WHERE DO YOU GO?
Migration and Urbanisation in Cambodia

Cover: The rural suburbs of Phnom Penh (Photo: Matti Kummu).

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Executive summary

The study about urbanisation and migration in Cambodia is ninth report in the series of WUP-FIN Socio-Economic Studies on Tonle Sap Lake. As in WUP-FINs modelling project, the main aim of this study is to understand the interconnections of socio-economic and environmental factors and their impacts on the Tonle Sap area. The interconnections between villagers’ livelihood, environmental changes and migration are under great interest in this study. Particularly, the study focuses on the reasons behind the migration (rural push and urban pull), destination of the migration and the type of the migration in Cambodia generally and more specifically in the Tonle Sap area.

Both quantitative and qualitative data were used in the study to give a wide perspective of migration. WUP-FINs team conducted six socio-economical field studies (also called participatory village surveys) around Tonle Sap Lake (2002) and three of them concentrated also on migration. These field studies offer essential information and important grass root data. Cambodian Population Census and Oxfam studies about migration in Cambodia on the other hand gave great quantitative data to the analyses.

The study analyses migration and urbanisation in Cambodia with a special focus on the Tonle Sap Lake area. This wide perspective was chosen to understand properly the migration flows from the villages around Tonle Sap and the destinations of migration. The time perspective in the studies was relatively long but focused mainly to the present as well as future migration ignoring migration due to political enforcements in 1970s and 1980s and the related return migration especially in the beginning of 1990s.

The studies showed that during the five years periods (1993-1998 Census, 1997-2002 WUP-FIN) one to three percent of the population from the provinces and villages around Tonle Sap Lake have migrated. The main destinations for these migrants were Phnom Penh, Thailand, Koh Kong, Battambang, Siem and Banteay Meanchey. The field studies pointed out that villagers were not willing to move and were rather pushed from the villages due to different reasons. These elements, like decrease of the rice yield and fish catch, floods, droughts, irregularity of the rainfall, decrease of water quality and natural resources, together and alone formed the rural push, which made the living in the villages unbearable. From this fact we can draw conclusions that urban pull is not the dominant force of migration in Cambodia but rather it is the difficult situation in the villages that forces villagers to move. Generally, cities or other provinces do not have special attractiveness for Cambodian people although young population is more affected by the urban pull.

Predicting future migration from the Tonle Sap Lake WUP-FIN team added a special imagination part to the field studies. In this study villagers imagined to which provinces or cities they would move if their life in the villages would end impossible. The answers were clear, most of the villagers would like to move to bigger cities where they already have friends or relatives living. Rumours, stories and gossips of different provinces and cities were very important sources of information for the migrants when they were choosing their new destinations. The possible future migration destinations for the villagers were Phnom Penh, Poipet and Krong Pailin, which attracted villagers with business opportunities, garment industries and free, mine-cleared land.
Even though majority of the migration in Cambodia takes place between rural areas the percent of migration to and between urban areas has been relatively high. In five years (1993 to 1998) the net-migration to urban areas was over one tenth of the total migration. In reality, urbanisation is even higher due to the seasonal migration, which is very strong in Cambodia. Many migrants move to work in the construction sites and factories of urban areas in dry season, which is the agricultural off-season. Most of the migrants head to the capital city of Cambodia, Phnom Penh, which is the most important urban centre and the most attractive city in Cambodia. Already now Phnom Penh has faced problems with the mushrooming amount of poor migrants.

Majority of the migration in Cambodia is internal. Although, many migrants have been, and in the future will be, tempted by the foreign countries’ work opportunities as well as higher wages. Especially, Thailand is the most important destination for the Cambodian migrants. Due to the warlike history migrants in Cambodia are not willing to move to Vietnam and prefer Thailand instead. Still very big cities, like Bangkok were not attractive in the migrants’ imagination.

Migration is high in Cambodia mostly due to a complicated history but also the volume of recent migration is relatively high. Especially, the migration to the urban areas is increasing and will increase in the future. Urbanisation is not yet a big problem in Cambodia but due to the deep problems in the rural areas it will definitely increase in the future. The urban areas in Cambodia are not ready to this kind of population growth and this can cause many problems. The possible future urbanisation is important to take into account in the decision-making so that the unfortunate destinies of other developing countries in this respect could be avoided.
ការធ្វើការណ៍នេះបានបញ្ចូលក្មេងស្តីស្ដេចបំផុតជាងមុនទៅដល់ការស្តុកបំផុត ក្នុងប្រជាជនប្រជាជនេះ។ ក្មេងស្តីស្ដេចបំផុតបានបញ្ចូលក្មេងស្តីស្ដេចបំផុតប្រែប្រួលយោងដូច្នេះការអាចបញ្ចូលបានយើងបានប្រឈម។ ក្មេងស្តីស្ដេចបំផុតបានបញ្ចូលក្មេងស្តីស្ដេចបំផុតប្រែប្រួលយោងដូច្នេះការអាចបញ្ចូលបានយើងបានប្រឈម។
1 Aim of the study

This study is ninth of the WUP-FIN socio-economic studies on Tonle Sap Lake. Tonle Sap Modelling Project (WUP-FIN) aims to model the flow regime and water quality of Tonle Sap Lake. Main objective of the project is to create a water model of Tonle Sap in order to understand better the interaction between the physical and biological features of the lake and the changes that may occur due to the human activities. Socio-economical issues form an important part of the project, with the main aim of achieving basic understanding of the interconnections of socio-economic and environmental factors and their impacts on the Tonle Sap area.

This study is based on the socio-economic field studies, also known as participatory village surveys, which were done with different rapid and participatory appraisal (RRA/PRA) methods (WUP-FIN Socio-Economic Studies on Tonle Sap 1-6). During the spring and autumn 2002, Tonle Sap Modelling Project conducted six socio-economic field studies in the villages situated along Tonle Sap Lake in the provinces of Kampong Chhnang, Pursat, Battambang, Kampong Thom and Siem. These studies focused on various socio-economic factors: occupations and their seasonal variations, use of natural resources and access to them as well as environmental changes. The three latter field studies focused also on migration, urbanisation and floods. This study is based particularly on these three, latter studies (WUP-FIN Socio-Economic Studies 3-6).

The aim of this study is to understand the interconnections between villagers’ livelihoods, environmental changes and migration in Cambodia. The study concerns particularly with the reasons behind the migration (rural push and urban pull), destination of migration and the type of migration. Due to the poverty, decrease of natural resources and problems in agriculture and fishing many people are forced to migrate from the rural areas. Especially, the migration to the urban areas, urbanisation, is under focal interest in this study.

Urbanisation is not yet a big problem in Cambodia but due to the problems in rural areas urbanisation will definitely increase in the future. The urban areas of Cambodia are not ready to this kind of population growth and this can cause many problems. The possible urbanisation is important to take into account in the decision-making so that in the future the destinies of many other developing countries could be avoided. Mega-cities like Bangkok, are not sustainable and many environmental and social problems will be manifested. The problems will be especially deep in such a poor country as Cambodia.
2 Migration in Cambodia

2.1 History of migration

The amount of migrants in Cambodia is very high. Even one third of the country’s 13 million people have migrated at least once in their lifetime. Especially the migration among urban residents is high. 80 percent of them (aged 20 years and over) are migrants. The high migration rates are mostly caused by the unsteady and militarised past. During the Khmer Rouge regime (1975 –1979) people were forced to move away from the urban areas when Pol Pot was fulfilling his idea of agrarian country and therefore the migration among urban residents is high. Additionally many people were forced to move from one rural area to another where free agricultural land was available. During the Pol Pot regime people were tortured, most of the educated people were killed and families (males and females) were separated. In 1979 the Khmer Rouge regime fell and re-establishment of stability in Cambodia began. These more peaceful times can be seen also in the migration figures: high percentage of migrants had last moved between 1970 to 1980 both in urban (38 percent) and rural (43 per cent) areas. (NIS 2000a, Rao et al. 2002)

Displaced people both men and women, returned to their villages and towns in large numbers after the Khmer Rouge was overthrown. The troubled recent past of Cambodia has also reflected to the reasons for moving. Of the 3.6 million migrants in the country, 482,000 persons (13.4 percent) migrated because of repatriation or return after internal displacement. The number of returned migrants among the rural people is very high. These high percentages of migration may not be explained only by high populations in the rural areas but also by the internal and international displacement of rural population that occurred during 1970’s. The martial history has had effects to the population and their feelings of security as almost 6 percent (5.8%) of the (migrated) people moved because of insecurity. (NIS 2000a, NIS 2000b, Rao et al. 2002)

Because of the civil war the infrastructure was badly destroyed and agricultural land was mined so that many areas have been inaccessible for a long time. Now the situation is better and most of the landmines have been removed and people have started to migrate back to these areas. Most mined provinces are Banteay Meanchey, Battambang, Siem Reab, Preah Vihear and Kampong Speu. The attraction of free land in these provinces is high. Koh Kong and Krong Pailin have also attracted migrants with the opportunity of paid jobs and small-scale trading. In these areas there is a very high increase in the population and migrants even make up the major part of the population (Koh Kong 58 percent, Krong Pailin 77 percent). (OXF 2000)

2.2 Present migration

Migration means that migrants have once lived in other place than the place of enumeration. According to the 1998 Census study nearly one third of the total population of Cambodia (3.6 million) had lived in a place other than the place of enumeration and 3.04 million persons have been born outside the village of enumeration. The difference in these two numbers identifies the amount of return migrants in Cambodia. The number of return migrants is high, over half a million migrants have returned to their place of birth, mostly after displacement. (NIS 2000b, Rao et al.2002)
The proportion of migrants in the urban population (59 percent) is much higher than in the rural population (26 percent). From these figures we can see that especially urban areas are attractive and draw people both from urban and rural areas due to employment opportunities as well as repatriation after displacement. However, it has to be remembered that the amount of rural population is remarkably high in Cambodia so the amount of rural migrants is naturally also much higher than the number of urban migrants. Only about 1 million urban and more than 2.5 million rural citizen have migrated. (NIS 2000b)

