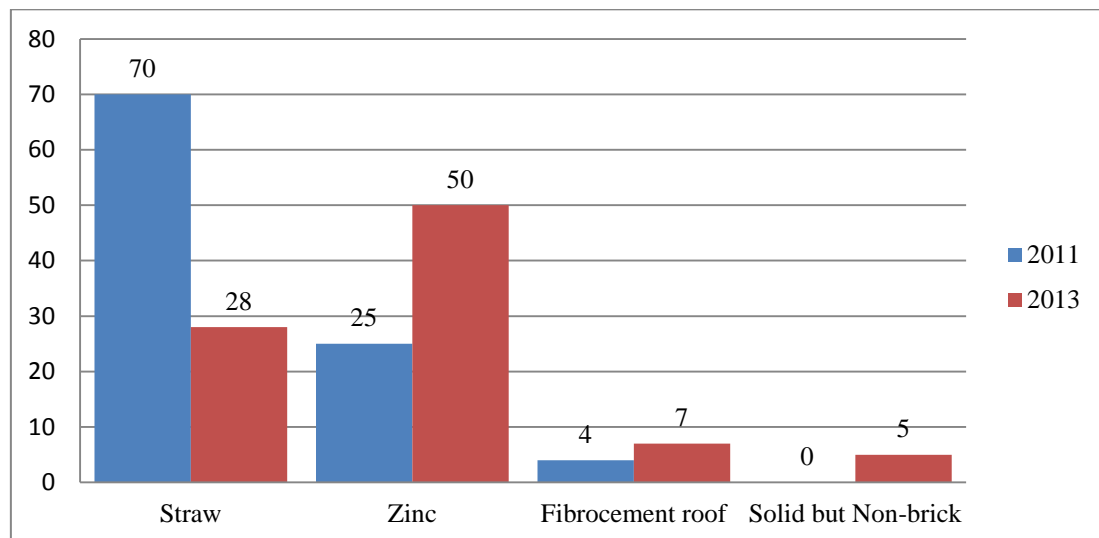
3.6.1. Types of Houses in Pu Treng Village

Pu Treng village is known for having many remaining traditional Phnong houses (straw houses). The village has more traditional houses than other villages in Dak Dam. However, the numbers of straw houses have decreased since 2011. The numbers declined sharply from 70 to 28. In 2010, the village gained access to electricity from Vietnam. 75 of 90 houses have access to electricity. Some houses have cable TVs that were mostly set up in 2010.

The ratio between the numbers of houses and families in 2011 was 0.8. Considering that the numbers of houses in 2013 was 90, and the number of families was 162 in 2013, the ratio is 0.5.

Thus, we can assume that the numbers of families that live together under the same roof have increased. Below is the figure of types of houses in Pu Treng based on the 2011 data from DPA.

Figure 3 Number of House Styles in Pu Treng Village



Source: Pu Treng Village Statistic Book 2011 and 2013

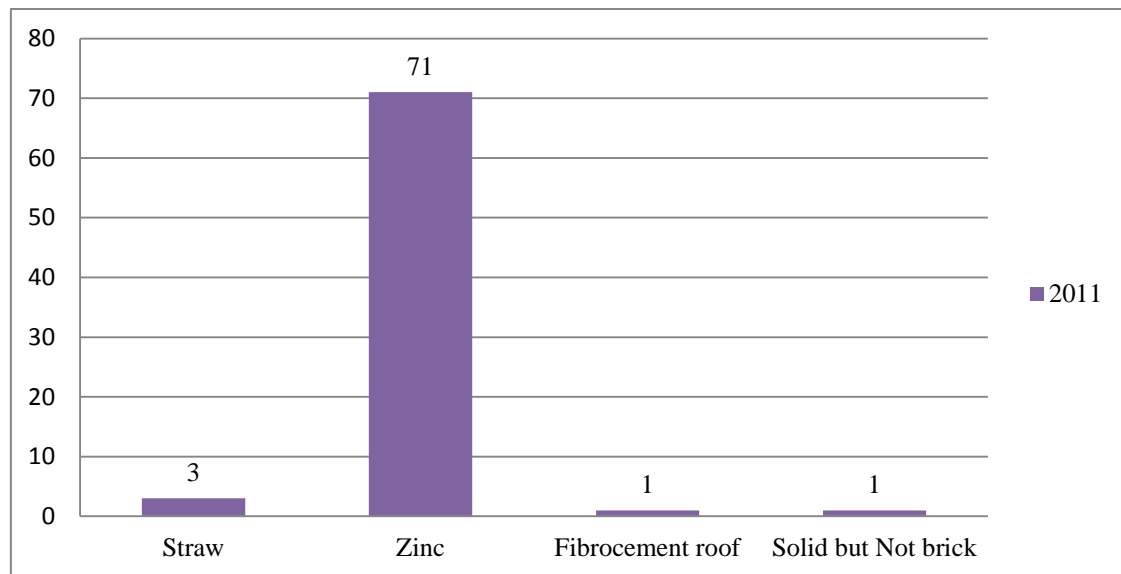
3.6.2. Types of Houses in Pu Rang Village

In Pu Rang village, almost all houses are constructed in Khmer style. This preference is a good representation of the village changes under the influence from outsiders. It appeared that they preferred to build the Khmer style houses to avoid frequent maintenance compared to the traditional houses. A new house is also considered as a symbol of prosperity and social mobility into the mainstream society.

Pu Rang villagers recalled that the last time they saw straw houses was in the year 2000. They said that most villagers rebuilt their houses in the early 2000s. At that time, there was sufficient wood available for them to build Khmer-style houses. In the mid-2000s, some of them said they were able to build a new house thanks to the money they got from cassava farming. At the moment, it is impossible to build a new traditional house because they needed to spend a lot of money on the wood, transportation, construction, and labor. Some families only spend money on small repairs to avoid high expenditures.

Considering that the numbers of houses in 2011 was 76 and the number of families was 98, we can assume that most families lived in separate houses. Below is the figure of types of houses in Pu Rang village based on the 2011 data from DPA.

Figure 4 Number of House Styles in Pu Rang Village



Source: Pu Rang Statistic Data from DPA (2011)

4. Background of the Two Villages

4.1. Background of Pu Rang Village

Pu Rang village was established during the administration of Prince Sihanouk, from 1953-1970. According to an elder in the village, the village was built in the 1950s. There were houses that were built to accommodate civil servants from the lowland. He said teachers and policemen were allocated to live in designated parts of the village different from the Phnong residences. The village was abandoned completely during the Khmer Rouge regime from 1975-1979. Villagers were forced to live in the areas where they were forced to work by the Khmer Rouge. After liberation in 1979, villagers returned to the village along with newcomers.

There were three main stages of migration into the village after the liberation in 1979. The first stage of migration was in the 1980s followed by newcomers from nearby areas in the 1990s. These two groups live in the center of the village and near the village's road. The last group is

the people who got permission to relocate to live in vacant communal land after the year 2000. They mostly live in the hills where public infrastructure is not available yet (See Table 12).

Table 12 Year They Resided in Pu Rang Village and the Place They are From, N=20

	Since 1980s (From)	Since 1990s (From)	Since 2000s (From)
Those who live in the center of the village N=3	PR8, PR11, PR16 (same village)	0	0
Those who live along the village's road N=14	PR10, PR12 (Keo Seima) PR2, PR9 (Provincial Town) PR18 (Dak Dam) PR20 (Pu Pyam) PR14, PR15, PR17, PR19 (same village)	PR3 (Keo Seima) PR1 (Pu Tru village) PR4, PR13 (Provincial Town)	0
Those who Live in the hills N=3	0	0	PR6(Kratie) PR5, PR7(Relocated)

Source: Author (2014)

4.1.1. Looking Back: Origins of the Pu Rang Villagers

From the 20 respondents in Pu Rang village, the proportion of people who arrived from other areas is slightly higher than the share of the original villagers. From Table 13 below, the numbers of outsiders who arrived after 1985-86 are 11 while the original villagers are only nine.

Table 13 Insiders and Outsiders in Pu Rang Village, N=20

	Insiders	Outsiders
Number of participants under 40 years old	5	4
Number of participants over 40 years old	4	7
Total	9	11

Source: Author (2014)

Seven Phnong, who are aged over 40 years old, relocated to Pu Rang village since 1985-86. They mainly followed other relatives after the state ordered them to live in a fixed location. Those who arrived after the 1990s were able to get farmland near the village due to the availability of lands; however, they also possess farmland in their original villages. Regarding

the Phnong aged below 40 years old from outside, they arrived in the village in the late 1980s with their parents or got married or got a job there in the 1990s. They can read and write the Khmer language, have a job with the state and have a connection with development agencies. Interestingly, 11 outsiders that moved to village are from the families of civil servants.

Respondents expressed various reasons for moving to live in Pu Rang village. The most common reasons are the cultural and administrative. According to the Phnong tradition, when someone dies in a freak accident, the relatives of the deceased are asked to leave their village to live somewhere else. Another cultural reason is intermarriage among villagers. Phnong men have to move to live in the Phnong women's village after they get married. In terms of administrative reasons, they were ordered to live in the village by the state, and later, they moved to the village because of work.

Those who live along the road are mostly relatives and distant relatives. For instance, they are related because their grandmothers are sisters or they are related on their mother's or father's side. They do not have a record of a family tree. They know they are related based solely on elders' accounts. Hence, it is not surprising that villagers along the road tend to live next to each other. They mostly moved to the village for traditional and administrative reasons.

Those who live in the mountains were relocated from the center of the village due to overcrowding or as newly-wed couples. According to **PR8**, he was born in the village, and he lived with his parents until he got married. Three years ago, he moved to live in the mountains not far from the central village with his wife and children. There are no proper toilets and water supply, so he and his relatives used their money to build a well.

All villagers are animists. Besides, some of them believed in both animism and Buddhism. During Buddhist sacred days, they would offer some flowers, water and bananas to the Buddha. They would also go to the pagoda during a festival. There is no other religion in the village.

4.1.2. Family Size in Pu Rang Village

The family size is divided into the large and small families. Large family refers to a family of more than five. Small family refers to the family that has family members less than five. The division mark below or above five members is derived from my observation of their family characteristics and conforms to the village data of an average family size of five. The numbers are based on headcount rather the numbers of families under the same roof.

Table 14 Size of the Family in Pu Rang Village, N=20

	Family size	
	Large	Small
Number of participants under 40 years old	3	6
Number of participants over 40 years old	6	5
Total	9	11

Source: Author, 2014

From Table 14 above, the household heads aged over 40 years old in the large and small families are not much different. It is worth mentioning that large families tend to bring in vulnerable relatives such as widows who had no one to rely on. For example, **PR2** has the largest household. The household consists of four families and a total of 10 people. The family consists of a widow with her children, a couple with a child and a newly married couple. In contrast, the household heads aged below 40 years old tend to have small families. I found that some respondents separated their house from their family after marriage. If we compared the literature concerning the Phnong family size, the findings indicate that there is an increase of small families with the household heads aged below 40 years old.

4.2. Background of Pu Treng Village

Pu Treng village was formed in the 1950s during King Sihanouk's administration (1953-1970). During the Khmer Rouge era (1975-1979), the villagers were forced to relocate to the Koh Nhek area. After liberation from the Khmer Rouge regime, the former villagers returned to

the village. In the 1980s, the government ordered other Phnong from nearby areas to live in Pu Treng village in order to protect them from Khmer Rouge soldiers. The population did not increase much until the influx of migration of Khmer people in 2010.

The in-migration of the Khmer people in 2010 was driven by the newly-constructed road in 2010 and the availability of electricity from 2011. These Khmer people are mostly from the lowland area. From the village data in 2013, the number of families grew from 125 to 160 between 2011 and 2013, of which 15 are non-indigenous families.

Regarding the religion of the 20 respondents in Pu Treng village, 12 respondents are animist Phnong called *Preah Sen*, and eight respondents are Catholic Phnong. From the Table 15, the origin of the 20 respondents is not much different. Most of them were forced to relocate to Koh Nhek and came back after the liberation. They have an advantage regarding farm location close to the village and inherit fallow lands since the 1979 liberation.

Table 15 Background of the 20 Respondents in Pu Treng Village

Code	Religion	From	Relatives
PT1	Animism	Same Village	In Chhouk and Vietnam
PT2	Animism	Same Village	In Keo Seima and Vietnam
PT3	Animism	Same Village	In Pu Lung village
PT4	Animism	Same Village	In Sre Ampun Commune
PT5	Catholic	Since 1986	In another province and Vietnam
PT6	Catholic	Since the early 1980s	In Pu Tru near Vietnamese Border
PT7	Catholic	Since 1986	In another province and Vietnam
PT8	Animism	Since 1980s	Mostly in the same village
PT 9	Animism	Same Village	Relatives live in another village.
PT10	Catholic	Since 1986	In another province and Vietnam
PT11	Catholic	Since 1986	In another province and Vietnam
PT12	Animism	Since the mid1980s	In Pu Tru near Vietnamese Border
PT13	Animism	Since the early1980s	Pu Rang, Koh Nhek
PT14	Catholic	From Pu Les in 1997	Bou Sra
PT15	Animism	Same village	Pu Lung
PT16	Animism	Same village	Bou Sra
PT17	Animism	Same village	Bou Sra, Pu Chri
PT18	Catholic	From Pu Les in 2013	Pu Les, Pu Treng, Sre Amvong
PT19	Animism	Same village	Bou Sra, Dak Dam, Koh Nhek
PT20	Catholic	Same village	Pu Chrey and other areas

Source: Author (2014)

4.2.1. Looking Back: The Origin of the Pu Treng Villagers

According to Table 15, ten respondents lived in the village since liberation, and six of them were originally from the village since it was created in the 1950s. Another ten respondents come from other areas. Those who come from other places are mostly Catholic Phnong. They returned from Vietnam after they took refuge during civil wars in the 1970s. When they returned, they brought with them Bibles and new perspectives about life. Cultural reasons and the state policy also contributed to in migration of the Phnong. For example, two male respondents came to live in Pu Treng village in 1997 and 2013 respectively after they got married to the local females. One Phnong woman came to live in the village with her mother in 1985 after her father passed away in a freak accident. Another Phnong woman came to live in 2007 after she got permission from the village community with the help of her brother.

Most of them travel to their farms by foot, which takes between 30 and 60 minutes. A Phnong woman who came to live in 2007 has to spend nearly two hours walking because her farmlands are located in her former village. Those who came before the 1990s may have the advantage regarding the farm distance and the fallow lands that they inherit from their ancestors. These fallow lands, in some cases, are more than 30 years old.

4.2.2. Family Size in Pu Treng Village

According to Table 16 below, 13 out of 20 respondents are from large families. The household heads over 40 years old tend to live in large families. On the contrary, the case of the household heads under 40 years old is varied. Some live in large families, and some do not.

Table 16 Size of the Family in Pu Treng Village, N=20

	Family size	
	Large	Small
Number of participants under 40 years old	4	5
Number of participants over 40 years old	9	2
Total	13	7

Source: Author, 2014

The research divided the family size in Pu Treng village into two religious groups, consisting of animist Phnong and Catholic Phnong, to highlight the potential differences in relation to family size, age and religion.

Table 17 Religion in Relation to Family Size in Pu Treng Village, N=20

	Family size	
	Large	Small
Number of Animist Phnong	10	2
Number of Catholic Phnong	3	5
Total	13	7

Source: Author, 2014

Based on Table 17 above, the animist Phnong families tend to be large. They tend to live together under the same roof and engage in mutual help. This family characteristic is said to provide many advantages because they can share labor and food production. This finding can also be used to explain the reason household heads over 40 years old prefer to live together. Regarding the Catholic Phnong families, the large and small families are not much different. However, it is worth mentioning that the Catholic families are more open to letting their children live separately after they get married. Therefore, it is likely that the numbers of small families may increase in the future.

4.2.3. Describing the Catholic Phnong Community in Pu Treng Village

There is one Catholic Phnong community in Pu Treng village. 16 Phnong families formed a Catholic community located in one cluster of the village. They live next to each other, and they are close to each other due to kinship and the shared religion.

One respondent, who is a church leader, recalled his and other experiences about how they converted to Catholicism, and the time they fled to Vietnam between 1973 and 1975. He said most Phnong who converted to Catholicism thought that the religion was suitable for them. Those who fled to Vietnam during the war did not experience Khmer Rouge genocide, but they

had heard about the genocide from their relatives. While in Vietnam, he stayed with other Phnong under the church's care. He came back in 1986 with other Catholic Phnong. Initially, he returned to live in Pu Chri village, but due to the government policy to gather villagers in one place, he went to live in Pu Treng in 1988. Five years later, he gathered people to build a church. They got funds from the priest who raised money from abroad. He said the church was located next to the commune office, but later, it was relocated to the current location. The site for the church was the community property. They got permission to build the church from the Phnong community. He said the Catholic Phnong community does not have any trouble with the traditional Phnong community. Its mission is to spread love and care for each other.

The community followed a general story based on Adam and Eve. The twist is Adam is called 'Ta Adam' which means Grandpa Adam. Eve was created from Adam's rib. In this sense, women are subordinated to male. He continued to explain how humans became shy and became mortal because of disobeying God's warnings by eating an apple. The Bible has been able to fill the hole in Phnong culture that explains how the world and life were created. The Catholic Phnong community has a regular meeting and prayer on Sunday. Regardless of religious differences, they still have the old mentality, such as not respecting the time and always coming late although they were reminded of the time. He said this habit was hard to change. For example, the church meeting starts from 9:30 am to 11:30 am and in the afternoon from 3:30 pm to 4:30 pm, but most of them come late. Therefore, regardless of the religion, they still hold similar values and characteristics. They help each other for mutual support and also participate in ceremonies and festivals arranged in the villages.

5. Recalling their Encounter with Cassava Farming in the Early 2000s

5.1. Pu Rang Villagers Recalling their Encounter with Cassava Farming

Pu Rang villagers recalled their first encounter with cassava farming while they were visiting their relatives in the Keo Seima area. As mentioned before, cassava farming among the Phnong in Mondulhiri province began in the Keo Seima area. Those who have relatives there tend to get information and roots from their relatives, while some Phnong need to buy from the market. Some said their relatives who live in Andong Kroleung village and Keo Seima introduced them to cassava farming. Some villagers decided to attempt cassava farming after they observed the farming in these areas. Some said that they got cassava roots from the state agency and NGOs. However, what is clear is that Pu Rang villagers had already introduced cassava into their community before state and NGOs began to promote cash crops there. It was only after the 2004-2005 cassava boom that all villagers fully embraced cassava farming. Below are some of their stories about their first encounter with cassava.

“I was observing the cassava farming in the Keo Seima area”

PR6 described his first encounter with cassava farming while he was visiting the Keo Seima area. He saw many people got high yields from cassava and cashew, and it led him to follow their success. He said he was one of the first people to grow cassava in the village in 2001. He started it as a trial and later he bought more cassava from the market. He also mentioned that he missed an opportunity to get free cassava from the government due to lack of information from the village authorities. He bought two batches of cassava roots for 60,000 Riels (around 15 USD) in which one batch had 50 cassava roots.

“I was introduced to it by my brother to get extra cash”

PR4 said that she started to grow cassava even before the government started to provide it in the early 2000s. She got the idea to grow cassava from her brother who lived near the provincial

town. He said, “Why don’t you try growing cassava? You can earn more money”. So she got some roots from her brother and began farming on her land. She said it was not a popular crop at that time, but people started to farm cassava after they saw the opportunities. For her, cassava has helped her to buy food after she finishes her rice stock.

“I got it from state agencies”

PR3 and her husband farmed cashew nuts from 1998 to 2000. However, due to the geographical location in Pu Rang village that is susceptible to heavy wind they decided not to focus much on cashew nuts. They only plant some cashew nuts with other mixed crops. They turned to farm cassava in early 2000 after they got cassava from a state agency. She recalled the time when a state agency came to survey the villagers about the crops. Since that time, villagers tend to get assistance in the form of cassava. Then the cassava boom started when the price rise. Now, everyone farms cassava to buy rice since then.

“I am new to cassava farming”

Before farming cassava, **PR12** worked as a soldier. After quitting his job, he started to farm cassava that he got from an NGO in 2007. However, he could not keep the crops because the animals damaged it. Later, he went to clear land for other Phnong, and he got some cassava roots in exchange. Now he has abundant crops. He also enjoyed planting many crops and fruits. He said life was easier than in the 1980s, referring to transportation means, communication systems, and foods in the market, but at the same time they need to work more.²⁵

Therefore, most of them began farming by observing and imitating their relatives or community members. Most of them are not experienced in cassava farming. **PR8** said that he used to grow yams, so he applied the same method to cassava. **PR5** has never learned how to farm cash crops. **PR12** made a fence to protect his crops only after they were destroyed by

²⁵ All PR12 interview were conducted on 20140919 in Pu Rang village

animals. He put a trap to protect the crops as well as to catch wild animals. Later, the practice became part of their activities to find foods.

5.2. Pu Treng Villagers Recalling their Encounter with Cassava Farming

In Pu Treng village, traditional crop cultivation and hunting formed the largest share of income in Dak Dam commune in 2003 (McAndrew, Mam, Hong, & Ky, 2004, pp. 9-10). Later, villagers were introduced to cassava farming by NGOs around 2007 as part of a program. At that time, the market for cassava was good, so they started to cultivate cassava for additional income generation since then. Some respondents said they got cassava from state agencies and NGOs as a part of the hunger reduction and food safety program. Some said they got the idea from their relatives. Based on another account from Mr. Mao²⁶, who has been a primary school teacher since the year 2000, he said that cassava began to boom in the village in the late 2000s, around 2008-2009. In 2010, more traders and middlemen came to buy from the villagers after the road's construction. Most of them followed each other and learned from each other about farming techniques and selling. Therefore, observation and imitation have been a part of their culture to adjust to the changes. Some of their accounts are written as follows.

“I saw others and I went to by the roots”

PT9 said she saw other relatives earned cash from cassava farming, so she followed what they did. When asked why they choose to farm cassava, they said because everybody farmed cassava. It is common for them to follow what their family or other relatives do. However, when asked about planting something else, **PT9** said if she could, she would grow peppers and rubber trees.

²⁶ The interview with Mr. Mao was on September 25, 2014 in Pu Treng village

“I got it from an NGO called MVi”

According to **PT1**, an NGO called MVi brought cassava roots from Keo Seima and distributed them to the community in 2006. The Phnong who joined the project received the cassava roots.²⁷ Similarly, **PT10** said she got cassava roots from NGOs, but they were damaged so later she asked for roots from her relatives.²⁸

“I got it from the state agencies”

PT6 received cassava roots from the government after she was selected by the state agency around 2003. Her response is consistent with Pu Rang villagers, that around 2002-2003, a state agency came to deliver cassava roots to some selected villagers. Nevertheless, the wider spread of cassava farming began only in recent time when the market was good.

Their life stories show that their livelihood decision involved direct communication or observation of their relatives in other areas. They introduced cash crops into their communities before the state and development agencies came to promote cash crops for food security. Then the cassava market began to flourish, and they fully engaged in cash crop farming. The road allowed more traders and middlemen to come to buy their products.

6. Main Livelihoods in Both Villages at the Moment

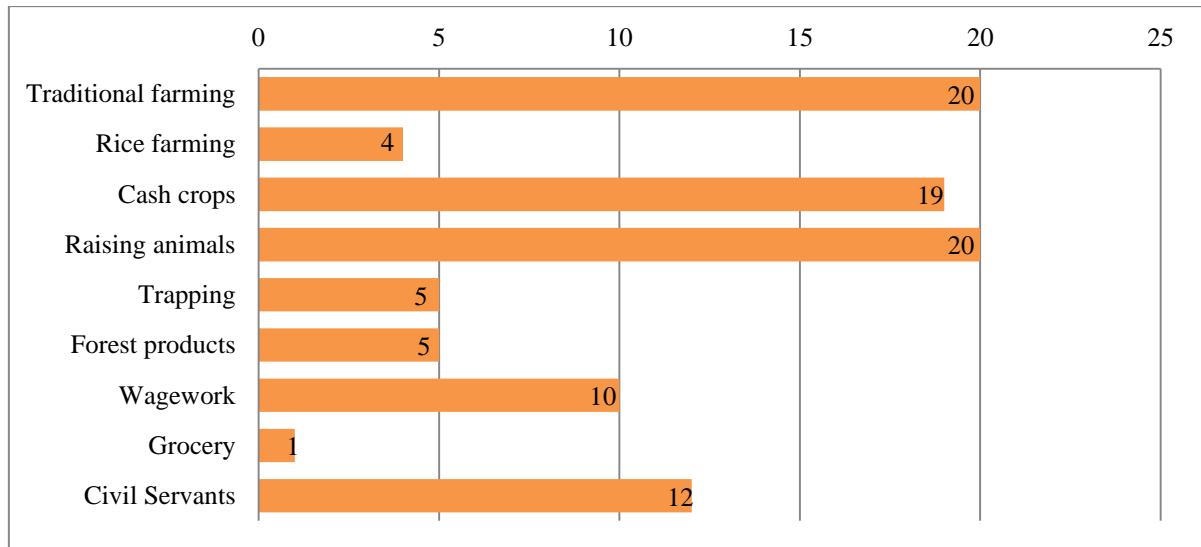
6.1.Livelihoods in Pu Rang Village at the Moment

In general, livelihood activities in Pu Rang village consist mainly of cassava farming, mixed crop farming, and wage work. Sometimes they collect forest resources and do trapping to reduce insecurity. Few families get involved in traditional rice farming due to their geographical location and the climate changes (See Figure 5).

²⁷ All PT1 interview were conducted on September 21, 2014 in Pu Treng village

²⁸ All PT10 interview were conducted on September 16, 2014 in Pu Treng village

Figure 5 Livelihood Activities in Pu Rang Village, N20



Source: Author, 2014

Regarding rice farming, Pu Rang village could not produce much rice, and they eventually halted cultivation. Those who keep rice farming did not expect that they would have enough food. They said that they kept rice farming because they did not want to leave the land unused. They said it could provide short-term food consumption if they are lucky, or be used to feed animals. Others said they wanted to keep the seeds from becoming rotten. Another reason for them to keep traditional upland rice farming has a cultural basis.

Concerning paddy rice, they had tried to grow paddy rice, but it was not suitable for their area. They tried to be diligent, such as clearing grass and protecting it from animals, but the harvest was still very low. Families who continue growing paddy rice either possess plots of land suitable for paddy rice farming or got incentives from NGO projects. The Phnong were not familiar with paddy rice farming until the 1980s. They said they got paddy rice seeds from the government during the 1980s when the government brought the seeds from Vietnam. However, they abandoned paddy rice because it did not suit their area. In the late 1990s, an NGO called ICC brought paddy rice and taught their community how to grow paddy rice in the upland area. They also taught about how to remove weeds and use pesticide. Therefore, their encounter with

paddy rice farming has been promoted by the state and most recently by NGOs. However, in most cases, it was not successful. One family said that they decided to grow rice to keep the seeds, not to waste the land, and to feed their poultry.

According to Table 18 below, five families are involved in rice farming, and one family is involved in paddy rice cultivation. The low productivity does not motivate them to continue farming. Gradually, the villagers focus more on cassava farming and use the money to buy rice. The villagers used ‘B’, which is equivalent to 32 kg, as a measurement scale for rice. As a whole, they preferred to be involved more in cassava farming to substitute for crop failure from rice farming. Now, only a few considered rice as their prime livelihood resource. They have to purchase rice from the nearby vendors or get it from their relatives in Vietnam when they go to help harvest cashew nuts.

Table 18 Rice Farming in Pu Rang Village in 2013, N=6

Respondent code no.	Rice production this year	Rice type	Notes
PR 1	1 B (32 kg)	Traditional rice	For feeding animal
PR 3	1 B (32 kg)	Traditional rice	Want to try this season
PR 2	3 B (96 kg)	Traditional rice	Crop sharing with her relatives
PR 4	3 B (96 kg)	Traditional rice	Got the seeds from her relatives after all her crops were damaged.
PR 9	5 B (160 kg)	New rice	Got from NGOs, a part of a project
PR 8	12 B (384 kg)	Mixed	He has a plot of land that is suitable for farming rice and he is good at farming

Source: Author, 2014

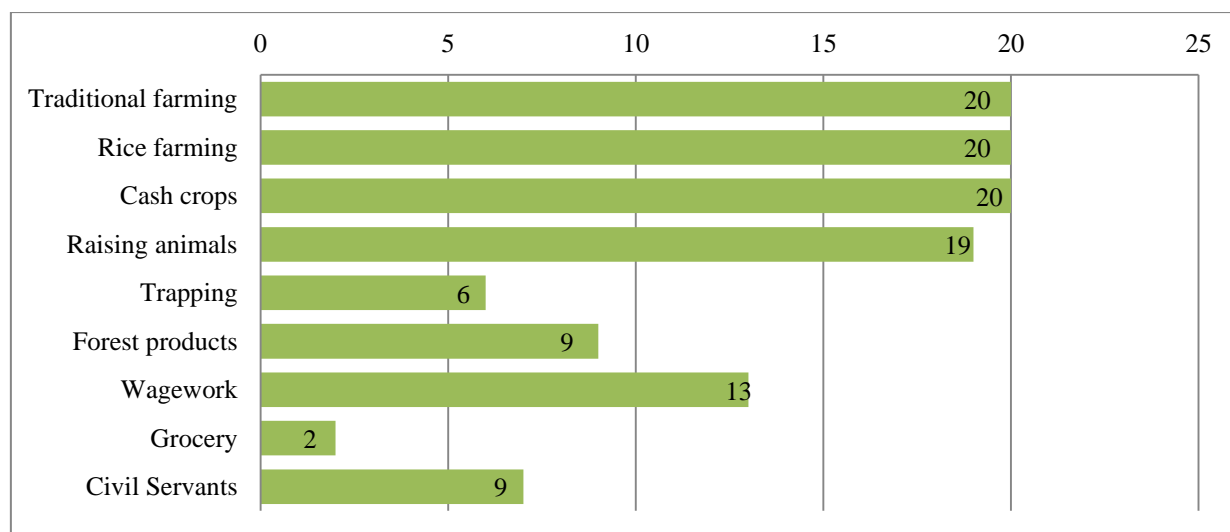
Regarding forest products, they said that their village had only a few valuable trees left. They said most resin trees were cut down illegally ten years ago and sold to the Vietnamese. At the moment, only ten families possess resin trees. Wage work is a very common activity in Pu Rang

village, particularly for women, to cover the daily expenses and necessities such as for health, education, paying for wedding gifts and repairing motorbikes. They conducted these activities before farming and during the harvest season when farm owners need labor. There are also significantly high numbers of families with a member working as a civil servant, particularly as primary school teachers.

6.2.Livelihoods in Pu Treng Village at the Moment

Their livelihood activities mainly rely on farming and collecting forest resources (See Figure 6). They still maintain rice farming in addition to cash crops. Besides, they depend on forest products because the village still has valuable trees and forest resources such as resin, honey and herbs. According to DPA data in 2011, ten people formed a liquid resin tapping group. Some families who possess resin trees can generate cash from resin collecting to reduce livelihood insecurity. After they left the tapped trees for a week, they could collect 1 B of liquid resin per night. Liquid resin can be sold for 3,500 Riels per kilo.

Figure 6 Livelihood Activities in Pu Treng Village, N20



Source: Author, 2014

Concerning rice farming, Pu Treng villagers have conducted it annually. They are highly involved in rice farming compared to Pu Rang village because there are parts of their land that

are suitable for farming. Rice is cultivated with other crops, particularly maize, and vegetables such as cucumbers, pumpkins, eggplants, and so on.

Except the Catholic Phnong, they mostly conduct rituals before farming, when rice starts ripening, and after the harvest. They offer items such as chickens and wine, mostly after the harvest. However, according to the village chief, the number of people halting rice farming is increasing, especially among young Phnong. These young Phnong felt that they still needed to buy rice, so it was better to focus more on cassava farming and other activities. This statement reflects the different opinion among elder Phnong, who preferred to grow mixed crops, and the young Phnong, who preferred to grow mono-crops for high yields.

From the fieldwork, I found that the average rice production is 18 B (around 576 kg) in 2014 and 2013 it was 16 B (512 kg). The finding is consistent with DPA's data in 2011 in which they found that the average rice production is around 500 kg. In this case, it seems that they have slightly increased their average rice production. Comparing to the past, some villagers said that their parents used to get 50 B (1,600 kg). Now they could only manage to eat for two months because they had many family members. Regarding milled rice, the average amount is 333.4 kg.

Pu Treng villagers preferred both rice farming and cash crops. There is a process of farming. A newly cleared piece of land is reserved only for rice farming. They would keep around 5 B (160 kg) of rice seeds after they harvest in the first year. In the second year, they still conduct rice farming by clearing more new land around their old rice farm land. If they do not have land to expand, they will clear fallow land around the village. Some families possess fallow lands that are almost 30 years old that they inherited from their ancestors. In the process, old lands are used for cassava farming. Therefore, they can maintain both rice farming and cash crop farming by forming a farming system to adjust to the changes. It is worth mentioning that Pu Treng villagers have more advantage regarding labor-sharing because they still maintain a strong village bond.

