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Rural-urban migration and social exclusion among Cambodian youth

Discourses and narratives from Phnom Penh

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ABSTRACT

A critical ethnographic approach is used to analyse patterns of social exclusion among young rural-urban migrants in Cambodia. Since the 1990s, Cambodian society has experienced a rapid transformation as a series of neoliberal policies have spurred high levels of urbanisation and economic growth, made possible by a newly flexible, young labour force. This project utilises social exclusion as a lens through which to examine the relations between these migrants and wider society, paying particular attention to the dynamic roles of social relations, space, culture and identity. A poststructuralist discourse analysis of newspaper articles and music videos firstly maps out dominant representations of rurality, urbanity and migration, which have the power to govern popular imaginations of migrants' relationships with society. Four months of fieldwork, including 20 life history interviews with migrants, provide narratives through which to examine the impact of migration on their lives and to explore subjective conceptions of their relationships with multiple facets of society. The findings show that dominant discourses portray absolute, dichotomous images of urban and rural culture, which neglect the fluidity and hybridity shown to exist among migrant identities. Furthermore, beyond the tightly-knit friendship groups created by young migrants in Phnom Penh, social relations tend to lack diversity; rural-urban migrants provided narratives of discrimination and collective exclusion from different segments of society. Spatially, access to the urban "centre" is limited to the privileged, while those on periphery - such as many rural-urban migrants - are excluded from the benefits of urban living. Finally, migrants adopt urban identities to varying degree, dependent on their social positioning but their identities are unanimously underscored by strong cultural roots in their homelands, evidenced by frequent visits and future aspirations to return home. Throughout the project, these dimensions of social exclusion have been theorised as subjective, fluid, overlapping and mutually constitutive. The social, spatial and cultural elements of migrants' narratives investigated via the interviews collide and intersect, supporting more critical conceptions of social exclusion as a theory.

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Table of Contents

List of Figures vii

List of Tables vii

Chapter 1. Introduction 1

Chapter 2. Conceptual Framework 3

2.1. Development as discourse 3

2.2. Migrants 4

2.3. Social exclusion 5

2.3.1. Social relations 6

2.3.2. Urban space 6

2.3.3. Role of identity 8

2.3.4. Intersectionality 9

2.4. Research questions 9

Chapter 3. Methodology 11

3.1. Discourse analysis 12

3.2. Participant observation 14

3.3. Life history interviews 15

3.4. Narrative analysis 18

3.5. Limitations 21

Chapter 4. Regional Thematic Context 23

4.1. Contemporary Cambodia 23

4.2. Population dynamics of Cambodia 24

4.3. Migration to Phnom Penh 26

Chapter 5. National Discourses 28

5.1. Rural homogeneity 28

5.2. Urban vulnerability 31

5.3. The city as progress 33

Chapter 6. Relational Exclusion 36

6.1. Social relations 36

6.2. Interaction between social groups 38

6.3. Differences between social groups 39

Chapter 7. Spatial Exclusion 42

7.1. Life on the periphery 42

7.2. Accessing the centre 44

Chapter 8. Identity 47

8.1. Stories of place 47

8.2. Claiming an urban identity 49

8.3. Ambivalence towards the city and strong rural ties 52

8.4. Perceptions of “urban” and “rural” 53

8.5. Future aspirations 55

Chapter 9. Discussion 57

9.1. Social exclusion as intersectional 57

9.2. Comparing discourses and narratives 59

9.3. The future 60

Chapter 10. Conclusion 63

References 66

Appendices 71

List of Figures

Figure 1. Population pyramid for Cambodia, 2010 (Source: United Nation, 2011)

Figure 2. Still from the music video for ‘Nek Ptas’ by Aok Sokun Kanha

List of Tables

Table 1. Research methodology

Table 2. List of participants in the life history interviews

Chapter 1. Introduction

The debate on migration in development studies is contested territory. It has been characterised by shifting discourses claiming to explain the motivations of people who choose to move in search of "a better life" and the impact of migration patterns on national development projects. Dominating such discourses have been an infatuation with the economic motivations behind migration and underlying modernist, assimilationist assumptions regarding its effects (Halfacree, 2004; Silvey and Lawson, 1999). This research contributes to the growing body of literature influenced by the 'cultural turn' in development studies (Nederveen Pieterse, 2010) that is encouraging alternative understandings of migration. In-depth explorations of migrants' experiences and perceptions can facilitate more nuanced conceptions of migration patterns and uncover the complexities inherent to individual mobilities.

Classically, much literature within migration studies has been laden with dualisms, such as between rural-urban, traditional-modern, native-Western and backwards-progressive, which have been used to characterise various aspects of the geographical transition from one place to another. Such an approach is problematic as it essentialises difference, prescribes labels to migrants which may not reflect reality and can overlook the diversity of relationships. This point is especially pertinent given the growing permeability of cultures and the "rural-urban divide", made possible by technological advances, globalisation more broadly and migration itself. Cambodian society has experienced a rapid transformation as a series of neoliberal policies since the 1990s have reversed its former isolationism and integrated itself into the world economy. Internally, high economic growth and urban development are complimenting newly capitalist labour relations, which is spurring much of Cambodia's young, rural population to move to the cities; as an indication of the extent, Phnom Penh has doubled in population between 1998 and 2010 (MoP, 2012, 94). Considering the context and relative speed of change in Cambodia, it provides the ideal case study to critically explore the effects of migration and urbanisation on a humanistic level.