Migration is high especially among young, urban residents (aged 20 to 24 years). Many of these young migrants (around 40 percent) are recent migrants and have moved during the years 1993 to 1998. In each age group in urban areas, recent migration constitutes at least 10 percent of the total migration. Due to this fact it is evident that nowadays urbanisation is voluminous in Cambodia. Males are more eager to migrate and their migration rates generally exceed that of females. The migration rate of males is highest in the age group of 20 to 24, both in urban and rural areas. It is common that young men move in search of work to other urban or rural areas and females typically are left to take care of the family and household. (Rao et al. 2002)

It is important for the migrants when choosing their destination of migration that they know somebody from this new city or village. These local people are often relatives and friends, who are willing to support migrants in a different ways, help migrants to find work, give place to stay and provide mental support. The Oxfam studies showed that especially women easily rely on their childhood friends. (OXF 2000)

2.2.1 Internal migration

The average distance of migration in Cambodia is short. Around 94 percent of the migration has been internal. Majority (59 percent) of migrants in Cambodia have moved within the province of enumeration and of these 39 percent had moved between villages even within the same district. Only 35 percent of migrants have moved between different provinces. Although the previous migrants have clearly favoured short migration distances now it can be seen that the trend is changing and people are starting to migrate for longer distances. (NIS 2000b, OXF 2000)

The main target of urban migration is Phnom Penh as well as the urban market towns along the Thai border, which attract many migrants. Migrants are pulled to these cities by non-farming wage works, such as construction, factory and service works. Also Sihanoukville, Siem Reab and Battambang attract large numbers of migrants to work in non-farm works and in tourism related jobs. The industrial growth is not powerful in Cambodia and in its own way slows down the urbanisation. The industries of Cambodia are nowadays mostly concentrated in garment manufacturing and beverage industries, which have attracted many female workers. The low quantity of industrial works in Cambodia is also one reason to the high migration rates to Thailand. (OXF 2000)

2.2.2 International migration

Over 10 percent of the pre-war Cambodian population (about 650,000 persons) has been lost abroad in the past quarter of century. Many have migrated to the neighbouring countries due to political problems, disorder and persecution. For example, Vietnam was the main country for Cambodian refugees. Thailand was also one of the main stops for Cambodian refugees and as the wealthiest country in the region, attracted refugees also from Laos and Vietnam. Many of these migrants have come back to their home country but on the other hand new migrants have left abroad, especially to Thailand. As an example,
375,000 displaced persons who lived in Thai border camps migrated back to their villages between the years 1992 to 1993. The amount was so big that it boosted the national population by an average of 3 percent and in some CARERE-assisted provinces the population increased by 25 percent. (UNDP 2000)

Also nowadays the international migration is high. Thailand still attracts a lot of legal as well as illegal migrants from Cambodia and other riparian countries. In Thailand migrants are mostly involved in farm works near the Cambodian border. Some migrants go further inside Thailand, Bangkok or other provinces near the Gulf of Thailand’s coast to work in fishing boats or ports. For example, people from South-Eastern part of Koh Kong province migrate often to work in Thailand in various works; fishing boats, sawmills, plantations, sex-trade, etc. (OXF 2000)

The financial matters are very important push factors for the Cambodian people to migrate. The temptation is high if the neighbours come back from Thailand with plenty of money. Migrants can earn around 300,000 riels (~75 US$) a month as a construction worker, sewing or washing clothes in Thailand, which is almost twice the salary in Cambodia. Although some migrants have to pay even 300,000 to 400,000 riels to the middleman just to get to Thailand. This is one month’s salary in Thailand so migrants have to work for a longer time in abroad before they are able to get some savings. (Derks 1997)

2.2.2.1 Migration to Thailand
The amount of women and men who are moving to Thailand in search of work has increased constantly in last few years. The economic growth in Asia has created a demand of unskilled and manual labour. This demand cannot always be met within the country and this makes migrants important pool of labour. The demand of workers in construction sites, plantations, homes, restaurants and brothels is high. Also disparities in the economical situations of the countries offers cheap migrated labour from the neighbour countries. (Derks 1997)

Thailand has become one important country in receiving and sending migrants. Thai people migrate to the wealthier countries and on the other hand, migrants from the poorer neighbouring countries, like Laos, Burma, Cambodia, are replacing them. Thailand’s labour-intensive industries have become dependent on low-wage, illegal immigrants. The Royal Thai Government has also realised the problem and in June 1996 they conducted a law were they allowed registered workers from Burma, Laos and Cambodia to work for two years in Thailand. In 1996 it was expected that around 700,000 migrant workers were needed and in addition to the regulated migrant workers also the need of illegal migrant workers increased. There are some estimations that in year 1996 there were at least half a million illegal migrant workers in Thailand but some estimations even predict that the number of the workers is twice this amount. Most of these migrants are Burmese but also a big part constitutes of Cambodian males and females. The Southeast Asian economic crisis in 1998 decreased the need of migrant workers for couple of years but already in 2000 the demand was back at the same level as it was in 1997. (Derks 1997)

Many Cambodian women are working in Thailand in garment factories, construction sites, fish-processing industries and in domestic services. Women of all ages are recruited: old ladies are sought to take care of the house and children of rich Thai families. Young women are wanted to the construction works and different service works. The life in the foreign country is not always so rosy; migrants may have to work with low or even without salary, they are sometimes forced to take certain stimulating drugs so that they are able to
work harder and longer hours, they have to work in poor air and very hot temperatures. It is common that when the employers do not pay the agreed salary the workers cannot complain because they have no status as illegal migrants and cannot speak the language. (Derks 1997)

In addition to the migrants, there emerged a totally new network of employers, facilitators and recruiters. These networks organize the whole trip of migrants from their own village to the neighbouring country’s work places. Some women have taken part voluntarily but there are also girls/women that have been deceived or forced to work (trafficked). The description of the work in the destination as a waiter, cleaner, etc. can be very different from the actual work. (Derks 1997)

The trafficking can be described in many ways. For example, Cambodian Women’s development Association (CWDA) defines trafficking as “a practice of taking people outside their support structure and rendering them powerless”. The estimations of Oxfam shows that nearly 40,000 Cambodian people, mostly women and children, are trafficked yearly to the neighbouring countries and over million migrants work in these extremely difficult situations with a little hope of improving their life. The women and children who are trafficked are mostly involved in prostitution and begging, but some of them are also sold also for domestic and construction works. Especially, sick and disabled children are the prime targets of this business. Usually traffickers take these children to work in the begging rings of Bangkok and they have to beg money around 17 hours per day. Many of these children are runaways from the violent homes or are sold by their mothers due to poverty. (Derks 1997, OXF 2000, Carmichael and Nara 2002)

2.3 Reasons behind the migration in Cambodia

2.3.1 Rural pushes

The high and large-scale migration percent in Cambodia is mainly explained by the turbulent history and large displacement projects, which at the present can be seen in high repatriation numbers. Although, there are other matters as well that have effected on the high migration numbers. These are population growth, problems in the agriculture sector, poverty and decrease in natural resources, which together create the pressures to move. In other words, the rural push means that these previously mentioned reasons together or alone form up the pressure that pushes people to move away from the rural areas to other rural or urban areas.

2.3.1.1 Difficulties in farming

Nearly 85 percent of Cambodian people rely on agriculture as source of their living. It is evident that problems in this sector will affect highly to the populations living conditions. Unfortunately, there are many problems with agriculture in Cambodia - floods, droughts, landlessness, pests. At the present, the productivity of the land areas has been falling down, and land area per person has been decreasing. The cultivated land area decreased with nearly 30 percent from 0,29 ha/capita to only 0,21 ha/capita in Cambodia between the years 1990 to 1999. This together with constantly growing population is pushing the situation over the edge. It is also normal that the land owned by poor people is less fertile and non-irrigated, which affects to their rice yield and income. (OXF 2000, MOP 2001)

Land is a critical source of livelihood to the people in the rural areas but still nearly 20 percent of the households in Cambodia have no land. The main factors that cause landlessness are depths, poverty and population growth. The percentage of landless people
is highest in Tonle Sap region where over 17 percent of the households are landless. This is high percent compared for example, to around 9 percent in the coastal areas of Cambodia. Because of the inadequate income, many people have loaned money or sold their land in case of illness, natural disaster or loss of cattle. The loans are usually taken from informal credit systems and the interest rates are very high. High interest rates are defecting seriously families’ economy and they have to sell their land or split their families to solve their loans. Often children of the poor families migrate to work in urban or other rural areas. It is very rare that poor families are able to buy their land back but at least they can survive with these methods. (OXF 2000, MOP 2001)

The land distribution is not equal in Cambodia and the richest 10 percent of the households own 40 percent of the land while the poorest 40 percent own only 12 percent. Some parts of usable agricultural land in Cambodia are still contaminated with mines and often the tenure of land is insecure, which increases the pressure to the agricultural land. (MOP 2001)

In addition, in the period of 1999 to 2002 floods and droughts devastated Cambodian rice cultivation. For example, in year 2002 the droughts affected more than two million people and damaged 135 000 hectares of rice crops. Besides, floods affected about 1.5 million people and covered almost 60 000 hectares of land in the same year. Many scientist say, that reason behind these problems is El Nino, a climatic phenomenon, that brings erratic weather to the region: rains are insufficient in the early wet season in many provinces, which delays rice planting and withers rice crops and on the other hand many provinces suffer from floodwaters after heavy rains in parts of Laos and China. Due to these problems the period when people starve (the time before harvesting when food is more scarce) is getting longer and because of the hunger many families have eaten the rice seeds that are normally saved for the next year’s planting. (Coren 2002)

2.3.1.2 Poverty
According to the socio-economic survey data approximately 36 percent of Cambodian people is living under poverty line (daily income less than 1US$) and even 20 percent lives under the hunger line (daily calorie intake less than 2,000). The definition of poverty is quite complex and multidimensional. However, poverty includes low income and low consumption, lack of physical necessities and assets, lack of access to the basic services and powerlessness. In Cambodia the poverty rates are highest in rural areas, especially among households engaged in agriculture. The poorest households in the country consist of many young family members and are more likely headed by uneducated male. Poverty figures are lowest in Phnom Penh and among the families whose head has high education. Most of the poor people live in the rural areas of Cambodia but the urban poverty is still a significant problem, especially in Phnom Penh. (OXF 2000, MOP 1999a)