7. The Opportunities from Cassava Farming

7.1. Cassava Booms

Both villages prosper from the cassava boom. However, they encountered the cassava boom in different time periods. From Table 19 below, we can see that the cassava boom in Pu Rang village was in 2004-2005, and Pu Treng village was in 2010-2011. The booms are associated with the market demand for cassava in Cambodia (See Table 19).

Table 19 Cassava Production in Cambodia 2002-2012 and the Effect on Both Villages

Year 2002	Year 2003	Year 2004	Year 2005	Year 2006	Year 2007	Year 2008	Year 2009	Year 2010	Year 2011	Year 2012
122,014t	330,649t	362,050t	535,623t	2,182,043t	2,215,000t	3,676,272t	3,497,306t	4,247,419t	8,033,843t	7,613,697t
			Cassava boom in Pu Rang					Cassava boom in Pu Treng		

Source: Compiled by author from FAOSTAT, 2012

Pu Rang villagers recalled vividly about the time they got high yields and sold for a high price. Then many villagers followed each other to farm cassava in 2004-2005. They were excited about the opportunity. Some villagers said they got 7 to 10 tonnes of cassava in their first year. They were very happy because they did not expect to get that much. Furthermore, they did not have to take care of cassava often compare to other crops. Similarly, Pu Treng villagers, who encountered cassava farming later than Pu Rang village, recalled that the dried cassava price was very good in 2011. Then more and more villagers began to integrate cassava into their farming system.

Most Phnong respondents in both villages sold mostly dried cassava rather than fresh cassava. In general, drying cassava was a labor-intensive process that most Khmer people would not do. However, the villagers are willing to do it to get the high price. The average price in both villages is slightly different depending on the distance from the village to the market. Pu Rang village is located close to Keo Seima, so cassava from there gets a slightly better price than that from Pu Treng village. In Pu Rang village, the average price of dried cassava is 620 Riels per

kilo. Nonetheless, the price of the dried cassava can be as low as 400 Riels per kilo and as high as 800 Riels per kilo. In general, the price will be low if the middlemen have to come to collect from the farm. In Pu Treng village, the average price of dried cassava is 600 Riels per kilo. The price can be as low as 450 Riels and as high as 800 Riels per kilo.

7.2.Modification of Farming System

The Phnong in both villages have modified their farming calendar since they introduced cash crops into their community. Cassava is farmed in April after the first rainfall and will be harvest in December or January (See Table 20). In the past, they relied heavily on rice farming. When the rice stock ran out, they had to consume vegetables and food from the forest. Today, they can buy white rice from selling cassava. They can also reduce expenditure for rituals.

Table 20 Phnong Farming Calendar

Mar-Apr	May-Jun	Jul-Aug-Sep	Oct-Nov	Dec-Jan-Feb
Cassava Farming	Rice Farming	Mostly free	Rice Harvest	Cassava Harvest
-In March, they start clearing land. -In April, when the first rain comes, they start to farm cassava -Wage labor	-They start farming rice and other mixed crops	-It used to be a hunger period. -Now they spend the money they earned in the previous year -Wage labor	-Harvest traditional rice or paddy rice	-After a long holiday in January, they start harvesting -In February, they finish drying and selling to middlemen

Source: Modification from White, 1995

The opportunities from cassava and other cash crops became the main reason Pu Rang villagers decided to stop rice farming. They said that the geographical location of the village was more suitable for raising animals than farming. In addition, they felt that farming traditional rice had become a burden, mainly because it requires performing rituals. **PR5** said that if she wanted to farm rice, she would not use traditional rice. She would use paddy rice so she would not have to spend time and money on traditional rituals. She preferred the new rice seeds from NGOs to

grow without having to think about complicated rituals. Therefore, they have modified their farming calendar to accommodate mixed crop farming and cash crops while rice is farmed only when they clear new lands.

7.3.Cash Income Value of Cassava per Household in Both Villages

According to baseline research in Dak Dam commune in 2012, the average household income is 1,578 USD (So, Hak, Oeur, & McAndrew, 2012, p. 11). Of this, the average cash value of rice is 92.8 USD, and the cash value of cassava is 361 USD. According to my field research data in 2014, the average cash value of rice and dried cassava in the two villages are higher than the average in Dak Dam commune for 2012.

Specifically, according to the 20 respondents from each village, the respondents in Pu Treng village produced an average of 333.4 kg of milled rice, which is worth 166.5 USD, and an average of 2.3 tonnes of cassava, which is worth 373.8 USD. On the other hand, the respondents in Pu Rang village produced an average of 88.9 kg of milled rice, which is worth 44.5 USD, and an average of three tonnes of cassava, which is worth 487.5 USD.²⁹

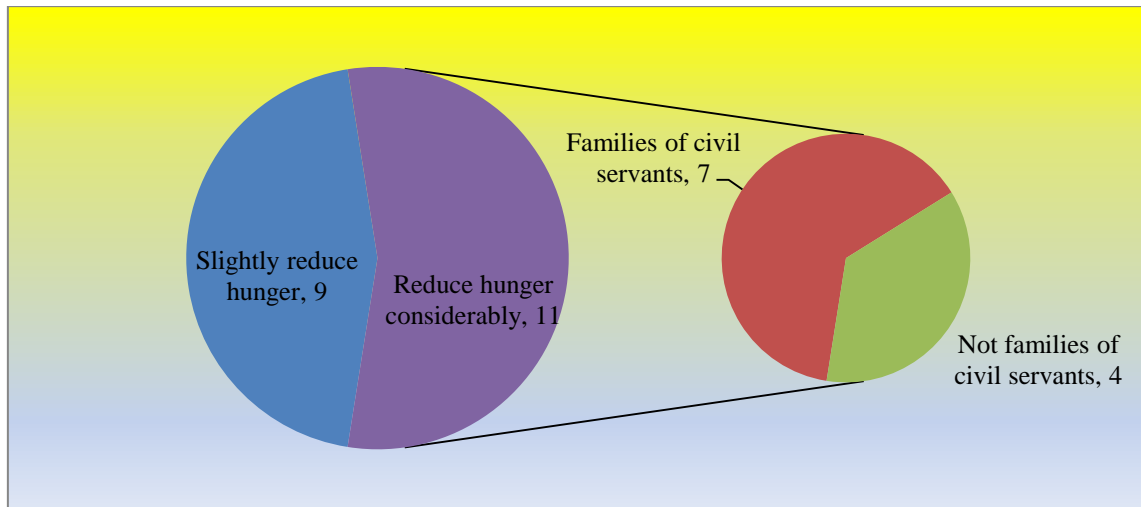
The finding showed that some villagers produced rice despite the report at the commune level that showed otherwise. Besides, this data indicated that each village could produce differently depending on their geographical location and socioeconomic context.

7.4.Rice Farming and Cassava Farming in Reducing Hunger

As seen in Figures 7 and 8 below, most respondents, mostly from the families of the Phnong civil servants, said the income generated from cassava has helped reduce hunger considerably. Some families even said they used the money to support their children's education.

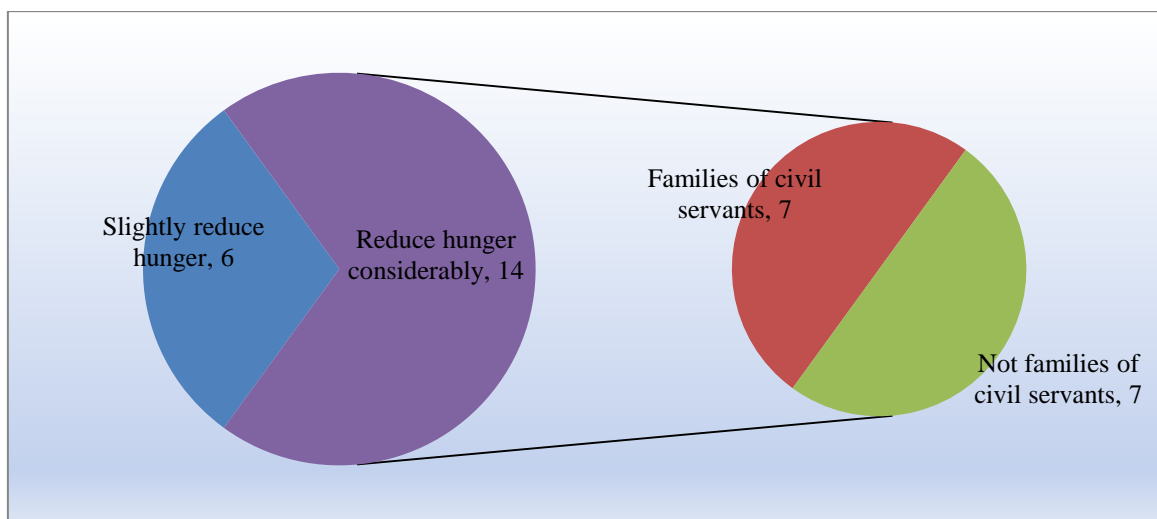
²⁹ The price of rice per kilo is 0.5USD or around 2,000 riels and the average price of dried cassava per kilo is 650 Riels (0.16USD) in the villages

Figure 7 Cassava Farming and Hunger Reduction in Pu Rang Village, N20



Source: Author, 2014

Figure 8 Cassava Farming and Hunger Reduction in Pu Treng Village, N20



Source: Author, 2014

When asked about economic opportunity and wealth accumulation, they perceived that cash crop farming could reduce hunger to a certain extent, but they did not believe that they could accumulate wealth. Although they perceived cash crops as alternatives to crop failure, they are not enough to generate wealth. When asked what they would need to do to become wealthy, they responded that you could become wealthy by getting involved in illegal logging and selling village land. These negative impressions about wealth accumulation are a result of their livelihood experiences of political turbulence and corruption in Cambodia.

7.5. Consuming Commodities

The villagers gradually began to consume commodities after they began to generate cash income and when merchants began to come to their villages. They prefer to buy processed food because they are convenient to consume. Most popular products they bought from the grocery store are alcohol, beer, cigarettes, instant coffee, juice, sardines, and household appliances. Gradually, they began to embrace the Khmer lifestyle. In the morning, Phnong men go to drink coffee and chat with their neighbors in the same grocery store. Sometimes, men gather in their houses and drink beer with the meat they got from trapping. Households that have TVs and DVD players tend to watch a drama with neighbors with the DVD they rent from the Khmer. It has become a part of their leisure and socialization among neighbors. It is different from 30 years ago, when everyone lived far away from each other.

When the villagers began to generate cash, Khmer merchants from other areas came to the village to sell their products. They come to the village between one or two months to sell products ranging from clothes, daily necessities, foods and even kitchen gas. For example, a merchant who lives in Keo Seima comes to the village by bike to sell eggs once a month. He sells a set of ten eggs to the Phnong family who owns a grocery store.

The Phnong also have a habit of following each other to buy commodities. For instance, **PT11** got her electricity connected in 2013 because she saw that her neighbor had electricity. She also got cable TV equipped because her husband wanted to watch TV. She had to spend around 20,000 Riels per month (5 USD) for electricity. To conserve energy, she would only use the TV at night. To cover the expenditure, she had to rely on farming and wage labor.

Another example is **PT6**, a Phnong merchant. She sells herbs from the forests brought home by her husband. She does rice farming and mixed crops outside the village. She saw that her life was a little bit better than before. She even wanted to have another child. Her house is a Khmer-

style house with a ladder and rooms. Near her house is a large kitchen hall. She also plants some vegetables and fruits, such as passion fruits. Once in a while, she sells to the broker who comes directly to her house. The house has a TV set with a video player. She said she could watch many programs and interesting movies in many languages from the cable. She also said that the movies on the TV are better than the DVDs she rented from the movie store. At night, her house becomes a movie theater because many teens and children come to watch TV at her house.

On the other hand, these commodities became burdens when they realized that they had to work hard to generate cash. Hence, the opportunities from the market economy are also unwanted opportunities in the sense that they face problems and challenges to make income to sustain their life in the market economy. In the next section, I will provide details of their perceptions about their livelihood experiences with cash crop farming, such as yearly productivity, excitement, problems, challenges and solutions.

8. Perceptions about Cash Crop Farming after Several Years

8.1. Perceptions about Cassava Production

Productivity in this research refers to the final production after they sell to the buyers in the form of dried cassava ‘pellet’. In Pu Rang village, cassava is farmed annually, although it is preferable to leave the crop for two years to get more yields. Most respondents said their cassava production decreased yearly (See Table 21). In 2013, the average dried cassava production is around three tonnes. The average cassava yield is higher than in Pu Treng village.

Table 21 More or Less Cassava Production in Pu Rang village, N=19

	Number of participants over 40 years old	Number of participants under 40 years old	Total
More	2	2	4
Less	8	7	15

Source: Author, 2014

In Pu Treng village, the respondents said cassava production decreased yearly (See Table 22). They felt that the low cassava yield is caused by the loss of soil fertility. In the past, it took six to 15 years until the land became fallow again. Nowadays, they have to come back within three years due to land shortage. They also encountered problems with weather and pests. The average dried cassava production is around 2.3 tonnes. The production is lower than in Pu Rang village for both 2013 and 2014. Although cassava production is low compared to Pu Rang village, it is worth mentioning that Pu Treng villagers conduct both rice farming and mixed crops. They can enjoy more production due to their livelihood diversification. Besides, the elderly in Pu Treng village still prefer rice farming, as they do not have much strength and equipment.

Table 22 More or Less Cassava Production in Pu Treng Village, N=16

	Number of participants over 40 years old	Number of participants under 40 years old	Total
More	1	1	2
Less	8	6	14

Source: Author (2014)

8.2.Lack of Excitement and Problems

In this section, local perceptions about their excitement regarding the opportunities of cash crops and problems and challenges will be shown to provide more understanding of their livelihoods and struggle.

According to Table 23, most of the respondents in Pu Treng village expressed neutral opinions about cassava farming. However, they are concerned about problems such as market price, weather, pests, and workloads. In other words, the cassava price becomes lower, and farming became harder for them. Concerning farming challenges, they discussed issues such as health problems and labor shortages. They are worried that they cannot go to the farm regularly (See Table 24).

Table 23 Feeling Towards Cassava Opportunities in Pu Treng Village, N=20

	Excited	Neutral	Not excited
Number of participants over 40 years old	1	9	1
Number of participants under 40 years old	2	5	2
Total	3	14	3

Source: Author, 2014

Table 24 Concerns in Relation to Cassava Farming in Pu Treng Village, N=17

	Health	Labor shortage	Market price	Weather/ pests	Soil
Number of participants over 40 years old N=10	4	5	10	10	10
Number of participants under 40 years old N=7	3	2	7	7	7
Total	7	7	17	17	17

Source: Author, 2014

According to Table 25, most of the respondents in Pu Rang village expressed their neutral and non-excited opinions about the opportunities from cassava farming. Reasons for not being excited about cassava farming are low market price, weather, and pests. Also, health issues and labor shortages have also limited their farming ability (See Table 26).

Table 25 Feeling Towards Cassava Opportunities in Pu Rang Village, N=20

	Excited	Neutral	Not excited
Number of participants over 40 years old	5	6	0
Number of participants under 40 years old	2	6	1
Total	7	12	1

Source: Author, 2014

Table 26 Concerns in Relation to Cassava Farming in Pu Rang Village, N=13

	Health	Labor shortage	Market price	Weather/ pests	Soil
Number of participants over 40 years old N=6	5	6	6	6	6
Number of participants under 40 years old N=7	7	6	7	7	7
Total	12	12	13	13	13

Source: Author, 2014

In general, most respondents complained about the imbalance between their workloads and cassava price. They complained that they should have got a higher price because cassava farming and cassava drying are difficult. Price fluctuation and market crashes are very new things for them. Cassava's market price is unstable. Two cassava market crashes have been recorded within the last ten years, and it has brought worries to them. They said they used to get 800 Riels per kilo, and now it has fallen to 600-500 Riels per kilo for dried cassava. To get this price, they have to bring the crop to their village or the middlemen will lower the price. To bring the cassava to the village, some families have to hire a mini-tractor to transport for 100,000 Riels (around 25 USD) for 1 ton of cassava. Apart from market-related issues, they have problems with weather, pests and soil fertility loss. Besides, they also have challenges with health and labor shortages. For those who are not healthy, they raised worries about not being able to go to the farm. The research cannot identify whether their sickness is relevant to cassava farming, but the addition of cassava farming may have added a further workload to their already labor-demanding traditional farming.

8.3. Health, Aging and Labor Challenges

Health issues, aging and the lack of labor are the challenges for cassava farming. Most respondents said that they conduct cassava farming intensively. They complained that they

started to develop muscle pains. Muscle pain, particularly in the joint area, is a common disease among Phnong women.

In Pu Rang village, 12 out of 20 respondents said they were unhealthy, and a half of them were under 40 years old (See Table 27). Apart from the common diseases such as dengue fever and diarrhea, most female respondents said they had symptoms such as tiredness and muscle pains in the joint area. **PR6** said he and his wife both suffered from muscle aches in the joint area for two or three years. These symptoms restricted them from farming. Those who are sick tend to remain at home and rely on their spouse, relatives or neighbors, or hired labor. **PR3** started farming cash crops since she got married in 1998, and she became sick in 2004. Other respondents described various health issues such as miscarriage, appendicitis and injuries.

Table 27 Health Condition in Pu Rang Village, N=20

	Number of participants over 40 years old	Number of participants under 40 years old	Total
Good	5	3	8
Not good	6	6	12

Source: Author, 2014

In Pu Treng village, seven out of 19 respondents said they were not healthy. They have common diseases such as dengue fever and diarrhea. Diarrhea is caused by drinking wine rather than water because they know how to drink clean water using a water purifier. Joint or muscle ache are less common in Pu Treng village (See Table 28 below).

Table 28 Health Condition in Pu Treng Village, N=19

	Number of participants over 40 years old	Number of participants under 40 years old	Total
Good	6	6	12
Not good	5	2	7

Source: Author, 2014

Cassava farming is not a favorable option for old Phnong. They complained that cassava farming required a lot of labor. **PT10** said her harvest had decreased every year because of her age and lack of labor. The distance from her house to the farm is also a challenge. She has to walk one hour to her cassava farm, so sometimes only her daughter goes to the farm. As a result, she got only 300,000 Riels in 2014 (around 75 USD) from the cassava harvest as opposed to 550,000 Riels (around 138 USD) in 2013. For the sick Phnong, they find cassava farming even more difficult. **PT6** could not farm cassava in 2014 because she is sick. She hesitated to hire labor. If she hired Khmer labors, they would charge 800,000 Riels (around 200 USD).

8.4. Section Conclusion

When asked what made their yields more or less than the previous year, most respondents mentioned soil fertility. Most of them farm on the same plot of land for many years, and it affects their productivity. Also, pest infestation reduced their production, while weather causes crop damage, especially during the harvest. During harvest season, if there is too much rain, they cannot dry their cassava, and it easily gets damaged.

Apart from the problems with the soil and weather, the main challenges are sickness and lack of labor. They said they were not able to clear new lands like they used to. Some people used the old land for more than three years for farming cassava because they did not have enough labor to clear new land. In this sense, sickness and lack of labor have affected their livelihood more than damage by weather because having more land cultivated will compensate for the loss. Hence, sickness and lack of labor also limit them from doing other activities to generate cash income. As a result, they are unable to go to work on the farm as often as before. They said that drying cassava is a very labor-intensive job. It requires many tasks, such as harvesting, chopping, drying, packing into plastic bags, and waiting for buyers to come. They are also worried about getting sunburn from drying cassava.

Furthermore, villagers complained that they face a shortage of labor. Traditionally, the Phnong do not have many children as they tend to think that more children will bring more burdens. Since they have fewer children, they do not have enough labor when their children go to school. They said their children would only come to help them with farming on the weekend. **PR20** said, “I have to ask my daughter and son-in-law to help me with land clearance. I could only clear a small amount of land around my old land near my house.”³⁰ It is not easy to call them back home because they are also busy and live far away.” **PR1** said that she grew cassava on the same land for six years. Now she decided to leave it fallow after her sons helped her.

None of them mentioned technique and skill relating to the level of production. Although some of them got training from NGOs, they hardly use it. For example, the gap between roots should be wider for roots to grow bigger; however, in their case, roots are planted close to each other. Furthermore, they said they conducted cassava farming the same way they farm potatoes, with a traditional method. Some families conduct crop rotation to counter the loss of fertility.

9. Overcoming Challenges

9.1. Practical Solutions

9.1.1. Two-Year Cassava Farming

The villagers have formed a way to overcome the challenges through a two-year farming system and *Mao* so they can go do other activities. A two-year harvest has been a desirable choice for Pu Treng villagers. They said when they do not have time to clear new land due to business or sickness they will leave their cassava for two years. Also, leaving cassava for two years allows them to observe market price, counter middlemen that tend to lower the price, and accumulate bigger roots. However, leaving their farm for two years also causes some problems. The Phnong do not possess modern harvesting equipment, so when the roots become too big, and

³⁰ All PR20 interview were conducted on September 20, 2014 in Pu Rang village

the soil is hard, they have difficulties harvesting. In this case, some Phnong would ask Khmer people to *mao* their cassava lands. It is a practice when the owner of the cassava farm decides not to harvest and asks someone to harvest instead. The owner will get the money based on negotiation before the harvest while the requested person will harvest all the yield and sell to the middleman. The cassava farm owners who are busy with other activities or sick tend to resort to *mao*. They said that the Khmer use modern equipment to harvest cassava, so they could harvest more than the Phnong, who used traditional methods. According to **PT9**, who asked a Khmer family to harvest her farmland, the Khmer harvested 20 tonnes of cassava from her farmland. She regretted her decision, but she would not have had enough labor to harvest on time. Therefore, on the bright side, when they leave the cassava farm for two years or *mao* to Khmer farmers, they can focus on their other livelihood priorities such as rice farming, collecting forest products, and wage work to reduce insecurities. On the other hand, the two-year-farm system is not an ideal practice in Pu Rang village. They were reluctant to leave their farm for two years because they need to sell crops to get cash. Therefore, they need to harvest cassava annually.

9.1.2. Helping Each Other to Cope with Food Shortage

Disappointments with the state and development agencies and cash crop failure reinforced their reliance on relatives and networks for social security. As they say, they do not place much expectation in the state or NGOs. The former does not pay much attention to their issues. For instance, they complained that the state's support comes too late, such as when their poultry get sick and when they face drought. The latter come merely to provide technical assistance. In the end, they need to depend on their relatives when they are in need of food or cash.

In the 1980s, under the socialist government of the People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK), the Phnong were ordered to live in a village system and conducted farming under the government's planned economy. According to the village chief, there was a communal rice

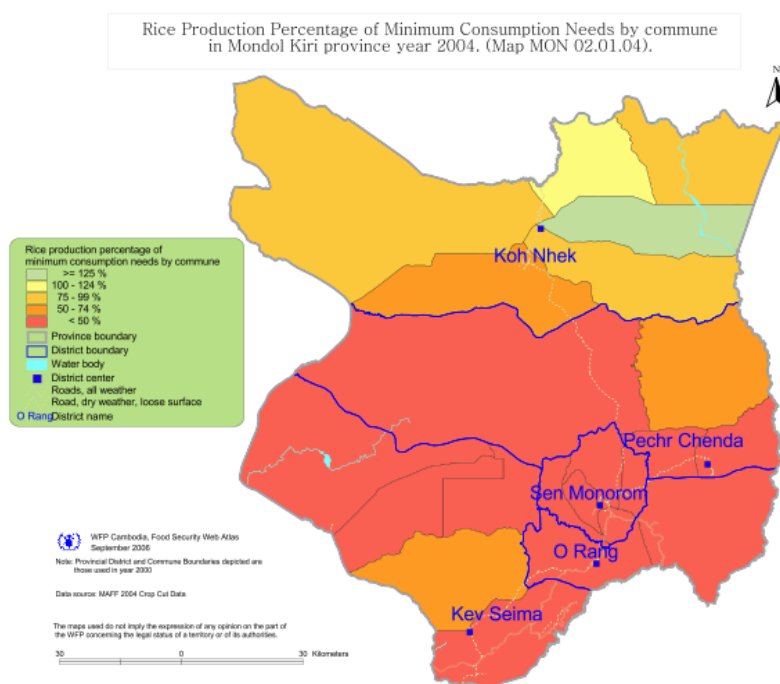
storage that would serve as security storage for the needy families. Any village members who had a surplus of rice had to contribute a portion of their rice harvest. The rice was given to families that were in need and whom would return the seeds after the next harvest. However, this is no longer practiced in the village after the PRK government ended in 1989.

At the moment, there is one traditional practice that helps villagers who need rice seeds for farming. A family that intends to farm rice but does not have the seeds will ask a family that does not plan to farm rice. The family that does not intend to farm rice will lend the seeds to ensure the original seeds are used. While most Pu Treng villagers farm rice annually, Pu Rang villagers will farm rice only when they clear new forest land or fallow lands. After they harvest the rice, they begin to conduct cassava farming for the next two or three years or more. Hence, they need to give the seeds to someone to preserve the original rice seeds. The proposal for the seeds mainly comes from the family that wants the seeds. The family that wants the rice seeds tends to observe anyone in the village that farms rice, so they can ask to borrow the seeds. After the harvest, the rice seeds will be passed to another family or returned to the original owner when he or she needs them back. This practice works both ways: to help other families that need the seeds and to keep the original seeds. The passing of rice seeds was created by the concern that if they farm next time, the production will be lower. Therefore, the owner of the seeds will give the seeds to a family that intends to farm on newly-cleared land with fertile soil and ask for them back when the owner needs the crops.

Another practical method to counter food shortage is when a family that produces a surplus of rice will invite their relatives to help with the harvest. In return, the invited family will get some portion of the harvest to take back home. Because Pu Rang villagers halted rice growing and were unable to grow paddy rice, they will wait for an invitation. Within Pu Rang village, this practice has been almost abandoned, as many families are faced with crop damage. The practice

is still visible in Pu Treng village, where some families still produce a good amount of rice, but they still travel to get rice from other areas. Phnong families normally travel to other areas that still conduct this practice, such as the Keo Seima and Koh Nhaek areas. They go there when they are invited to help with the harvest, but they will also go to these areas if they need to borrow rice. Nowadays, this practice is also applied to cassava. For instance, if a family needs cassava roots, they can help other families with the harvest and get some roots in exchange.

Figure 9 Rice Production Percentage of Minimum Consumption Needs by Commune in Mondul Kiri Province Year 2004



Source: <http://www.foodsecurityatlas.org/khm/country/provincial-Profile/Mondulkiri#section-4> (Retrieved June 16, 2014, from World Food Programme, currently unavailable)

From Figure 9 above, some areas such as Koh Nhek district have surpassed the percentage of minimum consumption needs. Some areas in Keo Seima and Pichrada District have almost a sufficient percentage of minimum consumption. According to respondents from both villagers, the reason these areas meet minimum consumption needs is the geographical location that allows the people in those areas to grow paddy rice. Villagers who are facing food shortage or crop

shortage tend to ask for help from relatives in those areas. For instance, **PR4** got traditional seeds from her brother after she lost all her paddy rice in 2012.

Similar to the practice of seed borrowing, some villagers go to borrow land in other areas to produce paddy rice. They mostly borrow from their relatives. For them, having relatives in other areas gives them more options to maintain their livelihoods. However, only some families could afford to grow paddy rice in other areas. In most cases, the land is covered with trees or fallow lands. They need to hire labor, but they do not have enough money to do so, or they are afraid that the yields would not surpass the money they invest.

In conclusion, when they are facing food or crop shortage, they tend to rely on their relatives who live in the same village or outside the village through traditional practice. Having relatives in different areas proves to be beneficial for the Phnong. A farming surplus of a relative in one area can help other relatives to cope with natural disasters, market fluctuation, and the slow responses from development agencies. To strengthen their bond, they will help each other because they believe that farming is unpredictable. They may have a good yield this year and may have poor yields next year. This behavior is considered as everyday support within their community. Being traditional means that they are likely to be able to maintain their interdependency based on the core of their culture and tradition.

9.2.Using Agricultural Substances

Some of them learned how to make natural fertilizer and pesticide from NGOs. It was found that those who participate are mostly those who have problems with their lands due to insecticides and the loss of fertility. Some learned how to use chemical agriculture to apply to paddy rice. According to NGO staff, once a month they provide training about making natural fertilizer and about the home garden that is a part of a climate change program. Although the Phnong admitted that they learned how to make natural fertilizer from NGOs, they are too busy

to make it. Besides, if they use natural fertilizer, they will only apply it to the home garden and rice paddy because they could not apply it on a large cassava farmland and for cultural reasons. As we already know, cassava is only regarded as a substitute crop when mixed crop farming does not provide enough yields. When talking about using agricultural substances, people tend to associate them with rice paddy fields rather than cassava fields. They felt that paddy rice deserved more protection than cassava and other cash crops. Furthermore, paddy rice seeds are not indigenous seeds, so they are not under the control of the forest spirits. Thus, they can use agricultural substances on rice paddy fields.

In Pu Rang village, among all respondents, only one respondent has been continuously using pesticide because her farm is already six years old. When asked about whether they want to use agricultural chemicals on their farm, seven respondents expressed their desire to use them. One respondent who had just returned from Vietnam wanted to try using agricultural substances, but she was undecided because she was not sure how to use it. Their interest in using agricultural substances is a sign of their desire to conduct intensive farming due to their reliance on cassava, as well as problems and challenges. For them, their area is not blessed with fertile soil like other areas. Hence, they are eager to try to use agricultural substances to enhance their productivity. Some respondents expressed their eagerness to use agricultural substance to eliminate pests. One respondent said she first used a pesticide that she got from NGOs to use in her rice fields 13 years ago. As a result, she got high yields in the beginning. But she never used it again because she did not know where to get it. On the contrary, those who do not have experience using agricultural substances or have not learned about them are indecisive about using such substances. They said fertilizer was not traditionally used in this village. They said they could shift or rotate the crops. They are also aware of the health issues resulting from using agricultural substances, both on the user and the people who eat the product.

The split views on agricultural substances among villagers may imply that, on one hand, the exposure to experience, particularly from NGOs and mirroring their relatives' success in Vietnam, along with farming constraints have triggered their interest in using agricultural substances. On the other hand, there are Phnong who pay less attention to agricultural substances because they do not feel that they are necessary, and they are aware of issues with agricultural substances.

9.3. Getting Involved in Wage Work

9.3.1. Wage Labor and Saving in Pu Treng Village

Pu Treng villagers get involved in wage work by working on plantations and farms to generate cash income. They said they got around five dollars a day to support their family. Activities are mainly in the harvest season and the beginning of the farming season when the land owners need workers. Most Phnong people who provide labor in exchange for cash, *Shi Chhnual*, are mostly young or have good health.

According to **PT11**, in May, June, and July, they go to do wage work on the Khmers' or foreigners' farms for 20,000 Riels a day (5 USD). Similarly, **PT4** said that she used to go *Shi Chhnual* not far from her village. She got 15,000 Riels (almost 4 USD) from clearing land and farming cassava. According to **PT9**, she needed to bring her food to the plantation. She is still doing it when she has free time. When she has money, she sometimes goes to the market in the provincial town. Her mother also works with her, but she quickly uses the money to buy wine. So they do not have much savings. From these stories, it shows that when the agricultural plantations are created near the village, the villagers can generate income from labor such as clearing land, planting pine trees, collecting cashew nuts and peppers, and more. **PT4** said that she was able to partially support her studies by working on the farm.³¹

³¹ All PT4 interview were conducted on September 22, 2014 in Pu Treng village

Apart from labor work, some respondents said that they could generate extra cash income from tourism. Dak Dam commune has attracted tourist attention with its traditional weaving and Phnong houses. Tourists come to buy traditional crafts directly when they come to visit the village. In most cases, they are bulk orders to sell to tourists outside the village with the help from NGOs. One small craft costs around 5 USD. However, they said they could not make it on time. They do it only when they are free from farming. At the moment, there is one weaving group in the village which consists of 10 to 15 women.

Some villagers could make money from providing homestay for foreign tourists. **PT6** said that she recently hosted an Australian man. She said he wanted to experience Phnong culture. She cooked him traditional food and took him to see her farm. For a one-night stay, she got around 50 USD. However, she did not expect to have more guests because it was a rare case. She was introduced to the Australian man by NGO staffs that frequently come to visit her house. She hoped she could host more people.