Accordingly, this critical ethnographic research project will take a post-structuralist approach by focusing on the agency of migrants and recognising the diversity of individual experiences in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. An initial discursive analysis of newspaper articles and music videos will deconstruct their meanings and identify dominant representations of migrants, the

migration process and their relations with “development”. A subsequent exploration, through participant observation and a series of in-depth life history interviews will provide narratives to trace the evolution of migrants' identities, social ties and relationships with multiple facets of society. This will aim to uncover patterns of various types of social exclusion; a contested term that will be revisited in depth. These will facilitate a comparison of non-material aspects of migration-related transformation - through the lens of social exclusion - with national discourses of development and migration.

Chapter 2. Conceptual Framework

This chapter introduces and explores the main concepts to be used in this research project that, together, form the conceptual framework.

2.1. Development as discourse

Discourses around migration sit within the wider discursive field of development. In mainstream development literature, Escobar (1995) was one of the first to support the value of analysis from a Foucauldian perspective and to tease out the relationship at work between power and knowledge in development practices (Abrahamsen, 2000, 14). To comprehend development as a discourse, Escobar called for an understanding of the historical contingency of development and how certain elements have achieved more authority than others to form policies and plans. For example, the historical conditions which allowed for 'the emergence and consolidation of the discourse and strategy of development in the early post-World War II period [were] the result of the problematisation of poverty that took place during those years' (Escobar, 1995, 17).

Post war, the formulation of development theory gave the 'Third World' a new visibility and let it erupt into a new realm of language (Escobar, 1999, 384). Development fostered a way of conceiving social problems as the result of underdevelopment and as a technical problem. Therefore, as Nustad (2004, 19) supports, the decisions of technocrats in development organisations mattered and have mattered ever since. They have shaped the way development discourse has shifted focus from solely top-down ideas linked to modernisation theory to a more varied terrain in recent decades (Nustad, 2004, 20). Nonetheless modernist and developmentalist assumptions still firmly dominate popular conceptions of social change, constructed widely by the popular media and other means. In relation to migrants, it could be argued that dominant development discourses assume the prevalence of migration as a signal of increasing social mobility, independence and hence development. Such assumptions call for a deconstruction of the discourses that frame reality in certain ways and that can constitute claims to single truths. Through such deconstructions, a post-structuralist approach can work to destablise economically fixated assumptions of 'modernisation as development' (Simon, 2014, 224). Challenging the dominant power structures provides the space and freedom to

facilitate alternative conceptualisations of development and migration, according to migrants' own perceptions, experiences and motivations.

2.2. Migrants

Depending on the theoretical approach, migration research has conceptualised migrants in many different ways. These ways have however uniformly focused on mobile groups or individuals and their relationships with national development. As a starting point, academic literature published from a modernisation approach have treated migrants as units of labour and as objects in the development process (Todaro, 1969; Zelinsky, 1971). Such an approach is in line with the principles of classical economics, which treat individuals as rational choice makers that, in this case, understand the economic benefits of migrating and voluntarily mobilise. Political-economy approaches theoretically derived from the dependency school of thought objectify migrants in a similar manner. However, they differ in that migrants from peripheral countries are conceptualised as objects of victimisation. The actions of migrants, in this case, are viewed to be structurally constrained through the global capitalist system's exploitation of labour movements in order to serve the interests of the elite (Burawoy, 1976; Shreshtha, 1988).

The shift towards a more critical theorisation of migrants falls in line with the rise of cultural studies and post-structuralist approaches within development scholarship. In particular, this perspective offers a critical insight into the role migrants are constructed to play in the development discourse; 'as agents negotiating the material and discursive dimensions of development' (Silvey and Lawson, 1999, 129). This critique of development contributes to a more diverse, broader conception of migration and encourages researchers to challenge the taken-for-granted Western knowledge and developmentalist assumptions, which often rely upon the willingness and ability of migrants to integrate into new places. In other words, 'interpreting the voices of migrants themselves as theoretically meaningful allows researchers to open up "development" ' (Silvey and Lawson, 1999, 123). Theoretically opening up development also allows for the critical assessment of the definition of "migrants". Engaging with this thought and opposing assumed definitions of "migrants", Paerregaard stresses that migrant societies are not in reality distinct, bounded social groups but, instead, that the term should be used by researchers simply as a 'demographic label' (Paerregaard, 1997). This

allows for researchers to explore notions of culture and identity from a more dynamic perspective.

2.3. Social exclusion

Social exclusion is a term that emerged in the social sciences in the 1990s. Initially, it was often used by scholars as a tool to vaguely describe an aspect of poverty focusing on the relations between individuals and society (Fangen, 2010, 133). However, the meaning of social exclusion has been extended since then and is more often conceptualised as multidimensional and flexible, which enables better analysis of complex societies. De Haan (1999) was one of the first to operationalise social exclusion in this manner as a framework for explaining the multifaceted nature of deprivation and the social relations that underscore it. Social exclusion is given centrality by Sen's (2000) capability approach to conceptualising poverty, which labels the term a 'capability failure'. Emphasis is given to the relational dimension of social exclusion, i.e. social ties, and notes that being excluded is, in itself, a form of deprivation.

There is a general consensus among scholars that individuals may be socially excluded for a variety of reasons. Gabarino and Holland (2009) expand on this notion by claiming that social exclusion may be present at birth due to a group assigned to an individual such as ethnicity, gender or class. Alternatively, people may become excluded as a result of circumstantial changes, such as migration, or due to more long-term processes, such as unemployment (Gabarino and Holland, 2009, 40). Geography may also be a reason for social exclusion as people's place of habitation can limit access to certain parts of society such as amenities. When researching social exclusion, it will be useful to consider that people may become excluded for many reasons as this perspective respects the complex and flexible nature of the phenomenon. However, simply focusing on the wide variance in factors of social exclusion leaves unanswered questions over its features, tangibility and measurability.