The poverty in Cambodia is very deep and due to this even small income changes or sudden expenses can destroy the budget of many poor families. The problems are severe if family faces illness, death of draught animals, high interest rates or floods that destroy their rice yield. Usually in this case poor families have no other choice than sell their lands and move away from the villages. In some cases poverty even forces people to sell their children to a richer family, where children will help with the housework for shelter and nourishment. (Derks 1997)
2.3.1.3 Rural population growth and unemployment

The quantity of workforce is increasing rapidly especially in the rural areas of Cambodia. From 1993 to 1998, 150,000 new workers have entered the labour market each year. The number of workers is estimated to be even higher in the future: 200,000 new workers yearly by 2003 and even 250,000 by 2008. This is a growing problem because there is not enough employment opportunities or available free land to cultivate for the rural people not even today. There are not any precise statistics of employment in Cambodia available but it is worldwide recognized that under-employment and unemployment are major problems in the rural areas in many countries, as well as in Cambodia. Many of the currently unemployed or under-employed are women, handicapped injured by mines and other disadvantaged persons. Unemployment is particularly high during the agricultural off-season. (OXF 2000, UNDP 2000)

The agricultural sector will continue to provide the major portion of employment opportunities in rural Cambodia also in the future. It is also clear that there is large number of unemployed persons who will not be absorbed by the sector in the short term. As a consequence there is an urgent need for the immediate expansion of employment opportunities throughout the rural areas of the country. Some minor expansion in the service and small industry sectors has occurred, but much greater effort needs to be made in this respect, including the policy context, human resource capacity building, business and vocational skills training, and access to credit, in order for the small to medium size enterprise sector to develop. (UNDP 2000)

The fertility rate is high in Cambodia, which adds the demand of the land. It is estimated that by the year 2010 the amount of rural households will increase by half a million. Landlessness is a great problem already and due to population growth the lack will be even worse in the near future. This will have a straight effect on the rural regions’ job opportunities and unemployment. (MOP 1999a)

2.3.2 Urban pulls

The urban pull is the force that together with rural push draws migrants to the urban areas. Urban pull attracts people mainly to the cities but some rural places may have similar effects that draw population towards it. For example, the free land area in Krong Pailin acts as pull factor for this province. The urban pull is not as strong as rural push in Cambodia but cannot be forgotten either. Some reasons for moving in Cambodia are explained below. These explanations are mainly taken from the Cambodian Population Census from 1998.

2.3.2.1 Employment

The Census shows that over a third (35.6 percent) of migrants say that the main reason was moving with their families. This kind of answer does not give the correct reason for the migration because most of these families obviously migrated in search of work and therefore the whole family has migrated because of economical reasons and work opportunities. In addition, over 20 percent (21.8 percent) of the migrants actually said that they have moved because of economical reasons, work opportunities or search of employment. Among these 14.5 percent said that they moved in search of employment. The study showed that males were twice as eager to migrate for employment reasons. Female migrants were likely to move with their family because often wives and children follow males into their new working places. (NIS 2000b, MOP 2001)
2.3.2.2 Education

Education is not a significant reason for migration in Cambodia and an average of 2.1 percent of migrants have moved after education. Most of these who moved after education headed mainly to the big cities where the education system is more comprehensive, like Phnom Penh. The migration after education is higher among males and urban population. (NIS 2000b)

2.3.2.3 Other

Other reasons for migration are for example, repatriation, insecurity and marriage. Around 14 percent of the migrants said the reason of their change of residence was the return after displacement and little over 13 percent moved due to the marriage. Males have migrated more because of the marriage than females. This can be understood as a cultural symptom because in Cambodia groom normally moves to live in the wife’s family after marriage. Migrants in the rural areas were almost three times more likely to move with marriage, natural calamities or insecurity and repatriation than urban people. (NIS 2000b, MOP 2001)

2.3.3 Inequalities between urban and rural population in Cambodia

The socio-economic conditions are different in urban and rural areas and the rural inhabitants have many disadvantages in several aspects of life. The Cambodian socio-economic survey 1999 estimated that the average monthly income in Phnom Penh household is around 1 139 553 riels compared with the 314 247 riels in rural areas. The average urban person has 3.6 times more money to use than rural inhabitant. Although it has to be remembered that the living expenses are higher in the urban areas which somewhat evens the differences.

Still there are many matters that are better in urban areas (see Table 1). In urban areas almost 80 percent of the population can read or write and only less than 65 percent in rural areas. Access to safe drinking water is over twice as common in urban than in rural areas. Access to electricity is remarkably higher in urban than in rural areas. Similar differences are seen in access to toilet facilities. Also education is almost three times higher in urban than in rural areas. (MOP 1999a, 2001)

Differences between urban and rural facilities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facility</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>Rural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Av. Monthly Income (riels)</td>
<td>1 139 553</td>
<td>314 247</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult Literacy (%)</td>
<td>79.1</td>
<td>64.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to safe drinking water (%)</td>
<td>60.3</td>
<td>23.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to electricity (%)</td>
<td>53.6</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to toilet facilities (%)</td>
<td>49.0</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education beyond primary school (%)</td>
<td>31.4</td>
<td>12.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The inequality can be seen also in the money use of money for non-food necessities, which include housing and utilities, education, health, transport and clothing. In a national basis consumption to these necessities is over one third of the total income. In Phnom Penh the percent is highest two thirds of the income is used to non-food necessities. The percent is also relatively high in plain regions of Cambodia and other urban areas (around 41.2 to 42.2 percent). In the regions around Tonle Sap Lake as well as in the coastal and upland areas of Cambodia the percentage is lower than the national average. (MOP 1999a, 2001)
2.4 Seasonal or long term migration?

The migration in Cambodia is quite often seasonal. This kind of migration is mostly focused on the urban areas but can as well be occurring between rural areas. People travel everyday to work to the city from the rural provinces nearby or move from the rural areas for a couple of months, especially in dry season, to work in the urban areas. Many people who have motorbikes come from the provinces nearby to work as a moto-driver in Phnom Penh. Battambang town attracts migrants within the province who either commute daily or weekly to work in construction sites or in hotels. Poipet attracts a lot of young migrants for short period to work as head loaders. Similarly, the smaller market centres attract workers with their opportunities of paid jobs.

Saving money is not easy because the living costs in the urban areas are higher than in rural areas. This is why many of the seasonal migrants live on the streets or at their worksites and many of them moved alone leaving their family home. Often seasonal migrants have to work longer than they expected in order to save enough money. Usually migrants have to pay first some money for the working place for training, etc. For example, many migrants that are working in the garment factories have to pay their sewing school by themselves or work one month without the salary to learn the required skills. These reasons are behind that sometimes seasonal migrants tend to stay in the city for longer time and end up to be so called long-term migrants. In addition some migrants plan to move already in the beginning for long time. Normally these migrants migrate after education or they have relatives living already in the destination. (OXF 2000, Heng 2002)

2.5 Migration flows in Cambodia

The amount of migrated people in Cambodia was 491 580 in the year 1998. This number was over 4 percent (4.3 percent) of the total population of Cambodia. The migration has occurred between 24 different provinces of Cambodia. Of these provinces some are more attractive and enjoy the population growth while some suffer from the population decrease. The migration does not occur only one way. There are several different populations flows in and out of provinces. To find out the provinces were population by migration is increasing or decreasing we have to concentrate to the net-migration. In the Figures 1, 2, 3 and 4 the amount of migration by percent of province’s population and amounts of migrants to different provinces are shown. The more detailed tables are found in Annex 1. (NIS 2000b, MOP 2001)

2.5.1 Negative migration

The negative migration means that more people have migrated out from the province than migrated in. This means that the population has decreased due to migration. The negative net-migration has mostly occurred from the central areas of Cambodia- around the Tonle Sap Lake and around Phnom Penh. From the Figure 1 we can see that the percent of negative net-migration is highest in Prey Veaeng province where around 5 percent of the population has been lost due to the negative migration, mostly to Phnom Penh, between the years 1993 to 1998. Also the percent of negative net-migration is high in Kampong Cham (3 percent), Takeo (4 percent), Kampot (4 percent) and Svay Rieng (3 percent) where people have mainly migrated to Phnom Penh (see Figure 3). The provinces around the Tonle Sap Lake have high negative migration as well. Although, the percent, which is lost in migration is little lower than in the previously mentioned provinces it is still significant. Approximately one to two percent of the total population of the provinces around Tonle Sap Lake has been lost in migration in five years (1993-1998).
The amount of people lost by the negative migration was highest in Prey Veaeng and Kampong Cham. The both provinces have lost about 10 000 people yearly between the years 1993 and 1998 (see Figure 2). Also the migration from Takeo and Kampot provinces has been relatively high- totally 20 000 to 30 000 people have left these provinces in five years. Other provinces of negative migration are Svay Rieng, Kampong Thom, Battambang, Kandal, Kampong Speu, Pursat and Siem Reab but the amount of negative migration from these provinces is relatively low (1 000 to 3 000 persons yearly). (MOP 2001)

The Figure 3 shows three major destinations between the years 1993 to 1998 for each of the province around Tonle Sap Lake. From the figure we can see that most of the people from the provinces around the lake had migrated to Phnom Penh or to the provinces
nearby. The migration to the neighbouring provinces had been mostly migrants’ secondary options. Only Phnom Penh, Banteay Meanchey and Battambang had attracted migrants from further away. These provinces had gathered totally most of the migrants (73 percent) in these five years. As it already was mentioned, Phnom Penh had been drawing people in high numbers and one third of the migrants around Tonle Sap Lake had migrated to this vital capital city. Both Banteay Meanchey and Battambang had been also attractive destinations for migrants from Tonle Sap Lake.

Most of the migrants from Battambang province had migrated between the years 1993 to 1998 to Banteay Meanchey, Phnom Penh and Krông Pailin (see Figure 3). On the other hand Battambang had been the attractive destination for the migrants from Pursat, Siem Reab and Kampong Chhang and it had attracted over 20 percent of all migration from Tonle Sap Lake in these five years. Other attractive destinations for migrants from Pursat, Siem Reab and Kampong Chhnang had been Banteay Meanchey, Otdar Meanchey, Kandal and of course Phnom Penh. Similarly, than Battambang also Banteay Meanchey had attracted around 20 percent of the total migration. Especially, from Siem Reab many people had moved to Banteay Meanchey.