9.3.2. Wage Work and Savings in Pu Rang Village

Wage works in Pu Rang is limited to activities that require labor. They mainly do wage work in the dry season. Most female respondents said they used to do wage work. They said that when they needed quick cash they would go to work on a farm or plantation near their village. According to **PR5**, she used to clear grass and work on a farm to generate extra cash income. She got paid for 15,000 Riels a day (almost 4 USD). She said she did not have a record of how much she made from farming and wage work. She said she would spend the money based on a fixed amount of money, a similar amount as the money she spent the previous month for daily consumption. **PR9** said she first conducted wage work in 2006-2007. Her job was to plant pine trees, and she got paid monthly. She also got involved in cashew nuts where she got paid daily. The money she got, she would spend on rice and give some to her parents. At the moment, the

company does not want the villagers. They tended to hire people from the lowland because the villagers could not come regularly. Some families conduct wage work together. **PR2** used to do wage work on a farm. Sometimes the farm owners called her, and sometimes she asked them when she needed money. She recalled that in 2010, she got 300,000 Riels a month (around 75 USD) for planting pine trees. She would go to work when she is free. She tends to go with her two teenage children.

A few families also started to raise ducks imported from Vietnam. **PR1** thought that ducks were easier to look after than chickens and pigs. She said as long as she provided them with water, they would not stray far from her house. Now she has around ten ducks. She would eat them when she had nothing to eat. She also had a positive view about the home garden.

There are significant numbers of primary school teachers and civil servants in Pu Rang village. Historical factors have played a significant role in this unique situation. The village was established for its strategic administration location near the main road to provide public services in Ou Reang district. There is important public infrastructure, such as a district office, schools and a health center in the village. For them, acquiring a job with the state ensured a stable monthly income that can be used to cover their daily expenditures. They also stated that these jobs bring honor to the family. For this reason, a job with the state is regarded as prestigious.

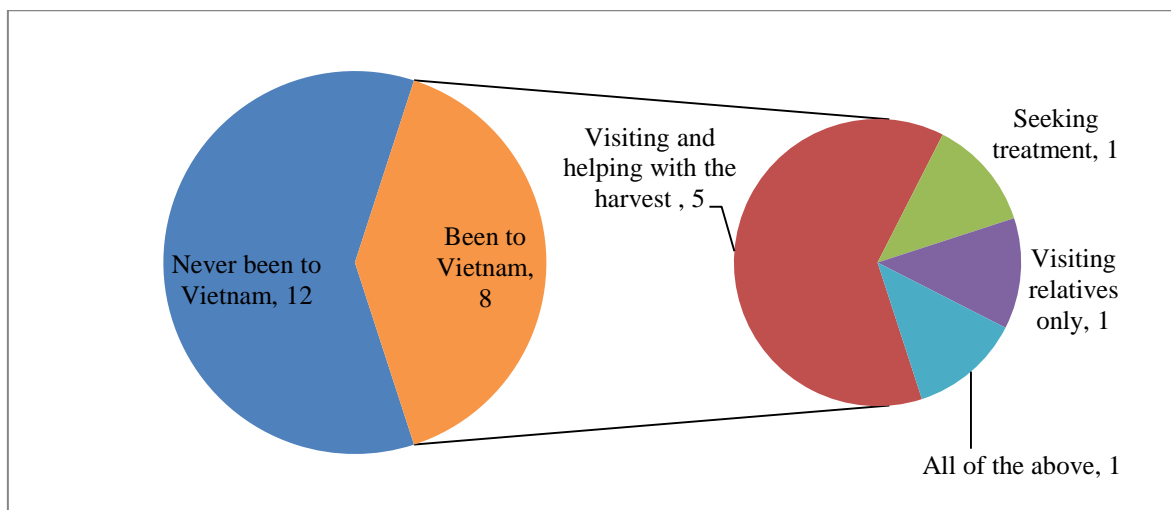
9.4.Maintaining Social Relations among Relatives

9.4.1. Visiting Relatives and Helping with the Cashew Nut Harvest in Vietnam

Both villages are located not far from the Vietnamese border. Most villagers have close and distant relatives in Vietnam. They maintain relationships by exchanging visits. With the advance of technology, some families can communicate by phone. Sometimes, they receive a phone call from relatives in Vietnamese asking them for help with the cashew nut harvest.

In Pu Rang village, 12 respondents said they have relatives in Vietnam. More than half of them are over 40 years old. They still have connections with their relatives in Vietnam. They said they know about their relationship based solely on oral memory passed down from their elders. Eight out of 20 respondents used to go to Vietnam. Regarding the age of the respondents, five out of eight respondents who used to go to Vietnam from Pu Rang village are over 40 years old. It shows that older Phnong keep their relationships with their relatives in Vietnam better than young Phnong, as they remember their relatives and their addresses. Regarding the reason for traveling to Vietnam, among eight respondents who used to go to Vietnam, four have traveled to Vietnam recently. Three of them traveled to visit and help with the harvest, and one of them sought medical treatment (See Figure 10).

Figure 10 Pu Rang Villagers who Used to Travel to Vietnam and Their Purposes

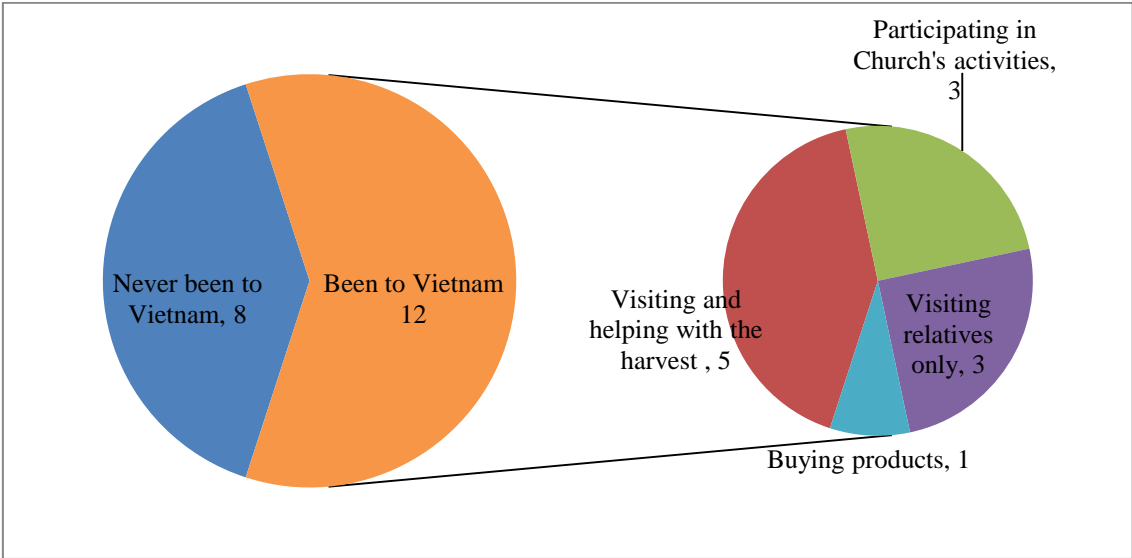


Source: Author, 2014

In Pu Treng village, 17 respondents said they have relatives in Vietnam. Most of them are over 40 years old. They are the returnees from Vietnam after the civil war ended, and they have close relatives there. In addition, 12 respondents said they used to go to Vietnam. Most of them are the Catholic Phnong. Nine out of 12 respondents are over 40 years old. It shows that older Phnong can maintain their relationships with their relatives in Vietnam.

The main purpose of traveling to Vietnam is to visit and help their relatives with the cashew nut harvest. It was found that they would go to visit their relatives in Vietnam when there is an invitation and after they are free from harvesting cassava. However, among six respondents that traveled to Vietnam recently, four said they went to Vietnam for purposes other than just a family visit. Three of them traveled to Vietnam for a Catholic Church’s activities, and one of them traveled there to buy products to sell in the village (See Figure 11).

Figure 11 Pu Treng Villagers who Used to Travel to Vietnam and Their Purposes



Source: Author, 2014

Having relatives in Vietnam is considered as having important security because the networks provide them with the access to obtain foods when they are in need. When asked whether they see the difference and want to live in Vietnam, they have mixed feelings. For instance, **PR5**, who visited her relatives in Vietnam in 2012, said the life in Vietnam is better than in Cambodia. They grow many peppers and cashew nuts. They have electricity and water. The downside is they are not allowed to own communal land to conduct shifting agriculture. So they have to grow on old lands. As a Phnong person, she prefers to live in Cambodia because she has more lands to conduct traditional farming.

9.4.2. The Act of Building New Houses

Regarding house construction, the Phnong villagers said that they needed to pay separately for wood, transportation, and house construction. The main problem is the wood for house construction has become scarce around the villages. They need to hire people and a tractor to transport the wood from the forest far from the village. Only a few families who are well off enough can afford to hire labor and transportation. They have to pay 500,000 Riels (approx. 120 USD) for one cubic meter for logging, 280,000 Riels (approx. 70 USD) to rent a tractor for a cubic meter, and construction fees. Some villagers gave a fixed sum of 2,000 USD to build a Khmer-style house.

Therefore, they found that house construction was not possible without help from their relatives because they did not have much money to hire people to go to the forest, get the wood and build the house. So they will wait until their networks could give them assistance to get the resources and build a house. In return, they would arrange a party for the helpers, or they would have to help with house construction next time.

9.5. The Role of Social Networks

9.5.1. Networks in Pu Treng Village

In Pu Treng village, 70% of the respondents said they have a strong connection with relatives in other areas and Vietnam, and NGO staff. Most of those respondents are from the families of Phnong civil servants. Their responses may imply that having a job in the mainstream society allows them to travel and have more connections than families of non-civil servants. The remaining 30% are from the families of non-civil servants. They do not have many connections with NGOs. Looking at their traditional Phnong family background one by one, there are some commonalities among them such having no experience of leaving the village or rarely leaving the village, depending on family members and close relatives in the same village, and relying

mostly on subsistence farming. Although the traditional Phnong said they heard about their relatives in Vietnam, they had never contacted them.

Therefore, most families in Pu Treng have considerable connection with networks that allow them to seek social security when they are in need. Their confirmation supports the argument that between the selected two villages, Pu Treng villagers tend to have stronger networks. They also maintain a considerable number of traditional practices that sustain their livelihoods, such as crop- and labor-sharing, living in the same house, traditional livelihoods, and others.

9.5.2. Networks in Pu Rang Village

In Pu Rang village, 70% of the respondents said they have strong connections with relatives in other areas and Vietnam. They said they maintained contact with relatives in other areas. Occasionally, they also cooperate with NGO staff for a project. The remaining 30% that has few networks in other areas are from the small families of Phnong civil servants.

Looking closely at their family backgrounds, there are various factors that cause them to have few connections, such as fragmentation between the village members, being busy, reliance only on close relatives in the same village, and lack of experience traveling. **PR18** is a beneficiary from past regimes but could not form many networks.³²

Nevertheless, there are also a few commonalities that cause them have few networks. Three respondents said they just became civil servants, and all of them are in their early 30s. They moved to Pu Rang for work. One of them moved to live and work in the village after he got married to a local woman. Thus, the newly arrived young families of civil servants tend to have fewer networks.

³² All PR18 interview were conducted on September 20, 2014 in Pu Rang village

10. Justifying Livelihood Transformation

After learning about their livelihood transformation, the remaining questions are about what the transformation tells us about Phnong livelihood experiences. Have we learned about the formation of their social security networks? How can I justify their livelihood transformation and associate it with sociocultural components apart from the commonly-known structural constraints? In this section, I will provide the justification that their livelihood transformation requires the additional explanation from the sociocultural perspective. For example, the decisions about not expanding farmlands or not becoming an entrepreneur can be related to a cultural decision, and have not been explained fully.

10.1. Looking at their Everyday Political Economy

From the Phnong livelihood experiences, the drastic livelihood transformation began in the new millennium. When cassava was first introduced into the village in the early 2000s, cassava farming was believed to reduce livelihood insecurities in addition to rice farming and forest products. However, they became dependent on cash crops after the arrival of ELC and the influx of Khmer migrants in the mid-2000s. The government said that ELC would generate jobs in the upland areas, but on the contrary, it has destroyed the forest land and their former livelihoods. Also, the state and development agencies came to the villages and promoted cash crops in the hope that the Phnong villagers could reduce livelihood insecurities. Gradually, the villagers became reliant on cash crop farming and wage work. It is ironic that they have to go to work in the agricultural plantations that took most of their forest and ancestral land. As Gironde and Peeters said, the majority of indigenous populations could only at best find a job such as clearing the land of the new holders (Gironde & Peeters, 2015, p. 13). At the moment, most of them stated that life was better after they began cassava farming because they could afford to buy rice in the market. However, they are also at risk of the exigencies of cash crops because the cassava

market is easily fluctuated. The future was uncertain, as they expressed their concerns about crop damage, climate change, the lack of labor, illness, and so on. Furthermore, the traditional farming self-insurance is gradually changing as young Phnong expressed a preference to conduct fixed mono-crop cultivation and engage in non-farming activities. They are worried about their future and constantly looking for livelihood alternatives and some become busy with education.

While acknowledging the above-mentioned structural factors, there was an ‘everyday’ political economy of the Phnong that is associated with their strategic behavior. The research sees their everyday political economy in two ways that describe their ways of making a living and obtaining security. First is the practice of everyday life where the individuals tactically use the existing rules and the products of the institutions and structures of power, but they are never fully controlled by the rules and productions, for example, taking shortcuts in spite of the strategic grid of the streets (De Certeau 1984). The livelihood transformation of the Phnong shows that they integrated cassava into their farming system, but they never imagined expanding or intensifying their farming. They adopted the state policy, but their livelihood activities are done in a way contrary to the state’s intention to have them in mainstream jobs. Rather, the Phnong tactically engage in cash income farming and, on the other hand, they stick to subsistence livelihoods. The second way of looking at their everyday political economy is by borrowing ideas from the concept of styles. As seen in their livelihood transformation, there patterns that go back and forth between being involved in semi-subsistence livelihoods and traditional livelihoods, and between mutual support and self-insurance. They cope with stresses and shocks by relying on self-insurance and by traveling to Vietnam and engaging in various livelihood activities. If their form of self-insurance is at risk, they will rely on mutual support for social security. Therefore, their livelihood transformation is not a result of their structural factors alone but sociocultural components that influence their manners and strategies.

10.2. Looking at their Livelihood Orientation

The Phnong families that said they could reduce livelihood insecurity considerably are mostly from the families of civil servants. As mentioned earlier, most of these families are not originally from the same village, and some of them are Catholic Phnong returnees from refuge in Vietnam. Hence, they have to adjust to the community, and at the same time they possess consciousness and knowledge that is different from traditional Phnong. It was found that the families of Phnong civil servants were the first group to access cash crop farming and networking with the state and development agencies. They have accumulated income that they could consolidate and invest in their children's education. At the same time, they are humble and modest about wealth because they do not want to lose the culture and tradition that sustains their lives when they are in need. They do not have a plan to expand their farmland yet. Instead, cassava is mostly conducted for self-sufficiency to substitute for crop damages. By remaining subsistence, they can maintain social security through traditional practices such as crop-borrowing and crop-sharing after helping harvest. Also, it allows them to steer way from too much reliance on unwanted opportunities. They are aware of exposing themselves to the risk of market failure and cheating from middlemen. What can be implied from this brief explanation is that we need to learn more about the livelihood experience of the Phnong and their social security. If we look only at the Phnong as a poor and vulnerable group without looking further to their heterogeneity, we will miss important information about them. Also, there should be a new perspective to reveal strategic behavior for social security.

Therefore, we need to ask: are the socioeconomic condition and structural constraints sufficient to explain their behavior and actions? How have the lives been so different within the group when they share the same values and same conditions? Why do some families value social relations so much, and despite their insecurities, they travel abroad to meet their relatives? How

to explain the cases that are abstract to our naked eyes and hidden from statistical data? In the end, we need to examine the sociocultural components that influence their strategic behavior.

11. Conclusion

This chapter has shown the livelihood transformation of the Phnong through their livelihood patterns, including their first encounter with cash crops, opportunities and constraints, and their locally-organized forms of social security. Besides, I was also able to show their perceptions about the wanted and unwanted opportunities amidst the sociopolitical changes in Cambodia. The way they make the decision to get engaged in opportunities and how they work their way to reduce insecurities are testaments to their everyday political economy to obtain social security. At the moment, they are engaged in some market activities for cash income. Their preferences have changed based on the political and social transformations in Cambodia, such as from livelihoods under a planned economy in the 1980s to a more self-oriented livelihood generated from cash crops under the current market economy. During each regime, the Phnong families have diversified their crops to adapt to the sociopolitical changes and climate change, such as from upland rice to paddy rice, and from paddy rice to cashew nuts, and from cashew nuts to cassava. In each case, they learned about the crops from observing their relatives and outsiders. Apart from self-insurance activities, networks have played a significant role in social security. I was able to show how they returned to relying on a traditional form of social security. They may get engaged in some market activities for cash income, but they strategically return to traditional livelihoods and practices to overcome challenges associated with the market economy.

However, I could only show their conditions at the village level and some variables that are associated with their farming production. It does not explain the components that influence their strategic behavior and decisions. For example, some families may be able to expand their farmland or become entrepreneurs; however, they do not wish to do these things for individual,

structural and cultural reason. Therefore, the explanations in Chapter Four alone are not sufficient to understand the various forms of Phnong livelihoods. Also, it is necessary not to overstate the conditions of the Phnong and make the assumption that they are poor but doing well, and thereby neglect their abilities and preferences. Therefore, to reduce overstating 'income and networks' as the main constraints contributing to their manners and strategic behavior, it is also important to reflect the voices and strategies of individuals and groups.

To provide more explanation of their livelihoods diversification and to show heterogeneities among the group towards obtaining social security, I will use the case of the families of Phnong civil servants in the next chapter.

Chapter Five: Livelihood Strategies of Families of Phnong Civil Servants

1. Introduction

In the previous chapter, I discussed the Phnong livelihoods, such as their experiences, perspectives and their locally-organized forms of social security to adjust to changes. I found that the livelihood transformation of families of Phnong civil servants stood out among the group. However, their ways of making livelihoods and the different strategies among members in their group have not been explained. Hence, in this chapter, I focus on their strategic behaviors that involve two points: their orientation towards livelihood security and the structural factors. Structural factors in this research refer to the sociopolitical and socioeconomic changes relevant to economic condition, family size, and networking, and include aspects such as health, education, migration, employment, and so on that condition the Phnong livelihood transformation. Also, I will show that within the families of Phnong civil servants, there are also variations among the group that are conditioned by structural factors.

2. Revisiting Multiple Realities in Both Villages and Research Methods

2.1. Revisiting Multiple Realities in Both Villages

Both villages have a mixture of members that migrated from different areas for various reasons. Since the late 1980s, those who moved to live in the villages cited reasons such as cultural reasons, jobs and marriage. The later newcomers have formed a group that, on the one hand, embraces Phnong cultural practices such as beliefs, kinship, and language, but on the other hand, they try to steer away from strict tradition as it is economically burdensome. They want to improve their life through adapting to modernity. They tend to have better relations with NGOs or state agencies. Among the respondents in Pu Rang village, more than half used to join NGO activities. They are eager to observe new things that they think will give them a better life. However, they do not necessarily follow all NGO instructions, as they have their own agendas.

In Pu Treng village, 16 families constitute a Catholic Phnong group. The group is eager to adapt to modern life with their religious principles. They also seek employment in the mainstream society. Nevertheless, they maintain some basic Phnong values such as language, kinship, traditional farming and praying.

The above-mentioned information mostly applies to the families of Phnong civil servants. Most of them are the beneficiaries of earlier policies. Those who got state jobs tend to play a major role in sharing information and guiding their relatives to improve their lives. They are able to avoid exigencies by relying on shifting between the market economy and traditional livelihoods. They have semi-integrated into the mainstream society by following the footsteps of the Khmer and engaging in skill learning and children's education. At the same time, they practice mutual support among the community members. Their characteristics, livelihood orientation and strategies towards obtaining social security will be explained in another section.

2.2.Revisiting Research Methods

In this research, 21 families of Phnong civil servants were chosen as the main targets. The majority of the civil servants are male. They have jobs such as a soldier, policeman, provincial and district staff, and a teacher. They were selected to reflect their livelihood orientation and the heterogeneities of the Phnong livelihood experiences and strategies to obtain security. Table 29 below shows the numbers of the families of Phnong civil servants and their particular jobs.

Table 29 Numbers and Types of Families of Phnong Civil Servants in Both Villages

	Number of Primary school teacher	Number of Police and soldier	Number of Provincial and district staff	Total
Pu Rang	4	5	3	12
Pu Treng	1	4	4	9

Source: Author, 2014

Specifically, in Pu Rang village, 12 families have family members or relatives working as civil servants.³³ There are four families of primary school teachers, three families of district staff and five families of soldiers and policemen. The village is located at the center the district's administrative activities, with schools and health centers. Thus, these advantages have contributed to the high numbers of Phnong civil servants. In Pu Treng village, nine families have family members or relatives who are civil servants.³⁴ Four families who have relatives as civil servants are from the Catholic Phnong families.

3. Who are the Families of Phnong Civil Servants?

3.1. On Becoming a Civil Servant

In the past, the Phnong were recruited to become soldiers to protect the country. After the country became peaceful, the Phnong, who were the beneficiaries of the past regime, became integrated into Khmer society. They are proud of their ethnic group members who became the provincial governor and high-ranking officials. **PR19** recalled how he became a soldier in the early 1980s. When he was young, he lived close to the dormitory of the Khmer civil servants who came to work in Pu Rang village. The Khmer civil servants asked him to go to school, but unfortunately, he had to quit school when the war began in the early 1970s. After liberation in 1979, he was recruited to be a soldier in the areas near the village. After the country had become peaceful, he worked as a military driver in the province. Later he was transferred to work at the military base near Pu Rang village. He said there was not much requirement to become a soldier or civil servant at that time. Education was not a requirement as long as they could fight for the country.³⁵

³³ According to DPA data in 2011, there are 38 families in Pu Rang village who have family members or relatives as civil servants.

³⁴ The numbers is consistent with the data from DPA in 2011 where there are 16 families. From the fieldworks, there is one family of a primary school teacher, two families of district officers and four families of polices and soldiers.

³⁵ All PR19 interview were conducted on September 20, 2014 in Pu Rang village

Similarly, **PR3** said her husband only went to a primary school, but he got a position as a border patrol police officer thanks to the recommendation from the village chief. In her case, she was fortunate to complete grade nine. It was rare for a Phnong woman to finish grade nine. When she heard about the recruitment of a police officer from her relatives, she went to apply and successfully passed. Similarly, **PT1** became a civil servant in early 1990s because he could speak the Khmer language and had the ability to write. At that time, Pu Treng village was still remote, and only a few villagers could obtain an education. With his ability to speak and write, he became the favorite of development agencies that came to implement projects in the village. In general, the families of Phnong civil servants hold positive perceptions towards education. They tend to tell their children and relatives to study to become civil servants to improve their life and develop the community. It was found that regardless of the parents' level of education, the families of Phnong civil servants want to see their children educated. They do not see farming as a stable livelihood, as they remarked that humans increase but farmlands do not.

Therefore, opportunities, networks and a minimum education allowed them to become a civil servant in the past. Then they tended to tell their relatives to follow in their successful footsteps. Therefore, through development discourse, the families of Phnong civil servants have embedded a mentality, strategies towards social security, and have positive behavior towards education.

3.2.Folktales that Reflect their Changing Perceptions

During a group discussion, two Phnong folktales were used as a topic of discussion concerning their culture and modernity. Below are the stories and the perceptions of participants who are from the families of civil servants about their culture and relation to modernity.

Story 1: There is a Phnong woman who can create salt by rubbing her body. The villagers called her *Yeay Ambel* or salt granny. Her food tastes delicious because she uses salt instead of

ash. The villagers think she is a witch and decide to execute her. The old lady tells them to execute her near the sea. After they execute her, she becomes salt in the sea.

Story 2: There is a Phnong woman who can cultivate rice very fast. Instead of digging holes and putting rice grains one by one, she climbs a big tree and spreads the seeds into the field. She can finish her task faster than other villagers. The villagers accuse her of knowing black magic and later execute her.

After the two stories had been read, one respondent said, “If we follow her practices, our farming will be much easier.” She thought that traditional Phnong farming was too difficult and did not provide high productivity. Another respondent jokingly said that every intelligent person would be killed if they were too smart and stood out from the rest. Then another Catholic Phuong spoke about his relatives who are intelligent and got the opportunity to visit Jerusalem. He said that Phnong should learn modern knowledge so they can also progress.

From the stories, it is likely that intelligent people are considered a threat to their cultural survival. Innovation that distorts their community bond is also considered a threat to their culture. Based on the discussion, the families of Phnong civil servants do not support the strict traditions. They perceived them as a hindrance to livelihood improvement. They believed that being educated and hard work will help to improve their lives.

3.3.Engaging in Work for Cash Income and Believing in Hard Work

According to their livelihood histories, they mostly experienced suffering or difficulties because of the strict traditions. Moreover, they could not rely solely on traditional livelihoods anymore. **PR1** recalled a painful experience while she was in her old village. The villagers collectively asked her to demolish her house to get rid of the bad omen after her husband died in a freak accident. Some people were afraid to be contaminated with bad omens from her family, so they never visited her house. All her neighbors moved their houses to live in another village

cluster. Even her children were discriminated against. Other children would not play with her children. In the process, she got her houses demolished three times to remove the bad omen. However, some villagers held grudges against her. They asked her to demolish her house again and again because they felt that her family was not cleansed of the bad omen. Witnessing this hardship, her brother, who was a police officer in Pu Rang village, told the villagers with anger “How could you move away from my mother, my sister and my nephews?” After that, he asked her to follow him to live in Pu Rang village. She vowed to rebuild her life because she did not want to live in pain anymore. Similarly, **PT6** said when her mother passed away in 2009 the elders ordered her to performed rituals by offering a pair of chicken, a pair of pigs and buffaloes and burning all her mother’s belongings. She was fortunate that they allowed her to keep her house. After she had completed the rituals, she decided to change her religion from animism to Catholicism, so she does not have to perform the rituals again.

The families of Phnong civil servants tend to value hard work. At the same time, they have slowly reduced their belief in relying solely on the blessing of nature and spirits. Therefore, they developed different perceptions in explaining their economic condition and livelihood security. They abandoned most of the economic burdens of tradition to reduce unnecessary expenditures. For instance, they halted traditional rice farming to avoid the expenditure on rituals. Some even avoid using traditional rice seed.³⁶ Instead, they became semi-involved in the market economy and mainstream jobs in addition to traditional farming. **PT7** stressed three reasons that make the Phnong poor and unable to improve their livelihood. Firstly, some Phnong are too lazy to produce materials and rely on buying from the market. Second, they do not have knowledge about modern farming. They still practice traditional farming that has low productivity. Finally, they do not know how to invest for the future.³⁷ **PT6** gave another insight into the mentality of

³⁶ They said they do not need to perform rituals if they use the rice seeds from the low land.

³⁷ All PT7 interview were conducted on September 22, 2014 in Pu Treng village

the families of Phnong civil servants. She said they had pains, and that was the reason they worked hard to improve their lives. She said she wanted to live a good life like the Khmer, so she followed their style and opened her own grocery store.

3.4. Education Level of the Families of Phnong Civil Servants

The education level of the Phnong families of civil servants is low compared to Khmer people. Most of them have primary school level or lower (See Table 30). They became civil servants when the country was at war and in need of people to work in a dangerous and remote place. In other words, they are the beneficiaries of the past regime. But what distinguished them from the traditional Phnong are the social experiences they have had through coordination with outsiders and adjusting to the mainstream society.

Table 30 Education Level of the Head Families of Civil Servants

	Families of Phnong civil servants in Pu Rang Village	Families of Phnong civil servants in Pu Treng village
Number of head families who completed grade 9 and over	4	1
Number of head families who have primary level or lower	8	8

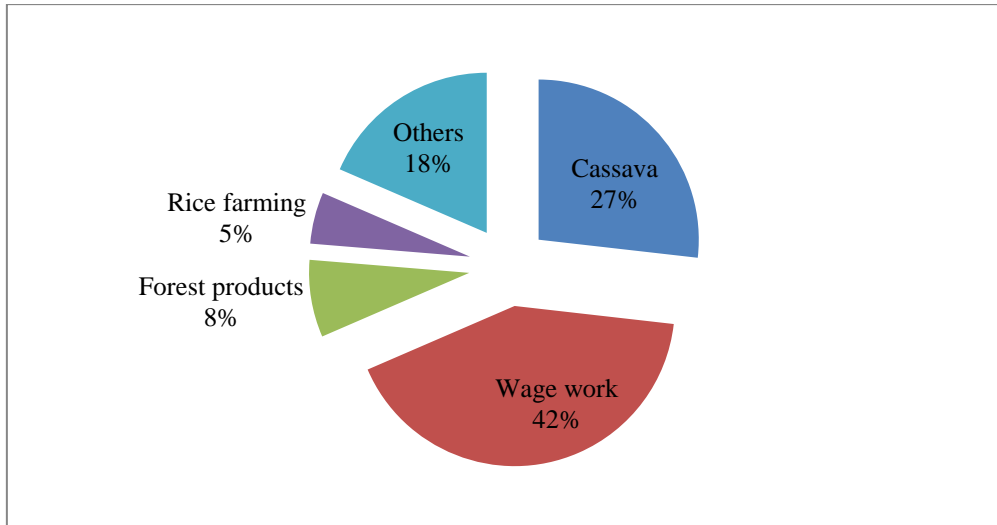
Source: Author, 2014

4. Orientation towards Semi-subsistence Livelihoods

4.1. Livelihood Activities and Cassava Farming

The families of Phnong civil servants engaged in diverse livelihood activities. Apart from traditional livelihoods such as rice farming and collecting forest products, they engage in cash crop farming and wage work. They mostly follow the livelihoods of the Khmer such civil servants, house construction, bike repair, grocery store, weaving, sewing, cashew nuts, selling cow dung, selling bananas and vegetables, among other activities. Some of these activities were introduced by NGOs.

Figure 12 Income Share of Livelihood Activities of the Families of Civil Servants, N=21



Source: Author, 2014

Cassava has gradually become one of their main sources of livelihood. The annual income share of cassava is 27% of household income (See Figure 12). The average cassava farmland of the families of civil servants was 0.9 hectares for 2013-2014 and 1 hectare in 2012-2013. Between 2012 and 2014, eight families farmed on new lands and 13 families farmed on old lands. The average shifting period is three years. The longest period before they shift the farm can be six years, according to one respondent. From the interviews, it was confirmed that cassava has helped them to reduce hunger. Besides, most families in both villages confirmed that the income from cassava has helped in reducing hunger considerably.

Nevertheless, cassava is mostly conducted for self-sufficiency rather than for trade. Most of them said they do not plan to expand their farmland. They preferred to be involved in semi-subsistence livelihoods rather than becoming entrepreneurs. It is worth mentioning that entrepreneurs are considered wealthy people. Engaging in entrepreneurship means that they are at risk of losing mutual support from the community. Hence, although some families of Phnong civil servants are capable of becoming entrepreneurs, they prefer not to do it. They would pay for labor if it is necessary; otherwise, they preferred to conduct crop- and labor-sharing.

4.2. Annual Household Income and the Share of Income from Cassava

I used Dak Dam commune data in 2012 as a benchmark for the annual income and cassava production of the families of civil servants in each village.³⁸ According to the data, the average household income in Dak Dam commune is 1,578 USD. The income from cassava is 361 USD, 22.9% of the household income (So, Hak, Oeur, & McAndrew, 2012, pp. 11-13).

In this research, the 2014 household income per family in Pu Rang village was 1,418.6 USD. The low household income is not a surprise because they do not conduct rice farming or generate much income from forest products due to their historic and geographical location. The annual household income share from cassava is 34.7%. The high share of cassava shows that the families of civil servants in Pu Rang village rely mostly on cassava for social security. The average cassava production is approximately 3.1 tonnes, and the income value is 503.8 USD.

The 2014 household income per family in Pu Treng village was 1,672.5 USD. The annual household income share of cassava in Pu Treng village is 23.6%. The average cassava production is approximately 2.1 tonnes and average income value is 341.3 USD. From the share of cassava, it shows that the families rely on cassava, but they are not as reliant as the families in Pu Rang village. Also, they can accumulate income from traditional rice farming.

It can be confirmed that the families of civil servants in Pu Treng and Pu Rang village have produced more cassava than the Dak Dam commune's average in 2012. The families of civil servants as a group produced an average dried cassava crop of around 2.6 tonnes, with a cash value of 422.5 USD. The annual household income share of cassava is 26.8%. However, if we look only at the annual household income in 2014, the annual income is 1,538.8 USD, which is slightly lower than Dak Dam commune's average household income in 2012. Based on their accounts, crop loss, soil loss and price reduction are factors for the decrease of income.

³⁸ Pu Rang village is located in Sen Monorom commune, but I do not have sufficient data for the average household income. Hence, I decided to use only Dak Dam commune data in 2012 as a benchmark.

5. Household Income and Expenditure of the Twelve Key Families

5.1. Household Income

From this section onwards, twelve key informants of the 21 families of civil servants were selected to reveal their livelihood strategies. I selected them because I have comprehensive information about their income and expenditure and the details of their livelihood experiences. Also, I have access to their children who are working or studying outside the villages.