Fangen (2010) goes some way to fill this gap by proposing categories for different types of social exclusion, complimented with examples of defining features for each. For example, Fangen introduces the concept of labour market, or employment, exclusion. For migrants, it may be difficult to get a job due to a lack of experience, networks or knowledge of how the labour market works. Furthermore, discrimination can be a factor as employers may not chose a migrant due to identity-related stigmatisation. It is important to note that the labelling of a

migrant that manages to obtain employment as “included” and someone that does not as “excluded” would be an oversimplification. For instance, the divide between formal and informal employment can be significant, as suggested by research by Wiborg (2006), which reveals the barriers faced by young migrants attempting to enter the formal labour market. Weil et al (2005) describe the issues faced by marginalised youth when entering the labour market, which include struggles over adopting a work-based identity and to work which may fall below the individual's expectations.

2.3.1. Social relations

It is firstly relevant to mention relational exclusion, which is linked to social ties and social networks. This type of exclusion is inherently subjective and therefore difficult to quantify; again advocating for qualitative approaches to research. On this topic, a number of contemporary research projects have explored the role of social networks in the lives of rural-urban migrants in the Global South. For example, Korinek et al (2005) identify the influence of social ties in determining levels of integration among migrants in Thailand; migrant social networks are presented as complex with varying levels of new ties with urbanites and maintenance of links with the place of origin through migrant clubs and equivalents. Furthermore, numerous studies have researched how relational inclusion and, in particular, the possession of deep, geographically broad social networks act as a form of social capital, enabling the initial migration process and consequent integration into the urban environment (Kuhn, 2003; Walker, 2010).

Relational exclusion is linked to social ties, social networks and relations between social groups. This type of exclusion is inherently subjective and therefore difficult to quantify; again advocating for qualitative approaches to research. In addition, inspired by informal conversations in Phnom Penh, the concept of relational exclusion extends to include the relations between different social groups in the city. This will be achieved through an interrogation of who migrants interact with, to what extent and their feelings about these interactions.

2.3.2. Urban space

Socio-spatial exclusion is a concept linked to urban citizenship and the use of, and access to, urban space. This deserves investigation in the context of Phnom Penh where, over the past

twenty year, a comprehensive shift to a free market society has taken place. As commented by Millington (2011), some urban spaces in such neoliberal societies are valued higher than others, creating hierarchies. This point is derived from the works of Henri Lefebvre, which is interested in unpacking the socio-spatial inequalities inherent to neoliberal cities. Lefebvre argued that the social and cultural *use value* of cities is being overtaken by the *exchange value* in the commodification of urban space (1996 [1968], 174). This process is driven by industrialisation and commercialisation and works to exclude many people from accessing positive aspects of urban life; to socially exclude. On a city level, this hierarchicalisation of space heightens the importance of "centrality" as centres become areas of decision-making and consumption (Millington, 2011). Yet centres also become areas where people are excluded from, and, in a shift of what Lefebvre labels from 'concentration' to 'decentralisation', low-paid workers are forced to live on the margins of the city (1996 [1968]). These "peripheries" exist as the opposite to the urban utopia of the centre and those living there can lack access to urban space and decision-making power. This research will therefore aim to explore how migrants' social positioning in relation to the dominant urban sphere, the "centre", influences claims to urban space and social exclusion.

Spatial exclusion is also a complex concept and is strongly linked with individual perceptions. Put simply, the area of a city in which individuals live can produce forms of social exclusion linked to inadequate public facilities; this can be a problem for migrants that tend to settle in "margins" of cities, initially at least. Bourdieu (2002) takes the concept further by introducing relativity; spaces that are not naturally different are socially and hierarchically assigned differing levels of desirability. Therefore, the people living in areas lower down the hierarchy can arguably suffer a form of collective social exclusion. Although popular meanings are socially assigned to areas, individuals or different social groups define their own, if not less dominant, alternative hierarchies. Therefore, this again shows that social exclusion is a complex matter intrinsically linked to culture and identity, suggesting that research into the topic would benefit from an in-depth, exploratory approach.

Furthermore, structural or political factors determining the extent to which urban citizenship is realised can lead to, what Fangen (2010) labels, socio-political exclusion, which has a distinctly spatial element. Citizenship has meaning beyond its traditional, legal notions that deals with the complex socio-political relationship between the individual and the state. From a non-material perspective, a lack of self-identification as a citizen of a city can function as a

form of socio-political exclusion as a migrant may suffer from a sense of "otherness" and not feeling integrated. This notion can be extended to Lefebvre's analysis of spatial production (1991), which claims that the production of space is a material, mental and lived process, with class difference integral in its determination. Self-identification then guides everyday experiences and how space is often conceived, perceived and passively experienced or "lived". Therefore, the extent and breadth to which spatial exclusion exists within everyday practices is determined by social hierarchies and individuals' self-identification. More tangibly, migrants might be excluded from participating in official political practices and may be excluded from gaining official residency status. Arguably this can constitute a form of socio-political exclusion for rural-urban migrants in Cambodia if they are not able to realise full urban citizenship.

2.3.3. Role of identity

This research also aims to explore the role of migration in shaping migrants' identities, through their self-imagining and interpretations of place. Multiple scholars in social anthropology have had similar intent when researching well established rural-urban migrant communities (Paerregaard, 1997; Jacka, 2005; Mills, 2012). What the findings of the multiple social anthropological findings have in common is in challenging conventional fixed notions of the "cultural" or "imagined" rural-urban divide. For example, Mills (2012) argues that in Thailand dominant, dichotomous discourses of urbanity and rurality are contradicted by migrants' experiences of mobility, underscored by their hybrid sense of belonging. The disconnection between dominant cultural perceptions and lived experiences is attributed to the recent surge in geographical mobility among rural communities. For Cambodia, where the rapid surge in rural-urban migration has occurred since the turn of the century, it will be valuable to explore the impact of mobility on migrants' negotiations of identity. As Gabarino and Holland contest that the reasons for social exclusion can be due to the possession of a minority identity and are often multifaceted (2009, 40), this research will extend the questions of identity to the concept of social exclusion.