When comparing previously mentioned numbers to the migration generally, including all durations of residence in the destinations, we can notice again that Phnom Penh, Banteay Meanchey and Battambang had been the main destinations of migration. Anyhow, we can notice that recently Krông Pailin, Banteay Meanchey and Battambang had been the most attractive provinces for migrants around Tonle Sap Lake (1993 to 1998). Other significant changes had been that migration to Kandal province had decreased recently. This could be explained by the fact that industries are nowadays moving to Phnom Penh from the surrounding Kandal province.

Figure 3. Most of the migrants around Tonle Sap Lake have migrated to Phnom Penh between the years 1993 to 1998.
Positive migration means that more people have migrated to the province than left from there. These provinces have increased their population by migration. When looking at the positive migration as a percent of the province population the migration has been remarkable in the provinces like Krong Pailin, Koh Kong, Krong Kaeb and Phnom Penh. From Figure 4 we can see that especially in Krong Pailin the percent of positive migrants is high compared to the total province population- positive migrants in the years 1993 to 1998 constitute almost half of the province’s population in those five years. Also, in Koh Kong the percent of positive migrants is high, over 25 percent. In Phnom Penh and Krong Kaeb the percent of positive migrants is as well high over 10 percent. In all of these provinces the amount of positive migration has had an effect on the amount of the total population and its social structure. Also it has to be remembered that the population of Phnom Penh is exceptionally high so the amount of positive migrants to this province is very high compared to other provinces (see Figure 5).

Figure 4. In Krong Pailin the positive migration has been over 46 percent of the total population in five years (1993 to 1998).

Phnom Penh has increased its population by migration by averagely 24 000 people yearly between the years 1993 to 1998. From the Figure 5 it is easy to see how overwhelming the migration to the capital has been. The amount of positive migration is almost four times the amount in Koh Kong, which has been the second attractive province. Koh Kong and Banteay Meanchey have also been attractive provinces and yearly around 4 000 more people moved to these provinces than out of them. The positive migration can also been seen in Sihanoukville to where the migration has been relatively high. Other provinces with positive migration have been Krong Pailin, Kampong Chhnang, Kratie, Rotanak Kiri, Krong Kaeb, Preah Vihear, Stueng Traeng, Otad Meanchey and Mondol Kiri but the number of persons is relatively low (totally under 1 000 persons yearly). (NIS 2000b, MOP 2001)
Positive migration in Cambodia

Figure 5. The positive migration has been highest to Phnom Penh (1993 to 1998).

2.5.2.1 Differences between gender
When comparing the negative migration between females and males there are differences especially with the provinces of Battambang, Kampong Thum, Kampot, Kandal and Prey Veaeng. In Battambang, Kampong Thum, Kampot and Kandal the negative migration of males is lower than females (see Figure 6). This means that from these provinces more women than males migrated to the other provinces. In Prey Veaeng the situation is reverse and more males than females migrated. Even though the differences are not extraordinarily high. (MOP 2001)

Comparison of female and male negative migration

Figure 6. The negative migration of males was higher from Prey Veaeng than females.

With positive migration there is also some differences between gender (see Figure 7). The basic line of migration is again similar but for example, when looking at Phnom Penh the differences are clear. More females than males have ended to live in the capital whereas more men ended to Koh Kong, Kratie, Preah Vihear, Odlar Mean Chey and Krong Pailin.
Also, from here we can see that the agricultural works and business attract more males (e.g. Krong Pailin and Koh Kong) and garment factories and small-scale businesses more females (e.g. Phnom Penh). (MOP 2001)

![Comparison of positive migration of females and males](image)

Figure 7. The positive migration of females to Phnom Penh was remarkably higher than males.

2.5.3 Some basic information about provinces and their attractions

2.5.3.1 Provinces with negative migration
Negative migration was high in the provinces around Tonle Sap Lake and Phnom Penh. The provinces around the lake are: Siem Reab, Kampong Thom, Battambang and Pursat (see Figure 8). These provinces have high population, fertility and poverty rates and the population depends highly on rice cultivation and fishing. Siem Reab is different from other provinces in the region and has potential with tourism due to the Angkor temples. (Yim 2002)

Provinces around Phnom Penh (Kandal, Prey Veaeng, Kampong Speu, Kampong Cham, Takeo, Svay Rieng and Kampot) are depending on rice cultivation, crop production as well as business and some industries (beverage factories). These provinces also have high population and poverty rates. The region around Phnom Penh is most densely populated in Cambodia and population density can rise up to 300 persons per square kilometre (e.g. Kandal). (Yim 2002)

2.5.3.2 Provinces with positive migration
Provinces with highest positive migration are Phnom Penh, Krong Pailin, Koh Kong and Krong Keab. Phnom Penh is the capital city of Cambodia and naturally attracts migrants with small-scale businesses, industries (garment factories), education opportunities, construction and service works. Krong Pailin draws migrants with free land (due to minesweeping), crop production (sugarcane, pineapple, durian and corn) and some gem mining. Koh Kong is the province of marine fishing, fruit tree plantations (mango, rambutan and pineapple), casinos, tourism and flourishing businesses to Thailand. Krong
Keab persuades migrants with marine fishing, tourism, some rice cultivation and fruit tree plantations (durian). (Yim 2002)

Other provinces with positive migration are for example, Sihanoukville, Banteay Meanchey, Rotanak Kiri and Mondol Kiri. Sihanoukville attracts population with rubber tree and oil palm plantations, marine fishing, booming business to Thailand and all the time increasing tourism. In Banteay Meanchey especially the city of Poipet acts as an attractive pole of the province offering opportunities to migrants in businesses to Thailand (e.g. importing fruits from Thailand to Cambodia), border crossing and work opportunities in Thailand as well as tourism. Poipet is also biggest child trafficking centre in Cambodia. Mondol Kiri and Ratanak Kiri have some positive migration but due to provinces’ low population it has an effect on the provinces population. Migrants (mostly males) move to Ratanak and Mondol Kiri mainly due to farming, gem mining and work opportunities in army. (Yim 2002, Carmichael and Nara 2002)
3 Urbanisation in Cambodia

3.1 Cambodia's urbanisation trends and prospects in global perspective

World population reached 6.1 billion in mid-2000 and is currently growing by 77 million people per year. By 2025, world population is expected to be between 7.9 billion and 10.9 billion, with the medium variant 9.3 billion. The population in today's developed countries is not expected to grow in the next 50 years because the fertility levels are remaining below the replacement levels. On the contrary, the population in developing countries is projected to rise from 4.9 million in 2000 to 8.2 billion in 2050. The rapid growth of population is expected especially to take place in the low-income countries where the annual population growth rate is around 2.1 percent. The population growth percentages are notably lower in middle and upper-middle income countries, 1.6 and 1.1 percent. Cambodian population growth is 2 percent, which is high but similar than the average of the other low-income countries. (PDDESA 2001, WB 2001).

From Figure 8 we can see how the population of South-East Asia and particularly Cambodia has increased in the past years and what are the future population estimations in the region. The population in the area has increased fast in the last 50 years. Although, the United Nation’s estimations show that in the next 30 years the population will decrease in many countries but still continue to increase in the poorer countries of the region like Laos and Cambodia. The growth in Cambodia’s population in the next 30 years is estimated to be even 26 percent. (UNPD 1999)

![Population in South-East Asia](image)

**Figure 8.** The population of Cambodia will increase by almost 26 percent in the next 30 years. (UNPD 1999)

Nowadays urban population is increasing three times faster than rural population. The average annual growth rate in the world for urban population is around 2.03 and for rural only 0.44 percent. The urban population is increasing faster due to high rural-urban migration as well as rapidly rising birth rate of urban populations in many parts of the world. Especially, in developing countries the urban population is increasing extremely fast, in these countries populations in the urban areas have grown from 300 million in 1950 to more than 1.7 billion today. In addition, urban population is projected to more than
double in the next twenty-five years, reaching nearly four billion. (Girardet 1996, Massay et al. 1999, UNPD 1999).

In the year 1999 almost half of the world’s population lived in the urban areas (47 percent). The percent of urban population is higher in the developed regions, in upper middle income countries over two thirds of the population resides in urban areas. The percentages are lower in middle income and low-income countries, 52 and 34 percent. In Cambodia the percent of urban population is low, 16 percent, but it is estimated to grow remarkably in the next 30 years. The Figure 9 presents the percentages of urban population in the last 50 years as well as the estimations for the next 30 years in South-East Asia. Even the urbanisation in Cambodia has been lowest in the region it will increase remarkably in the future as well as the urban population in the other countries of the region. The United Nation’s estimations show that in the year 2030 almost one third of the Cambodian people are living in the urban areas. (UNPD 1999, WB 2001)

![Figure 9. The percent of urban population in South-East Asia](image)

Due to the rapid population growth and urbanisation, the demand for food, freshwater, infrastructure and facilities have grown over the environment’s limit. Especially the rapid speed of urbanisation in developing countries has surprised the infrastructures in many cities, which has led to environmental, water and social problems. The consumption and the way of living in the cities are different than in the rural area, which deepens the gap between food and water demand and supplies. Urbanisation is a reason of many factors, population growth, poverty, level of living, environment and human preferences.

### 3.2 Migration flows in Cambodia

In Cambodia over 64 percent of migration is occurring between rural areas. Though, the migration from rural to rural areas has decreased between the years 1993 to 1998 and recent migrants tend to move more from rural to urban areas compared to the previous migrants. This shows the trend that urbanisation is slowly increasing. Also the number of urban migration to urban areas has increased in last years. Males among the recent migrants were somewhat more likely to move to rural areas and female to urban areas. This trend can be explained, by the agricultural works typical for males in the rural areas and increasing garment factory works for females in urban areas. (NIS 2000b)
From Figure 10 it is easy to see that people move mainly from one rural place to another rural place. It is understandable when considering that the main livelihood in Cambodia is agriculture that employs over 80 percent of the work-active population. The percentages of migrants that have moved to and between urban areas are also high. Almost one-fifth of the migration is occurring from rural to urban areas and 15 percent between urban areas. Of the high migration between urban areas it can be assumed that smaller cities may suffer from population decrease and some attractive cities from population growth. One of the tempting cities is Phnom Penh. The percent of migration from urban to rural areas is only half of the migration from rural to urban areas, which means that the urbanisation in Cambodia is evidently increasing. (NIS 2000b, Rao et al. 2002)

3.3 Urban areas in Cambodia

Before looking at the Figures 11 and 12 it has to be noticed that the data is taken from the Cambodian Population Census and there are some questions how the urban areas are described in the study. The Census made in 1998 defines urban areas in Cambodia as,

1. Four urban districts of Phnom Penh (though nowadays the whole province is defined urban).
2. The entire population of Krong Pailin, Krong Keab and Sihanoukville.
3. The population of the provincial capital of all the other provinces.