According to the twelve key families in both villages, the average cash value of cassava per household is 496.3 USD, which represents 36% of the average annual household income. Comparing this finding to the Dak Dam commune data, cassava production by the families of the Phnong civil servants as a group is higher than the commune average of 361 USD.

The combined annual household income of the twelve key families in 2014 was 1,612 USD. It showed that the annual household income remains lower than the 2011 country average of 2,631 USD (Tong, Lun, Sry, & Pon, 2013, p. 3). However, dividing income into low, average and high incomes reveals that there are Phnong families that almost fall within the country average (See Table 31). Furthermore, by dividing income into three sections, it helps to reveal diverse livelihood experiences and differences among the families of Phnong civil servants.

Table 31 Household Income of Key Families in 2014, N12

Income of low income families	Income of average income families	Income of high income families
PT18=820 USD PR10=479 USD PR2=529.3 USD	PT12=1,476 USD PR1=1,316.3 USD PR20=1,400 USD PR16=1,558 USD	PT1=2,153 USD PT6=2,588.5 USD PT7=2,177.8 USD PR3=2,593 USD PR12=2,254 USD

Note: Commune data are from So et al., 2012, pp.11-13. Country data are from MOP, 2012 as cited in Tong et al., 2013, p. 3

Source: Author, 2014

5.2. Annual Household Expenditure and Concerns

5.2.1. Annual Household Expenditure

According to a calculation by Thath (2015), the 2009 annual consumption items in the plateau and mountain amounted to 2,901.3 USD. Food consumption constituted 67.4% of the consumption items and was worth 1,955.7 USD (Thath, 2015, p. 115). However, the data has a mixture of ethnicities and cannot be used for the Phnong case. It is expected that the annual household consumption of the families of Phnong civil servants would be lower than the national average.

From my fieldwork, I was able to calculate the main expenditure of the twelve key civil servant families (excluding education and health expenditure). It was found that their annual household expenditure in 2013 was around 1,535 USD, of which around 70% was spent on food consumption. Rice consumption occupied 55% of the food consumption expenditure. It can be said that the key families consume mostly rice and spend less on non-food consumption items.

5.2.2. Model Family Expenditure Explanation

To provide a picture of the Phnong household expenditure, I created a household model based on one key respondent's accounts that I thought represented the picture of civil servant families expenditure in both villages. The family spent around 600 USD for an average of 1,200 kg of annual rice consumption, 50 USD of food collected from the forest, 150 USD for fish and meats, and 90 USD for snacks. The annual non-food consumption is 95 USD for electricity and 180 USD for gasoline. The medical care consumption is not included in the non-food consumption because they said NGOs paid for them. Similarly, the research assumes that education expenditure is deducted from selling buffaloes, so it is not included in the consumption items. In total, the annual consumption items amount to around 1,165 USD. Food consumption cost 890 USD, 76.4% of the consumption item. The share of rice consumption is 67.4% of food

consumption. Considering that the families generated an average annual income of 1,612 USD in both villages, it seems that the average families can barely save any money. The family that faces problems will find extra work, and spend and eat less to reduce expenditure. It is worth mentioning that the research did not include salary and income from cows or buffaloes because they treat these animals as cultural items. The cows and buffaloes act as savings items and are sold when they are in need of quick cash or to pay for education.

The data showed that, in general, the families of Phnong civil servants might be able to reduce insecurities and generate some savings. However, I am aware of the facts that the findings can be overstated in the sense that there are also families of the civil servants that struggle to make a living. For example, there is one family that is too dependent on cash crops. In addition, salary makes up to 60% of the share of income. They have to spend as little as possible, especially the money they earned from selling cassava. Because of dependency on cash crops and lack of social security, the family is thinking of selling their ancestral lands for self-insurance. There is also another family of Phnong civil servants which shares similar poor conditions. The differences among the families of Phnong civil servants and their livelihood strategies to obtain security will be explained in the next section.

6. Differences among the Key Families

6.1.The High Income Group

6.1.1. Improving Life by Observing the Khmer

PT6 is a civil servant in Pu Treng village. She wanted to become a civil servant because it was her dream to follow the Khmer's successful route. She recalled asking her mother to allow her to go to school and finally obtaining a job. She is a well-known person in the community and has good connections with development agencies that come to conduct surveys or projects in her village. Sometimes, she provides food and a place to stay for the staff from NGOs. Unlike other

Phnong, she preferred to take a job other than farming that can generate daily income. In 2013, she successfully opened a grocery store with the help of 500 USD borrowed from a Khmer merchant. It was a big risk, but she was fortunate that she was able to pay the money back within a week because there was no competition in her village. At that time, she could make approximately 100 USD a day. Now she makes approximately 25 USD a day. She said she learned to run a grocery store by observing the Khmer and sought advice from her relatives and Khmer merchants who came to buy her herbs. She was pleased to realize the dream of owning a business like the Khmer and wants her child to continue her business in the future. Apart from owning the grocery store, she also makes money by providing homestays for foreign tourists. She recently hosted an Australian man who was introduced to her by an NGO staff member who is a customer of her grocery store. The Australian man wanted to experience Phnong culture, so she cooked him traditional foods and took him to see her farm. Notably, she used to follow animism but converted to Catholicism. She said that converting to Catholicism helped her reduce unnecessary expenditures on rituals and helped her stay focused on improving her life. She became very busy with her work and grocery store, so sometimes she hired labor to farm or harvest her crops. She also hires labor when she wants to clear new land for rice farming.

6.1.2. Multiple Jobs

PR3 from Pu Rang is engaged in multiple jobs to generate income. She and her husband are both civil servants. She is a district police officer, and her husband is a border patrol officer. She recalled that before the national election in 1993, the village had to recruit civil servants with minimum educational requirements. Thus, they are considered beneficiaries of the past regime because they do not have high education levels. In the early 2000s, she received some cassava root from her relatives in the Keo Seima area, and she began farming it. Her husband regularly goes into the forest and brings back forest products. With the cash income from cassava and her

salary, she was able to rebuild her house in 2005 and support her children's education. Her annual household income is approximately 2,593 USD, which is the highest among all respondents. Few families in her village own electric generators but she owns one for pumping water in the dry season and generating electricity at night. Although she can generate a stable income from cash crops, she said the money from cash crops would be gone if they became seriously ill. In 2012, she had to go to Vietnam for medical treatment and spent approximately 500 USD just to cover the bill.

Although she can generate cash income for self-reliance, she tries to balance relationships with community members. For example, when her relatives and neighbors came to ask for cassava roots, she did not charge them money because she knew that one day she would rely on them for help. She was correct. After three years, she lost the roots to pest infestation, and she went to ask for the roots back from her relatives, demonstrating that it is important to balance social relationships within their ethnic group for social security.

6.1.3. Investing in Education

PT7 is a civil servant and is also a Catholic Church leader, in addition to proclaiming to be a farmer. In the 1970s, he and his relatives fled to Vietnam to avoid the civil war. In Vietnam, he was supported by the Catholic Church and his distant relatives. He returned to the village in the mid-1980s. When he returned, he engaged in traditional farming on his ancestral lands. In the early 2000s, he began to farm cassava and other marketable vegetables when NGOs began to promote cash crops in the village. At that time, he was selected as one of the key participants. He said cash crops and livelihood activities, such as fruit trees and fish farming, have helped him to reduce livelihood insecurity. With the additional income from his wife, who is a traditional weaving instructor, he has generated some savings. He said she can sell approximately 5 to 10 pieces a month. His annual household income is approximately 2,177.8 USD. With the savings,

he could educate his children despite the lack of a school in the village. With help from the Catholic Church, he might also be able to secure higher education in the city for his children. In addition, he could spend money on leisure activities, something his parents never experienced. He had his house equipped with cable TV for 250 USD, for which he typically spends approximately 10 USD per month in electricity.

6.2.The Average Income

6.2.1. Overcoming Constraints

PR1 is a widow. Her husband passed away 15 years ago after she gave birth to her fourth child. She said she obtained cassava roots from her relatives for trial farming. Later, she bought more cassava roots from the market to expand the farm. She said she is fortunate that her farm is not far from the village, so she does not have to bring her dried cassava to the village. The middlemen will come to pick up the dried cassava directly from her farm. In addition, to maintain livelihood security, she also engages in various livelihood activities ranging from working on a plantation, selling cow dung, sewing old clothes and traveling to Vietnam. Most Phnong raise chicken and pigs, but she thought that ducks were easier to take care of. She said that as long as they were given water, they would not wander far from the house and will not be stolen. She used to have ten ducks but six died. She would eat them when she had nothing else to eat. She said she bought the ducks from a merchant who brought them from Vietnam. She also has a vegetable garden on her farm from which she can sell vegetables in the market. Her annual household income is approximately 1,316.3 USD, which is not high by any means, but by engaging in various livelihood activities and spending as little as possible, she has reduced her livelihood insecurities. With small savings, she was able to afford to send her daughter to school. Now, her daughter is a primary school teacher, and she sends remittances to support the family.

In the process, PR1 maintains good relations with her relatives for mutual help. She tends to give gifts to her relatives to maintain those good relations. She also travels to visit her relatives in Vietnam once or twice annually. If her relatives need someone to help with the harvest or when her relatives have important ceremonies or are sick, she will travel there more often than usual. She mostly visits the relatives of her parents. She has approximately six families of relatives who are living in Vietnam. Sometimes she also visits relatives of her deceased husband. When she must return home, most of her relatives give her food and a gifts of 100,000-200,000 Dong (approximately 5-10 USD), whereas her wealthy relatives tend to give approximately 300,000-400,000 Dong (approximately 15-20 USD) for transportation expenses and for helping with the harvest. When she returns home, she brings new clothes, shoes, corn, and sardines that she bought with the cash she received from her relatives.

6.2.2. Those Who Struggle

There are a few families of Phnong civil servants who cannot take advantage of the economic opportunities. They said their life is becoming more difficult. Instead, some intend to sell their ancestral lands after government Directive 01 was issued to register private land ownership in late 2012.³⁹ Problems with their livelihoods have led some villagers to leave their communal land and this has caused arguments among the community members.

PR16 lives in Pu Rang village. She has three children. She is working for the district office for women's affairs. Her father used to be the district chief and governed the community until the mid-2000. She lives with two other families under the same roof. Her sister just married and moved in with her husband. Apart from her main job, PR 16 also engages in traditional farming and cassava farming. She began farming cassava which she obtained from her relatives in 2004. She saw others do well, so she decided to grow cassava also. In 2013, she obtained four tonnes

³⁹ Directive 01 is an order involving strengthening the effectiveness of economic land concession management.

because she had time to clear and expand the farmland. In 2014, she obtained only two tonnes because she became busy. At the time, she had to work and take care of her small children. She said it was hard to support a large family. Her mother could only take care of the buffaloes because she was aging. Adding to the hardship, her rice crop was destroyed last year by a pest infestation, and she now does not want to waste time farming rice anymore. Her husband is a farmer. To support the family, he engages in wage labor and also goes into the forest. He regularly kills a deer once a month and also brings home forest vegetables. However, she is worried that her livelihood will not be sustainable over the long run.

In general, large families produce more through rice and cassava farming.⁴⁰ However, because such production is not much different from that of small families, small families can produce more as measured on a per-person basis and more easily cover their daily consumption. Therefore, those from large families cannot earn much compared to those from small families. Notably, if large families engage in crop- and labor-sharing as a form of mutual support, they are less vulnerable than small families, who mostly rely on self-insurance, such as the families in Pu Treng village. However, there is another exception. If large families include many young children and old people, they are more vulnerable than small families which include only two adult parents and children. For example, in the case of **PR16**'s family, they had many children and old people, which made her more vulnerable than other large families.

Apart from their livelihoods, the communal land registration has caused conflict among those who want to stay and those who want to leave the community. **PR16** recalled the time the communal representatives came to her house and cursed her family because she did not want to join the communal land ownership. Some neighbors still talk behind her back. Those who threaten her family are the group that has close relations with the communal representatives. The

⁴⁰ I refer to families that have more than six family members.

reason she did not want to join the communal land registration is that she has a large family and she therefore sometimes needs quick money. She could not rely on her relatives who are also in difficult circumstances. If she owned private land, she could borrow money easily from the bank. If she joined the community, she could not borrow money from the bank. Hence, they hold a grudge against her. They threatened her that if she would not join the community, they would not let her farm on her ancestral lands anymore. She said she could ask for money from the community, but it is difficult because she would need to obtain permission from all its members. If she keeps waiting, her family will have nothing to eat. In addition, she is worried that the communal land registration is taking too long and exposes her ancestral land to opportunists.⁴¹ If she obtains private land ownership, she can keep it for her children and obtain a loan.⁴²

PR11 (not included in Table 31) is vulnerable and struggling to survive because she is old. She has only an adopted child, but they do not have strong relationship. She does not have many relatives in the village. She said she is not smart, and that is why she does not have many networks and is unable to improve her life. Without enough labor, she abandoned farming cassava two years ago because she could not carry out the task alone. Now she relies on traditional mixed crop farming and a small vegetable garden. She relies solely on her husband, who is a border patrol officer who occasionally comes to check the farm. Although her husband is a civil servant, he is almost in his fifties. Without a child and relatives to help them, their future is rather grim.

6.3.The Low Income

6.3.1. Spending as Little As Possible and Sharing Tasks

PR2 is a widow. Her husband was a civil servant in a provincial town. After he passed away during a mission in the early 2000s, she returned to live with her parents and sisters under one

⁴¹ The Phnong cut the tree in half and used it as a sign to differentiate the landowners.

⁴² All PR16 interview were conducted on September 19, 2014 in Pu Rang village

roof in Pu Rang village. There are three families in her house, including her old mother and her sister's family. It is common in the Phnong culture to house a vulnerable family member.

At the moment, her annual household income is only approximately 529.3 USD. To reduce her expenditures, she ate more wild fruits and vegetables with fermented fish than rice. Fortunately, her family practices produce sharing. This allowed her to reduce her livelihood insecurities. For example, when she faced crop damage, she could rely on other family members, who may have had a surplus. Therefore, she said that she would not have been able to survive without the help from her family and relatives. Wage work is another option to generate cash income, the type of work performed mainly by women after they finished farming. She said she first engaged in wage work in 2006-2007. Her job was to plant pine trees. She was also involved in harvesting cashew nuts, for which she was paid daily. She would go to work with her two teenage children when she was free. Sometimes the farm owners called her, and sometimes she asked them when she needed money. With the addition of cassava in 2006, she was able to enhance her livelihood security and even send her children to school with partial help from donors and NGOs. Currently, one of her children has just become a primary school teacher.

Notably, at one stage of her life, she wanted to borrow money from a micro-finance institution to expand her farming. However, she was aware of the risk. She saw that some Phnong families became indebted after they borrowed money from a micro-finance institution to farm cassava. When their crops were damaged, they could not pay back the money on time. Some families did not see profits after they paid back the money they had borrowed. Therefore, it was a waste of time and effort and risky to borrow money to expand their farming.

6.3.2. Returning to Traditional and Mutual Help

Like other low-income Phnong families, **PR10** must rely on her relatives and has returned to traditional farming to avoid the risk associated with the market economy. She said she tried to

grow paddy rice like other villagers in the early 2000s after she obtained seeds from NGOs. In the beginning, the harvest was good with little pest infestation. However, her paddy rice was damaged by pest infestation in 2011. It was the first time she lost all her rice seeds. Later, she was fortunate that her brother gave her traditional seeds to continue farming. The seeds are believed to be resistant to climate change. She has been using traditional seeds for the past three years, and she does not think she will change that anytime soon. In addition, she relied on labor sharing to harvest cassava. She and her neighbors take turns harvesting cassava when there is a lack of labor.⁴³

Therefore, the low income families can be flexible when they face constraints. When they face problems, they rely on traditional practices for mutual help. In the process, they go find extra work, spend and eat less to reduce expenditure.

7. Orientation towards Mutual Support

Apart from the orientation towards self-insurance, the families of civil servants maintain mutual support for social security when they need help. They still hold values about group collaboration, consensus, group duties and assisting their vulnerable and old family members. They try to balance the social relations among the community members and relatives by involving in mutual help activities such as labor sharing, crop-sharing and lending, and information sharing. They know that one day they will need to rely on mutual support. They are aware that involvement in the economic market helps them to reduce insecurities; however, at the same time, it is unstable and risky. Below are examples of how they balance social relations through mutual help to reduce shocks and stress, and reduce expenditures.

⁴³ All PR10 interview were conducted September 16, 2014 in Pu Rang village

7.1. Trying to Balancing Social Relations

The Phnong know that they can depend on their relatives more than outsiders. Their everyday goal is to maintain these social relations in the community and outside their community as much as possible. Looking at the projection of their livelihoods, it shows that they try to balance their relations amidst the encroachment of the market economy and lack of social security.

Taking **PR1**'s case as an example, she learned that livelihood improvement that exceeds others may lead to arguments and jealousy, and it taught her to balance the social relations with the community members. **PR1** raises animals and occasionally sells them to sustain her family. She can sell one adult pig for 500,000 Riels (appx.125 USD), and she can also sell the baby pigs. However, her progress has caused some discontent among other villagers. She recalled the time when a donor came to register her son for a scholarship in 2007; some villagers got jealous of her. They asked why she got helped when she had many animals. They neglected the fact that these animals are mostly the inheritance from her late husband. Upon hearing the accusation, she was hurt. Nevertheless, she tried her best to maintain social relations with her relatives and villagers because she is a newcomer to the village. She tends to give other community members a gift or help whenever she can.

Another example is when cassava farming was initially brought to Pu Rang village around 2004-2005, only a few Phnong had the roots for farming. Those who succeeded in farming became the target of observation from other villagers, who asked them for some roots. **PR3** said that her relatives and neighbors came to ask for cassava roots after seeing her success. She did not charge them money because she knew that one day she would rely on them for help. She was correct. After three years, she lost the roots for farming from pests, and she went to ask for the

roots back from her relatives. Hence, maintaining strong networks by helping each other ensures crop security.

Furthermore, they need to be aware of joining NGO projects or market activities that might cause discontent among the village members. **PR1** said that she had to balance between being involved in the market economy and the embedded ethnic social relations to avoid problems. She recalled the difficulty in selling vegetables in the village. Most people who come to buy her vegetables are relatives and neighbors, so she found it difficult to charge them. In some cases, her relatives promised to pay, but they never did. To maintain relations, sometimes she had to give the vegetables for free or sell at a cheaper price. Another alternative was she needed to find a market for her vegetables outside the village. If she grew traditional crops, she did not feel pressure because they would not ask her because they grew the same things. Although they tried to balance their social relations, it is not possible to avoid the differences between those who strive for modernity and those who remain traditional.

7.2.Maintaining Relations with Relatives in Other Areas (Domestic and Overseas)

Some of the families of Phnong civil servants said they are constantly looking for their relatives who were separated during the civil war in the 1970s. **PR19** in Pu Rang village keeps looking for his relatives who left during the war. He heard that one of his relatives went to live in America, but he does not know how to find him. **PR1** said she found her long-lost cousin five years ago after she got information from her relatives. He is living in Kompong Cham province. Because he has been living with the Khmer people, he cannot speak the Phnong language. To maintain their relations, she lends him a land for farming cassava free of charge. He tends to call her about whether the rain has started so he will commence farming cassava. In the process, she frequently informs him about the cassava price and the condition of the farm. Sometimes, when he is busy, she will help him with the harvest and share the cash income.

Further analysis found that seven respondents out of 11 who recently traveled to Vietnam are from the families of civil servants. It shows that the families of civil servants travel to Vietnam more than the families of non-civil servants. Based on the interviews, two families of civil servants from the Catholic Phnong travel more frequently to Vietnam for religious activities. Another Catholic Phnong traveled to buy products to sell in the village. One Phnong family traveled recently for medical treatment. The rest traveled to Vietnam for visiting and helping with cashew nut harvest. By traveling to Vietnam, the families of Phnong civil servants have been able to maintain their relations with their relatives in Vietnam. They also got some gifts and cash after they helped their relatives to harvest cashew nuts.

The Phnong maintain their social relations with the relatives in Vietnam. They mainly go to Vietnam during cashew nut harvest season. It is a very busy period with a need for labor. The act of traveling to Vietnam is to maintain their social relations as well as generating cash income from helping with the harvest. Those who travel to visit relatives in Vietnam tend to leave the village around 8:00 in the morning. They bring with them sarongs, scarves, *prohok* (fermented fish) and *kantel* (a kind of carpet) as gifts for their relatives. These items are difficult to find in Vietnam. To enter Vietnam, they need to bring with them an identification card. They travel in a group of two people to the Cambodian-Vietnamese border by bike, and each of them has to wear a helmet. They reach the border around 10 am. The border is in the Keo Seima District of Mondulkiri Province. When they arrive at the border checkpoint, they ask the border police for permission to visit relatives in Vietnam. They have to tell the length of their stays and the location. If they intend to stay for less than twenty-three days, they need to pay 5,000 Riels (a bit more than 1 USD) per person to the Khmer side and 500 Riels to the Vietnamese side. But if they intend to stay for a month, they need to pay an additional 10,000 Riels (around 2.5 USD). When they cross to Vietnam, their relatives will come to pick them up, or they have someone

lead them to their location. Most of the time, they will reach their location by around 4:00 pm. After they arrive at their location, they have to show the sealed border-crossing paper from the Cambodian and Vietnamese border authorities to the Vietnamese village authority. The village authority will come to collect it from them directly. Then they will give their relatives the items they brought from Cambodia. The gifts are a symbol of friendship among Phnong kin. In return, the relatives in Vietnam will cook chicken and prepare wine for them. While they are staying there, they will help their relatives in Vietnam to collect the cashew nuts from the early morning until the evening. When they return to Cambodia, their relatives in Vietnam tend to give them some money for helping with the harvest and some gifts such as clothes, drinks, and particularly rice. They perceive the money as a gift, not a wage.

7.3.Helping Taking Care of the Vulnerable

In both villages, the value of kinship remains relatively strong for some families. Those who are well-off will help those who are not. Taking house construction as an example, Phnong will help vulnerable family members such as the elderly and widows to build a house. Some families will build a new house next to their house for vulnerable members. In most cases, the family will bring in the vulnerable family member to live with them instead of building a new house. For them, no house is too small for family members. Besides, adding a member to the house means that there is an addition of labor and more productivity. The vulnerable member tends to own pieces of land and will share the products with the rest of the family members. In return, the family members will help the vulnerable or old members with clearing land and harvesting.

7.4.Behind the Decisions Not to Become an Entrepreneur

While the findings show that there are families who are oriented towards cash income for self-insurance, there is also a question as to why they have not become entrepreneurs yet. This

finding is similar to previous research in Dak Dam commune (McAndrew, Mam, Hong, & Ky, 2004, p. 10), although they do not explain the reason behind this phenomenon.

Culturally, the Phnong reassess their livelihood means and resources in the face of unstable conditions through coordination with other actors and their wide range of past experiences, such as historical repertoire and social differences. In most cases, their decisions rely on past experiences rather than a vision of the future. That is why they rely on observation and imitation of their relatives' experiences before deciding on livelihood activities. This way of making a decision is intended to reduce risk and cash use as much as possible. Regarding the absence of indigenous entrepreneurs, there are various possible explanations. First, in the Phnong world view, wealth is accumulated through the blessing of the spirits and nature. They are reluctant to have a plan or expectation because it is out of their hands. From their experiences with the market, they do not believe that intensive farming can help them to accumulate wealth unless they exploit the forest and sell lands. Also, those who work hard in farming do not believe that they can compete with Khmer people. Another reason is they are afraid that they will become indebted or be cheated. For instance, **PR2** used to borrow 100,000 Riels (25 USD) from a micro-financial institution to farm cassava. Unfortunately, she was faced with crop damage. After she had paid back the loan, which was around one ton of cassava, she did not have much left, so she did not want to borrow money anymore from the micro-financial institution.

There is one more crucial reason that is associated with the role of mutual support. Becoming an entrepreneur is considered as distancing themselves from the community. Hence, it is worth noting that indigenous entrepreneurs do not simply emerge the way non-indigenous entrepreneurs do when opportunities come. By engaging in semi-subsistence livelihoods, it allows them to sustain their day-to-day existence and gain extra cash, and sometimes helps

maintain their communal bond for mutual support. Therefore, the Phnong know their limitations and do not want to take a risk and lose the social relations in the community.

One study stated that rural people should engage in crop maximization instead of low-risk but low-return crops (Devereux, 2001, pp. 511-512), and the findings show that at the moment, to avoid risk and maintain mutual support, the Phnong do not risk to invest in crop maximization.

7.5. Networks: Who Benefits the Most from Mutual Support?

In this section, I will show the networks that each family of Phnong families of civil servants has, and whom they can access for mutual help. It is intended to reveal who benefits more from access to many networks.

I used information of their status, the number of years of residence in the village, and their social interactions to form a table of the role of networks (See Table 32). Data from both villages showed that most of them are not the original villagers. Six out of nine families of civil servants moved to Pu Treng village from other areas. In Pu Rang village, eight out of twelve families of civil servants moved from other areas. Thus, most of them have relatives in other areas such as in other districts, provinces and Vietnam. In addition, interactions with state agencies and NGOs also allow them to access vital information and opportunities to obtain social security.

For instance, **PT12** is from the average income group, but she is fortunate to have strong networks. Access to networks helped her to reduce insecurities. She said her brother, who is a civil servant, helps her family with farming. He is living in the provincial town and working for the provincial department of agriculture, but he regularly contacts them. Her farmland is around 30 minutes by motorbike, but it is not easy to transport the product, so her brother lent her a car to transport the crops. This year, she got three tonnes because she grew on new land and sold for 700 Riels. Farming is easier when her brother lends her the car and the middlemen come directly to her house to pick up the product. She confirmed that, when in need, she will mostly ask

relatives for help before others.⁴⁴ This case showed how networks can help certain families who are struggling or trying to improve their lives.

Their networks are not limited to family and relatives. The families of Phnong civil servants have extensive networks among Khmer people, such as middlemen, NGO staff, and government officials. They described the Khmer middlemen who come to buy their cassava as good people. If they are not good people, they will not sell their product. From this statement, it can be implied that they maintain their networks with middlemen who they can trust. Whenever they have their dried cassava ready, they will contact Khmer middlemen to pick up the product. The families of primary school teachers have a good connection with teachers and school staffs. They have contact numbers of teachers in the teacher training college so they can ask about school information such as entrance examinations and scholarships. One teacher said she has a good relation with the Khmer school principal, so she could get permission to come to school late. Besides, the socioeconomics of families of civil servants is one of the factors in maintaining their network. They can afford to rent a motorbike and pay for the transportation fee to Vietnam to visit their relatives there to buy products to sell in the village. Religiously, the Catholic Phnong has access to the Catholic Church for support in education.

If the group is divided into three groups, high income, average income, and low income, it shows that those who benefit the most are from the high and low income groups (See Table 32) in terms of the proportion of help to their socioeconomic condition. Besides, most of them are from large families that have access to networks, assistance, and labor, and can rely on traditional practices.

⁴⁴ All PT12 interview were conducted on September 23, 2014 in Pu Treng village

Table 32 Networks of the Families of Civil Servants in Relation to Income Status, N12

Code	Age	Family size	Relations with NGOs	Numbers of relatives	Networks	Total scores	Checking their income status	Explanations
PT1	50	Large	High	Many	Strong	2.5	High income	Strong networks, large family, good lands
PT6	32	Small	High	Many	Strong	2	High income	Self-insurance, skill, networks, paid-farm
PT7	60	Large	High	Many	Strong	2.5	High income	Self-insurance, skill strong networks
PR12	44	Large	Strong	Many	Strong	2.5	High income	Self-insurance, skill, strong networks
PR3	41	Small	Low	Many	Normal	0	High income	Small family, lack of labor, paid-farm
PR1	49	Large	Strong	Many	Strong	2.5	Average income	Strong networks, large family, share tasks,
PT12	39	Large	High	Many	Strong	2.5	Average income	Reliance on wealthy relatives
PR20	69	Small	Medium	Average	Normal	0	Average income	Self-insurance, skill, good lands
PR16	33	Large	Medium	Few	Weak	-0.5	Average income	Weak networks, mostly self-insurance
PR2	40	Large	Medium	Many	Normal	1.5	Low income	Reliance on networks, eat less
PT18	24	Small	High	Many	Strong	2.5	Low income	Reliance heavily on networks
PR10	38	Small	Medium	Few	Weak	-1	Low income	Reliance on close relatives, eat less

Note 1: If the respondents meet with NGOs more than five times a month, it is considered as strong, at least once a month is considered as medium and rarely is considered as low.

Note 2: The score of 1 will be given to families that have strong relations with NGOs and access to many relatives. The score of 0 will be given to families that have medium relations with NGOs and average-degree of access to relatives. The score of -1 will be given to the families that have low relations with NGOs and few accesses to relatives. More than 2 is considered as Strong, between 0-2 is considered as Normal and lower than 0 is considered as Weak.

Note 3: The score of +0.5 will be given to families that have a big family size and 0 will be given to families with a small family size.

Note 4: Having weak network strength means that the families have less access to networks but it does not mean that families with weak networks could not rely on mutual help from their relatives. It is only an indication that some families have more advantage than others.

Source: created by Author, 2014

From Table 32, the high income group is involved in self-insurance most of the time, but they maintain social relations by contributing to the community through labor sharing and giving crops. When they are looking for a hand for help, they will reach out to relatives and networks. With many relatives and access to networks, they have more time to get involved in business or wage work activities, while their relatives will replace them for labor. They will repay by giving a portion of crops or pay in cash or labor if necessary. Hence, they benefit the most from this form of security compared to their family socioeconomic condition. For small families, sometimes they hire the villagers to farm or harvest their crops because they are busy with other livelihood activities. Therefore, they have the ability to spend on labor and invest in small businesses such as grocery stores and bike repair stalls.

The low income group plays the role of mutual help every day because they will not survive alone. Most low-income families live together to reduce risk as well as access to labor. They need to depend on relatives in other areas who produce a surplus of crops or relatives who can provide labor. In return, they will provide labor for constructing houses, cutting wood, clearing land, and a bit of everything that is not paid for by cash. As seen in Table 32, **PR10** cannot rely on many networks, except very close relatives. She has to reduce expenditures and get involved in extra activities as much as possible.

The average income group tries to balance social relations, and some families even travel abroad to maintain social relations with their kin. However, there are families that have little access to networks and relatives in other areas. They are also preoccupied with livelihood activities. In most cases, their goal is to look for cash to reduce insecurities. Mutual help without cash was not welcome nowadays unless they have other things in exchange. A normal price for one-day land clearance or harvest is around 5 USD. The price is set and well-known in the community. If they are not busy, they might help with labor. However, if they are busy, they

want to get paid for working. In most cases, they get paid by the wealthy Khmer or wealthy Phnong families during the farming and harvest season. This is a sign of the crumbling of their mutual help, as families become individualistic.

What is the consequence of more or less access to the social security of mutual help? The high-income families are likely to access more resources and information because they can access relatives and networks. Then they will reproduce and consolidate social security. Some even said they invest in their children's education. Hence, they are likely to maintain this status quo. The low-income families have fewer options, so they will rely on mutual support as much as possible. They will get involved in mutual help, such as labor and crop sharing, in exchange for help and food from the relatives who produce a surplus. On the other hand, some average-income families that are struggling and have little access to networks will need to apply individual strategies to reduce insecurity, such as looking for work and even selling ancestral lands. However, this strategy is only a short-term strategy to compensate for the loss of crops.

8. Discussions

8.1. Various Livelihood Strategies of Families of Phnong Civil Servants

The low-income families of Phnong civil servants can reduce livelihood insecurities through systems including mutual help with close kin, such as traditional practices and being involved in off-farm activities. Characteristically, they are either from large families that have many members living under the same roof and practice crop- and labor-sharing, or small families that have connections to families that can produce crop surpluses. They tend to stick together and maintain traditional livelihood activities for social security.

The middle-income families of Phnong civil servants are involved with both traditional livelihoods and the market to generate cash income. Some families are more capable of accessing resources and traveling, and some are less. For example, the family of **PR16** in Pu

Rang barely manages to make ends meet because there are many family members, and she does not have good relations with the community members for mutual support. She was thinking of selling her ancestral lands for short-term security. However, **PR1** has learned how to maintain relations with community members. To maintain the relations, she must give them products for free or sell to them at cheaper prices. It is not possible to sustain their livelihoods just through self-insurance. When circumstances spiral out of their control, they need mutual support that allows them to overcome shock and stress. Hence, they are aware of exposing themselves to risk from the loss of their traditional social security. The middle-income families occasionally travel outside their villages; however, contrary to the high-income families, their decision to travel is not from their own will. Generally, they are invited to go help with the harvest.