2.3.4. Intersectionality

Although in no way exhaustive, the categories outlined above– identity, relational and spatial - provide useful variables and lenses for theorising the multiple forms of social exclusion that individuals may experience to some extent as a result of migration. These concepts provide the theoretical framework supporting this proposal's research questions, which will be expanded upon later in this section. However, this by no means suggests rigidity or empiricism in approach. In fact, this research will view social exclusion as a flexible term with multiple meanings and aim to unpack and destabilise taken-for-granted notions of social exclusion.

This is firstly in opposition to the often presented dichotomy of inclusion and exclusion between which the state of marginalisation precariously exists (Room, 1995). Such fixed constructions offer an over-simplistic framing of reality in which one is either 'included' or 'excluded'. Instead, this research will take a more dynamic perspective in which the space in between social inclusion and exclusion is more of a flexible continuum. Furthermore, the separate categories of social exclusion outlined above can be experienced to differing extents and one might feel excluded from, or included in, multiple aspects of society at any one time. It is perfectly feasible that an individual may feel excluded from many aspects and therefore suffer various forms of related deprivation, suggesting an existence on the "margins of society". However, this research also aims to challenge the traditional assimilationist assumption that migrants, and in particular young migrants, prefer to be included over excluded or that exclusion is not a choice. Raum et al (2009) remind us that many young people in Western societies often choose to live outside of mainstream factions of society, instead turning to alternative culture and a desire for hyper-individuality. It is therefore problematic to assume that young people in the Global South have distinctly different aspirations to those in the West; such a perspective would be a form of "exoticisation" and certainly "othering", as critiqued by postcolonial scholars. In sum, the term 'social exclusion' will be treated with flexibility as the research will aim to juggle the various sensitivities and possibilities that come with its complexity.

2.4. Research questions

Following on from the conceptual framework outlined above, the research questions will form the crux of this research project. Put simply the questions aim to explore rural-urban

migration in Cambodia by focussing on four separable themes: national discourses, social relations, use of urban space, and identity. Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8 investigate each respective question accordingly.

1. How do national discourses of migration and urbanisation construct migrants and frame their relations with society? *(Chapter 5)*
2. How do social relations influence social exclusion among migrants? *(Chapter 6)*
3. How does migrants' social positioning in relation to the dominant urban sphere influence access to urban space and social exclusion among migrants? *(Chapter 7)*
4. How does migration shape identities and interpretations of place and to what extent does identity influence social exclusion among migrants? *(Chapter 8)*

Chapter 3. Methodology

As advocated by multiple scholars, this research applies methods grounded in critical social theory to migration research (Silvey and Lawson, 1999; Halfacree, 2004). Firstly, a poststructuralist discursive analysis of popular media has been used to facilitate an exploration of national discourses of urbanity, rurality, as well as migrants and their relations with society. From four months of fieldwork in Phnom Penh, a combination of participant observation and life history interviews provided the data to analyse migrants' own narratives. Such methods constitute a qualitative, critical ethnographic approach that has enabled an in-depth exploration of complex patterns associated with migrant identities and subjectivities. This has facilitated an exploration of how non-material aspects of transformation linked to migration, urbanisation and social exclusion compare with national discourses of migrants and their relations with society.

	Desk-based research	**Fieldwork**
Data collection	3.1 Review of popular media	3.2 Participant observation 3.3 Life history interviews
Data analysis	↓ 3.1 Discourse analysis	↓ 3.4 Narrative analysis

Table 1. Research methodology

In the development field, Warwick and Overton point out that modernisation approaches still dominate practice (2014, 30). Therefore, alternative, more critical approaches to doing development research, which have been growing in prevalence, must be systematic if they are to comprehensively research the topic in hand and provide practical relevance. This section accordingly outlines the steps taken to achieve this, covering a discussion and justification of the methods and techniques as well as a discussion of the limitations.

3.1. Discourse analysis

For this thesis, a working definition of discourse will draw upon understanding the relationship of knowledge and power; upon the work of postmodern thought and Michel Foucault who stated that "discourse is the power which is to be seized" (1984, 110). For Foucault, a 'discourse' is more than its conventional linguistic meaning as 'a discourse provides a set of possible statements about a given area, and organises and gives structure to the manner in which a particular topic, object, process is to be talked about' (Kress, 1985, 7). Therefore, the structure of the migration discourse will be conceptualised as an organisational tool which exists and is constructed through the media to allow for certain ways of thinking about migration, whilst excluding others. It is therefore the aim of this research to investigate how migrants are constructed by discourses found in Cambodian popular media and to explore their framing of migrants' relations with society and "development".