This kind of definition forgets the other urban areas like secondary cities that are sometimes very vital in Cambodia. Even the population in these small cities is low they cannot be forgotten because they are urban areas as the provincial capitals. Krong Pailin, Krong Keab and Sihanoukville are quite large and the number of communes in these provinces is high and therefore it is evident that some of these communes can be considered as rural. By defining these rural communes as urban, the urban populations in these provinces are definitely overestimated. Although the total population of Phnom Penh province is nowadays considered as urban, although some parts of this municipality are absolutely rural. (NIS 2000b, Rao et al.2002)
Although the Census study shows that urban population covers around 16 percent of the Cambodia’s total population, which means that 1.8 million people resided in urban areas in 1998. When remembering how the Census study defined urban areas in reality the number can be even higher. For example, in IUSSP Regional Population Conference paper in 2002 Not Rama Rao presented that with new definition of urban areas about 18 percent of the population in Cambodia can be considered as urban. In addition, seasonal migration is significant in Cambodia and have remarkably effect on the amount of urban population even it is not included to these studies. (NIS 2000b, Rao et al.2002)

**The Percentage of Urban Population in Cambodia**

![Map of the Percentage of Urban Population in Cambodia](image)

Figure 11. The percent of urban population is highest in Phnom Penh, Krong Pailin, Sihanoukville and Krong Kaeb (NIS 2000b)

From the Figure 11 we can see that in Krong Kaeb, Sihanoukville and Krong Pailin the whole population and in Phnom Penh 60 percent of the population lives in the urban areas. Other provinces where big part of the population lives in the urban areas, provincial capitals are Otdar Meanchey, Stueng Treang, Mondol Kiri, Kratie and Koh Kong. In the provinces around the Tonle Sap Lake only around 10 to 20 percent of the population is living in the provincial capitals. The provinces around the Phnom Penh are considered rural and in these provinces only less than ten percent of the population lives in the capital cities of the provinces. (NIS 2000a)

From this data some important cities can be identified. In the Southern part of the country Phnom Penh is the most important city and most of the urban population in the region lives there. In the outer regions of Cambodia like in Otdar Meanchey, Stueng Treang, Mondol Kiri, Kratie and Koh Kong the provincial capitals are important and they habitat even 20 to 30 percent of the total population of the provinces. In the region around Tonle Sap Lake the provincial capitals are not so important. These provinces are more rural and the secondary cities may be even more attractive. (NIS 2000a)

Previous studies have concentrated on the percent of populations living in the urban areas but when we consider the total amount of urban population in Cambodia it is evident, that the amount of urban population is highest in Phnom Penh, Siem Reab, Battambang and
Sihanoukville (see Figure 12). There are also the biggest cities in Cambodia. Though, the Figure 11 showed that the percent of people living in the provincial capitals in Otdar Meanchey, Stueng Treang, Mondol Kiri, Kratie and Koh Kong is quite high the actual amount of urban people in these provinces is really low (10 000 to 50 000 people) due to low population in provinces. From the figure 10 we can see that around Tonle Sap Lake and Phnom Penh the amount of urban population is high even the percent of population living in the urban areas is low. This is explained with the high population density in the region. (NIS 2000a)

![The Amount of Urban Population in Cambodia](image)

**Figure 12.** The amount of urban population is highest in Phnom Penh, Battambang, Siem Reab and Sihanoukville.

From the previous examination we can draw some basic information of the provinces and their provincial capitals. The capital cities in Otdar Meanchey, Stueng Treang, Mondol Kiri, Kratie and Koh Kong in the fringe areas of Cambodia are important in the provincial level even their population is not big. These provinces are quite sparsely populated and lean on agriculture production and their provincial capitals are more like small towns. The provincial capitals around Tonle Sap Lake (especially Battambang) are relatively big and vital even though they populate only around 10 percent of the population in the provinces. In addition, there are many quite highly populated secondary cities in these provinces.

### 3.3.1 Cities in Cambodia

Due to the problems in Census study’s definitions of urban areas in this chapter we lean on the urban study, done by Not Rama Rao et al. in 2002, which tries to correct the course of the Census. These studies have similarities but some differences can be seen in the amounts of population especially in the provincial capitals. (Rao et al. 2002)

The cities in Cambodia are relatively small and the country does not have any mega-cities, which would be typical to Southeast Asian countries. Together over 2 million people (2 006 925) live in the 35 towns in Cambodia. Only 12 of these towns have population over 30 000. Of the remaining 23 towns 12 have more than 10 000 population each and 11 have
less than 10 000 population each. Only one city in Cambodia, Phnom Penh, has population over one million. The Table 2 gives more specific information about different towns and urban agglomerations in Cambodia. (Rao et al. 2002)

List of urban agglomerations and individual towns in Cambodia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
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<th>Population</th>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Town</th>
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From the Figure 13 we can easily see how dominant the country’s capital city, Phnom Penh, is. The population in this urban agglomeration is almost 9 times higher than the population in the next biggest urban agglomeration, Sway Pao, in Battambang. Some parts of the Kandal province are add to the definition of Phnom Penh because often the urban agglomerations cross the provincial borders. Also, the urban agglomerations in Banteay Meanchey (Mongkol Borey) and Siem Reab are big both populating over 80 000 people. Kampong Cham as well, have high urban population living in the two urban agglomerations, Kampong Cham (45 354) and Tboung Khmun (44 604). Other big urban agglomerations and towns in Cambodia are Poipet in Banteay Meanchey, provincial capital of Kampong Chhnang and Chbar Mon in Kampong Speu all populating over 40 000 people.

![The Populations in the 15 Biggest Towns in Cambodia](image-url)

Figure 13. The population of Phnom Penh is very high. (Rao et al.2002).
3.3.1.1 Phnom Penh
The domination of Phnom Penh as a primary city in Cambodia is evident. The population of Phnom Penh was in the year 1998 over one million (1 077 853 persons) and 53 percent of the people were living in the city centre, which consist of Duonh Penh, Prampir Meakkara, Chamkar Mon and Tuol Tok districts (569 888 persons). The population of Phnom Penh is increasing constantly due to fertility and high migration and it has in great probability nowadays crossed the line of one million people. The population in the capital city is increasing especially due to the high migration rate from the rural areas. Unfortunately, Phnom Penh is not ready for this kind of continuous migration (seasonal and long-term) and therefore the already inadequate infrastructure is under a great pressure. (MOP 1999a, MOP 2001, Rao et al.)
4 Migration from the field study villages

4.1 Introduction to the studies, the methods and aim

The aim of the migration/urbanisation field studies was to understand where migrants from study villages have been migrated, when and why. Studies covered present migration of the villagers together with possible future migration. To succeed in this complicated task field studies of migration/urbanisation based on focus group discussion with villagers about present migration and three different future migration rankings: first choice ranking, last choice ranking and preference ranking. To find out the situation in present migration the focus was set on the last ten years in order to ignore the migration due to the 1970s and 1980s political enforcements.

The field studies were done together with the field team that consisted of two socio-economical trainees, two local staff members and one socio-economist. All the exercises were done in local language, Khmer. Therefore, the foreign socio-economist mainly had to act as an observer of the exercises. The presence of a foreigner, barang, in the studies was sometimes confusing. When the foreigner stayed at the background, the villagers were more encouraged to participate in the studies.

The focus group discussions were done with the group of villagers (18 villagers in Kampong Pradam, 16 villagers in Peam Kreang and Pou villages) that were collected by the village chief of each village. This group of villagers was supposed to represent the whole scale of population in each village: different ages, occupations, income groups and sexes. The aim was to get as representative group as possible. Although, the village chief was responsible of gathering the group together so it is possible, that some preferences and family connections were influencing in choosing the participants.

The idea in a focus group discussion is free conversation. In each discussion one of the team members acted as a facilitator and the aim was to encourage discussions to follow the right directions. Other team members’ main aim was to listen villagers’ opinions not to ask questions. With an open-minded focus group discussion new points of migration/urbanisation can be identified. Although, there can be always some problems with the openness in this kind of discussion, it is still the best way to understand the life and circumstances in the village. In these studies the difficulties were mostly caused by language problems.

The future migration rankings were made in three parts. Two of the rankings (first choice and last choice ranking) were made individually and the preference ranking was done together with the group of villagers. In the first choice and last choice ranking all the villagers got one marker (stone) and they placed it individually to the box (city/province) where they would like to move and where not to.

In preference ranking villagers decided together how attractive they think different cities and provinces are regarding migration. In this ranking markers using the scale from 1 to 10 were placed in each box. The bigger the number in the box, the more attractive villagers found the city to be. Cities and provinces in the exercise were agreed together with the villagers and they included provincial and district towns closer to the village as well as cities and provinces further away (e.g. Phnom Penh, Bangkok).
4.2 Previous migration from the study villages

The information in this chapter is collected from the villagers. The conversation of previous migration was focused in last ten years to ignore the mass migration movements in 1970s and 1980s. Although, we can see in the text below, that most of the migration from the study villages had taken place in last couple of years. (See Figure 14.)

4.2.1 Kampong Pradam village

Kampong Pradam village is situated on the banks of Stoung River in Kampong Thom province eight kilometres from district headquarter (Stoung) and 58 kilometres from the provincial headquarter (Kampong Thom). The livelihood in the village depends primarily on agriculture: wet season (recession) rice and floating rice. There are 990 villagers in Kampong Pradam and 53 percent of them are females. At the moment, the average birth rate in the village is 28 children per year (almost three percent of population). Landlessness is big problem in Kampong Pradam where over 12 percent of the families living in the village do not own agricultural land. Most of the landless villagers are involved in fishing.