The high-income families of Phnong civil servants engage in both cash crop farming and wage work. They still rely on forest products for daily consumption; however, because they become busy with work and farming, they do not go to the forest as often as before. Instead, they prefer to purchase food from the market. Another feature of the high-income families is they can afford to invest and expand their farming. They have consolidated their livelihoods by maintaining production by investing in labor hiring and through their access to buyers and middlemen. Besides, they have more access to networks and information. They also have the resources and mutual support to back them up when they face crop damage. In addition to access to resource and networks, they are more capable of traveling outside the village, which contributes to their livelihood diversification. Some families travel to Vietnam for religious purposes and some travel to buy products to sell in the village. In terms of expenditures, they are more capable of spending on commodities and leisure. Furthermore, they are more likely to send their children to study for higher education. Therefore, they are capable of investing, consolidating and compensating for losses with strong and extended networks.

8.2. The Imbalance of Mutual Support

Within the same socio-structural context, some families perform better than others. At one stage, conditioned by structural factors such as family size, climate and pests have led to the differences even though they want to replicate successful livelihood patterns. The access to networks for mutual support also contributes to the differences. High-income families have more access to local support networks than some average and low-income families because they are capable of reaching networks and traveling. The case is what Nooteboom called the paradox of local social security, because it appears to benefit rich villagers more than poor villagers (Nooteboom, 2014, p. 289). The rich families have access to many networks, which helps them obtain more labor help and accumulate more gifts during weddings and rituals. In this research, the high-income villagers said they still maintained mutual support in the form of labor- and crop-sharing. Their neighbors help them with labor when they are busy with other business and wage work. Also, they can pay for labor if necessary. On the other hand, the poor villagers have smaller networks and cannot access much help. In this research, there are a few low-income families which can still depend on their relatives for mutual help, but their time seems to be running out. Some families are already struggling to survive and cannot rely on relatives who are also poor. Thus, they must pay attention to their livelihoods rather than concentrating on reciprocal activities in the community. Consequently, they are excluded from the wider community because they are considered not to have the time or the means to contribute. In this research, the family of **PR16** has been excluded from the community because they did not participate in communal land ownership. Therefore, those who struggle must rely on their inventive individual strategies, such as selling their ancestral land to reduce livelihood insecurities, traveling outside of the area, or attempting to acquire an education for job opportunities. As Nooteboom said, they must rely on their own devices, relations, and

inventiveness (Nooteboom, 2014, p. 293). However, those who struggle may apply individual strategies that work only temporarily, such as selling ancestral lands and depending solely on cash crops and isolating themselves from the community.

Therefore, local social security is seldom beneficial to those who struggle and have smaller networks. This case is similar to research in a nearby province where the social differences are conditioned by the access to land and labor. According to Gironde and Peeters (2015), land acquisitions have led to social differentiation among indigenous populations in Ratanakiri province. They said IP families that had enough labor could clear new land to compensate for land loss and sell the wood to generate income that would be used to hire labor for more land clearance. On the other hand, some families that do not have enough labor could only clear less land or took a long time to clear land (Gironde & Peeters, 2015, p. 13). In this sense, small families that have less labor are vulnerable, especially when they do not have a strong mutual support and networks. Also, from this discussion, when poverty strikes a certain type of family, the family is not likely to be able to rely on local social security alone.

8.3.The Remaining Phnong Community Support System

Before discussing the Phnong community support system, I would like to explain two types of this system. Vertical and horizontal redistribution are the community support systems that were found in studies in Malawi and sub-Saharan Africa (Devereux, 1999). The traditional practices of vertical redistribution (transfers from wealthier ‘patrons’ to poorer ‘clients’) are rapidly vanishing due to commercialization. On the other hand, the practices of horizontal redistribution (transfers between people of similar economic and social status) persist across community, but susceptible to vulnerabilities, such as drought that reduces food production surplus (Devereux, 2001, p. 513).

In this research, support from a wealthy family to a poor family or vertical redistribution is conducted mostly between close relatives. This finding is similar to Pawde's research on the Jarai people in Ratanakiri province (Padwe, 2011). He said wealthy Jarai farmers tend to hire laborers to do the work, mainly from other villagers (p.132). However, he did not elaborate further the reason they hired laborers from other villages. This research found that the wealthy Phnong families have relatives in other villages. Whenever they need help for the harvest or farming, they will contact their relatives. On the other hand, most average and low-income families testified that they tend to ask for support in a horizontal redistribution pattern, where families with similar socioeconomic status share help, such as through crops, labor, and needs. It is obvious that families with similar socioeconomic status are more open to each other and aware of each family's harvest. Horizontal redistribution has been conducted efficiently among the poor and average Phnong families because the reciprocal activities do not require much cash. In the horizontal redistribution, they are aware of each other's situation, and it is impossible to hide about their harvest. Families that have a good harvest need to pay back the crops they borrowed when the owner of the crops demands it. Normally, the owner will demand the crops when his or her own harvest is not good. It is obvious that the owner of the crops tends to observe the family that borrowed the crops. However, this horizontal redistribution is not without problems. Those poor families may be able to exchange labor or crops with each other, but it will not work when both families cannot reciprocate. Besides, this redistribution does not work when they are in need of quick cash. Hence, when poor families need cash, they need to work for the wealthy families or some families resolved to sell their lands. Some families even travel to Vietnam to visit their wealthy relatives, work and get some cash or food back. Vertical distribution is not uncommon in the Phnong culture. Wealthy families may help poor families to overcome

problems, and it will also act as a social security in the future. However, commercialization may change the practice into an employer-employee relationship.

8.4. Linking Strategic Behavior to Sociopolitical Transformation

Their strategic behavior and attitude towards obtaining social security cannot be separated from their institutional and societal contexts. Through development discourse, the families of Phnong civil servants have developed an economic explanation for the reasons why they are poor and set a goal to be modern. They have locally-organized forms of social security to adjust to the sociopolitical transformations in the country. The families of Phnong civil servants are mostly the beneficiaries of past regimes. Their livelihood experiences taught them to access resources, networks and information to obtain livelihood security. According to their accounts, they were the first to access cassava roots from the state and development agencies. In the early 2000s, they began to adopt cash crops because they faced frequent pest infestations and the loss of forestland to the ELC. They strove to maximize their income to reduce livelihood insecurities. Some families became more individually oriented; however, they still maintain social relations in case they require mutual help. They are also oriented toward education because they see it as a means of obtaining a job and future security. When the state and development agencies began to promote education and revise policies to recruit trainee teachers in mid-2000 (Phin, 2014), the families of the Phnong civil servants were the first to exploit this opportunity. However, there were a few families who could not generate benefits from their economic opportunities. Instead, they have considered selling their ancestral lands after the government issued Directive 01 in 2012, which allows them to register private land ownership (Milne, 2013). Without strong mutual support, these families have no choice but to rely on selling their lands to reduce livelihood insecurities. The problems with community members over private land ownership also contributed to the failure of the community bond. Eventually, some of them abandoned the

notion of communal land ownership in the hope of secure land ownership and access to loans for self-insurance. In this case, the state's policy and the problem with ELC have contributed to this risky strategic behavior and have harmed these families.

9. Conclusions

The research revealed that the families of Phnong civil servants are oriented towards semi-subsistence livelihoods and self-insurance. In addition, when they are in need of help, they turn to mutual support for social security. To keep this relationship and practice, they will help their relatives who are in need. Also, mutual support among close relatives can also be beneficial to access information that is useful for generating cash income and access to education. The research also revealed that through development discourse, they took advantage of the opportunities amidst Cambodia's socio-political transformations. They engaged in cash crop farming and wage work to reduce insecurity. Young Phnong became more involved in cash-generating activities such as house construction and bike repair. Older Phnong engaged in a specific income-generating activity rather than multiple livelihood activities. They agreed that the income from cassava and wage work had helped reduce hunger considerably.

Although the families of Phnong civil servants are oriented towards self-insurance and mutual support, the degree of orientation varies depending on the family. Some families are more oriented towards self-insurance and take charge of their life by engaging in various forms of livelihoods. Regarding the mutual support, it seems to benefit the high-income group more than those with average income because they have more access to networks and relatives. These families can accumulate more wealth and can invest in other things such as leisure, house repair and children's education. They will reproduce and consolidate the livelihoods that work for them. They even said they invest in their children's higher education for the future. On the other hand, some families did not adjust well due to various conditions in their cultural context and the

socio-political transformations. These families had to depart from the old form livelihoods that only work for certain individuals and groups. These families have few networks and may apply temporary but not long-term strategies to reduce insecurity, for example, selling lands and selling wood. Therefore, the families of Phnong civil servants have similar livelihood orientations; however, at one stage, conditioned by cultural and structural factors, some families do well, and some families do not do well and need to rely on other strategies. Some families also can afford to invest in higher education using their individual strategies. In the next Chapter, I will use the cases of Phnong youth to reveal their strategic behavior to acquire education and increase job prospects for the future.

Chapter Six: Pursuit of Education among the Families of Phnong Civil

Servants

1. Introduction

In Cambodia, nearly all indigenous females and over 80% of the males are illiterate (Thomas, 2002). The government saw the lack of infrastructure and high teacher-student ratio as the reasons for school dropout (Collins, 2008). In the early 2000s, the government established a policy to promote education in remote areas. Besides, the government eased the procedure for trainee teacher recruitment to support and train teachers from the remote areas. The new procedure saw the requirement for a primary school trainee teacher changed from 12+2 years to 9+2 years (Phin, 2014, p. 345). As a result, there were surges of indigenous applicants who hold a lower secondary degree or ninth grade to study at the provincial teacher training college. The interaction between IPs and development agencies that came to promote indigenous rights and environmental protection (Baird, 2011) has also created several reinforcing narratives, particularly the culture of silence (Smith, 2010, pp. 42-43). They were fed with a distinction between those who know and those who do not. Thus, they also wanted to become educated and get a job for the future. However, only a few Phnong succeeded in acquiring education and jobs in the mainstream society. They tend to encourage their family and relatives to follow in their successful footsteps.

From the above interpretations, through the internalized outsiders' views combined with their ideology, they have developed an explanation for the reasons why they are poor and set a goal to be modern through education (Porath, 2010, pp. 285-286). However, few livelihood studies were able to reveal the strategies to acquire education and employment, and how their strategies are linked to the wider transformations in Cambodia.

This chapter is an extension of Chapter Five in which I intend to reveal the orientation of the families of Phnong civil servants towards education and to show the individual families' strategies towards education and job acquisition. I revealed that they coordinate with many actors such as relatives, the state, donors and development agencies, and grounded by their historical repertoire and past experience, find a way to acquire higher education and employment.

2. Reasons the Phnong Did Not Perform Well

2.1. Stereotypes about Indigenous Education

Throughout history, the Cambodian education policy was to integrate IPs into mainstream society through education. However, there was no specific policy for IP education, nor there was culturally sensitive education. Thus, the integration process was not straightforward. The state officials tend to complain that it was hard to gather students to study at school. However, they did not take into consideration aspects of IP cultures, such as seasonal farming and the shifting cultivation system. Besides, according to the Bourdier inquiry in 1994-1995, education was conducted in the Khmer language, so it was nearly impossible to encourage indigenous students to study. Moreover, the school calendar did not fit with the indigenous agricultural calendar. The best time to gather students to school is only from December till March, when the Phnong families return home after the harvest (Bourdier, 2009, p. 561). Parts of the misunderstanding are caused by stereotypes.

Stereotypes are still visible in the Cambodian society. Bourdier criticized the stereotypes that are still embedded in the state agencies' mentality. He discussed some of his encounter with state officials as follows. A provincial official in Monduliri province said IPs' rituals were a waste of money. That official even said IPs were not smart, and that was why they are always facing hunger and lack of nutrition (Bourdier, 2009, p. 564).

Apart from stereotypes, the past Cambodian policies in the upland areas were also created based on the Khmerization approach to making things the Khmer way. The issue with the Khmerization approach is IPs are classified as being poor based on stereotypes, indigenouness and being in need of the modernity of the Khmer. The Khmerization approach is still visible in reality. As raised by ADB in its report, the bank is concerned about inadvertently encouraging the Khmerization of highland populations through roads, the agricultural system and integration into the national economy (ADB, 2002, p. 36).

Therefore, stereotypes and the legacy of the Khmerization approach have led to the lack of IP participation in education. They also limited IPs' access to a culturally-appropriate education. Not until the promotion of bilingual education by development agencies in the late 1990s did the attitude towards IPs education began to change.

2.2.Need for Bilingual Education for IPs

In 1997, bilingual non-formal education was implemented in Cambodia for the very first time, conducted by ICC in Ratanakiri province. It is said that for the first time indigenous communities were able to produce literature, record oral traditions, and access both formal and non-formal education and training opportunities (Thomas, 2002, p. 28). Bilingual education will serve as a vital tool to preserve their language and culture (Middleborg, 2005). Thomas stated that to design and launch community-level education initiatives, it requires key elements such as using the vernacular language combined with the national language, and community ownership (Thomas A. E., 2003). By doing so, the bilingual curriculum enables students to be ready to transfer their reading skills from the vernacular to the national language.

It is said that with the introduction of bilingual education, Ministry of Education Youth and Sport (MoEYS)'s goals to achieve national literacy along with indigenous cultural preservation can be achieved (Thomas, 2002, p. 39). Also, the bilingual approach to education for IPs in

northeastern Cambodia is said to be a step forward to meet the EFA by 2015 (Chey, In, & Thomas, 2003). It is worth mentioning that the bilingual education activities for the Phnong in Mondulkiri only began in 2005. The translation of materials for primary bilingual education in the Phnong language occurred in 2010 and Phnong teaching teacher training began in 2011. Thus, it has not provided a fruitful result yet compared to Ratanakiri province.

2.3.Need to Remove Education Barriers and Improve Teaching Quality

ADB reports found that indigenous children are less likely to go to school than average Cambodian children in the formal education system. In this context, the bank recommended project implementation that can ensure equitable access and quality improvement of the Northeastern area, such as improving teacher quality, multi-grade classes, reducing direct and indirect costs for parents, and so on (ADB, 2002, p. 42). The report recommends that any development project for poverty reduction should consider the role of education. Following these recommendations, state officials or development agencies come to the villages, build schools, send teachers to remote areas, and inform them about the role of education for livelihood improvement.

Similarly, according to Watt, the issues surrounding education for IPs in northeastern Cambodia are associated with infrastructure, location and the quality of education. He described issues as follows:

- remoteness
- a high proportion of villages in remote districts are without school facilities
- a chronic and systemic shortage of teachers
- a high turnover of teachers
- a high proportion of teachers are young and inexperienced
- very few teachers are from highlander groups

- currently there are no highlander trainee teachers at the Regional Teacher Training College (RTTC) in Steung Treng

- irregular attendance of both students and teachers
- the official curriculum is unresponsive to the reality of village life and inappropriate in bicultural and bilingual settings

- the school calendar is inflexible and out of step with the village farming calendar
- for much of the year, especially during the busy growing season, people live at their farms as opposed to their village. Farms may be anything from 3 to 10 km from the village. Parents are reluctant to allow children to walk through the forest by themselves as they believe that they may be harmed by the spirits.

- school closures due to teacher absenteeism
- lack of support, professional or otherwise, for teachers in remote, isolated areas
- lack of effective communication between teachers and students because of language. Khmer teachers do not speak the language of the children and children do not speak Khmer.

- lack of role models for girls, as a high proportion of teachers are male
- inadequate training of teachers for remote locations and the social context
- low student enrolments
- high dropout rates, especially girls in the early grades (Watt, 2010, pp. 3-4)

These conditions are mainly associated with structural constraints. The state tries to tackle these constraints through various measures, such as providing scholarship, building infrastructure and focusing on teaching quality. It is thought that by removing these constraints and improving education quality, there will be an increase of indigenous children and a reduction in drop-outs.

The national strategic plan 2009-2013 encouraged the building of more schools to reduce the number of drop-outs and to give more schooling opportunities for the handicapped and indigenous children. Complying with Education Strategic Paper (ESP) strategies and policies, MoEYS planned to recruit 5,000 new trainees annually to enroll in all teacher training colleges (TTC), in which priority will be given to at least 40% of trainee teachers from remote and disadvantaged areas. It means that MoEYS will recruit 1,500 new trainees from the remote areas annually. Hence, those with ethnic minority backgrounds will have an advantage. After the completion of a two-year program, the new teachers will be assigned to work in their indigenous areas (MoEYS, n.d.). To increase the numbers of teachers in the remote areas, the government has eased the conditions to study in the provincial teacher training college. MoEYS introduced a provision that graduates from grade nine from a number of specified areas be allowed to enter the Provincial Teacher Training Colleges (PTTC) in its proposal for ESP 2001-2005 and its summary for ESSP (Education Sector Development Program) 2002-2006 (Geeves & Bredenberg, 2005, p. 20). The main purpose was to increase the numbers of primary school teachers in the remote and ethnic minority areas by shortening the education requirement. Therefore, the primary school teacher training became 9+2 years from 12+2 years (Phin, 2014, p. 345). Those who pass the examination will go to study for two years. Most trainee teachers are provided with dormitory space and some financial supports. Simultaneously, international and local NGOs have been active in supporting indigenous children's education. Since 2010, one NGO supported by Lotus Outreach has supported Phnong female students to reduce the dropout rates in lower secondary school, increase gender parity rates from seventh to ninth grade, and support Phnong students to enter a two-year study program at the Regional Teacher Training College (RTTC) in Steung Treng province in order for them to become role models for other Phnong children.

Also, to boost teachers' performance, incentives were given to the teachers for difficult postings and remote areas. They were given an allowance of 12.5 USD for difficult postings and 15 USD for teaching in remote areas (Geeves & Bredenberg, 2005, p. 19). With the promotion and aid from the development agencies in the field of education, the number of indigenous primary school teachers began to increase. That is because it requires only nine years of education to apply to study at the teacher college and another two years to become a primary school teacher. The revision of the education policy and the support from development agencies has shaped the Phnong perspective on education acquisition.

2.4. Khmer Teachers' Perceptions of Phnong Students

2.4.1. Primary Teacher in Dak Dam Primary School

Mr. Ker is a six grade teacher and came to teach in Dak Dam from the year 2000. He said there were only three to four primary school teachers at the beginning of the millennium. There were not many Phnong students. Now he has around 35 students, and most of them are Phnong. He described Phnong students as shy and not confident. He said the reasons the Phnong students did not perform well is due to their socioeconomic condition. Most drop-outs at the primary school level are male students. They have to help their family with farming, constructing houses and collecting from the forest. For girls, many of them drop out during primary school; in addition, they do not come regularly. They tend to come to study in the first semester and stop the next semester because they need to help the family with farming. Hence, girls tend to repeat the grade rather than drop out. He continued that the dropout rate increases after they enter lower secondary school because the village does not have the grades higher than the primary level. Regarding the Phnong parents, he described them as neither encouraging nor discouraging. He wished the parents were more encouraging of sending their children to school. He said those who could achieve educational success were those from wealthy Phnong families. Two or three of his

students went on to become primary school teachers. One of the students who managed to obtain a bachelor degree got sponsored by a Catholic Church.⁴⁵

2.4.2. Staff of the Provincial Teacher Training College in Steung Treng Province

Mr. Sar is a teacher in charge of computers and staff. He has been on the job for 12 years. He said most of the students at the provincial teacher training college were from Mondulkiri and Ratanakiri province. They occupied almost 80% of the teacher training students, and most students are female. As of 2014, 175 trainee teachers had graduated. In the next academic year, the school was scheduled to accept 160 students for the 33rd academic year. The school provides a dorm only for the students from Mondulkiri and Ratanakiri province with the sponsorship of NGOs such as KAPE and ASPECA. The school has also found a fund from a Japanese man to support students. The student will get 20 USD each; however, only around 20 students are eligible to get this pocket money. At the moment, there are 45 students who would get this assistance. However, students have to pay for the daily life necessities.

Regarding dropouts, there are two to three students who drop out every year, mainly due to the family's economic conditions. Concerning performance, they tend to have problems with math and Khmer. Some students have problems with general knowledge and computer skills too. In this sense, when they graduate, they are qualified to teach at the primary school level, but they are not qualified to be a teacher at a higher level.

Finally, regarding their post-graduation, he said that indigenous students chose to study primary school teacher training because it was the fastest way to obtain a job. However, in the future, there might be problems with teaching location as most posts have been occupied. In this sense, new primary school teachers have to work in a location farther from their community. He heard that there were already students who abandoned their posts due to difficult postings.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ The interview was conducted on September 20, 2014 in Pu Treng village

⁴⁶ The interview was conducted on September 29, 2014 in Steung Treng province

2.5. Section Conclusion

From the policy papers, the main barriers for IPs to acquire education are the lack of infrastructure and teachers, and followed by socioeconomic constraint. As a result, the state tends to focus on the structural constraints and solves these problems by building schools, providing dorm and scholarships, supporting bilingual education, improving teacher quality, and most noticeably increasing the numbers of teachers in the remote areas. The policy implementation and outcomes will be explained in the next section.

3. Implication of the Policy to Increase Teachers in the Remote Areas

3.1. Implication on Teacher Recruitment in Mondulakiri Province

According to the MoEYS Education Statistics and Indicators for 2013-2014, Mondulakiri province is the only province of the 25 provinces where the number of teaching staff that hold a lower secondary degree surpassed the number of teaching staff that hold an upper secondary degree, with the ratio 314/210 (MoEYS, 2014a, p. 22). This fact shows that most teachers that are willing to teach in the remote provinces hold a lower secondary degree. It is a reflection of the policy to increase primary school teachers in the remote areas.

Out of all 401 primary school teachers in Mondulakiri province, 43 (11%) teachers have primary school level, 293 (73%) teachers hold a lower secondary degree and 63 (16%) teachers upper secondary degrees (MoEYS, 2014a, p. 24). Compared to 2009-2010, the teachers that hold a lower secondary school degree in Mondulakiri province increased by 110. Besides, the teachers that hold an upper secondary school degree also increased, while the teachers that hold a primary school level decreased.

Regarding student performance in Mondulakiri province, the percentage of primary level completion in 2013-2014 was 74.87%. The completion percentage for girls was 79.10% and for boys 70.83%. In the lower secondary level, the completion percentage was 29.7%. The

completion percentage for girls was 28.40% and for boys 30.10%. In the higher secondary level, the completion percentage was 11.40%. The completion percentage for girls was 9.52% and for boys 13.20% (MoEYS, 2014a). It showed that the girls are more likely to stay longer and complete primary level than boys, while more boys complete high school level.

3.2.Implication for Education in Ou Reang District

At the district level, Ou Reang district has the fewest numbers of schools among the five districts in Mondulakiri province. There are 13 schools in Ou Reang district out of 117 schools in Mondulakiri Province, of which ten are primary schools, two schools are kindergartens, and one school is a combined of lower and upper secondary school (MoEYS, 2014b, pp. 2-6). Among the primary school teachers, the majority of degrees held are the lower secondary degree. Specifically, four hold a primary school level, 28 hold a lower secondary degree and six hold an upper secondary degree (p.24). It shows that most primary school teachers hold lower secondary school degrees. It reflects the outcomes of the 9+2 teacher training policy that has boosted the number of primary school teachers in the district.

In the academic year 2012-2013, most students tend to drop out when they had to move from grade 6 to grade 7 due to the requirement to move to other schools, and from grade 9 to grade 10 due to the requirement to pass the examination (MoEYS, 2014b, pp. 44-45). Nevertheless, the district has the second lowest number of dropouts among five districts when they move from grade six to grade seven. Also, the completion percentage for girls surpassed the numbers of boys at the primary level, while the completion percentage is almost equal at the lower secondary level. The only difference is the percentage of upper secondary school completion. The percentage for girls was 3.45 %, and the completion for boys 19.30% (p.55). Similar to the Mondulakiri province data, the girls tend to stay longer in primary school, while more boys completed the high school level.

3.3. Phnong Illiteracy Rate in Pu Rang and Pu Treng Village

The illiteracy level of people aged between 15-45 years old in both villages is lower than the illiteracy level of their respective commune. In Dak Dam commune, the illiteracy rate for 15-45 year olds was 37.95% in 2008 (NCDD, 2009, p.33) while in Pu Treng village, the illiteracy was only 24 percent based on the village book (2013). In Sen Monorom commune, the illiteracy rate for 15-45 year olds was 31.4% in 2008 (NCDD, 2009, p.33) while in Pu Rang village, the illiteracy level was only 20% based on the village book (2012).

The illiteracy rate for 15-24 year olds in Dak Dam commune was 28.8% (NCDD, 2009, p.33) while in Pu Treng it was only 24 percent based on the village book in 2013. The illiteracy rate for 15-24 year olds in Sen Monorom commune was 21.2% (NCDD, 2009, P.33) while in Pu Rang it was eight percent based on the village book in 2012 (See Table 33 and Table 34). Hence, the illiteracy rate for 15-24 year olds in both villages is also lower than their respective commune.

Table 33 Illiterate People in Pu Treng Village Between 15-24 Years Old in 2012

	Age between 15-17	Age between 18-24
Number of Phnong male	5 out of 30	10 out of 35
Number of Phnong female	5 out of 31	10 out of 32
Total	30 out of 126 (24%)	

Source: Author's modification from the Pu Treng Village Statistic Book 2013

Table 34 Illiterate People in Pu Rang Village Between 15-24 Years Old in 2012

	Age between 15-17	Age between 18-24
Number of Phnong male	0 out of 23	8 out of 19
Number of Phnong female	0 out of 33	0 out of 21
Total	8 out of 96 (8%)	

Source: Author's modification from the Pu Rang Village Statistic Book 2012

Regardless the age, the number of illiterate people in Pu Treng village and Pu Rang village were 134 and 91 people respectively, according to DPA data in 2011. Considering that Pu Rang village has a smaller population, the village has more Phnong who went to school or acquired formal and informal education.

The political changes and outside supports have changed the landscape of education in Phnong villages. Particularly Pu Rang village has seen the increase of students and primary school teachers. However, it is worth mentioning that mostly the students from the families of Phnong civil servants have been able to access education and capable of reaching higher education and job prospects.

3.4. Section Conclusion

Education policies have implications for education in the remote areas where most Phnong live. Gradually, the Phnong began to see the value of education. However, it is not enough to explain how they make a decision to send their children to school. There is a question of why some Phnong families are eager to support their children's education and eventually get a job in the mainstream society. It is also necessary to understand what strategy they use to acquire an education for their children. From here, I suggest looking for another approach to studying individual families' cases to acquire education and job prospects. Also, sociocultural components will be included to understand their education decision.

4. Perceptions of Phnong Youth Who Remain in the Villages

Being positive towards education does not mean that it will translate into actions. In this section, the perceptions of Phnong youth who are still in the villages, and are confused about whether they should continue studying, will be shown. It is intended to show why some do, and some do not go to school yet. I selected six Phnong youth, of whom three are from Catholic Phnong families.

4.1.Youth in Pu Treng Village

“I want to learn new skills”

PTYV1 is 18 years old. He is the fourth child among six siblings. He lived in a very traditional Phnong household. Neither he nor his siblings have managed to complete primary school. Only one of his siblings goes to primary school. He could not concentrate on studying for several reasons, such as family issues and having trouble catching up with other students, so he decided to quit school in the fourth grade. He was more interested in working in the forest, such as tapping liquid resin and putting out traps, because he wanted to help the family.

He developed his interest in collecting forest resources after he went to the forest with Phnong adults. Since then he got hooked on these activities. Unfortunately, in 2012, he got into an accident while transporting liquid resin back to the village. Now the injury is healed, but he cannot walk straight. He can only do light work such as clearing land, harvesting, and drying cassava. Sometimes he goes to find fish in the stream. He showed his sadness for not being able to help his family much. He wanted to learn repair skills and have a proper job in the future.⁴⁷

“I quit school. Then I got help to learn skills in the city by NGOs”

PTYV5 is 19 years old. He is from a Catholic Phnong family. He quit school when he was in the fourth grade because his parents wanted him to take care of the cows and farming. Later, he got support to study motor repair in Phnom Penh from a Korean NGO. He was introduced to that NGO by a priest. While staying in Phnom Penh, his parents gave him 25 USD for his expenditures in the city. He had to rely on his scholarship and an extra job because his parents did not send him money to support himself. He would go to visit his family during holidays, which cost him around 25 USD round trip.

⁴⁷ PTYV1 interview was conducted on September 26, 2014 in Pu Treng village

He is very interested in repair skills, especially motor repair. He plans to open a business when he has enough money. It is worth mentioning that his talent goes beyond repairing. He also knows how to construct houses, which he learned from Phnong adults. With these skills, he could make money through house construction at 20,000 Riels (5 USD) a day. Furthermore, he has other small activities, such as finding honey, in which he can earn 5 USD for 5 liters of honey, 6 USD for one cubic meter of wood cutting, trapping animals, clearing land and taking care of rubber trees. But he said it was difficult to save because he also had to spend a lot.⁴⁸

“I quit school but my family encouraged me to study skills in Phnom Penh”

PTYV2 is 19 years old. He is the son of a single mother. He quit studying in sixth grade for several reasons: due to his loss of concentration for school because of the dispute between his parents, arguments at school, and farming. Later he went to study motor repair for seven months staying in a rented room in Phnom Penh. He got help from his uncle and a sister who is studying in Phnom Penh. His sister helped to guide him to study motor repair because she saw that he liked repairing bikes. He plans to open a repair garage with money he will borrow from his relatives in Pu Pyam village. He also provided some reasons why some Phnong children could go to higher studies. He said wealth is an important factor. If the parents are wealthy, the Phnong children can study further.⁴⁹

“I did not know that my family would send me to the provincial town to study”

PTYV4 is 15 year old girl from a Catholic family. She has four siblings, and she is the oldest. At the moment, she is studying in sixth grade in Kampong Cham Province. She can only come to visit her family during vacation because the school prohibits her from going to the village during the school period. During the holiday, she will stay with her family for two to three months.

⁴⁸ PTYV5 interview was conducted on September 27, 2014 in Pu Treng village

⁴⁹ PTYV2 interview was conducted on September 26, 2014 in Pu Treng village

She said she did not know about her parents' decision to send her to study in the provincial town because they did not tell her. In the beginning she was confused, but later she learned that other Catholic Phnong children also go to study there. The school is a Catholic school and has good teachers to teach until sixth grade. They also serve free meals. Her family sends only around 5 USD, which she needs for one month. The school provides a scholarship until the sixth grade. After seventh grade, the school will not provide any scholarship, but they will help to find accommodation to study in the public school. She said she will attend the seventh grade, which was already decided. She will go to study in a public school called "Beng Kok" in Kompong Cham province. Her worries are mainly about missing her family and the money she will need to spend on cram school. In the future, she wants to become a teacher. She also wants to be an advocate for community development. Her response is similar to other Phnong regarding job preference. It became a blue print for Phnong youth to follow other Phnong's successful paths. This decision is a reflection of habits that influence their decision.⁵⁰

"If I do not pass the exam, I will get married"

PTYV3 is 17 year old girl from a Catholic family. She stayed with her brother and her mother. She just completed grade nine, and we can assume that she entered school late. Her brother does most of the livelihood activities, such as farming and collecting forest resources, to allow her to go to school. She helps him once a week after school. She got accepted to study in Kompong Cham province with help from the church after she finished primary school in Dak Dam commune.

After she had passed ninth grade examination, she planned to apply to study at a provincial teacher training college. However, she is already engaged to a Phnong man who is a high school teacher in Dak Dam commune. They met through his brother, who is Dak Dam commune chief.

⁵⁰ PTYV4 interview was conducted on 2 September 27, 2014 in Pu Treng village

At the moment, she only has two options. If she passes, she will go to study in Steung Treng province to become a primary school teacher. If she fails, she will get married.⁵¹ It is common for the Phnong women and men to get married when they fail school. After they get married, they mainly farm for a living.

4.2.Youth in Pu Rang Village

“I am worried whether my parents can support me if I continue studying”

PRYV1 is 17 years old. He just passed the ninth grade examination. Characteristically, he is different from typical Phnong children. He is very shy, loves studying, and is not interested in going to the forest. Although he does not like going to the forest, he regularly helps his family with farming. Sometimes he goes fishing, but he avoids going to the stream in rainy season due to leeches. During vacation, he mainly stays at home and helps with household activities.

After he had finished ninth grade, he was undecided whether to continue his studies or not. If he wanted to continue his studies at high school, he needed to leave his village. He thought of applying for the teacher training examination. However, he was worried that it would become a burden for his family. Fortunately, the government established a high school in his village, so he did not have to worry about leaving the house. Therefore, he decided to continue to high school. At the moment, his aim is to become a secondary school teacher after he graduates from twelfth grade. His family is very supportive of his education; however, he is worried whether his family can support his education until he finishes high school. As of now, he needs to pay around 1 USD for a cram lesson a week if he wants to finish and pass the high school exam and realize his dream to become a college teacher.⁵²

⁵¹ PTYV3 interview was conducted on September 26, 2014 6 in Pu Treng village

⁵² PRYV1 interview was conducted on September 24, 2014 in Pu Rang village

4.3. Section Conclusion

The Phnong children quit school to help their families. They feel the responsibility to help the family. Besides, cram school fees have also discouraged them from going to school. According to previous research, while there are no official fees for attending district schools, teachers expect their students to seek them out for tutoring sessions, mainly to pass the examination (Fox, Vogler, & Poffernberger, 2009, p. 26). This expectation is still visible and hinders Phnong's participation in education. They had to take a tutoring session provided by the teachers in their community.