It is necessary to comment on the data collection process, firstly by justifying the choice of newspaper articles for analysis. Using the internet as a tool to locate and assemble articles, I narrowed down the selection process on the two most prominent online newspapers in Cambodia – "The Phnom Penh Post" and 'The Cambodia Daily" – both of which supply a wide range of English-language news articles. Consequently and as widely suggested (Rose, 2012; Tonkiss, 1998), I carried out an intertextual search to identify the articles which talk the most about migrants. As Tonkiss (1998, 253) argues, when undertaking an intertextual search, 'what matters is the richness of textual detail, rather than the numbers of text analysed'. Following this line of thought, a further narrowing down process was carried out with the aim of highlighting a preliminary list containing an unknowable number of reports. To make the task of identifying passages about migrants feasible, the search functions, supplied by the newspapers' websites, were used to automatically locate articles where the words 'migrants', 'migration', 'you(ng/th)', 'urbanisation' are included in relation to Phnom Penh. After excluding irrelevant articles, of which there were many, 24 articles remained (see Appendix A); these were then skim read to verify an adequate richness of textual detail. To quote Rose (2012, 199), 'what brings an intertextual search to an end is the feeling that you have enough material to persuasively explore its intriguing aspects'. This 'feeling', impossible to quantify in terms of number of texts, was met, while it was not felt that there was too much material to lose any focus or depth of analysis.

Moving on to describe the steps taken during discourse analysis, it is important to note that is widely regarded as a 'craft skill' and Rose (2012, 209) argues that scholarship and 'interpretive sensitivities' are more important than rigorous procedure. However, I took explicit, separable steps in this research to investigate the discourse. The first step was to put aside any preconceptions in my mind or from any literature read pointing towards any dominant discourses or assumptions. Following this, both Rose (2012) and Waitt (2005) recommend a process of familiarisation with the texts. To achieve this, I repeatedly read the texts an attempt to immerse myself in the literature. A list was then made of commonly repeated concepts and all articles were interrogated, with the material coded every time that concept occurred. This coding allowed for an examination of the 'relations between statements and groups of statements' (Foucault, 1972, 29) which, in turn, made it possible to identify the connecting themes between key concepts in different texts. These key concepts and themes are visually represented in the form of a mind map, which was useful when selecting final codes and as an overviewing reference point during deep analysis of the texts (see Appendix B). Throughout, I treated the process of coding and interpretation with a sense of flexibility and new issues and questions commonly prompted new coding. A final reading, re-coding and re-interpretation the texts led to a stage where I could identify dominant discourses, ready for discussion in the later chapters of this thesis.

Although the dominant discourses constructed by the newspaper articles provide analytically significant and widely relevant insights, the meanings of national discourses are made across a wide variety of texts and other forms of media. Discourses exist not solely within texts but are co-constructed by many different sources. As Lemke advocates, 'meanings are made through the co-deployment of different modalities with one another, both consciously and unconsciously or automatically' (2012, 86).

Therefore, departing from a solely textual form of discourse analysis, the decision was made to extend the research into a multimodal discourse analysis. The aim was to allow for a more in-depth, reinforced and legitimised discussion of the dominant migration discourses found in the Cambodia media. A new process of data collection was necessary and, following three months of observation in Cambodia, I identified music videos as a widely accessed form of media and an additional source for analysis. This is empirically backed up as television is the most commonly used media platform in Cambodia, with a majority (57%) of the population saying they watch television at least weekly (BBG and Gallup, 2014). With the assistance of

my translator, 8 popular, contemporary and widely circulated music videos were identified for analysis (see Appendix C). The lyrics were roughly translated into English to provide context and I coded the images in a similar manner to the textual discourse analysis; highlighting recurring concepts, identifying key themes and mapping the connections between sources.

3.2. Participant observation

To begin fieldwork, I dedicated the first few weeks of the research to conducting participant observation. According to Bernard (2011), the method provides firm foundations for any ethnographic research project. This is achieved through the obtainment of trust from research participants or "population" and making oneself comfortable with others in order to reach a point where observation can occur and details of their lives can be recorded. It is a highly interpretative method that requires a lot of "gut" feeling, which can create a lot of in-depth qualitative data. This can derive from field notes, photographs and informal conversations; all of which I produced in Phnom Penh. The preliminary data was created during an initial period of exploration and fact-finding; I visited "hang-outs" to record patterns of behaviour among migrants. This also allowed me to map out the parts of Phnom Penh where migrants live and work. Admittedly, "authentic" and comprehensive participant observation was not feasible due to the limited time span of the research; ideally, more time would have been spent immersing into the culture and learning the language in order to gain a more informed insight into the lives of young migrants in Phnom Penh. Nevertheless, a slightly compromised, short-term approach still gained valuable data.

Moreover, the initial period of participant observation provided avenues to begin formulating a participatory approach to more in-depth research. The aim being to continually analyse and report on the data collected right from the very start, as advocated for by Mikkellson (2005), allowing for explicit input from the research participants moving forward. I conducted several informal interviews with migrants and experts (staff at NGOs working for migrants' rights) to provide such input. These interviews informed the creation of a discussion guide for the life history interviews as the meaningfulness of questions and concepts were tested, ensuring a participatory approach to research. In addition, I took field notes and photographs detailing the daily routines and hang outs of migrants in Phnom Penh. These informed the selection and recruitment of respondents for the life history interviews, allowing migrants from a cross-section of society to be included in the research. Such a participatory approach can challenge

orthodoxy surrounding the identification of problems; participants even suggested some problems or issues that were previously perceived as non-existent and therefore not worth researching. This granted ownership to the people who are supposedly set to benefit from development research.

Throughout the processes of observation, data collection, analysis and reporting, I aimed to follow Kapoor's suggestions for ethically practicing and presenting in development, which derive from the deconstructionist perspective of Gayatri Spivak (2004). These include: being acutely aware of the potential to hegemonically represent research subjects; being 'hyper-self-reflexive' about our complicit position as researchers; question individually held, taken-for-granted assumptions and 'unlearn' dominant ways of representing (Kapoor, 2004, 630).