4.2.1.1 Migration

Between three years from 1999 to 2001 almost two percent of the population moved out from the village.

During the dry season in 1999 one family (two females, two males) moved from Kampong Pradam village to live in Battambang Province. The family was poor and they lacked both residential and agricultural land because they had sold their land due to depths and illness in the family. The family had friends living in Battambang before they moved there. These migrants have not visited Kampong Pradam village since they left.

During the dry season in 2001 eleven villagers (ten females, one male) migrated to Phnom Penh to work in the garment factories. Most of these migrants were young (around 21 years), single and poor farmers that had graduated from the 4th class. The reason for moving was lack of food due to low rice yield as well as the decrease in village’s natural resources. Migrants knew someone who was living in Phnom Penh beforehand and they come to visit their families during the festivals.

In 2001 five villagers (two females, three males) migrated to Thailand. Most of these migrants were 25 years old, single (one widow) and had studied until class five. The families of these young migrants sent them to find work from Thailand due to low rice yield and lack of food. Migrants choose to move to Thailand because some of their relatives and friends were already living there. These young migrants have not returned to visit their families.

4.2.2 Peam Kreang village

Peam Kreang village is situated in Kdey Dong commune in Kampong Thom province on both banks of Stung Sean River approximately nine kilometres east from district and provincial headquarters. Villagers’ livelihood in Peam Kreang is depending primarily on agriculture especially on floating rice cultivation. The population in the village is 1452 of which around one half are female. At the moment, the average birth rate in the village is 33 children per year (over two percent of population). The landlessness is not a serious problem in Peam Kreang and approximately less than three percent of the families in the village do not own agricultural land.
4.2.2.1 Migration

All the recent migrants have migrated in year 2001 and during that year over one percent of Peam Kreang village’s population migrated out from the village.

In the dry season of 2001 one family migrated to Kampong Cham province because they lacked draught animals for agriculture work. They sold their agricultural and residential land and moved away from the village. They chose to move to Kampong Cham province because their friends where already living there.

In wet season 2001 fifteen villagers (eleven females, four males) migrated to Phnom Penh to work in garment factories. Reason for their migration was lack of food due to low rice yield and decrease in natural resources around their village. These migrants were young (about 20 years), farmers, mostly poor and single and they had graduated from the fifth grade. Villagers moved to Phnom Penh because they had friends already living in the city. These migrants come to visit their families normally during the festivals (Khmer New Year and Phum Ben).

4.2.3 Pou village

Pou village is a floating village situated in Pou Treay commune in Pouk district, Siem Reab province. The village is located 36 km from Pouk, 80 km from Siem Reab and 73 km from Battambang. During the dry season houses are situated on the Sankai River, while during the wet season the floating houses move little closer to flooded forest following the changing water levels. All the villagers in Pou are primarily dependent on fishing and fishing related activities. Pou village has 470 habitants from which 249 are females. The population in Pou village increases naturally slowly and the average birth rate in the village is 4 children per year (0.9 percent of population).

4.2.3.1 Migration

In the last years over three percent of the village’s population have migrated out from the village. Most of the migrants have moved between the years 2000 and 2001.

In the wet season 2001 one male villager migrated to Siem Reab to work in a private company. Reason for his migration was lack of food, lack of fishing gears and low fish catch. He was 22 years old, poor and single fisherman. He was graduated from the grade nine and was able to find good work outside the village with his high education.

Between the years 1988 to 2001 nine villagers (three females, six males) migrated to Phnom Penh to work in garment factories or as paid labour. Reason for their migration was lack of food due to low fish catch, lack of fishing gears and decreased natural resources (e.g. fish and wildlife) around the village. The migrants were all poor and single, fishermen and most of them had graduated from the third grade. Majority of them was 25 to 30 years old and they left the village during wet season.

In dry season 2000 two female villagers migrated to Poipet (Banteay Meanchey) to do business in the market. Reason for their migration was also lack of food and low fish catch. They both were poor, young (20 years), single fishermen and had graduated from the fourth grade. In wet season in the same year three villagers (two females, one male) migrated as well, to work in Banteay Meanchey as paid labour. Also these villagers migrated due to lack of food and low fish catch. They all were young (19 years), poor and single fishermen and had graduated from the second class.
4.2.4 Some basic trends of migration

Even though the migration from study villages has not been enormous in the last ten years some basic trends can be identified - who has moved and why. From the discussions of present migration some destinations can be named to where most of the people have migrated. For example, Phnom Penh, the capital of Cambodia, is one of the most important attractive poles of migration in Cambodia.

Similarly, like from the previous Census data examination about out-migration from Tonle Sap Lake (between the years 1993 to 1998) we can notice also from the field studies here that one to three percent of the population has been moved away from the study villages in the last five years (1997 to 2002). Especially the years 2000 and 2001 have been the years of high migration from the study villages, probably due to droughts and floods that bothered the rice cultivation in those years, as well as, a constant decrease in natural resources. From the Figure 14 we can see that the present migration flows from the study villages have been quite short and directed mainly to the provinces nearby. Although there is one province, which has attracted population even from further away.

![Migration from the study villages](image)

Figure 14. Phnom Penh has been the most attractive province for migrants in last years.

Majority of the migrants from the study villages (66 percent) has moved to Phnom Penh. This city has attracted migrants from all the study villages and migration to this city covers most of the migration from these villages. All the migrants who have moved to Phnom Penh have been young (20 to 30 years), single and low educated (3rd to 5th grades). Females have been twice more eager than males to migrate to Phnom Penh where they mostly work in the garment factories. Female migrants have been in average younger (around 20 years) than the male migrants who have migrated to Phnom Penh to work as paid labour.

In addition, the province of Banteay Meanchey has been attracting relatively many migrants but only from Pou village, which is on the north side of the lake. In Banteay
Meanchey especially the city of Poipet near Thai-Cambodian border has been the main target for these migrants. Together five, young (19 to 20 years) and low educated migrants moved to this border city to work in the market or as paid labour.

Phnom Penh and Banteay Meanchey have been attracting young population. These migrants have all moved from the villages to earn money in different branches of employment. Lack of food due to low rice yield and fish catch, lack of fishing gears and decreased natural resources around the villages acted as main rural pushes to these migrants. They all have moved from the villages during recent years, in 2000 and 2001, when the floods in Tonle Sap Lake have been extraordinary high.

The previously mentioned, young migrants have moved away from the village due to the lack of food and natural resources. These migrants are children of poor villagers that had not found work or earnings in the village and had decided to migrate to other areas in search of better livelihood. The situation was even worse with other families which due to deep poverty could not cope anymore with their livelihood in the village – lack of both residential and agricultural land and lack of draught animals for agriculture work had made their life in the village unbearable. Due to these deep problems these families had been forced to migrate from the village. From Kampong Pradam and Peam Kreang families already had moved to Battambang and Kampong Cham. Both of the provinces had been familiar to these migrants, they had known someone from there beforehand and they had though that in these provinces they would be able to live without land.

The present international migration has been directed to Thailand. Five migrants, majority of them, males, have migrated abroad from Kampong Pradam village. These migrants had been similar than the migrants that had moved to Poipet and Phnom Penh although little older and they had have similar reasons for their migration.

All the migrants had chosen the destinations of migration by their local friends. All these migrants had chosen to move to these previously mentioned provinces because they had known someone from there beforehand. Their local friends or relatives had told about their lives and opportunities in the destination place, which had made the decision of migration easier for the villagers. Through this fact, it is important to think about previous migration when concerning about the possible future migration.

4.3 Future prospects of migration

Villagers in all three villages said that they do not want to move from their villages but if they will face more problems with their livelihood they do not have any other choice than migrate. The factors that will harm their life significantly would be shortage of rice, low fish catch, inadequate rain or irregular flood or loss of forest cover. From this finding it is effortless to notice, that the rural push is much stronger than the urban/rural pull of different provinces and cities. At the moment all villagers liked to live in their home villages with their friends and relatives and the urban life did not attract greatly these people. Anyhow, we have to remember that the group of villagers cannot present the whole population of the village. The average age in our field study groups had been relatively high (~47 years), education mean and income level moderate, which definitely had some influences to the results. The willingness to move would be different if the poorest, uneducated and young people would be heard separately. In this case, also the power of urban pull could be different.
If the rural pushes will cross the potency of livelihood and villagers have to move from the villages they would prefer business cities like Phnom Penh and Poipet. In these cities they think that they are able to find jobs more easily. Villagers think that in these places they would be able to find work as paid labour, in business or in small-scale trading. For the villagers it is truly important that they know someone from the destination that could help them in the beginning. This is the reason why all the migrants moved to the place where they knew somebody. The stories and rumours are also often the only information about other provinces and cities because villagers do not have electricity for radios and televisions and they often cannot read the newspapers if they would be able to afford one.

4.4 Attractive poles of migration in the future

To understand the possible future migration in Cambodia the study includes an "imagination part" where villagers pretend that the situation in the village has gone hopeless and they have to move. In the case of migration villagers pictured the best possible destinations of their future migrations as well as the destinations were they last would like to move. According to these results we are able to do some estimations about the directions of possible future migration.

The results of the imagination part showed similar trends in future migration than we can see in previous migration. Again Phnom Penh and Poipet in Banteay Meanchey are the main poles of attraction. These destinations are popular for villagers of Kampong Pradam and Peam Kreang. In Phnom Penh villagers think that they could work in small-scale business, garment factories and as paid labour. The capital city is most popular destination for females also in the future as in the past. For comparison, Poipet attracts more males to work in business life or as paid labour. Also Krong Pailin attracts mainly male migrants to work with rice cultivation and mining. Pailin is relatively popular destination of migration especially for the villagers from Kampong Pradam and Peam Kreang (see Figure 15).
Anyhow, not all villagers prefer these popular cities/provinces like Phnom Penh, Poipet or Pailin. Some villagers prefer provinces that are nearby. For example, Siem Reab is popular mostly because its opportunities with tourism. In addition, other studies support that Siem Reab is an important destination of migration especially from the communes and provinces nearby (FAO 2000). Also secondary cities like Stoung (8km from Kampong Pradam) and Puok (36km from Pou) attract villagers with their short destination from the village and familiarity. Especially Stoung seems to draw people from the Kampong Pradam village in the future. Villagers think that in the city of Stoung they can do business in the market or work as paid labour. It can be said that the distance to the secondary cities is one influential fact. Stoung attracts villagers from Kampong Pradam with short distance but Pouk cannot be a magnet for villagers from Pou and villagers rather choose to migrate to the provincial capitals, Battambang (73km) or Siem Reab (80km). The villagers in Pou think that Battambang is the closest city where they would be able to make their living. In addition to distance, it is important that villagers are familiar with the city and that they have been in the city beforehand. For example, Battambang and Stoung Markets are well known and homely to many villagers in Kampong Pradam and Pou village.