Phnong girls tend to stay at the primary school longer than boys because they get involved only in farming and household activities; however, girls are likely to get married if they cannot continue studying or if they fail an exam. The girls get married while they are still teenagers. However, from my findings, those who are educated tend to extend their marriage age until their early twenties. Phnong boys tend to go to collect liquid resin or trap animals to make money after they quit school. However, these boys are vulnerable if they face injuries while collecting forest products. For these boys, getting injured has a heavy impact on their family and themselves.

Phnong youth that quit school choose to get involved in various economic opportunities, from the burgeoning of market activities to generate cash incomes in addition to the traditional livelihoods. They have skills and different perceptions from their parents and have experiences going outside the village that equip them with a business mentality. Some got help to study skills such as motor repairing in Phnom Penh from NGOs through church recommendation or relatives' help. When they return, they can make money from the skills they obtained in the city.

From their statements, education acquisition can be achieved through individual strategies and coordination with several actors. Looking at the Catholic Phnong children's cases, there are

consistencies in that they were approached by the Catholic Church to study in the province. After an agreement is made between the parents and the church, the child is sent to study in the church's boarding school in the provincial town. The church will support tuition fees, learning tools and dorm accommodation until the child finishes grade six. The church will also assist in finding a public school and accommodation after the scholarship ends. On the other hand, the traditional families or the families that have little access to networks have little chance of accessing education. Thus, they decide to stay in the village.

Finally, the findings confirmed that it is mostly the wealthy Phnong families that can afford to send their children to study higher education. They can afford to sell their poultry to send their children to study in the city or provincial town. Some Catholic Phnong families may rely on church, while the less well-off families have less chance to get a higher education.

5. Phnong Parents' Perceptions of the Education of their Children

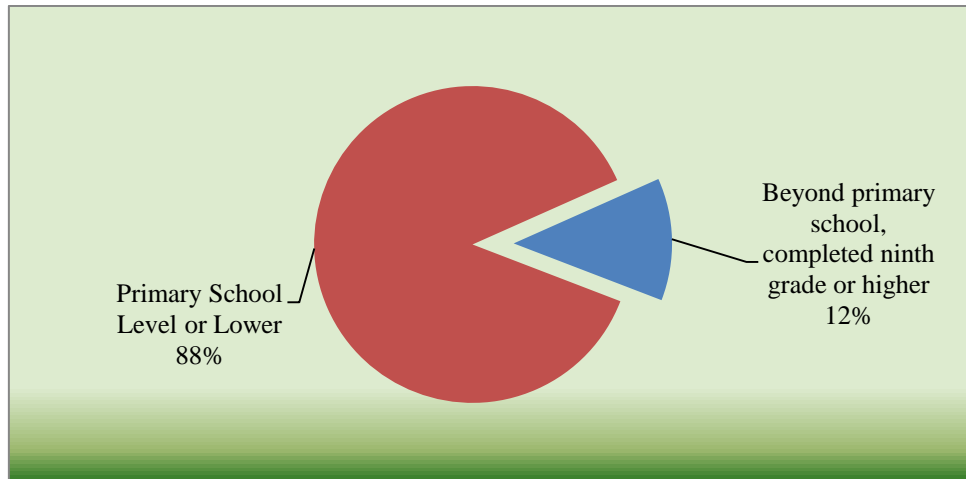
According to White's research in the 1990s, the Phnong parents used to say, "Khmer people send their children to school and they will get a job. When we send our children to school, they will not get a job." They were reluctant to send their children to school because they did not see the benefits from education (White, 2009, p. 500). However, this research has found different perceptions about education among the families of Phnong civil servants. They want to follow in the successful footsteps of their educated relatives. Most parents want their children to be a teacher, doctor or NGO staff member.

5.1. Education Level of Phnong Parents

The parent's education level seems to have less impact on their decision to school their children. Instead, these parents were influenced by their relatives who are the beneficiaries of previous development policies. These parents are also influenced by the state and development agencies' educational promotion. As seen in Figure 13 below, the percentage of respondents who

have a primary school degree or lower is 88%, while the percentage of respondents who have a ninth grade degree or higher is only 12%. These respondents have one thing in common, that is they perceive education acquisition for their children positively.

Figure 13 Level of Education of Respondents, N=40



Source: Author, 2014

The main reasons the Phnong parents feel positive about education is they believe that education would improve their status and livelihood. They associated farming with tribal life, while getting education means they are reaching another level of status. When asked who will continue farming if their children are educated to work somewhere else, most parents said farming is for parents. They did not wish their children to work hard like them.

Regarding decision making, Phnong mothers tend to be influential in making decisions regarding their children's education because they mostly stay close to their children and know who should be selected to go to school. The Phnong fathers tend to be busy with their work and they mostly trust the mothers to decide about the education of their children. Nevertheless, the decision making can be varied among families where male and female share the responsibility regarding education.

5.2. Phnong Parents' Perceptions of the Role of Education

The parents interviewed are mostly from the families of civil servants. Each household possesses a story of their hardship and experience that makes them think that education is one of the ways to provide a stable life. The following are some parents' perceptions in both villages concerning their children's education.

"I do not want my children to be clumsy like me"

PR1 wanted her children to become teachers. One of her daughters is already a teacher. Two of her children are in the lower secondary school, and she might ask them to study to become teachers. Her relatives told her to follow this path with her desire to leave hardship. She said she did not want others to look down on her children.

"Without my two children, I would not have rebuilt my life after I lost my house."

PrePr2 has been living in Pu Rang village since 1987.⁵³ Her husband died in 2012. Her husband was a policeman. She has four children, and two of her children are teachers in Koh Nhek and Pechreada. Now she lives with the other two other children. She said that her life became a little bit better after her two sons got jobs as teachers. Apart from the livelihood improvement, she also felt that the jobs as civil servants brought pride to the family.

"I want my daughter to be educated so I can rely on her."

PrePr4 used to live near the provincial town.⁵⁴ After her husband had died in an accident, she moved to live in Pu Rang village with her relatives. At the moment, she is living with her parents and siblings under the same roof. She said "In the past, I relied on my husband, who was a civil servant in the provincial town. Now I am a widow. I want my children to study higher education." For her, education is a way to improve her and her family's life. She wanted all her

⁵³ PrePr2 is one of the respondents from my preliminary fieldwork. I decided to include her in this section because it will provide more understanding of Phnong parents' perception towards education. The interview was conducted on September 5, 2013 in Pu Rang village.

⁵⁴ PrePr4 is also one of the respondents from my preliminary fieldwork. I decided to include her in this section for the same reason as PrePr2. The interview was conducted on 20130905 in Pu Rang village.

children to be educated and become civil servants. She hopes that she can rely on her daughter after she gets a job and gets married.

“I do not want them to farm”

PT12 did not want his children to farm. He said farming is not for the children because farming is for old people. He wished to see his children become educated and get jobs such as a teacher, a doctor or working for NGOs. He said he was willing to sell his poultry to support his children. But some of his children do not want to go to school. They said they were scared of the Khmer teacher.

“I do not force them to go to school. I will let them go if they want to go.”

The traditional Phnong parent **PT19** in Pu Treng village acknowledged the role of education.⁵⁵ He saw that the educated Phnong got good jobs and high positions. However, he does not pressure his children to go to school or act against his children’s will. In most case, a Phnong child is raised in an environment that views the importance of life attached to nature, and they are not subjected to an act of force or pressure.

5.3. Parents’ Perceptions about Dropouts

When asked about what make Phnong children drop out of school, Phnong parents mostly blamed the children’s characters. They provided some examples, such as the child was not smart and could not catch up with others, the child was scared of the teacher, and the child did not want to go to school. It is very interesting that they did not identify their economic condition as the reason for the dropouts. From their cultural lens, Phnong parents believed that being smart is a quality that begins from within the child, and it is predestined. If the child is already smart, he or she will do well at school and will not quit school. Hence, their responses show that they do not have views opposing education nor attempting to stop their children from going to school.

⁵⁵ All PT19 interview were conducted on September 24, 2014 Pu Treng village

5.4.Perceptions about the Outcomes of their Children's Education

From the Phnong parents' perspective, girls and boys are treated equally regarding education. Those who are smart will receive support from their family and relatives. Those who are not considered as smart are not forced to quit school; however, some children might hear discouraging words from their family or relatives after the teacher informed the family and relatives about the child's school performance. Eventually, they decide to quit school and help their parents by farming, collecting forest products, or hunting, and some may obtain skills to generate cash. Although the Phnong do not have a preference for girls or boys to remain at school, girls tend to stay longer at primary school. According to teachers in both villages, girls tend to stay longer in the primary school because they do not go to the forest as much as boys do. They also have more opportunities to reach higher education because the state started to recruit indigenous teachers and when NGOs come to promote girls' education.

5.5.Section Conclusions

The Phnong parents' education has little influence on their children's education. They hold a positive view regarding education because they see its importance. Regarding the families of Phnong civil servants, they have seen their relatives become successful. They tend to advise each other to take the opportunities to become civil servants or get jobs such as a doctor or NGO staff.

Preferably, the parents wanted their children to follow in the footsteps of their relatives who are civil servants. The most preferred job was teacher, followed by NGO worker. They regarded being educated as family pride because the Phnong are envious of those who are educated. Furthermore, they do not want to be looked down on as uneducated, and they also think that being educated will help them to avoid being cheated. Last but not least, they are aware of the future, and being educated will help the children to get jobs in mainstream society that will bring stable income. As the parents said, they do not want their children to be farmers like them.

Farming is for the parents, not for their children. They are eager to support their children if their children want to go on to higher education.

Regarding the Phnong culture and traditions, parents said that they rarely taught their children about these things. For Phnong, children learn by observing their surroundings. Children follow their parents or relatives to the farm or forest and learn by observing and imitating their actions. Parents never force their children and children have freedom to follow what they want to follow. At the moment, their children do not know how to build traditional houses or to make crafts and tend to buy from the market. Although the parents are worried about cultural loss, there is not much they can do. They said getting a higher education and skills are more important for the future. They do not want their children to be subsistence farmers, as they said that people increase but the lands do not.

Within the Phnong community, although they have an orientation toward education, there are only a few wealthy families that have the ability and access to networks to help them to send their children to school. Some less well-off families rely on luck and opportunities. This manner and strategic behavior are grounded by historical repertoire and experience, and conditioned by the sociopolitical changes in Cambodia. In the next section, I will show the pursuit of education among the Phnong youth.

6. Pursuit of Education of Phnong Youth from Civil Servant Families

In this research, I selected 10 Phnong youth who are studying or working in the city and provincial towns. Five of the Phnong youth are from the five families that have already been mentioned in Chapter Five. Most Phnong students are from families that practice animism, and two are from Catholic Phnong families (See Table 35 below). I coded names **PRY1-PRY6** for the Phnong youth from Pu Rang village and **PTY1-PTY4** for the Phnong youth from Pu Treng

village. Then I examine their livelihood experience and path to acquire education. All interviews were conducted in 2014.

Table 35 Number of Relatives of Phnong Youth Who are Civil Servants, N10

	Believe in Animism	Believe in Catholicism
Father	5	2
Uncle	2	
Aunt	1	

Source: Author, 2014

6.1.Family Background of the Selected Phnong Youth

As explained in Chapter Five, by using the commune's annual household income as a benchmark, I divided the five families of the Phnong youth into groups of low income, average income and high income. These families are the same families as in Chapter Five. I chose these five families because I have comprehensive data and access to their networks in the villages, the city and provincial towns where the youth are pursuing their education and job. The Phnong families' annual income that falls within the commune's average is considered average. Annual income below or higher than that average is considered as low income and high income respectively. Therefore, I can describe the family status of five key Phnong youth and how it is related to their education. It is worth mentioning that I could not identify the socioeconomic background of the other five key Phnong youth.

Table 36 Annual Household Incomes of the Five Key Families

Income of low income families	Income of average income families	Income of high income families
PR2=529.3 USD	PT12=1,476 USD PR1=1,316.3 USD	PT7=2,177.8 USD PR12=2,254 USD

Note: Commune data is from So et al., 2012, pp.11-13, country data is from MOP, 2012 as cited in Tong et al., 2013, p.3

Source: Author, 2014

I also asked the parents whether they have a child studying in higher education or have a job. According to the twelve respondents aged over 40 years old, eight of them, or 72.7%, said their children are currently studying in higher education or had graduated. Concerning the families' socioeconomic status, they are mostly from the high-income and average-income families. Among the eight families, two are from high-income families, five are from average-income families, and one is from a low-income family (See Table 37).

Table 37 Number of Parents Aged Over 40 with a Child in Higher Education, N11

	Number of parents with a child in higher education	Number of parents without a child in higher education
High income families	2	2
Average income families	5	1
Low income families	1	0
Total (%)	8 (72.7%)	3 (27.3%)

Source: Author, 2014

From Table 37 above, within the group of the families of civil servants, there are families that strive for the education of their children and those who cannot or do not. Those who do not have their children in higher education stated various reasons, such as that their children did not want to study, lack of information, and economic reasons. Those who can afford to send their children to higher education are from the families that have self-insurance and cash to support their children, strong networks, and the support from outsiders.

6.1.1. The High Income Families

From here, I will describe the background and type of families of the Phnong youth. It will help explain the reasons they can go to school as well as unravel why some low-income families are also supportive of their children's education.

The High Income PT7

PT7 is a civil servant and also a Catholic Church leader, although he identified himself as a farmer. He recalled that in the 1970s, he fled to Vietnam with his family to avoid civil war. In Vietnam, he was supported by the Catholic Church and his long-distance relatives. He returned to the village around the mid-1980s. In the early 2000s, he began to farm cassava and other marketable vegetables when NGOs began to promote community development in the village. At that time, he was selected as one of the key participants. He said cash crops and mixing other livelihoods activities such as fruit trees and fish farming have helped reduce livelihood insecurity. With the additional income from his wife, who is teacher of traditional weaving, he could generate some savings. She can sell around 5 to 10 pieces a month. His annual household income is around 2,177.8 USD. The income is almost equal to the country average of 2,631 USD in 2011 (Tong, Lun, Sry, & Pon, 2013, p. 3). With his savings, he could send his children to school. With help from the Catholic Church, he could also send his children to higher education. Now one of his sons has already graduated from university and is currently working for an NGO. Another son got a scholarship from the Catholic Church to study in Phnom Penh, but he needs to pay 120 USD a year to support his daily expenditures.

The High Income PR12

PR12 is a Phnong man who came to live in Pu Rang village in 1985. He was born in Keo Seima, so he has many relatives there. He used to be a soldier and was sent to study in Vietnam. He said he stopped farming rice due to pests and low productivity. Now he focuses only on cassava and cashew nuts. He started farming cassava in 2007 after he got the roots from NGOs. He said he produced more cassava than other villagers because he observed Khmer farmers and he learned some techniques in Vietnam. At the moment, his annual income is around 2,254 USD.

He said life was easier than in the 1980s but not in terms of making money. He needs to work hard to support his family of four children and their education.

6.1.2. The Average Income Families

The Average Income PR1

PR1 is a widow. Her husband passed away 15 years ago after she gave birth to her fourth child. She relied on relatives' help to maintain her livelihood. Later, she got cassava roots from her relatives to start trial farming. After she successfully farmed cassava, she bought more cassava roots from the market to expand the farm. She said she was fortunate that her farm is not far from the village, so she did not have to bring dried cassava to the village. The middlemen will come to pick up the dried cassava directly from her farm. To maintain livelihood security, she also engages in various activities ranging from working on an agricultural plantation, selling cow manure, sewing old clothes, and travelling to Vietnam. Most Phnong raise chicken and pigs, but **PR1** prefers to raise ducks. She said as long as the ducks were provided with water; they would not travel far from the house. She also has a vegetable garden from which she can sell in the village. Her annual household income is around 1,316.3 USD. It is not high by any means, but by engaging in various livelihood activities and spending as little as possible, she can reduce livelihood insecurity. With her small savings, she could afford to send her daughter to school. Now, her daughter is a primary school teacher, and she sends remittances home.

The Average Income PT12

PT12 is a single mother of four. Her husband left her to marry another woman. Around 2009, she got cassava roots from her brother, who is working in the Department of Education in the provincial town. He encouraged her to farm cassava because he saw the opportunities in the market. He even lent her a mini tractor to transport cassava to the village. Her relatives in Koh Nhek also helped her when she ran out of food. Koh Nhek is suitable for paddy rice, so most of

her relatives were able to produce a surplus from paddy rice cultivation. During the off season, she engages in weaving and participates in NGO projects. In 2014, she borrowed money from her relatives in Koh Nhek and opened a bike repair stall for her son. He went to study bike repairing skill for six months in Phnom Penh with financial help from her brother. Her annual household income is around 1,476 USD. She said her life has improved, but she is still concerned about decreasing yields.

6.1.3. The Low Income Families

The Low Income PR2

PR2 is a widow. Her husband was a civil servant in the provincial town. After he passed away during a mission in the early 2000s, she returned to live with her parents and sisters under one roof in Pu Rang village. At the moment, her annual household income is only around 529.3 USD. To reduce expenditures, she consumed more fruit and vegetables with fermented fish than rice. Fortunately, her family practice product sharing, and it allowed her to obtain livelihood security. For example, when she faced crop damage, she could rely on other family members who may produce a surplus. Therefore, she said without the help from her family and relatives; she would not have been able to survive. With the addition of cassava in 2006, she was able to enhance her livelihood security and even send her children to school with some helps from her relatives and NGOs. Now, one of her children has just become a primary school teacher.

6.2. Life Stories of Phnong Youth about Acquiring Education

There are some commonalities regarding the education path of Phnong youth. First, they reported that they began school late. The average age of entering primary school is 9.1 years old. The oldest age to enter the primary school is 12 years old. Most of them began schooling in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Hence, when they reached the lower secondary level, it was at the time of the cassava boom in the villages in 2005 and 2007. The cash income from cassava and

wage work allowed their families to support them until they finish grade nine and study further with some help from development agencies and the Catholic Church. Second, they said they had to leave the village to continue to the higher education. Despite some commonalities, there are also some differences, such the actor they coordinated with and the individual strategy. I will explain in detail as follows.

6.2.1. Those Who Became Teachers

6.2.1.1. Education Path of PRY1 from the Average Income Family

PRY1 is a 22-year-old Phnong primary school teacher. She began teaching in 2013. She is the daughter of PR1, who is a widow and is in the average-income group. She first went to primary school in 2002, at the same time that her mother began to farm cassava. With the cash income generated from cassava and help from her relatives, she was able to complete ninth grade. After she finished ninth grade, she had to make a decision to continue or not. Her mother and relatives asked her to apply for the teacher training examination so she could become a primary school teacher. They wanted her to become a teacher because they thought that she was clever. They also worried that the window of opportunity provided by the state to recruit indigenous teachers would end soon. At first, she did not want to continue her studies because she wanted to help her family. Upon hearing constant encouragement from her mother and relatives, she decided to apply for the examination. After she passed the teacher training exam, she had to leave to study at TTC in Steung Treng province.

At the training college, she was provided with a dormitory that she shared with 20 students. In the first month, she spent around 100 USD to buy utensils and other necessities. Later she had to spend around 70 USD every month. To save money, she and friends formed a working group to share food and tasks to reduce expenditures. During her studies, her mother spent most of her

income to support her without much help from outsiders. Her mother would spend the money that she made from selling cassava to support her. She also sold two buffaloes.

One of the most challenging experiences when she was at the teacher training college was when she had to go to practice at a primary school in Steung Treng, a provincial town. In the first year, she had to train at the primary school for one month, and in the second year she had to train for two months. At the time, she was assigned to teach third and fourth graders. She needed to teach them in the Khmer language because it is a public school. However, she could not manage the class properly because of her lack of experience and nervousness. Eventually, she got help from the head teacher until she adjusted to the class environment. Another challenge was she had to use the Khmer language because it is a public school.

After she had finished the training, she had to take examinations in math, Khmer, home economics, physical education, gender, and children rights. Fortunately, she ranked number seven among her colleagues and got to pick the school where she wanted to teach. The allocation of the post was decided by lot. First, she wrote her desired school on a white paper and put in a box. Then the name of the person would be drawn to decide the post. She initially wanted to go to Pu Pyam village, which is closer to her village. Unfortunately, a student who ranked above her also picked the post. Therefore, she picked Pu Tru village, which is a little more than an hour ride from her house.

After she got the post in Pu Tru village, she was assigned to teach a multi-grade class for the third and fourth grade. She was provided with a dormitory in which she normally stays from Monday to Saturday with her mother, who comes to take care of her newly-born baby. After school, she farms vegetables and cassava to generate food sufficiency. On the weekend, she helps her family with farming and household chores. While she was away for teaching, her husband stayed in Pu Rang village with her brothers, aunt and grandmother. The busiest time for

her is during the school season. She said she was fortunate that she met a kind school principal in Pu Tru village. She is a Khmer woman who also has a farm there. The principal always gives her extra days to prepare teaching materials and was always kind to her when she was late. During school vacation, she returns to stay with her family for around three months.

For her, life as a teacher has been great so far. She even suggested to her husband that he study to become a secondary school teacher. Her husband is an NGO staff member, so they hardly meet each other. If he became a teacher, he could transfer to work close to her, she said. Besides, teaching is better than working for NGOs because it is a stable job with incentives. She also wanted her siblings to study higher education and get as good a job as her.⁵⁶

6.2.1.2. Education Path of PTY3

PTY3 is a 29-year-old Phnong man from Pu Treng. Currently, he is residing in Pu Treng, but he teaches at the primary school in Pu Rang village. Occasionally, he also provides tutoring to children in Sen Monorom, the provincial town of Mondulkiri province.

He went to primary school when he was 12 years old. His parents did not send him until he asked them to go to school. At that time, the school was far from their house, and farming was more important than education, so his parents delayed his school entry. That is the reason he entered school late. After he had completed the primary school, he went to study in the Ou Reang lower secondary school. Fortunately, he got support from USAID, such as a dormitory, food, and pocket money until he finished ninth grade. After completing ninth grade, he did not continue his education because he could not afford it. Besides, he wanted to get a job to support his family after his father passed away. He decided to apply for the exam and successfully passed to study at TTC in Steung Treng province.

⁵⁶ All PRY1 interview were conducted on September 26, 2014 in Pu Rang village

During his stay at TTC, he was provided with a dormitory and small amount of pocket money. However, it was not enough for him. He faced many challenges, such as a lack of food and discrimination from other students for his ethnicity. But he never gave up hope. To support his studies, he worked part time clearing lands, working on a pine farm, working in a factory and more to pay for his education. During his teaching internship, his family sent him 200,000 Riels to 300,000 Riels (around 75 USD) a month.

Compared to several years ago, he said that his life was getting better because he could support his family and siblings with his salary to buy rice. However, he and his family still rely on cash crops and traditional farming. His family plants peppers and cassava for self-sufficiency and income. Due to his business, he could not farm annually and left his farmland untouched.⁵⁷

6.2.1.3. Education Path of PRY6

PRY6 is a 27-year-old Phnong man. He began school at the age of 10. His father, who is a civil servant working in the district office, wanted him to be educated, so he encouraged him to continue his studies. He left his village to study in the provincial town when he was 16 years old. He was fortunate to finish lower secondary level because he was provided with a dormitory, learning materials and pocket money of 30,000 Riels (around 7.5 USD) a month from the state. He was also provided with two meals a day from NGOs called CCI⁵⁸ and VFC (Village Focus Cambodia). Still, his family had to send him some cash to pay his daily expenses. He also needed to do extra activities to pay for his education until he finished high school.

After he had completed high school, he went to study in Phnom Penh to become a college teacher. In Phnom Penh, he got help and stayed in a child-friendly house called *Borei Komar* for two years. While he stayed in the city, he remained reliant on his family's support. He tended to return home three times a year during national holidays and take some food back. Each time he

⁵⁷ All PTY3 interview were conducted on September 28, 2014 in Pu Treng village

⁵⁸ The respondent could not recall the full name

spent around one week to help his family with farming and household chores. Eventually, he finished his training and got a post teaching at a college in Monduliri province. After he got a job as a teacher, he would send some money to support his family in gratitude.⁵⁹

6.2.2. Those Who Became NGO Workers

6.2.2.1. Education Path of PTY1 from the Average Income Family: NGO Worker

PTY1 is a 23-year-old Phnong from Pu Treng village. She comes from a family consisting of a single mother and four siblings. Her mother is **PT12** and considered in the average income group. She said she was one of the only two Phnong women to acquire a bachelor degree. She studied law at the Royal University of Law and Economics (RULE), and she graduated in August 2013. Before graduation, she already held a position in a community development-related organization. She was in charge of a project initiated by the Cambodian Indigenous Youth Association (CIYA) with the support of UN women development.

She recounted that the reason she was able to go to study was that she was indebted to her uncle. Her uncle who was working in the provincial Department of Education, Youth and Sports encouraged her mother to send her to school. Seeing that her house was far from the school, her uncle found a dormitory for her to stay in until she finished grade nine.

Her family moved to live in Pu Treng in 2007. At that time, she had to work part time to pay for her education through wage work, selling vegetables, and other activities, especially to pay for cram school. In the final year of high school, she paid around 15 USD for three subjects to study at a cram school to prepare for the grade twelve examinations. Fortunately, she passed the final examination.

She said she always wanted to pursue higher education in Phnom Penh. She said there was only one Phnong female from her village who got a bachelor degree, so she wanted to be like her.

⁵⁹ All PRY6 interview were conducted on October 13, 2014 in Sen Monorom

This dream would not have happened without the help from NGOs. She described the time when she was in grade twelve, an NGO from Australia saw her, and asked if she wanted to study in Phnom Penh, and she agreed. She was provided a four-year scholarship to study in Phnom Penh. She also got free accommodation from an organization called Cambodian Law Education for Women. Without these NGOs, it is not possible for any Phnong to go to study in the city.

She recalled some challenges while was staying in the city alone for the first time. The first two years were the most challenging because she had to constantly ask her mother for money for her daily expenses. At that time, she did not have a network and job access. Gradually, she met other Phnong students, and they helped her to adjust to life in the city.⁶⁰ Fortunately, she found a job and could pay for her life in the city. Therefore, she relied mostly on her family support, her uncle's assistance, and support from donors.

While she was at the university, she was discriminated against by other students. It was subtle. She did not intend to reveal her ethnicity if no one asked. However, one of her close friends inadvertently told other students. Upon hearing about her ethnicity, they were surprised and treated her differently. They held a stereotype that the Phnong are not smart (referring to education) and dirty people (referring to sanitation). She assumed that the understanding of IPs among Cambodian youth was very low. Therefore, at that moment, she kept her identity secret unless someone asked her. But now, she proudly promotes her identity to the Khmer people.

After she had completed a bachelor degree in law, she applied to work in NGOs. The NGOs' main activity is to work with the community. She said that although she wanted to help her village, her job did not allow her to stay there. Nevertheless, she is proud to be able to work for indigenous rights and development. She hopes she can help her family and send her siblings to school with her salary.

⁶⁰ The indigenous students who come to study in the city tend to connect with each other through CIYA.

For confirmation, I went to meet her mother, and I learned that her mother was very positive about education. She worked very hard every day on the farm to support her child. Almost all of her children went to school. One of her sons quit school in the fourth grade, but still she was able to send him to study motor repair in the city. She was able to send her sons to study in Phnom Penh under the guidance of her oldest brother. She said that her parents died when she was young and her husband left her. Life was very hard for her without parents so she could not obtain traditional knowledge or went to school. So she wanted her children to live a better life than her. It seems that her strategy to have members studying in various fields has seemed to pay off, as her children began to earn income from their respective jobs.⁶¹

6.2.2.2. Education Path of PRY4

PRY4 is a 25-year-old Phnong man. He was born in Pu Rang. He first went to school when he was 10 years old with encouragement from his parents. They wanted him to be educated and get a good job. In the process, he also got encouragement and financial support from his relatives. He recalled the time when he had to leave the village to study at high school. His relatives found him a dormitory to stay in until he finished. In addition to the family support, he supported himself by collecting forest wood, digging holes, and other activities to pay for his education.

After he passed the grade twelve examination, he decided to continue his education so he could get a good job. He said he would not have finished school without help from donors and his family. In Phnom Penh, he got support from an NGO called ASPCA⁶² for the school fee and dormitory. In the process, his family sent around 100,000 Riels (around 25USD) every two months. He tended to visit his family twice a year during long holidays such as New Year and *Pchum Benh* Festival. He stayed for a week. At home, he helped his family with farming and

⁶¹ All PTY1 interview were conducted on October 10, 2014 in Phnom Penh

⁶² PRY4 could not recall a full name of this NGO

fishing. When he returned to Phnom Penh, his family gave him some money and food to eat. Fortunately, he acquired a Bachelor Degree in engineering in 2014.

After he had graduated from university, he found a job in an NGO. The NGO is called Wild Conservation Society (WCS). At first, he struggled to adjust to the working environment because he had to deal with land and forest issues. Gradually, he got used to the job because he began to see the importance of protecting the forest. He can also use his indigenous knowledge and language to assist the work with indigenous groups.

Currently, he is living in Keo Seima District, Mondulkiri Province. He returns to visit his family during holidays. Whenever he comes to the village, he encourages his siblings to study hard and especially to study a foreign language to get a good job.⁶³

6.2.2.3. Education Path of PRY3

PRY3 is a 25-year-old Phnong man. He is working for an NGO. He was born in Pu Rang and is now living in the provincial town. He first went to school when he was eight years old in 1998. His father, who was a policeman, encouraged him to go to school for the future. He finished primary school in 2003 and continued his education by going to study at a college called ‘Hun Sen Mondulhiri’ in the provincial town (at that time the lower secondary school was not built yet). He stayed in a dormitory provided by VFC. He only went back home once or twice a month because he did not have transportation means. Sometimes he needed to borrow his friend’s motorbike to return home to help the family with farming and finding fish. His father passed away while he was staying in the dormitory. He successfully finished grade 12 in 2009. After he had graduated from high school, he worked voluntarily for VFC for four months, and then IHIA⁶⁴ from 2010 to 2013 and MVi in 2013. Remembering his father’s advice, after he saved some money, he enrolled in a university in Kratie province. He chose to study a Diploma

⁶³ All PRY4 interview were conducted on October 10, 2014 in Keo Seima

⁶⁴ PRY3 could not recall a full name of this NGO

in Business Management. Unfortunately, he quit school in the first year because he could not follow the lessons, the place was far from his house, and economic issues.

He recalled the reason he could complete high school. He said the main reason was the will to acquire higher education, recalling father's advice. Second, he was fortunate to get to stay in a dormitory. He was provided with three meals day, instant noodles in the morning and a group lunch and dinner that he shared with 150 other students. He also received some learning materials such as pens and books, a blanket, and *Kantel* that they give once a year. However, it was not sufficient. Sometimes he had nothing to eat and had no learning materials. To support his education, he had to work part-time, such as by cutting wood, clearing land, planting trees, constructing houses, and many more jobs he could not remember.

His life became hard when his father passed away. His older sister had to return home to take care of the family. In 2012, just before he went to study at the university in Kratie province, his mother passed away. His two younger siblings had to stay in Children Village and study there because no one could take care of them. The Children Village is a child-friendly school sponsored by VFC and the government. After he got a job in an NGO he could support himself and his siblings' education.

Regarding Phnong's hardship, he stressed that the changes in Phnong culture have led to their hardship. First, because they do not respect their culture as they used to. They became individualistic when they had to work in different places far away from each other. Second is the loss of natural resources. Hence, they could not conduct traditional livelihood activities such as farming, fishing and hunting. Finally, they could not adapt to the rapidly-changing society.

At the moment, he just wanted to focus on his job with the NGO to protect the forest. In the future, if he has enough money, he wants to return to the village and open a small agricultural business, such as farming cash crops and growing fruit trees.⁶⁵

6.2.3. Other Education Paths and Job Prospects

6.2.3.1. Education Path of PRY2 from the Low Income Family: a University Student

PRY2 is 25 years old. He is the son of **PR2**, who is a widow, and from a low-income family. He said that he was indebted to his uncle, who insisted his mother send him to school. He first went to school when he was 10 years old. However, his mother was still reluctant until he asked her many times. His mother had already sent his sister to school, so she was reluctant to send another one. Since she is a widow, she needed labor, and at that time, she could not afford to send two children at once. Finally, she decided to allow him to go to school. He said Pu Rang village is better than other villages in Dak Dam commune because it has school from primary to the lower secondary level.

He said he picked up the lessons faster than others at school because of his maturity. After he successfully passed the college examination, he asked his mother whether he should continue to high school. If not, he would apply for the teacher training examination. He eventually decided to continue to high school with the help of his uncle, who lives in the provincial town. He finished grade twelve in 2012 at the age of 23.