In particular, I strictly followed these guidelines for reflexivity in research during the final month of fieldwork in Phnom Penh. After all life history interviews had been conducted, I returned focus to conducting a second, more in-depth, period of participant observation. For four weeks, I volunteered as a receptionist in a backpacker's hostel. In this position, I worked alongside and shared living quarters with the staff team – most of who are young and originate from rural provinces in Cambodia. I made frequent notes from observations and informal conversations with colleagues. The familiarity gained with colleagues granted new, often more refined insights and challenged some of the previous findings relating to migrants' relations with wider society.

3.3. Life history interviews

Life history interviewing is a method of interrogation advocated for use in migration studies by Halfacree (2004). It has been adopted in this project with the aim of gaining a more nuanced understanding of migrants' relationships with wider processes of economic and social change. Life history interviews consist of the collaborative construction of a narrative by the interviewer and the interviewee. Returning to the concept of social exclusion, it can occur when an individual's circumstances change as a result of a process such as migration. Therefore life history interviews are useful in exploring the effect of migration on an individual's life as you can collaboratively work at identifying specific aspects of change. Furthermore, they allow for an engagement with the interplay between structure and agency, especially when considering migrants' motivations and enabling factors for migrating in the first place.

Firstly, it is appropriate to outline methods used when recruiting respondents for the interviews. As touched upon, I initially sampled during the process of participant observation; this technique could be described as 'purposive sampling' (Overton and van Diermen, 2014, 45). This means that units (respondents in this case) were chosen based on the judgement of the researcher and that the number of units sampled is often quite small. Following the initial purposive method of sampling, I employed snowball sampling, whereby initial respondents recommended others with the same characteristics relevant for the research. In this case, individuals were between the ages of 15 and 30 and had migrated from a rural part of Cambodia to Phnom Penh before 6 months ago. Critiques of snowball sampling include the obvious claim that it is highly selective but, when time and resources are constrained and due to the qualitative nature of this research, it is one of the only practical means.

This mixture of purposive and snowball sampling enabled the selection of interviewees from a cross section of the rural migrant population. For example, students were identified as a significant proportion of the rural migrant population in Phnom Penh. Therefore, I made contact with a professor at the Royal University of Phnom Penh, followed by introductions to student migrants to be interviewed. After the interview, they would then be asked to recommend any suitable friends that would be willing and able to participate in the study. In total, 20 life history interviews were conducted in full; half of which were with students and/or individuals working in service industries, the other half were with individuals working in manufacturing or construction industries.

This mixture in the backgrounds and characteristics of respondents in this study broadly reflect the different social categories of rural migrants living in Phnom Penh. The aim of this project is to treat all migrants' narratives as unique stories, constructed from individual experiences and through the interviews themselves. Nonetheless, understanding that individuals in this study have more in common with some migrants than others lends itself to the creation of analytically significant social categories. As level of education has been identified as the main factor in determining individuals' motivations for migrating, it will be used in this study as a flexible spectrum, on which to place participants in interviews and to use for comparing contrasting narratives. At one end of the spectrum are students, who migrated to Phnom Penh solely to pursue higher education in one of the city's knowledge institutions. While on the other end, sit individuals who are likely to have dropped out of school and who migrated to Phnom Penh to gain employment in the manufacturing industry. These mostly include garment factory workers who, for the purpose of this study, will be

referred to as low-paid workers during the analytical chapters of this thesis. Interviews with higher educated migrants were in English, whereas those with lower levels of education were conducted in Khmer (Cambodian) with the use of a translator. Table 1 below lists the 20 participants of the life history interviews.

Name (not real)	Age	Gender	Occupation	Language of interview
Mealea	27	F	Chef	English
Arun	24	M	Waiter	English
Akara	25	F	Cashier at a bar	English
Boupha	23	F	Student	English
Chakara	23	M	Student	English
Davuth	25	M	Student	English
Heng	21	M	Student	English
Kiri	26	M	Research assistant	English
Channary	25	F	Garment factory worker	Khmer
Jorani	23	F	Garment factory worker	Khmer
Kesor	30	F	Garment factory worker	Khmer
Kunthea	29	F	Garment factory worker	Khmer
Leap	28	F	Garment factory worker	Khmer
Malis	29	F	Construction worker	Khmer
Nary	26	F	Garment factory worker	Khmer
Pisey	29	F	Garment factory worker	Khmer
Rotha	30	F	Garment factory worker	Khmer
Seyha	27	F	Garment factory worker	Khmer
Vanna	19	F	Garment factory worker	Khmer
Chanmony	20	F	Student	English

Table 2. List of participants in the life history interviews

By following a discussion guide during the interviews, I encouraged respondents to tell their

story in a way that highlights the impact of migration on their lives. I initially drafted the discussion guide with input from field notes made during initial participant observation and from literature around social exclusion. This in line with the main aim of the life history interviews; to collaboratively construct a narrative that brings topics of identity, social relations and use of urban space to the fore. To further ensure collaboration and participation, slight adjustments were made following a pilot interview in which a few issues of cultural relevance and chronological flow were amended. The final version of the discussion guide is included in the appendices (see Appendix D).

The ten interviews with students and/or people working in the service sector were conducted in English, as the participants were conversationally fluent. Before starting the interviews, I introduced my background and the topic of my research to the participant. I also asked a few general questions to check that they fit the criteria and to ensure they possessed the required fluency in English to expand in enough depth. Several times, I had to cut interviews short, as I felt the language barrier was not allowing for an in-depth conversation. The ten interviews with migrants working in manufacturing, namely the garment and construction industries, were conducted in Khmer (Cambodian) as I hired a translator.