In the future, international migration seems to be quite insignificant. In the imagination study only two villagers said that they would move abroad, to Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia. They have heard that people have migrated to Malaysia to work in domestic services. They said that they would contact a special company that arranges work opportunities in Malaysia. Actually there are few offices in Phnom Penh that organize these kinds of opportunities. They arrange trip and work for migrants and take some percent of their salary to cover the expenses. In the future, there will probably be even more of these kinds of labour networks for different countries. In the imagination part it came clear that
villagers strongly prefer cities in their home country. Anyhow sometimes the pull of Thai cities can draw migrants to Thailand. Though, the villagers did not mentioned any cities/places in Thailand, they have many friends living in the neighbouring country and salaries are there higher, which makes one to assume that there will be some migration to Thailand as well in the future.

Again all the villagers said that the reason why they have chosen these cities/provinces for target of their possible migration is that they have friends and relatives living in these regions or they have heard something good about these places. When looking at the previous migration we can notice that trends of future migration are similar than present migration -once again the previous migration, stories and gossips showed their importance in future migration.

4.5 Cities/provinces without attraction

It is evident that villagers prefer to migrate inside their own country. They doubt that abroad they would not feel themselves comfortable with a foreign culture and language. Villagers think that in their own country they will have better chances to find proper work and not get cheated. Also in the international migration the threshold of moving abroad becomes lower if villagers already have friends in the new destination or they have heard positive things about the places.

On the villagers “black list” are the big cities especially in Vietnam, Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon) and Hanoi. Particularly Ho Chi Minh is an unwanted city for almost half of the villagers. This is probably due to the political problems and power game between Cambodia and Vietnam after Pol Pot’s overthrow. Neither does Bangkok as a big, foreign city attract villagers. In Thailand the lack of language skills and friends narrows down the future migration.

The ranking of cities/provinces without attraction showed the fact that villagers do not want to move to big cities. They rather stay in their home country where the cities are not yet so called mega-cities. Some villagers even said that Phnom Penh is already too densely populated and dirty, which makes it unattractive to move. Phnom Penh was the only city in Cambodia that some villagers thought to be their last choice of migration. All the other cities that were ranked last were in the neighbouring countries. From this fact we can figure out again that the internal migration will be dominant type of migration also in the near future in Cambodia.
5 Why villagers have moved?

5.1 Rural push

The rural push in Cambodia is strong and complicated. The force that pushes country’s rural population to migrate is not only formed by one or few factors but is more like a net that is weaved of many different matters. The components of this net are for example, population growth, poverty, water quality, water quantity, arable land area and natural resources. These components with many other subcomponents form small circles that finally shape the net of rural push. The circles are near to vicious circles where the end of the circle feeds the start of the circle.

Figure 16. How rural push built up?

The Figure 16 presents the basic structure of the rural push from the villages around Tonle Sap Lake. Even the figure shows only the very basic formation of driving force we can see that it is fairly complicated. To understand the different factors and their relations they are explained in the next chapters. Previous information is mainly gathered from the field study especially from the time rankings (See Keskinen, et al. WUP-FIN socio-economic studies on Tonle Sap 1-6, 2002).

5.1.1 Population growth

The population in the provinces around Tonle Sap Lake is over 3.4 million but around 1.1 million of these live in the lake’s area of influence. The total fertility rate in the region is average 5.8. The population is growing continuously in this area due to high birth rate and
Migration. Migration to study region (Tonle Sap) is mainly focused on grooms who move to live in their bride’s home villages as well as some seasonal migration between different provinces. Before 1990 the populations in the study villages have been rather small but after 1990 the populations in the villages have increased due to marriages and births. Especially in Kampong Pradam village the birth rate is high, average 28 children is born every year.

High population growth in the region increases the demand for food, water and natural resources. The lack of food in the region during few months in a year is commonplace and with increasing population the lack will be even deeper. Already nowadays some families in the village are landless and due to this have problems in their livelihood. When the population in the village will increase in the future this creates more demand for the land. The new families will need land to cultivate but fertile, free land is not often available for them. In addition the demand for land and natural resources for increasing population creates enormous pollution and nutrient load to the water systems and nature of the areas.

5.1.2 Rainfall

Villagers said that before 1990 there have been lot of regular rains in the villages because during that time the forest cover in the catchment areas as well in Cambodia overall was larger. After 1995 the rains have decreased in the villages and villagers think that reason for this is the lack of forest management. Lack of forest conservation, human activities and over-cutting of forests have had remarkable effects on the rains and their densities. Also changes in the climate may have caused some effects on the amounts of rains in the region.

The inconstant rains harm extremely country’s rice cultivation because the irrigation system in Cambodia is almost non-existing. Villagers sow the seeds of floating rice in April and wet season rice in May and during these months some rain would be needed to get rice seeds germinate and seedlings to root. Unfortunately rainfall is not often adequate at these months, which decreases the potential rice yield. For example, in year 2002 Cambodia suffered from droughts in early summer, which hindered the rice cultivation remarkably.

If the villagers have problems with low rainfall, hard rains also harm them in rainy season, especially in September. The rains lead to floods that are essential for rice cultivation but on the other hand may destroy the whole yield and flow roads and infrastructure.

5.1.3 Water quality

The three study villages are all situated by river – Stoung, Stueng Sean and Sankai Rivers are all tributaries of Tonle Sap Lake. Villagers of Kampong Pradam, Peam Kreang and Pou are highly dependent on the water of these rivers. Rivers offer water for rice cultivation, fishing, cattle breeding, irrigation and household needs. Because the water is included in every livelihood sector, the quality is very important to the villagers and their livelihood is highly dependent on it.

Until 1990 the water quality in these three rivers was rather good, especially during wet seasons, when the water level is higher. Due to population and demand growth recently the water quality in rivers have notably decreased. Villagers think that reasons for impaired water quality are smaller water depths, increased sedimentation, decreased flows, human wastes and loss of forest cover in the catchment areas. Nowadays the water quality is low in the rivers, especially during dry season (January to September), when water is contaminated by human activities, sediment and waste disposal from upstream.
5.1.4 Water depth and sedimentation
Before year 1990 the previously mentioned rivers were deeper but since 1990 all these water bodies have become shallower due to the increased amount of silt in water flows from the upland, heavier use of fish catches (Samras) which catch sediment and increased waste from human activities.

The main reason for lowered water depths in the water bodies near the villages is sedimentation. The increased sediment content in the rivers is caused by erosion in the catchment areas due to excessive forest cutting, express boat traffic and mining in the upland areas. Especially, in dry season between June and August the high amount of sediment causes harm to the water use. Villagers rely much on surface waters, so it is evident that high sediment concentration has effects on their life in the village. For example, Kampong Pradam village do not have wells and villagers use only water from Stoung River for all their needs.

5.1.5 Flood
Villagers said that before 1990 there were regular and relatively low floods in the villages because during that time the rivers and other water bodies were deeper due to lower sedimentation. Deeper water bodies were able to store more water and this way decreased the floods. Since 1995 flooding in the area has increased and villagers think that the reasons behind this are: loss of forest area in upland and mountains, sedimentation of rivers and lakes, changes in region’s weather, rain in upland area and raising water level of Tonle Sap Lake.

The height of the flood has an effect to the amount of fish and rice in the area. If the flood rises too high it will damage the rice yield and have an effect on the fish migration. Even the fish catch is best during the months when water level raises and lot of fish migrates to the rivers too high water level has its effects on the fish populations. For example, when the flood rises up to 6 meters, the fish population is much lower in the inundated forests near the Pou village, than when it rises only 3 to 4 meters.

5.1.5.1 Floods and rice cultivation
Rice cultivation is really important for the population of Cambodia. Both floating and wet season rice cultivation are highly dependent on the floods. Floods are essential for rice cultivation but as well harm farming with their irregularity.

Villagers said that before 1990 the flood in the rivers was lower. At that time the peak of flood was between 3 and 3.5 meters, which was good height for rice cultivation. After 1995 flooding in the area has increased and the peak flood has increased 4 to 6 meters, which is too high for rice cultivation and causes damage to the floating rice. The floating rice yield is highest when flood rises 2.5 to 3.5 meters. If flood rises up to 3 to 4 meters it is too high for rice and water drowns the rice plants. How high the rice is able to grow depends on the rice type but normally four meters flood is already too much for most of the rice types.

Also the rapidity of flood rising is important in rice cultivation. If flood rises too fast or too slow, it will have effect on the vegetation. If flood rises too fast the plant cannot keep up with the growing speed and water will finally cover the plant suffocating it. If flood rises too slowly the plant will fall down due to lack of water’s supporting effect.
In past three years (2000-2002) the villages of Kampong Pradam and Peam Kreang have been flooding more than normally and the floods have been reaching three to four meters. These high floods have been caused by combination of heavy rainfall as well as flood from Tonle Sap Lake and Stoung and Stueng Sean Rivers. High floods during the past three years have caused damage to the rice crop and due to that food shortage in the villages.

5.1.6 Forest
Before the year 1993 there was plenty of flooded forest around the study villages but since then there has been a clear decrease in the forest cover. The forest cover in the villages has decreased due to the powerful forest cutting for firewood, house repairing and building, material for fish catches (samras) and burning of forest to ease turtle hunting.

Forest cover in the villages is important for many reasons. It offers shelter for birds, breeding places for fish, gives protection to floating villages against storms and waves, fortifies soil decreasing erosion and sedimentation and absorbs water, hindering flooding.