While he was studying in high school, he originally planned to apply to stay in a dorm that is close to school, but the dorm was full. So he stayed temporarily at his uncle's house. However, he still had to walk to school and come back late at night. Fortunately, two months later, he learned that there were vacancies in the dorm because some students dropped out of school.⁶⁶ He

⁶⁵ All PRY3 interview were conducted on October 3, 2014 in Pu Rang village

⁶⁶ The bottleneck for the Phnong students is mainly in the lower secondary level. They have to leave the village to continue their studies because there is no school of this grade. According to one of the teachers, around 25 percent of the students in Pu Rang drop out and the number will increase as they progress to the higher grades.

moved into the dorm and met new friends who influenced him to engage in various subjects, especially learning English.

His passion for the English language started when he left the village. He got to learn English two hours a week because English is a subject being taught at lower secondary school. During the time he stayed in the dorm, he tagged along his friends to study English at a school in the provincial town. The place was sponsored by NGOs. Because of his enthusiasm for the English language and with encouragement from his friends, he decided to pay 15,000 Riels (almost 4 USD) a month to the English teacher.

With English ability, he could land his first job as a tour conductor. At the English school, he got to know a generous American man who is in charge of an organization that supports Phnong empowerment. The American man was very kind and introduced him to a foreign tourist group, and he only charged 10,000 Riels (around 2.5 USD) for the introduction fee. He could make 25 USD for a one-day trip to the forest in the Bou Sra area and 15 USD for a half day in Dak Dam commune to visit the locals and observe their traditional livelihoods. To improve his English, he kept practicing with foreign tourists. Hence, he was fortunate to meet generous people in the process of pursuing education. Furthermore, the language ability helped him to generate income to pay for his studies to a certain extent.

He recalled his experience during the grade twelve examination, when students were asked to pick a field: science or social science. He picked social science because he thought that the field did not have chemistry and physics; however, it turned out that both were included in the test. He said only 11 out of 25 students passed the examination from his room. Those who failed could not continue to study. Nevertheless, he recalled his excitement at passing the examination because he had studied math at a cram school.

After he has passed twelfth grade, he was fortunate to get support to study in Phnong Penh by an NGO named VFC. The NGO also supported seven other Phnong students during that time. The NGO financed him to study in Mekong University. Most Phnong students who were sponsored to study in the city mainly study social science, such as law, languages, and human rights. He chose to study English for teaching as his major because he had loved the language since he was young. The fee for Year 1 and Year 2 is 400 USD and for Year 3 and Year 4 it is 500 USD. Initially, he thought about becoming an IT specialist or studying law or English. He said he did not choose IT because he was not good with computers. He also did not choose law because he saw many Phnong had already chosen it. He said, without support from NGO, he would not have been able to study in Phnom Penh.

Although he got financial support to study English for Teaching in Mekong University, he still faces challenges to pay for his daily expenditures. He said he moved house three times to stay close to the university. At the moment, he shares a room with another student from Pailin province. The house rent costs 60 USD. The water and electricity cost 5 USD and 15 USD respectively. Hence, after dividing costs with his friend, he had to pay around 40 USD a month for the house, electricity and water. It was difficult in the beginning. In the first year, he asked his mother for around 25 USD to cover daily expenditures. He wanted to find a job, but he has no one to help him. He stopped asking for money after he got a job in a hotel called Nine Dragon as a receptionist in the second year. At first, he got 80 USD a month, and later he got 95 USD. Unfortunately, he decided to quit the job on October 3rd because he could not endure the workload. He said his shift ran from 9:30 pm until 6:30 am, and he had only two hours for sleep. His mother complained that he became skinny after he left the village. He thought it would be better to find a job in another place that he could do without hindering his education. Ideally, he

wanted to study from 5:30 pm to 9 pm and then go to work until morning so he can have enough rest in the morning. He wished he could study somewhere near his village so he could stay there.

Regarding his perspective about the future, he wants to go back to Mondulkiri province and apply for an English teaching position after he graduates. If not, another plan is to find a job in an NGO or work as a guide. Other Phnong students sponsored by NGOs mostly got jobs in NGOs in community development and human rights. He also said he wished to see his brothers and Phnong youth study beyond ninth grade and apply to study at the provincial teaching training college. His idea is similar to most Pu Rang villagers, who prefer their children to study to become a teacher after they pass the ninth grade exam because it is a well-known and well-established strategy among the group.⁶⁷

6.2.3.2. Education Path of PTY4 of the High Income Family: Becoming an Engineer

PTY4 is a 24-year-old Phnong man. He was born in Pu Treng village. Now he is living in Russey Chrum village, Koh Kong province. He is working as an electronic machine conductor for a Chinese hydroelectric company. His father is **PT7**, who is a civil servant and church leader, and considered to be a high-income family.

While he was in third grade, instead of studying in the village, his father sent him to study in the provincial town with help from the Catholic Church. The Catholic missionaries organize the school, and most students are from Catholic families. After he had finished primary school, he went to study in the provincial town because there is no lower secondary school in the village. Most students do not continue to study because the school is too far from the village. Fortunately, his father got contacted by USAID. They provided him with a place to stay, pocket money, clothing and learning materials. The support continued until he finished grade nine. When he went to high school, he got support from the Catholic Church, such as accommodation and three

⁶⁷ All PRY2 interview were conducted on October 2, 2014 in Phnom Penh

meals a day to study in the provincial town. Nevertheless, the food and learning materials were not sufficient, so he needed to ask for money from his family. He also engaged in wage work to save money for his education.

His father wished to see him get higher education and a good job, so he encouraged him to study in Phnom Penh. The church found him a sponsor to pay for his higher education, such as school fees and a place to stay. His family paid around 120 USD a year so he could finish the diploma in two years. After he got a job, he sent home around 50 USD a month. He said, “I used to ask my family for money. Now I can support myself and send them some money.”

Regarding community development, he stated that the reasons Phnong could not live well like before were because they lost their farmland and forest. Also, they are affected by climate change. In addition, Phnong youth nowadays have a different way of thinking from their elders. This could be good and bad for Phnong culture in the future.⁶⁸

6.2.3.3. Education Path of PRY5 from the High Income Family: Working in Japan

PRY5 is a 29-year-old Phnong man. He is the son of **PR12**, and considered as belonging to the high-income family. His father, who worked for the provincial district, wanted him to become educated and get a good job, so he registered him to study when he was 8 years old.

After finishing primary school, he went to study in the provincial town called Hun Sen Mondulkiri, which is around 20 km from his house. Fortunately, he got to stay in a dormitory and get two meals a day and some learning materials from an NGO. However, the food was not sufficient, and some of his friends became swollen because the meals do not contain enough nutrients. Hence, some students decided to quit school halfway through. After finishing twelfth grade, he got a scholarship to study for a two-year diploma in Phnom Penh. While in Phnom

⁶⁸ All PTY4 interview were conducted on October 10, 2014 by Phone

Penh, he relied mostly on his family and NGO support. When he did not have money to buy food, he would go back to the village and bring some food back.

After he had got a diploma, he did not continue his studies because the NGO stopped supporting him, and he did not have money to continue his education. He could not find a job in the city and eventually he returned to the village. One day, his friend, who works in the provincial municipality, told him that there was a job recruiting company called 'Kondo' looking for a trainee to work in Japan. He decided to apply to work and successfully passed the job screening. He went to work as a trainee in Japan for three years in the agricultural field. While he was in Japan, he regularly sent money he made to his family. After he had finished three years, he came back to Pu Rang village and continued farming. He used the money he saved to invest in cash crop farming and support his sibling's education.⁶⁹

6.2.3.4. Education Path of PTY2: Not Successful

PTY2 is a 27-year-old Phnong woman. She was born in Pu Treng village. Her current occupation is farming, and she occasionally does traditional weaving. When I heard about her story, I wondered why she did not get a job with the state or NGOs after she finished high school.

She finished high school in 2012 when she was 25 years old. She entered late because she went to primary school at the age of ten. In the process, she also repeated grades several times because she did not complete the school requirements. She also suspended going to school several times to help her family with farming. These factors are the reasons she graduated from the twelfth grade so late. After she completed ninth grade, she lost interest in studying, only to be encouraged by her parents and teachers who wanted her to finish twelfth grade.

Her family let her continue her education after a church representative approached her parents. Her parents wanted her to go to school, but they could not afford to support her, so they

⁶⁹ All PRY5 interview were conducted on October 2, 2014 in Pu Rang village

relied on the church. The church provided meals and the dormitory to study in Kompong Cham province. The church helped her with lunch and dinner and some financial support. In sum, the church covered almost 80% of the expenditure.

After she had gone to study in Kompong Cham province, she stayed in a dormitory. At school, she was also prohibited from speaking her language. During her stay in Kompong Cham, she relied on her family support for daily expenditures. Sometimes her family sent around five USD a month. However, it was not sufficient. She wanted to visit her family, but she could only go once a year during school vacation. She would stay for two months and help her family clearing land for farming and finding wood.

After she completed grade nine, she had to move back to Mondulkiri because the school did not provide an upper secondary level school. She got support from the same Catholic Church until she completed high school. After she had finished high school, she did not continue to university or get a job. She reasoned that she was not interested in education, citing that she was not smart and was too old to study. Another reason is donors only supported her education until twelfth grade. When asked about the education of Phnong youth, she saw education as important for the Phnong, and she advised her brothers to study to become teachers or NGO workers because farming is very tiring and not very productive.⁷⁰

6.2.4. Summary of Education Path of Phnong Youth

There are commonalities among Phnong youth in both villages regarding the access to higher education and getting a job. Most of them rely on the help of their family, development agencies, the state, and their will to study. However, before that, they look up to role models. The role models include their successful relatives, Khmer people, and the NGO staff. In most cases, their

⁷⁰ All PTY2 interview were conducted on September 28, 2014 in Pu Treng village

relatives are their first role models. As Phnong youth said, whenever they returned to the village, they constantly reminded and advised their siblings and relatives to keep studying for the future.

However, most Phnong youth faced a bottleneck when they enter lower secondary school. They have to make a decision to leave their village to pursue their education. Most will remain in the village if the risk is too high for them. The Phnong youth who traveled to study in the city or the provincial town relied on financial support from the family and the opportunities the state and development agencies offered. While busy with education, they have few opportunities to help their family with farming.

While in the city or provincial towns in the first year, most Phnong youth have to rely on their families' support for daily expenditures because they could not find part-time jobs. Parents will support their children by sending money every two or three months. Each time, they send around 50 to 75 USD from selling cash crops and livestock. If the money is not sufficient, they will provide dried food and rice to support their children. The families of Catholic Phnong who have a connection with the Catholic Church were able to find a scholarship program for their children and to reduce expenditures on education. However, the family needs to pay 120 USD a year to cover accommodation and meals.

The role of the state and development agencies is not significant in the early stage of education. However, their roles became prominent to support the Phnong youths who need to leave their village for higher education because of the lack of schools in their community. There are consistent responses that they got various sponsorships from development agencies, donors and the state. The students were provided with aid depending on the sponsors, such as scholarships, dormitories, learning materials and meals. The roles of these stakeholders become significant when they go to study higher education in the city or the provincial towns. Some students stated that they originally did not have the intention to study after the ninth grade. Then

they changed their mind after they were introduced to donors by NGOs or the Catholic Church.

Types of support from the state, development agencies and donors are shown in Table 38.

Table 38 Roles of Stakeholders (Excluding their Relatives)

Phnong youth code (Gender)	Sponsors for schooling	Sponsors for dormitory
PRY1 (F)	NGOs, state and donors	State
PRY2 (M)	VFC Donors from Australia	VFC
PRY3 (M)	VFC	VFC
PRY4 (M)	ASPA ⁷¹	ASPC ⁷²
PRY5 (M)	State and donors	NGOs
PRY6 (M)	ICC, VFC, State	State and Borei Komar
PTY1 (F)	NGOs and donors	Cambodian Law Education for Women
PTY2 (F)	Catholic Church	Catholic Church
PTY3 (M)	State and donors	State
PTY4 (M)	USAID, Catholic Church	USAID, Catholic Church

Source: Author, 2014

Although some Phnong students got scholarships, they still need to make a difficult decision whether they should go or not. First, the students may get a scholarship, accommodation or meals, but they still need to pay money for their daily costs. Some students recalled their difficulties during their studies. They had to find jobs to buy learning materials and pay for their daily life. Some students said the food was not sufficient, and some of them got ill. In the case of trainee teachers, they got both scholarships and accommodation, but they mostly relied on family support to cover daily consumption. Second, some Phnong youth are undecided about leaving their families, as they want to help them and are not familiar with the Khmer lifestyle.

⁷¹ Respondent could not recall the full name of this organization

⁷² Respondent could not recall the full name of this organization

Therefore, most Phnong youth are reluctant to go to study for higher education because of economic reasons, or what I prefer to call the self-reliance component. Only Phnong youth who got support from their families or found a part-time job in the city will continue their education. Also, those who continued studying received various supports from the state, development agencies and donors. A prime example is the education policy to recruit and support trainee teachers from remote areas. It requires only a nine-year-education to apply for the exam. Thus, with a two-year scholarship, those who could not afford to continue to high school after completing grade nine will likely to apply for the two-year teacher training at TTC.

6.3.Life after Acquiring Education and Employment

This section will provide a description of how education helps the Phnong families and how they change from a well-known job such as teacher to other jobs to obtain security. Also, their perceptions concerning the outcome of education will be explained in the following section.

6.3.1. Those Who Found Employment

For those who got posts as primary school teachers in a remote area, they are provided with a dorm and incentives based on the location and the grade they teach. They normally stay from Monday to Saturday and go back to teach again after the weekends. They noticed that after they had become a primary school teacher, their life gradually improved. They were able to purchase milled rice for daily consumption. Families who suffered from *leas leang*, a purification ritual involving sacrificing everything they possess when a family member passes away due to a freak accident, were able to rebuild their lives with the help from family members who work as teachers in the provincial town. For primary school teachers who got a post where their relatives reside, they were able to find land to farm during their free time. Hence, they can produce crops and get a salary at the same time. At the moment, life as a primary teacher has been beneficial for Phnong families who are looking for stable and extra income. One Phnong woman expressed

a desire to have her husband become a lower secondary school teacher. Her husband is an NGO worker, so they hardly meet each other. If he became a teacher, he could transfer to work closer to her. For her, teaching is better than working for NGOs because it is a stable job.

For those who went to study in Phnom Penh or the provincial town, they tend to get a job with the local NGOs. They got these jobs because the NGOs work with local people and they are in need of Phnong youth who have knowledge about the forest and the Khmer language. There is one Phnong respondent who got a job offer to work in Koh Kong province, which is more than 300 km from Mondulhiri. He studied engineering for two years with the support of his parents and the church. His main job is to control the machine for a hydroelectric dam. After he got a job, he has sent 50 USD every month to his parents. Those who could not get a job will stay in Phnom Penh for a while, and return to the village if their hard work does not bear fruit.

6.3.2. Those Who Could Not Find Employment

Those who did not get a job have to return to the village and revert to traditional farming. In some cases, acquiring education does not secure a job. Taking the case of a Phnong woman, after she completed high school, she got married and continued traditional farming. She rarely applied what she learned at school. She said she did not have a plan for what to do after she completed grade twelve. Also, she felt that she was too old to continue to university. Therefore, acquiring education did not guarantee a job. Similarly, take the case of a Phnong man who could not find a job after he completed a bachelor degree. He returned to the village and continued farming after spending time looking for a job in the city. Fortunately, his friend who works in the district office told him about a recruiting agency. He applied and got to study and work in Japan for three years. He always sent money to support his family, particularly for his siblings' education. He shared his livelihood experiences of working in Japan as follows:

There were four applicants and three passed the screening, while one applicant failed because he had hepatitis B. However, in the end, he was the only one who got selected to go to Japan. The company required him to study Japanese for six months and required him to pay 2,000 USD. Because he did not have the money, the company allowed him to borrow the money with guarantors from the village and commune officials. Then he went to study in Phnom Penh for six months before departing to Japan. He went to Japan in November, 2012. Before he went to Japan, he thought he would be cheated, but he was assured by a Japanese interpreter that he would be safe. When he arrived, he was guided by a Japanese staff member and there were people from the Cambodian community who came to greet him. Then they sent him to study Japanese for one month before the work began. He worked in agriculture, growing vegetables such as cabbage and onion. He worked from 8 am to 5 pm. The company provided a dorm and rice, but he needed to cook by himself. Each month, the electricity fee and house fee would be deducted from his salary. After the deduction, he received around 600 USD a month, and he could get more if he worked overtime. He could get an additional 50 USD when he worked overtime. He said the Japanese were kind to him. Only some Cambodian trainees who did not have a good education discriminated against him. The money he got, he sent to his family. With that money, he could support his sibling to go to high school.

At the time of this research, his sister was still working in Japan in the same agricultural sector as him. From his experiences, acquiring an education did not guarantee good future prospects. His unconventional approach to work in Japan has used different strategies from his parent and his villagers. That is, when he could not find a job after he completed school, he found a way to work in another country. Hence, with a bit of luck and the help of a friend, he got to work in Japan. Now every Phnong in Pu Rang village knows about Japan and imagines going to work in Japan to obtain livelihood security as he did.

6.3.3. Summary of Life after Acquiring Education

Those who pursue higher education have to go to study in the capital, Phnom Penh, or a provincial city. They mostly got jobs such as teachers and NGO staff. These jobs are well-known and practiced by the Phnong. There are also exceptions where some Phnong youth who had the same entry point then shifted to a not-as-well-known profession among the Phnong such as hotel reception, engineer or working abroad. In some cases, they returned to the village without pursuing job prospect.

Regarding job location, those who found employment tend to work outside the village. Six of the Phnong youth are working outside the village, and three of them are living in other provinces (see Table 39). Therefore, it shows that more Phnong youth are working outside the village to support their family.

Table 39 Education Background, Current Status and Address of Phnong Youth, N10

Code	Education level	Current status	Current residence
PRY1	Grade 9	Primary School Teacher	Pu Tru
PRY2	Grade 12	University Student	Phnom Penh City
PRY3	Grade 12	NGO Worker	Provincial Town
PRY4	Bachelor Degree	NGO Worker	Keo Seima
PRY5	Diploma	Farmer (been to Japan)	Same Village
PRY6	Bachelor Degree	College Teacher	Same Village
PTY1	Bachelor Degree	NGO Worker	Phnom Penh City
PTY2	Grade 12	Farmer	Same Village
PTY3	Grade 9	Primary School Teacher	Provincial Town
PTY4	Diploma	Technician	Koh Kong Province

Source: Author, 2014

7. Discussion

7.1.Awareness of Sociopolitical Changes

Their orientation towards education and job prospects is conditioned by the sociopolitical transformation in Cambodia. A good example is the revision of the education policy to recruit trainee teachers from the indigenous groups and remote areas. After the revision of the education policy (Geeves & Bredenberg, 2005) and the promotion of development agencies, the numbers of indigenous primary school teachers increased gradually. They started to see that education is a stepping stone to achieve a stable job. They see education as a means to obtain social security and become modern (Porath, 2010). Thus, they want to emulate the success of their relatives.

At the same time, they are also aware of the loss of opportunities. Their relatives who are working in state jobs, who are considered as successful role models, tend to remind them about the closure of windows of opportunity provided by the state. In fact, they are correct. The government is planning to stop recruiting primary school trainee teacher under the 9+2 system. If the policy is revised, they will need to complete twelfth grade instead of ninth grade to qualify for the exam.

This case shows that their orientation towards education is conditioned by the sociopolitical changes and grounded by their experiences, such as mutual support and networks to get information about the changes.

7.2.Redistribution of Assistance and Information among Families and Relatives

From the Phnong youth's experience, it was found that their relatives and networks have played an important role in their education. Relatives who stayed in the provincial town or live close to the provincial town are eager to provide a place for the Phnong children to stay until grade nine. After grade nine, their relatives provide valuable information concerning the trainee teacher exam. Besides, they tend to encourage the young people to get jobs as primary school

teachers before the state stops recruiting the trainee teachers. The wealthy relatives also provide financial support for their close relatives to study skills such as bike repair in Phnom Penh. Also, they help to find NGOs or donors to support their relatives to get an education. Therefore, the redistribution of assistance and information for education is conducted vertically from the experienced and wealthy educated Phnong relatives to other relatives. The vertical redistribution is not something new in Phnong culture, despite being an egalitarian society. The families that accumulated more will help the families that have struggled to achieve social security. In the commercial era, the redistribution remains intact, but the object of redistribution has changed to assistance and information sharing. However, it is too early to tell how long the vertical distribution can be maintained, because in the commercial era, new problems may not be solved solely through this practice. Besides, a wealthy Phnong family cannot redistribute help to many family relatives without reciprocity. It is worth mentioning that at the moment, the vertical redistribution has helped close relatives to acquire education. Thus, it cannot be considered as community redistribution yet because it is limited to close relatives.

7.3.Civil Servant Jobs and Other Job Prospects

The families of Phnong civil servants have an orientation toward education and obtaining jobs mainly as civil servants. Such jobs are considered as social security for the future. The wealthy families of civil servants tend to help their poorer relatives with assistance and information sharing in a form of vertical distribution. The poorer relatives tend to feel proud and assured to have relatives who are civil servants and treat them as role models. Therefore, they want their children to become civil servants too. Also, the jobs are thought to provide social mobility and give pride to the family. Although they share common livelihood orientation, they rely on inventive strategies to become civil servants. Besides, not all people can acquire a job as a civil servant. Due to family circumstances, conditioned by the sociopolitical changes and the

actors they coordinate with, the outcome of job prospects can be diverse. At the moment, apart from jobs such as police, soldiers and teachers, the Phnong also engage in jobs such as NGO staff, skilled workers, and even working abroad. The pursuit of education and job prospects will be explained in details in the next section.

7.4.The Pursuit of Education

Based on their narratives, the Phnong pursuit of education is based on four components. These components are a foundation for them to acquire education and job prospects. The four components are role models, self-reliance, networks and coordination, and a behavioral component. These components play different roles to generate or change the livelihood strategies.

Role models

A role model can be an individual or a group of people. It is a way of knowing who to look up to and what to do. Individuals use their strategic behaviors and interactions with various actors to adjust to changes and obtain security. When the individual strategies become successful, the villagers see the individuals as role models and follow similar strategies. For example, in the 1980s, the Phnong followed their role models to become soldiers. As in this research, the Phnong youth who became educated and obtained a job have become role models for other families.

Self-reliance

This is the ability to rely on oneself as well as find outside help to find ways to consolidate and change their old way of life for the better. They need to be able to support themselves to a certain extent to find ways to consolidate their livelihoods. When they can consolidate their livelihoods, they may invest in other livelihood activities for the future. For example, the high-income families and some average income families have more opportunities because they can afford to invest in their children's education. Apart from the families' self-reliance, this research witnessed the educated Phnong youth provide cash that they earned to their relatives so they can

apply similar strategies. In this sense, without self-reliance, it is difficult for the families to consolidate or change their livelihoods through education.

Networks and Coordination

The Phnong families need to obtain vital information and assistance from their networks and outsiders, such as finding information about teacher recruitment and access to information about scholarships. In this research, the Phnong youth who became role models helped their siblings and relatives to acquire information about education and job prospects. Apart from networks, they also need the support from development agencies and the state.

Behavioral Component

There are two behavioral components that act to balance the livelihood transformation. First is the consciousness of modernity and hard work. These are the values that lead them to adjust to the mainstream society, such as believing in hard work, converting to another religion, abandoning some traditions, acquiring education and jobs for social mobility, and so on. They believe that hard work will pay off. Some converted to Catholicism and abandoned or reduced certain traditional practices to save time and money. They believe in education and good job prospects to obtain social mobility. Those who possess these qualities are eager to strive for education and live a modern lifestyle.

The second component is cultural identity. Cultural values such as a matriarchal society, language, traditional cuisine, traditional practices, mutual help, ceremonies, and others help them in retaining the cultural identity and traditional security. For instance, when they cannot obtain a job, they return to live in the village and hold on to their traditional livelihoods until they have access to other opportunities. Therefore, it is a component that gives them a sense of belonging, a sense of support, and sense of attachment to the traditional way of life.

These behavioral components that include values towards modernity or cultural identity are shaped by the family's orientation. Although some people were raised in a family that is oriented towards the value of cultural identity, in most cases, they need to compromise their cultural values. They keep only the cultural values that help them to stay together and obtain social security, such as the practice of crop-sharing and borrowing, vertical redistribution, and others.

Explaining the pursuit of education

The research concludes that the pursuit of education of the Phnong youth is composed of the four key components. They look up to their role models that give assurance that it is not risky, but is fruitful and provides social security in the future. For example, the choice of primary school teacher is not a coincidence. The job became a shared goal because it requires only a nine-year education and two years of training. Thus, they do not have to invest in education beyond the ninth grade. To support their children in the city or the provincial town, they use their hard-earned money generated from cash crops and selling poultry. Without their self-reliance, they could not afford to support their children. Also, with access to networks and support from the development agencies and government, the Phnong youth are able to study beyond ninth grade. Those who succeed tend to adjust to the mainstream society and live the Khmer lifestyle because they work for the government and NGOs. Nevertheless, they maintain their cultural identity and return to their village for important occasions. Through education, some Phnong youth were able to shift from the shared goal of becoming primary school teachers and got jobs as engineers, NGO workers, college teachers, and even worked abroad. When they return to the village, they become role models for other families to follow. For those who do not succeed, they return to the village and conduct traditional livelihoods, and they hold on to the cultural identity component for a sense of consolidation and safety until they find another inventive strategy. Therefore, through their livelihood experiences, I have revealed and analyzed the strategies of

the Phnong youth and families to acquire education by pointing to the key four components. Their pursuit of education can be repeated as time goes by as long as they have the orientation toward education.

7.5.Trends

Amidst the sociopolitical and socioeconomic transformation, there are two trends that have emerged in both villages regarding education. First, the Phnong youth have to leave their respective villages to acquire higher education. Second, those who acquire a job need to live and work far away from their respective villages. In the first case, those who can afford to leave the village for education are mainly from the wealthy families of Phnong civil servants who have access to both resources and networks. The children of these families are well informed about their future and waiting for the right time with the help from the close relatives who are civil servants, the Catholic Church, NGOs, and donors. Those who obtained education and jobs needed to migrate to other areas where their jobs are located. They have no other options but to leave their lands untouched and could only come to help their parents with farming on national holidays. Although there are informants who send remittances to support their families, there are also consequences, such as the loss of social relations and sense of community. In particular, there are differences between the educated youths' way of thinking and the community members' way of thinking. The effect of out-migration for education and work needs to be considered to avoid the loss of social relations and solidarity that support their cultural sustainability.

8. Summary and Conclusion

The research has revealed that the strategic behavior is preconditioned by their historical repertoire, not just from the structural constraints alone. I witnessed that even the poorest of the families of civil servants positively viewed education and supported their children despite their socioeconomic conditions. They look up to their role models, who are mostly successful relatives.

Nevertheless, only a few of the families of civil servants can afford to acquire higher education. Apart from the role model component, they require self-reliance or cash income to support their children in the city or the provincial town. To achieve their goal, their everyday politics tell them to coordinate with various actors to formulate successful strategies. Apart from their family support, they also rely on the coordination with various stakeholders such relatives who are civil servants through vertical redistribution. Other stakeholders, such as the Catholic Church, donors, the state, and development agencies, play important roles after the Phnong youth complete primary school. Lastly, their strategies in pursuit of education are also conditioned by sociopolitical changes. I witnessed Phnong families adjust to the political changes from one regime to another so that they can obtain security.

Finally, the education acquisition and job prospects of the Phnong youth requires several components such as role models, self-reliance, networks and coordination, and the behavioral component. Also, their pursuit of education can be a repeated process and conditioned by the sociopolitical transformation in Cambodia.

Chapter Seven: Conclusion

1. Summary of Main Points

The research has revealed the livelihood patterns and differences in the group of families of Phnong civil servants to acquire social security. In this section, I would like to revisit the main findings in each chapter, as follows.

In Chapter Three, I revealed the political transformation in Cambodia that focuses on economic growth, and the stigma that treats IPs as uneducated and neglects their livelihoods. Despite lobbying from development agencies asking the state to respect IPs' rights, their livelihoods have been greatly affected starting from the early 2000s. IPs began to express their disappointment in the state and development agencies because they were provided with 'development' that is not suitable for them. I was able to describe the arena of the conflicts of interests that are concentrated on livelihood security. I concluded that the lack of attention to providing social security for IPs and the loss of natural resources forced IPs to depend on their locally-organized forms of social security amidst the rapid transformation.

In Chapter Four, I focused on the livelihood transformation of the Phnong in Pu Rang and Pu Treng village from the new millennium until 2014. I revealed various livelihood strategies to obtain social security. The state's policies to develop the northeastern plateau of Cambodia have brought Khmer migrants from the lowland and agricultural plantations to the area. They also brought the market economy, such as the cassava boom, and various livelihood activities into the indigenous areas. The Phnong villagers began to adopt cash crops into their farming system because they cannot rely only on traditional livelihoods amidst the sociopolitical and socioeconomic changes. With the booming of the cassava market, they began to earn cash and to purchase commodities. Most families considered cassava as an alternative to rice farming to

reduce hunger; however, they also need to get involved in many other livelihood activities. To generate cash income, they get involved in various activities not common in their villages while maintaining social relations with their community members in case they need mutual support. In particular the families of civil servants have found ways to obtain social security and transform their lives. They are the group that possess a modern mentality, got access to cassava, and engaged in livelihood diversification before other Phnong. In the end, I provided the justification that from their livelihood transformation, there is a manner and strategic behavior to reduce insecurity. Also, to understanding their livelihood transformation requires sociocultural components in addition the structural factors to explain their strategies to obtain security.

In Chapter Five, I revealed the characteristics of the families of civil servants as well as livelihoods heterogeneity that I found in Chapter Four. Through development discourse, the families of Phnong civil servants were able to establish their social security using strategies that are oriented towards self-insurance and mutual support. While the economic opportunities allowed them to accumulate cash to support their families, they also avoid too much reliance on the market economy. When they need help, they will rely on mutual support from their close relatives and networks, such as shared labor or crop-sharing and borrowing. This mutual help seems to benefit certain families that have specific strategies, access to rich relatives, and have many networks. With the cash accumulation and mutual help, some of them could generate money to buy rice for consumption. Some families even travel to Vietnam to visit their relatives and maintain their networks. Some families said they were able to generate savings and invested in their children's higher education. However, some families of Phnong civil servants are also struggling to cope with the changes. These families tend to have large families and small networks. They mostly rely on self-insurance, and because they are busy, they began to steer away from communal reciprocity. They also sold or intend to sell their ancestral lands to reduce

insecurity. These actions have brought fragmentation in the community between those who want to keep and those who want to abandon communal land ownership. Interestingly, the struggling families still view education positively and are eager to support their children's education. Therefore, despite some differences among the group, they shared a common orientation towards livelihoods, mainly towards self-insurance and mutual support, and are oriented towards educational achievement for the future.

In Chapter Six, I revealed the strategies in pursuing education and job prospects. I showed the various strategies of the Phnong youth from various backgrounds and the outcome of their education. In addition, I was able to show that the Phnong families followed their role models to acquire popular jobs such as in the civil service. They are being assured by their role models and want to replicate such success for the future. However, I also showed the need to be self-reliant with cash income to support their children's education and have networks and coordination with other actors, such as the state, development agencies, and donors. I have also shown that when they cannot become civil servants, the Phnong youth rely on their individual strategies and opportunities to become skilled workers, technicians, or workers abroad. They tend to work and live outside their villages. Although they live a modern lifestyle, they keep returning to the village for the Phnong's special traditional and cultural events. Those who could not obtain employment return to the village and rely on traditional livelihoods for survival until they find another inventive strategy. Finally, I focused on and discussed the pursuit of education among the Phnong youth that requires four key components, namely role models, self-insurance, coordination and networks, and behavioral components. Previous studies found that the economic background and the lack of infrastructure contributed to the low number of Phnong students at school and dropouts. In this research, I have added sociocultural components. That is, I looked into contexts such as their behavior and preferences that have influence on their

livelihoods and educational decisions. Their adjustment to the changes continues; however, those who have the four key components have more opportunities to acquire education.

Therefore, this dissertation revealed the livelihood strategies of the Phnong that have not been studied extensively in the Cambodia context. By borrowing the livelihoods concept and conceptualizing development alternatives, I revealed the life of the families of Phnong civil servants that strive for livelihood security by applying various strategies embedded in their historical repertoire, with coordination with various actors such as their relatives, state and development agencies, and conditioned by the structural factors. These strategies allow them to adjust to the changes and acquire education for the future. Regarding the contribution, this research provides an alternative approach to understanding the upland livelihoods in Cambodia. The research findings will be a great contribution to understanding their livelihoods, the revision of policy on IPs, and to design a suitable project to improve their livelihoods. I have created Table 40 below to explain the differences of livelihood strategies between general Phnong and the families of Phnong civil servants.