3.4. Narrative analysis

The data produced from the in-depth life history interviews is extremely rich and plentiful. Field notes were made during before, during and after the interview regarding details about the recruitment of the respondent, the location of the interview and the behaviour of the respondent. Additionally, I made full-length sound recordings of the interviews, with informed consent. However, the richness of the data is not automatically a positive feature of research and, in fact, provided a number of challenges for analysis. Most notably, there was the risk of trying to use all data collected, which would have potentially led to vague and irrelevant findings.

It was necessary to overcome such challenges and ensure a focused analysis that recognises the agency of both the respondent and I, the researcher, in producing the data, and which allows for a close inspection of stories distinctly concerning issues of social exclusion. Due to the biographical nature of the life history interviews, I chose a narrative analysis as the most relevant option. However, narrative analysis can take a wide variety of forms and the type chosen depends on the desired focus, may that be on language, content or structure of the

narratives. “Structural” and “thematic” narrative analysis are the two most widely used methods, yet both were deemed inappropriate for the following reasons. Structural narrative analysis is directly concerned with “how” stories are told and deeply interrogate the choice of language. However, as my respondents and translator have used English as a second language, it would be difficult or misguided to find such meaning in linguistics and semiotics (Riessman, 2005, 4). Thematic narrative analysis on the other hand is slightly more appropriate as it places emphasis on “what” is told by the stories; the content of the narratives (Riessman, 2005, 2). However, the common process by which thematic analysis is conducted involves the fragmentation of stories into different thematic segments and analysed outside the context of the stories in which they were told. This approach overlooks the diversity of individual experiences and the choices made in constructing the narrative. I view the narratives, not as neutral, historically accurate representations of events with clear-cut thematic boundaries but, as collections of purposefully chosen stories, emerging out of the respondents’ engagement with the questions, the present, and their memory, the past.

Furthermore such approaches overlook the role of me, the researcher, in guiding and influencing the creation of the life stories. Soon after each interview, I listened back to the recordings and reviewed my notes simultaneously in order to piece together the stories told during the life history interviews. I would then listen again, more slowly this time, to the recording, connecting the many episodes discussed during the interview into a chronological order and typing up a third-person biographical account; *life histories*. A conscious choice was made not to write transcriptions verbatim as I considered this unnecessary due to the language barrier. As noted by Mishler (1995, 95), this approach to processing interviews comprises a reconstruction of 'the told from the telling', in which I 'reconstruct an order of the told from the telling(s) [which] becomes the “narrative” for further analysis'. I, the researcher, directly participate in choosing the stories to be told and am involved in the co-construction of the narratives. My participation goes back further to include the processes of composing the questions to be asked and choosing the environment in which the interviews were held. Arguably, my demands for the interview to be conducted in English or with the use of a translator add another significant level to my participation. Bearing this all in mind, the stage of narrative analysis is impossibly neutral and is influenced by multiple perspectives. As Josselson explains about narrative analysis, 'what we are analyzing are texts, not lives' (2011, 37) and 'every aspect of narrative work is interpretive, as everything implies meaning... We, as researchers, “coproduce” the worlds of our research. We don't simply “find” these worlds.

Truth is primarily a matter of perspective' (2011, 38).

The life histories are the result of participation from the interviewee, the interviewer, and of the interaction between the both of us. Therefore, an analytical method that recognises and values the role of such interaction is highly necessary. Given the approach of the research, in exploring how individuals *negotiate* non-material aspects of migration and their positioning within the wider national context, dialogical narrative analysis (DNA), as proposed by Frank (2012), stood out as highly fitting. According to Frank, 'DNA understands stories as artful representations of lives; stories reshape the past and imaginatively project the future. Stories revise people's sense of self, and they situate people in groups' (2012, 33). Instead of identifying bordered themes within narratives, DNA aims to represent notable stories and to unpack their creation and meaning.

Although, Frank (2012) is cautious not provide definitive steps in conducting DNA, a number of exploratory processes are suggested. These have guided the analysis of the life histories in this project. As previously touched upon, the quantity of data produced through the interviews and creation of life histories is high and almost insurmountable. Therefore, the shortlisting and selection of stories for focused attention in the analysis section of the thesis is a pivotal task. Following the creation of life histories from interviews, which is a form of analysis in itself, I constantly reflected and re-read the texts to highlight stand-out elements and distinctive stories in relation to the issues of social exclusion; memo writing aided the organisation of this stage. Following on, I selected specific stories within individual life histories, based on their place within the wider collection. This is a highly iterative procedure but not uninformed as I made choices based on readings, field notes and observations or, as Frank puts it, 'practical wisdom gained through analytic experience' (2012, 43).

Once the stories for analysis have been chosen, Frank (2012) encourages the researcher to ask questions about what particular stories suggest, how the stories came into being and what they mean in relation to relevant concepts, such as, in this case, social exclusion and identity. The empirical chapters focusing on migrants' narratives of social relations, socio-spatial exclusion and identities are the result of dialogical narrative analysis. I do not intend these narratives to be used for generalisation, but to instead provide alternative, subjective perceptions of the places of migration and development. This approach and style is purposefully open-ended and ungeneralisable. This is in line with Frank (2012) who calls for a commitment to unfinalisability in analysis; the researcher must constantly recognise that the stories told are

chosen from many possibilities, the questions asked during the interview are also some from many and the participants are chosen from a wide population.

3.5. Limitations

No research project is without limitations and shortcomings. In this section, I aim to outline the limitations distinctive to this project; assuming that generic limitations related to time and resources also constrain the boundaries of the research. First of all, linked to sampling, it has been challenging to recruit a representative group to interview. This is due to the exclusionary nature of social exclusion and I am wary that it was potentially easier to find respondents who are more integrated into urban society, which may have neglected the most marginalised migrants in Phnom Penh. Therefore, rather than aim for representativeness or generalisability, this project has instead aimed to explore the lived experiences and subjectivities of individuals, without leaping to broad generalisations of the wider migrant population.