5.1.7 Fish
Fish gives important food for villagers throughout the year and offers livelihood to some villages. Before the year 1990 there was plenty of fish in Stoung River, Stueng Sean and Sankai Rivers as well as in Tonle Sap Lake. At that time the population by the rivers was lower, people used sustainable fishing gears (no electro-fishing etc.), there were more habitats for fish to breed (flooded forest) and water depths in the water bodies were deeper. Villagers said that in those days one family could catch up to 20 kg fish per day.

After 1990 both the quantity of fish and the amount of fish species (Trei Dam, Rey Trei, Ka Hai and Trei Kou Chrao) have decreased due the use of illegal fishing gears (electro-fishing, samras), shallower water depths, over-fishing, loss of flooded forest cover, water contamination and population growth. At the moment, one family can catch only 1-2 kg fish per day. In some villages the signs of problems with water quality and fish catch are already visible. For example, during October and November 2002 the villagers in Pou bear witness to mass deaths of fishes due to lowering water quality; sedimentation, wastes, pesticides, chemicals and poison. The whole floating village was lying inside the masses of dead fishes and villagers suffered from the terrible smell of decomposing fish and problems with the source of drinking water.

Floods also have an effect on the fish population near villages. Especially the height of flood has an effect on the amount of fish in water bodies of Tonle Sap Lake. If the flood is relatively high (3-4 meters) the fish catch is high, but if the flood rises up to six meters the fish catch will decrease. For example, during the last three big floods (2000, 2001 and 2002) there has been only a little fish in the river and inundated forest near Pou village.

The Tonle Sap Lake is divided to fishing lots that are auctioned to private companies. The villagers are not aloud to fish in these lots, which runs down their potential fisheries. In 2000 the government released the management of the fishing lot number two also to the villagers of Pou. Villagers believe strongly that this rearrangement will increase their fish catch and as a result also their level of livelihood.

5.1.8 Rice cultivation
Agriculture is the most important source of livelihood in Cambodia and it offers employment for the majority of the population. Rice cultivation dominates largely country’s agriculture. Floating rice and wet season rice (recession rice) are the most
important types of rice cultivation. Cultivation of dry season rice is really low due to the lack of irrigation. Average rice yield for wet season rice is low, approximately 1.5 tonnes per hectare. Poor farmers in Cambodia do not use fertilizers (except manure) or pesticides in cultivation and they lean on draught animals in tilling of their land.

Rice cultivation is harmed by poverty. The lack of arable land is problem for many families. Often land owned by poor villagers is infertile and villagers cannot afford to use fertilizers. Sometimes the poverty is so deep that in case of sickness or deep debts families have to sell their draught animals, which makes cultivation truly difficult. Also floods and droughts harm the rice cultivation. (See chapter 5.1.5.1: Floods and rice cultivation.)

Rats also harm the villagers by eating and destroying the rice crop as well as spreading diseases. Before 1990 there were only few rats in the villages but after 1995 the quantity of rats has increased due to loss of predators that are their natural enemies. The amount of predators has decreased because protecting forest cover has diminished and villagers have started to hunt predators for food and selling. Although, the rats harm the rice cultivation they as well offer villagers a great source of protein and money. Some villagers hunt rats by traps for eating and selling.

5.1.8.1 Droughts and rice cultivation

Droughts and irregular rains make cultivation of floating and wet season rice difficult in the villages. Villagers start to grow floating rice in May and June - they prepare land for cultivation and sow floating rice seeds to the fields. During these months rain would be needed for germination but rainfall is not often adequate at that time. Sometimes the lack of rain can even destroy almost the whole rice crop because most of the villages do not have irrigation system. Similar problems can be seen also with wet season rice. In June villagers plough the land and plant the rice seedlings to the fields. As in May as well in June the amounts of rains are often so low that the seedlings die before they can even root in the ground.

5.1.9 Level of livelihood

Villagers remembered that earlier the level of livelihood in the agriculture villages like Kampong Pradam and Peam Kreang was higher in because there were lot of rains, floods were regular, villagers had good rice seed to cultivate floating rice and recession rice and there were plenty of natural resources (e.g. fish and forest) around the villages. Since 1995 the level of livelihood has decreased due to the irregular rains and floods, which have harmed the cultivation of floating and wet season rice. Some families also lack land for cultivation due to the increased population and poverty.

In Pou village the livelihood of villagers depends mostly on fishing. Villagers catch a lot of fish in February, March and July, and in these months villagers have enough food and money (from selling fish). The fish catch is smallest between April and June as well as between August to November. During these months villagers have shortage of fish and rice, which naturally decreases villagers’ level of livelihood. Earlier the level of livelihood in village was higher because there were more natural resources around the village (e.g. fish, birds, wildlife, flooded forest). At that time people also got higher fish catch than nowadays i.e. around 20 to 30 kilograms of fish per day per family. After 1990 the level of livelihood of villagers has decreased due to decreased fish catch and increasing population.
5.1.9.1 Health

The health of the villagers is highly dependent on the rice crop and fish catch. From March till August the health of villagers in agriculture villages (Kampong Pradam, Peam Kreang) is good because then villagers have enough food and they have free time from fieldwork. During the rest of the year villagers have poorer health due to the lack of food, hard fieldwork and changes in weather. Most of diseases in the village harm both the young and the old villagers; most common diseases include bad cold, high fever and dysentery.

The dwellers of Pou village are mostly depending on fishing and fish catch. The fish catch is low in the end of dry season (April to June) and in the rainy season (August to November). Those times the water is very contaminated with sediment or the water level is really high. At these months the population of fishing villages (Pou) is suffering from bad health due to food shortage, bad water quality and changes in weather. After rainy season (February to March) and in the early months of rainy season (July) the fish catch is better and it will have as well positive effects on the people’s health.

5.2 Urban pull

The urban pull from the study villages is also formed from many different factors. These matters alone and together persuade villagers to move to cities or other provinces. The urban pull mainly draws people to the urban areas but also some provinces (e.g. Krong Pailin, Koh Kong) are attractive for villages and pull people towards them. Although, these pull factors are quite similar regardless are they pulling to rural or urban areas.

In the Figure 17 the different factors, that created urban pull in the study villages is showed. It has to be noticed that the different factors that construct the urban pull are changing after migrants’ life, their values and age. The reasons that draw migrants to the cities are education, income differences between urban and rural areas, western way of life in the city, relatives and friends that are already living in these cities and success stories that migrants hear about the city and it’s job opportunities. The actual friends in the destination city, rumours and stories are very important when migrants choose their destination city from the whole gamut of attractive cities. These previously mentioned factors, together with rural push creates the need of migration.

![Figure 17. Also urban pull is formed from many factors.](image-url)
In the study villages urban pull is relatively low and it seems that rural push is mainly dominating the migration. Anyhow we cannot underestimate the power of urban pull. With better infrastructure and road network the access to the cities even further away will be easier, which in great probability increases migration from the study villages in the future. With better road network the travel time to the cities will be shorter and this will make visiting home easier and this way lowers the threshold of migration. The better road network will definitely bring the modern lifestyle as well to the secondary cities and spread out the information of life in the cities to the people in the villages. Already now there can be seen some glorification of western life style, modernisation and city-life among the young villagers.
6 Conclusions

Although, migration and urbanisation in Cambodia are not broadly studied or they are even undervalued in recent studies, it is clear that migration is occurring between provinces as well as cities. The field studies showed that in the last five years approximately one to three percent of the population from the study villages has migrated. Most of the villagers have moved to Phnom Penh, Thailand, Koh Kong, Battambang, Siem Reab and Banteay Meanchey. The reasons behind migration had been poverty, landlessness, lack of food due to poor rice yield or fish catch and decreased natural resources. Rainfall, droughts and floods have had remarkable effects on the amount of rice yield as well as on fish catch.

From the we can learn that villagers are not willing to move away from the villages but instead would like to stay in their homes as long as possible. From this fact we can draw conclusions that urban pull is not the dominant force in migration in Cambodia but rather it is the bad situation in the villages that forces villagers to move. The dominant migration force in Cambodia is rural push that dragoons villagers to move. The factors behind rural push are among others: decreases in rice yield and fish catch, floods, droughts, irregularity of rainfall, decrease of water quality and natural resources. Villagers stated that if the situation in these aspects will worsen many villagers do not have another choice, than move from the villages to new locality.

The study focused also on the future migration by a special imagination part. Based on these results it can be pointed out that, if villagers would be forced to migrate, they would move to cities from where they already knew somebody. The gossips and stories told by relatives and friends are important information sources for the migrants when choosing their new destination. Villagers thought that in some bigger city they would be able to find some work. The popular destinations were: Phnom Penh, Poipet and Krong Pailin. These places interested villagers with business opportunities, garment industries and free, mine-cleared land.

Majority of the migration in Cambodia is occurring between rural areas, which is understandable in this rural, agricultural country. However, there is migration to the urban areas as well, 19 percent of the migrants chose urban area as their new living place. In 1998 most of the migrants that move to the urban areas move to the capital city of Cambodia, Phnom Penh. This city offers work for migrants in garment industries, construction sites, as moto- or cyclo-driver or in small-scale trading. The migration between urban areas is also high, which indicates that some cities are more attractive than others. Again, Phnom Penh seems to be a good example of this kind of attractiveness.

Commonly, the migration in Cambodia is seasonal. Many migrants move to the cities to earn money during the dry season when the agricultural sector has an off-season. Migrants come to the city with an idea to save money and at the same time to support their families back in the home-villages. Unfortunately, migrants were often surprised by the price-levels in the cities and they are not able to save as much money as they thought.

Internal migration is dominant in Cambodia but also international migration is vital and even increasing. Although, villagers in the study villages preferred to migrate inside their motherland, is Thailand a popular destination for the villagers with a hope of better standard of living. Due to the neighbouring countries’ hostile history most of the villagers were fond of moving to Thailand rather than Vietnam. Villagers also avoid big cities like Bangkok and Ho Chi Minh City.
7 References


Migrants from other Provinces classified by Province of Enumeration, Province of Previous Residence, Duration of Residence < 5 years  (NIS 2000b)

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