Table 40 Adaptation and Livelihoods Diversification among Phnong in the Past Decades

Year	Major policies	Phnong livelihoods (in remote areas)	Phnong civil servants livelihoods
1970s	-Civil Wars -Genocide	-Traditional Livelihoods (TL)	-TL + small trade with Khmer
1980s	-Liberation -Fighting Rebels	-TL	-TL + Soldiers and Police
1990s	-Market economy -Arrival of NGOs	-TL	-TL + Soldiers and Police -TL + Cash crop farmers
2000s-2014	-IPs Rights -ELC -Cash crops -Recruiting teachers	-TL -Cash crops	-TL + Cassava farmers -TL + Teachers, NGO staffs workers, wage workers, workers abroad, etc.

Source: Author, 2015

2. Implications for Livelihoods Research in the Upland Area

2.1. Attention to Livelihood Pathways

Livelihood pathways is a concept that tries to bring more meaning to people's preferences and stresses the strategic behavior that enables them to appropriate their life in the face of sociopolitical transformation, and reduce the reliance solely on economic framing. The concept also tries to disentangle regularities of livelihoods. In this research, livelihood pathways provide insights into individuals and groups' livelihood patterns of adjustment to changes such as individual strategies, moving up or down in status, and their future prospects. Perhaps the one of the most important contributions is explaining various strategies of Phnong families and youth in pursuing education amidst livelihood insecurity.

Therefore, livelihood pathways provide a great contribution to the livelihood studies as well as a study of the locally-organized form of social security. To be sustainable, it is important to respect the changes that people make. It is not appropriate to assume that people will remain the same and hope that the things that work today will last forever. Also, by taking a processual perspective rather than using a system, it can bring more understanding of the heterogeneities among the groups and reduce narrow categorization. Calling them the Phnong and labeling them as poor has already neglected their ability and the context behind their structural constraints. It is necessary to take into consideration their individual strategies, perspectives, habitual and non-habitual behaviors, and the structural factors that conditioned them.

2.2. Reciprocity among the Group Members

Past livelihood research found that the poor cannot reciprocate much with their kin and community, and thus they cannot strengthen and expand their networks. In this research, I found that some poor can reciprocate and exchange with their kin, especially under the horizontal redistribution form of social security between people with a similar socioeconomic status. It is a

form of mutual support that the Phnong have maintained until now to avoid unnecessary expenditures. For example, the low-income Phnong families can reciprocate through traditional practices such as crop- and labor-sharing because the activities do not require cash.

Concerning the high-income Phnong families, they maintain reciprocal activities with the low and average-income Phnong families through crop- and labor-sharing. The reciprocity mostly does not involve cash, and it is rather considered a gift to maintain mutual support and avoid the work and payment relationship. Sometimes, the high income invites their relatives who are low income who live in different area to help with the harvest and in return, they give a portion of their harvest to the low income. Therefore, reciprocity under the vertical redistribution is still visible in the Phnong community. However, the process might change in the future when cash becomes the main means of reciprocal exchange. As mentioned before, the high-income families began to pay the low-income families because they are busy with other livelihoods activities. The low-income families are also willing to work for cash. At the moment, hiring labor for farming has become a business-like activity where the price has been set.

This research has provided the situational of Phnong reciprocity that is specific for them. At the same time, it may contribute to the livelihood research in regards the reciprocity in the upland area. We witnessed how the wealthy Phnong still practice the vertical distribution of information and assistance by inviting relatives from other areas to harvest crops and in return, give them a portion of crops as a gift. This practice helps the poor families to reduce insecurities and at the same time, solve the problem of labor shortage and help maintain kinship relation.

3. The Role of Phnong Identity and Membership

3.1.Identity

Identity is a means for a group of people to identify who they are as a part of a community. For some marginalized people, their identity is based on the perception of a dominant group. To

counter this lack of identity, there are two intertwined processes. First, they rely on adaptive strategies and construct internal processes within their communities to assert their identity against the stereotype. Second, in the process, they also attempt to create a new identity by blending the elements of ethnic and dominant group cultures, such as welcoming technological and infrastructural changes, and emphasizing the education and knowledge of the dominant group (McCaskill & Rutherford, 2005, p. 151). Therefore, identity is associated with the process of maintaining who they are, and on the other hand, identity is associated with the way of adjusting to mainstream society. The process of identity assertion and adaptation is rather subtle, rather than an act of power struggle and violence.

In this research, most Phnong identified themselves as subsistence farmers rather than civil servants after I had asked them about their jobs and how they perceive themselves. I questioned what the reason was behind this answer. I found that the image of a farmer helped them to maintain social relations with the community. Being called a farmer also allowed them to interact and negotiate with state and development agencies concerning aid and support. Besides, they attempt to assert their identity as a farmer rather than tribal and savage people to adjust to mainstream society. It is exemplified by the eagerness to learn the national language for conducting trade (Bourdier, 2009, p. 567). Therefore, the Phnong attempt to assert their identity as farmers to maintain social relations with their community, negotiate with the state and development agencies, create a non-stereotypical and clear identity, and at the same time, adjust to mainstream society. At the same time, they assert their identity as the Phnong to maintain their community bond for mutual support that contributes to the continuation of their existence. Therefore, they still maintain some values, such as beliefs, language, and meaningful practices for them.

For the Phnong youth who went to study in the city, a minority of the Phnong youth hide their identity because of the stereotypes towards the Phnong, but the majority of Phnong youth do not. When someone misunderstands their culture and tradition, the Phnong youth are ready to explain the misconception to them. Regarding Khmer culture, they said they have an admiration for it. It is embedded with educational value and modern knowledge that do not exist in the Phnong culture. Therefore, they are eager to learn from the Khmer culture. Gradually, they have joined the mainstream society and have a sense of responsibility for the nation and to develop the country along with the Khmer people. At the moment, most Phnong youth who are educated tend to work as soldiers, police, NGO staff and teachers. In the future, more Phnong will join the public service and contribute to the development of their community and the country.

3.2. Community and Membership

When a person or a group of people are considered as a part of the community, they are bound by the social relations and commitments to activities such as mutual help and participating in communal activities. Being a part of the community means that they are eligible to obtain benefits from the social security provided by the community. For instance, the Catholic Church has been helpful for the Catholic Phnong to secure livelihood security and education. The traditional Phnong rely on traditional practices such as crop-sharing and –borrowing for social security, and only those who are considered as a part of the community will be invited to join the practice. Being a part of a community also means that they have to give back to the community through participation in labor-sharing activities and avoid causing discontent in the community. However, when a person is considered not a part of the community, or if he/she decides to leave the community, they will struggle to maintain their livelihoods and have to rely on their self-insurance as much as possible. In addition, they have to form their ways of life to adjust to the

change because they no longer belong to the community, such as in the case of **PR16**, who wants to sell the ancestral lands.

Being a community member, he/she is required to participate in reciprocal activities. As mentioned earlier regarding the horizontal redistribution from the wealthy to the poorer families, the families of civil servants have reciprocated help and gifts, but at the same time, they also expect social security in return when they get older. According to de Jong's (2005) study in Indonesia, civil servants tend to contribute to kin by giving help and gifts to ensure social security for the future. When they get older and resettle in the village, they will depend on kin who they used to help. They see long-term security in the social relations between the civil servants and their kin and villagers. Thus, families tend to invest in their children's education in the hope that at least one family member becomes a civil servant and generates similar security. However, this type of security may weaken the social security networks among the villagers. The process is seen as a mutual security provision between villagers and civil servants; however, the latter often benefit more from social relations (de Jong, 2005, p. 20). In Chapter Five and Six of this research, I revealed a similar form of social security where the Phnong families invested in children's education in the hope of following in the successful footsteps of their relatives who are civil servants. The families who are well-off tend to reciprocate and help the poor relatives in the hope of the social security. Therefore, being a community member entails obligation, and the families of civil servants may benefit more from their reciprocal activities with the poor Phnong families because the more they can reciprocate the more they can ask for social security from the poor Phnong families. However, an obligation is also a burden for a few families that cannot reciprocate. Thus, when they cannot fulfill their community role, they need to rely on their inventive strategies to survive. In this finding, the absence of the sense of community can fall into the consciousness of modernity that is one of the components that instigate the change in

their livelihoods. Those who cannot follow the institutional patterns of the community need to find other ways by applying various strategies, and if they are lucky, they will become successful.

3.3.Individualism and Collectiveness

Historically, IPs' decisions are collective under hierarchical status, from elders to villagers and from parents to children. In other word, IPs are cautious about the acquisition of knowledge that may compromise their culture and the stability of their collective system. There are cases where an individual left the village and returned with new skills and was dissatisfied and neglected by the villagers. For example, the villagers do not see raising animals for sale as a fair business (Bourdier, 2009) in the sense that it does not benefit the community. However, fragmentations are inevitable in the fast-changing society.

When asked about their goals, the families of civil servants said they wanted to be free from hunger and improve their lives. They tend to use the Khmer lifestyle as a benchmark. As mentioned before, they strive to reduce livelihood insecurities, and some families began to adopt the Khmer lifestyle, such as consuming commodities. Also, they began to value the role of education. Regardless of socioeconomic differences, all families of civil servants consider education to be important and are eager to send their children to school because they want their children to follow in the footsteps of their relatives who are civil servants. Notably, they are eager for their children to earn higher-education degrees because they see long-run benefits. However, the realization of their goals compromises their culture and traditions. As mentioned previously, the families of civil servants in Pu Rang have halted rice farming, a family has converted to Catholicism, some families had sold and intended to sell their ancestral lands, some requested private land ownership, and most of them engaged in wage labor. These activities signify the loss of their collectiveness, and they are becoming individualistic. Although they still have social security in the form of mutual support, it is evidenced that the mechanism is applied

only to close relatives. Without proper intervention to maintain the sense of community, the Phnong will lose their traditional social security. The research also sees that individualism is also one of the components of the consciousness of modernity and hard work.

4. The Future Trajectory of the Villages

4.1.Livelihood and Cultural Changes

One of the main reasons the Phnong began to change their livelihoods is that they started to lose their natural resources. There are stories about conflicts between villagers and outsiders. There is a well-known story that all Phnong in Ou Reang district remembered of when a Chinese company came to plant pine trees on their ancestral lands. Although they complained to the authorities, the solution was rather unfair for them. They either had to accept the monetary compensation for 350 USD a hectare or they had to accept another plot of land far away or worth less than their previous lands. Those who did not agree were forced to accept it by the authorities. Another story is the illegal logging of resin trees by the Vietnamese and the authorities. The solution ended with a mere compensation to the owners of 20,000 USD. They knew that the money was worth less than the actual trees they lost, but they had no other choice. When natural disasters strike them, they conclude these disasters were due to the Chinese and Vietnamese companies that angered the forest spirits. They could only ask for forgiveness from the spirits. At the moment, the Phnong have to exploit the forest to survive. Logging has been another livelihood strategy for Phnong youth. Although the state prohibited them from logging valuable trees, they have to disobey the regulation. **PRY2** said the villagers could not do that without the permission from the local authorities, as they also benefited from the logging. Sometimes, the authorities told the villagers that it would be better for them to log valuable trees before all the forest is transferred to foreign companies. Therefore, they could not rely solely on the traditional livelihoods any longer.

The educated Phnong youth who is considered as the future pillar of their community, gave opinions that their community needed to compromise their traditions and culture for development. They needed to change the strict traditional practices and unnecessary practices to avoid cost and time. For instance, they need to reduce drinking wine and smoking, learn about gender issues, and abandon strict traditions such as Leas Leang. They need to learn to make fertilizer because their lands are not fertile and they cannot shift their land anymore. Farming diversification, such as fruit trees and raising poultry, will help the villagers. In summary, they need to learn how to adapt to modernity and improve their lives.

In Pu Treng village, villagers witness the arrival of Khmer people from lowland areas, mainly since 2010 and the merchants who come to sell their products in the village. With the availability of electricity and newly built infrastructure, more people will be eager to come to live in the village. At the moment, the community has put effort to educate their members not to sell their residential and ancestral lands to outsiders; however it is uncertain how long this effort can last. Therefore, the villagers will need to prepare for the changes in their community. They need to maintain their identity and livelihoods survival, and at the same time, learn to live alongside the newly-arrived Khmer people.

4.2.The Roles of the Families of Civil Servants

The Phnong families of civil servants constitute less than a third of the families in both villages. Nevertheless, their livelihood diversification and pursuit of education and job prospects have been influential for some villagers to follow.

Their orientation and livelihood choice reflect the adjustment to the mainstream society while maintaining some aspect of their culture and tradition. These qualities allow them to obtain substantial livelihood improvement. As witnessed in the findings, these families have occupied jobs in the mainstream societies because of their strategies and the pursuit of education for the

future. As of now, they already occupy some of the state jobs, such as member of the commune council, soldier, police, teacher, and also non- state jobs such as NGO staff and skilled workers.

Because the families of civil servants have acquired jobs in the mainstream society, they have become the bridge or the mediators between outsiders and the community. As mentioned before, the state and development agencies tend to approach these families when they need to conduct any project. These families act as information distributors to other members as well as the community informants for the state and development agencies. Gradually, their roles have become influential in the community as other members look up to the families of civil servants to improve their livelihoods. In particular, the community members admire their livelihood improvement and educational achievement. Having said that, not all families of civil servants have obtained livelihood security. Some families are struggling to make ends meet because they could not balance modernity and tradition and are conditioned by several constraints. They became individualistic and busy due to their lack of labor, which leads to a reduction of mutual support. Despite these differences, the families of civil servants remain adept at livelihood improvement and the pursuit of education that constitutes their orientation and livelihood goals.

Therefore, despite their small number in the community, these families have been at the forefront in dealing with the sociopolitical changes by relying on their experiences and coordinating with various actors. Their experiences of coordination with various actors and their knowledge within and outside the community make them prominent mediators between the community and outsiders. They also have become the role models for other members of the community. As of now, they have already occupied positions in the commune council, and it is a matter of time before they will become representatives of their community at the central government level.

5. Recommendations

5.1. Reviewing and Revising State Policy

Soon after Cambodia opened its market in 1993, some officials suggested that IPs should switch from swidden agriculture to paddy rice cultivation or work on industrial plantations. At that time, swidden agriculture was viewed by the Cambodian officials as negatively affecting the environment. Moreover, the government thought that working on industrial plantations would help develop IPs' livelihood because keeping swidden farming would not provide any progress (Colm, 2000, p. 38). The government did not take into consideration that IPs do not like farming paddy rice, nor did the government have a clear policy to distribute paddy land to them. Instead, most paddy lands were bought by non-indigenous peoples for agribusiness (Ibid, pp. 38-39). It highlighted the development-based policy which rarely benefits the IPs' livelihoods. Instead, it caused more damage to their subsistence livelihoods.

The problems with the state's actions can be summarized as follows: 1) introducing cash crops which do not easily adapt or giving little time for adaptation. This approach might work in other areas due to geographical location, but not in the two selected villages; 2) economic policy favoring the industrial plantations rather than the locals; 3) lack of qualified field staff in dealing with the locals with cultural sensitivity; and 4) no follow-up research project and relying heavily on NGOs. The above-mentioned points caused disappointment among the Phnong. Thus, some Phnong groups have to adjust to the sociopolitical transformation by forming their own strategies of social security.

The families of Phnong civil servants have adjusted their livelihoods to the sociopolitical transformation and semi-integrated into the mainstream society. However, their livelihoods also are faced with problems and challenges, such as land loss to ELC, crop damage due to climate change, competing with Khmer merchants, and lack of public services. Thus, they still need

support from the state and development agencies to battle new emerging problems and challenges. Some points that need to be considered are as follows:

- There is no integrated land usage project in either village except for the regulations stipulated in the land law and other regulations such as the sub-decree on the procedure of communal land titling 2009 and the establishment of lists of areas prone to environmental impacts and the list of IPs. An integrated project will be suitable for communities located in a geographically difficult location for paddy rice farming and that cannot rely on subsistence livelihoods. Because there is no clear project and knowledge integration, the Phnong only farm cash crops for self-sufficiency and do not think that intensification or expansion of their farms is necessary. With a long-term integrated land usage project to equip them with aid and technical assistance, the IP community could allocate and implement it on specific land for intensive and extensive cash crop farming to increase their production. Similarly, NGOs that are a replacement for the state service at the local level should also reconsider a short-term program and follow it up with an integrated project that strives to stimulate the farming of cash crops and fruit trees to boost the economy, especially in Pu Rang where their vital livelihood source is almost entirely cash crops.
- The state also should review policy to keep up with the social transformation of the Phnong or indigenous society. The state seems to disregard the current livelihood conditions of the IPs, and instead, agricultural plantations are allowed to be established for economic growth. The rapid influx of migration from the lowland has changed the landscape of the IPs' village and farming system. Adding to this, they have to compete with the Khmer people who have more capability to farm. Thus, without a proper policy revision, there will be problems in the future because the

Phnong gradually have become reliant on cash crops. Similarly, regarding the indigenous community identification, it was found that one of the criteria on the evaluation sheet requires the indigenous group to be animist. However, in reality, not all indigenous minorities practice animism. Hence, more in-depth studies about IP livelihoods and their social transformation are needed to tackle the problems and to contribute to policy development.

5.2.Alternative Approaches for Development Agencies

From the findings in Chapter Three, the reasons for the conflicts of interest are development agencies overstate the socioeconomic conditions of the poor Phnong and hold stereotypes towards them. In addition, they tend to claim that their approach is “participation based on volunteers and willingness”, but it turns out that only some participants joined the projects and meetings. By looking further, it is found that most participants are not necessarily poor. The wealthy Phnong have more connections with NGO staff and will show up regularly. On the contrary, the poor Phnong do not join because they have to work or face starvation. In this sense, should development agencies reconsider their approach and try to focus on the various Phnong families? These findings have shown that despite governmental development projects at the village level, the poorest people are often excluded, and the projects rarely gives them benefits they need (Zeuner, 1996 cited from de Jong, 2005, p.19). Hence, the real poor are excluded, and only the motivated wealthy Phnong join the project.

Development agencies should also address the cultural behavior of the Phnong and their networks. It is found that to strengthen their participation, we need to start by observing their behavior. In most cases, the Phnong people have a habit of observing and following their relatives and networks. They also rely on their relatives and close networks for confirmation before decision making. For instance, if most of their relatives do not find education important or

pursue higher education, they will also not be eager to pursue education. This aspect of social networks should be included in the project planning. Targeting their networks will help to understand what they want or do not want. Focus group discussion and key informant interviews need to address the social relations among their networks because the normal information gathered will not be sufficient without a better understanding of their networks.

5.3.Improving Education and Skills

Skilled work is suitable for the community in the development stage, especially in Pu Treng. Young Phnong who possess a skill such as bike repair and house construction could earn cash to support their family. In contrast, in Pu Rang, there are few skilled people. They said that Khmer people make a lot of money from bike repairing because they know how to do it. They wanted to follow the Khmer livelihood example, but they are not equipped with skills and tools to open their own business. As one of the Phnong youth said, she wanted to open a hair salon in her village after she learned the business from a Khmer family. She thought that the business would do well, especially during the wedding season, because there is no hair salon in her village. Most Phnong in her village have to travel far to find a salon. However, she could not afford to do it.

Therefore, to reduce reliance on Khmer merchants and to boost jobs for Phnong youth, useful skills are vital for livelihood improvement and community development. More jobs can be created in the community that will not necessarily harm their cultural sustainability. Specifically, if boys decided to drop out for personal reasons, development agencies or the state should start a project to develop skills, so they can use them to sustain their livelihoods.

5.4.Balancing the Rapid Transformation

While the Phnong applaud the opportunities from economic market, they are also dissatisfied with the unwanted opportunities brought by opportunists such as through ELC, the influx of migration from the lowland, and the merchants. Similarly, while they applaud the law that

protects their rights, the same law also limits their access to land and forest. The socioeconomic transformation also created a socioeconomic gap between those who succeed and those who struggle, which leads to communal fragmentation. There are families that could not take advantage of the transformations and struggle to survive. Therefore, it is necessary to pay attention to different groups of people and the effects of the political transformations on them.

Regarding their social adjustment, two trends emerge in the respective villages, such as leaving the village for higher education and a job. Most higher education institutions and job prospects are located in the capital city or provincial towns. Therefore, the Phnong families have to send their children away for higher education and job opportunities. Despite several positive outcomes, such as livelihood improvement and social mobility, their social relations and the sense of solidarity among their ethnic group are gradually declining. As already exemplified in the case studies, the Phnong youth hardly understand about their farming production, some of them work outside the village and hold a different mentality from their elders. Therefore, more programs should be implemented to encourage the sense of solidarity among commune members and the Phnong youth to reduce social fragmentation. Also, the state and development agencies should focus on facilitating the access to higher education around the villages and create more jobs opportunities in the community. By doing so, they can remain in the community, and at the same time they help develop their community.

5.5.Preventing Phnong from Selling Ancestral Lands

If the community has a strong collectiveness and solidarity with enough resources to generate income for livelihoods, they are not eager to sell their lands to outsiders (Fox, McMahon, Poffenberger, & Vogler, 2008). Furthermore, with the land-use planning under the intensive focus of NGOs, the community members tend to understand their rights and responsibilities in setting limits and maintaining the portions of the lands for swidden agriculture and protected

forest (Fox, Vogler, & Poffernberger, 2009, p. 327). Hence, a village that has intensive assistance from NGOs to strengthen indigenous institutions and land-use planning will be able to maintain their natural resources and cultural institutions.

If that is the case, both villages are heading down a difficult path. Both Pu Rang and Pu Treng do not have clear land-use planning as of this research. According to an unofficial survey by a local NGO, half of the villagers did not want to join communal land titling. This fact reflects how serious the problem is among community members who want and do not want this system. Pu Treng encountered development later than Pu Rang, and this factor might put the village in a better position than Pu Rang village regarding land-use planning for future resources and forest protection. As mentioned earlier, in Pu Rang, there were controversies with the Chinese company on land issues and the illegal logging of the Vietnamese. If there is no will and action from the state and development agencies, and if there is a decline of village solidarity, the villagers will have to sell their ancestral lands to get cash for survival. The research recommends a project intervention to strengthen their social networks and their communal identity as a way to reduce the community fragmentation that leads some members to leave the community and sell their ancestral lands. The state needs to help those who have few workers and have little land by helping them to increase their production. At the same time, it should be done carefully without fully compromising their traditional practices and ancestral forest lands.

5.6. Realizing the Needs of the Phnong

The Phnong used to rely on subsistence livelihoods for self-sufficiency; however, the rapid transformation led them to exploit their resources and adapt to cash crops. At the moment, they have become reliant on cash crop farming. The unstable market price of cash crops led them to request the government to help to stabilize the market, so they can sell their products easily. Also, most Phnong families have trouble finding water in the dry season. They request the government

to build wells for them. The wells will be useful for the Phnong to conduct daily life activities as well as farming. They also face a labor shortage and a lack of equipment for farming. Providing them with farming equipment will help to reduce their burden and help them to a maximum harvest. As Pu Rang villagers said before, they would use agricultural chemicals if they were given for free and taught how to use them correctly so they would not harm their health.

They also wish to receive cash crops other than cassava to diversify their crops. They do not believe that mono-crop farming will provide social security. They learned from their experience and observation that farming a little bit of everything and farming the marketable crops will ensure their livelihood security. As of now, they see that rubber, pepper, and sweet potatoes are the likely candidates in addition to cassava farming. At the same time, they also ask for the protection of their ancestral lands and forest for their cultural survival.

Finally, the government needs to speed up the communal land titling process to protect them from losing more ancestral lands. They also hope that the government will build more public infrastructure and increase job opportunities in the community because more Phnong have become educated and capable of working. Lastly, they hope that the government will focus on helping the Phnong to increase their farming production because the Phnong cannot rely only on subsistence livelihoods anymore. They hope the government or development agencies will assist them by providing experts, farming equipment and building irrigation.

6. Final Remarks

First, I have achieved my aim to reveal the Phnong's livelihoods and their adaptation to the changes. Second, I have demonstrated that the Phnong are active participants that shift their preferences and means to adjust to the rapid transformation in Cambodia. Their strategies are grounded in their historical repertoire and conditioned by structural factors. The families of civil servants have formed livelihood pathways that enable them to improve their livelihoods and

acquire social mobility through education. Within the group, I have also unraveled different cases of Phnong families and how some families may perform better than others.

At the moment, the state and development agencies provide aid and technical assistance based on what they perceived as ‘the poor’ and based on the identity and stereotype of ‘the Phnong’. Thus, they neglected the fact that there are various forms of socioeconomic conditions among the Phnong, and they should reconsider their aid recipients. Specifically, within the Phnong community, there are those who can adjust well and those who cannot. I found that there were families that benefit greatly from projects, while some families were ignored by the projects. Some families are prone to conduct short-term strategies that are risky because they could not rely on the traditional social security system, and due to the structural factors such as lack of networks, families with many young and old members, and the inability to be self-reliant. These families do not join the projects or community meetings for a reason. Therefore, the structural factors and sociocultural components of the individual families and their narratives are essential information to understand their livelihood conditions, especially to assist the vulnerable families.

Despite the notion of people empowerment and human-centeredness, the rights-based approach and overused livelihoods perspectives need to reconsider their conceptual approach. They should refrain from overstating IPs as poor and passive and in need of development from outsiders. Instead, human-centeredness should take into consideration the values, beliefs, preferences and security mechanisms that are the outcomes of their adjustment to development. Therefore, under the sociopolitical changes and the market that is the instigator of changes, a new agenda requires an alternative concept and topic to approach the local people differently from the agenda of decades ago. In this research, I have shown several topics, such as migration

for adaptation and youth movement that are emerging in the indigenous villages of northeastern Cambodia. The topics are interesting for revealing livelihood strategies in a globalized era.

Finally, any development project should not take lightly that applying a simple statement of livelihood sustainability will work in the indigenous context. By taking the appropriate approach to understanding their sociocultural components such as culture, ideologies, and their view of modernity, there will be a great contribution to research, project design implementation, and policy development in the upland areas. Future research regarding IP livelihoods should also focus more on the heterogeneity among groups, apply longitudinal studies, and take into consideration the dynamic of local transformation and between the local and the political sphere.

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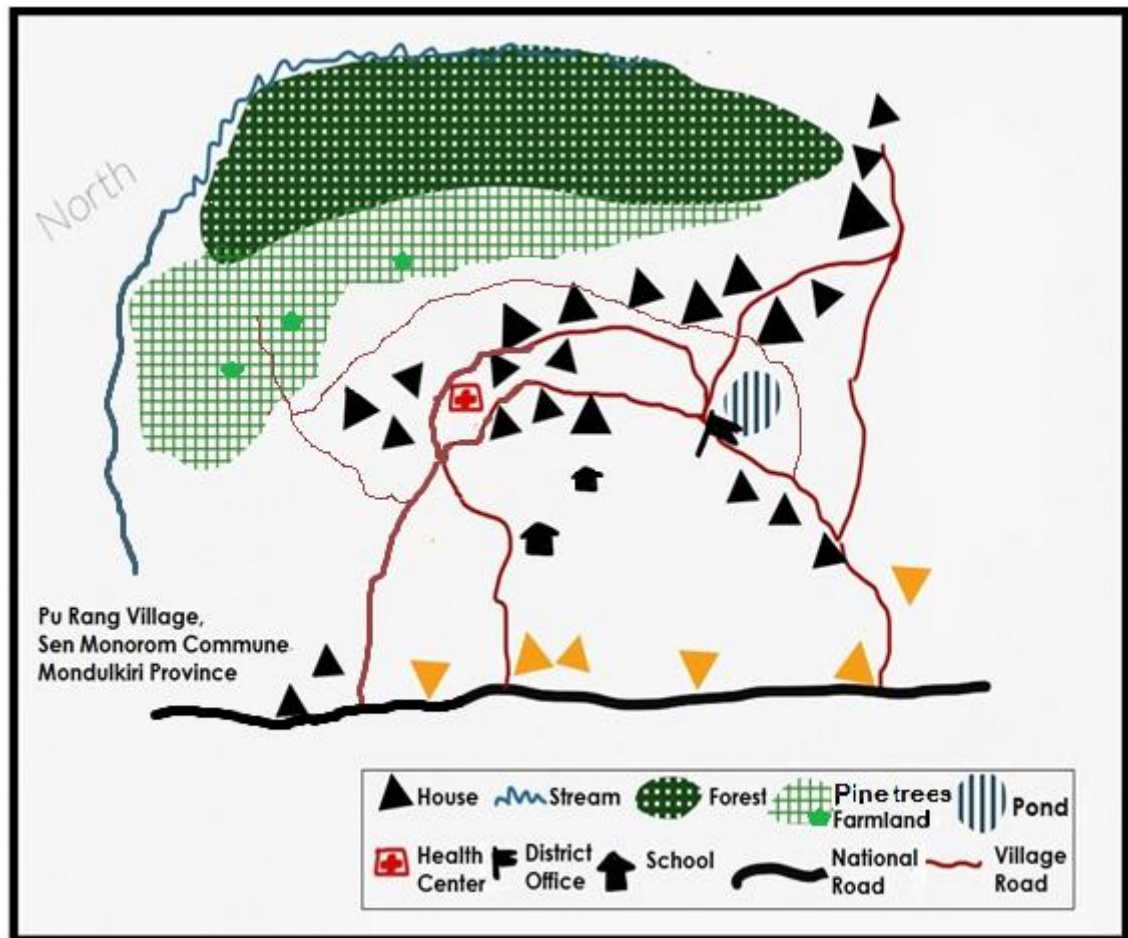
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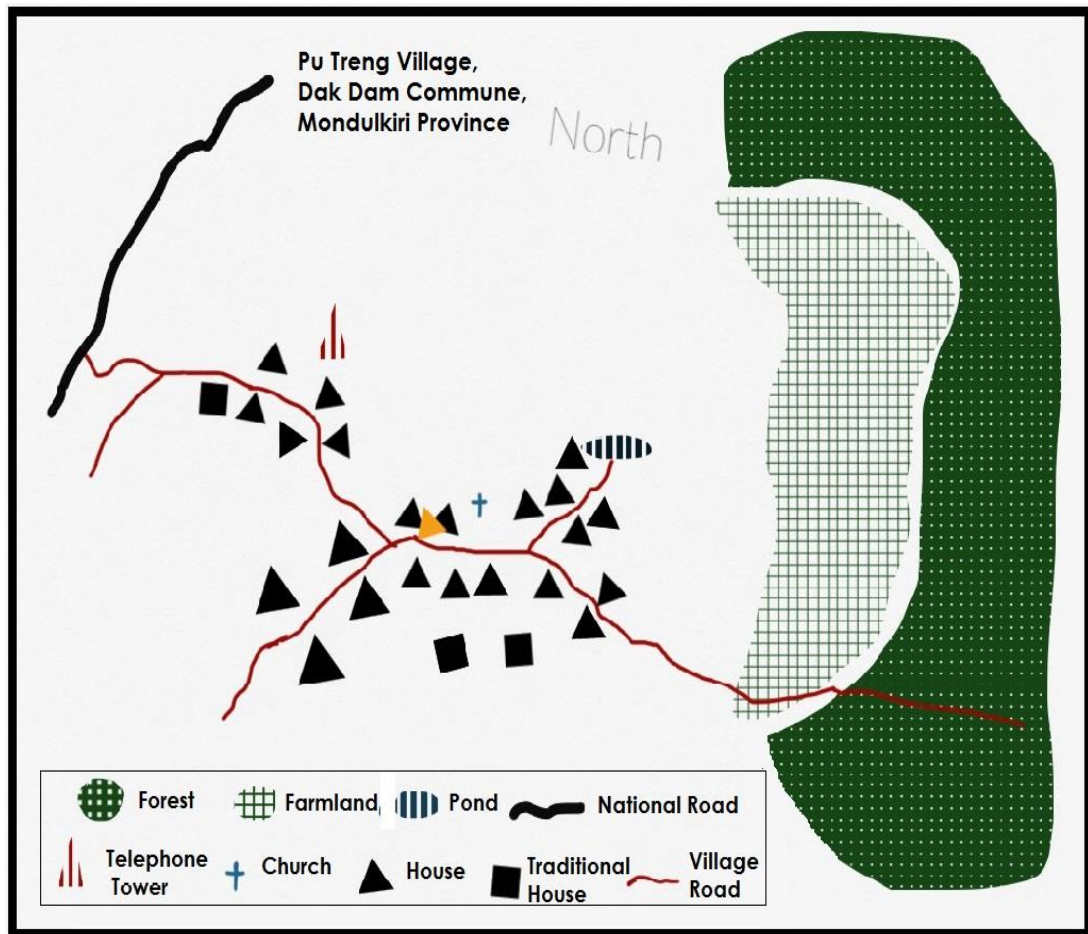
Appendices

Appendix A: Pu Rang Village Map



Source: Author, 2014

Appendix B: Pu Treng Village Map



Source: Author, 2014