Furthermore, it is possible that, as an "outsider", I have culturally misinterpreted the data from interviews. To reduce this risk, I aimed to fully immerse myself in all aspects of society during the participant observation stage of research. However, as previously touched upon, a deep ethnography was not possible due to time constraints. Linked to cultural interpretation, much time and effort was also put into finding an effective and suitable translator who I was able to gain a rapport with when conducting interviews. My translator possessed very high levels of English and was also careful in translating what was said "between the lines", as well as literally. Such precautions aimed to reduce the risk of cultural misinterpretation.

The discourse analysis section of this project has worked under Foucauldian assumptions linked to the intrinsic relationship between knowledge and power. Discourses have been conceptualised as a productive force in the formulation and regulation of 'knowledge, social relations and institutions, and indeed, such analytic and exegetic practices as scholarship and research' (Luke, 1997, 53). Therefore we can assume that this research paper is itself manifested in discourse, functions within a regime of truth and comprises discursive formations which limit how the reader constructs their thoughts. In fact, we can assume that a neutral analysis of any kind is impossible; for example, it could be argued that this paper is disciplined by a top-down research methodology which strives towards neat conclusions where, perhaps, they do not exist. This existential questioning provides the main limitation of the discourse analysis.

More specifically, the discursive analysis of newspaper articles was laden with bias. Arguably, it is a significant contradiction that English-language newspaper articles have been chosen for analysis in a country in which the official and, by far, most widely spoken language is Khmer. This limitation is labelled by McLennan and Prinsen (2015, 97), 'the blind spot of Anglophones'. In defence of the decision, both of the chosen newspapers publish their articles in both English and Khmer. Nonetheless, it must be taken into account that translations are never perfect and that the English articles may have missed what is written "between the lines" in the Khmer equivalents. The additional analysis of music videos aimed to further guard against English bias, by introducing a media source widely accessed by the Cambodian population.

Chapter 4. Regional Thematic Context

4.1. Contemporary Cambodia

Following decades of conflict, oppression and isolation, dominated by the brutal Khmer Rouge regime (1975-1979), the 1990s signalled a new beginning for Cambodia. In 1991, an aid embargo was lifted and, in 1993, a new government was formed and the long-standing trade embargo came to an end. The following few decades have witnessed the nation's comprehensive transition from a military, single-party, controlled economy state to a more peaceful, democratic, market economy state (Frewer, 2013, 98). It is therefore important to note the many social changes that have occurred in Cambodia over the past couple of decades. In terms of institutions, Cambodian state and civil society actors have grown, becoming more transparent and efficient. Cambodia has also been twice labelled the “Miracle on the Mekong” due to the rapid progress of democracy as transparent, free and fair general elections were held in both 2008 and 2013. The economic successes have perhaps been the most staggering on review of the statistics. Between 1999 and 2006, the economy recorded an average annual growth rate of 9%. Between 2009 and 2013, in the midst of the global financial crisis, Cambodia maintained an average annual growth rate of 7%, boosting the GDP per capita to above US$1,000 for the first time and contributing to a year-on-year decrease in the poverty rate (RGC, 2014, ii). All in all, Cambodia has lifted itself from being one of the poorest countries in the world to achieving medium human development status, as measured by the Human Development Report (UNDP, 2014).

The development policies and priorities of the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) have been formulated with a strong eye to the global economic environment as it seeks to effectively integrate into regional and international markets. On the surface, the comprehensive shift to a relatively open, market-led economy, backed up by an efficient and transparent system of governance, has had impressive development results: 'Cambodia has experienced rapid economic growth since the 2000s leading the country’s poverty rate [reduction] from 47.8 per cent in 2007 to 22.9 in 2009, 21.1 per cent in 2010 and 19.8 per cent in 2011' (MoP, 2013, vii).

4.2. Population dynamics of Cambodia

To understand the unique population dynamics of Cambodia, it is first necessary to revisit the historical background in more depth. In 1969, the USA carried out a secret bombing campaign on supposed communist bases in Cambodia, which had been independent since the end of French colonial control in 1953. The subsequent invasion by American and South Vietnamese troops, coupled with internal political instability characterised by claims of corruption, led to the descent into a situation of widespread armed conflict (Neupert and Prum, 2005, 222). Capitalising on the turmoil, the Khmer Rouge – a Cambodian revolutionary movement led by Pol Pot – took control of the nation, claiming rule over Phnom Penh on 17 April 1975. Khmer Rouge ideology dictated that workers and peasants are the only valuable members of a society so, in an attempt to skip the socialism stage on the road to communism, the regime forcibly evicted all people from towns and cities in order to work on the farms (Neupert and Prum, 2005, 223). Furthermore, most of those linked to previous regimes, along with those labelled as bourgeois or capitalist, were killed. The regime was clearly a major human disaster and a political failure; a mixture of Vietnamese pressure and internal revolts caused the toppling of the government in 1978 but the suffering had not finished yet, as continued socio-economic disruption triggered a widespread famine in 1979. Needless to say, quantifying the extent to which the Cambodian population suffered over this period is severely challenging; the long terms effects were also extremely damaging. By conducting ‘demographic reconstruction’ research, Heuveline makes an attempt and estimates that between 1.2 million and 3.4 million ‘excess deaths’ were caused as a direct result of violence during the 1970s; if we optimistically assume the figure is 2 million, that roughly translates to 20% of the population (Heuveline, 1998, 56). Moreover, Neupert and Prum (2005, 240) show that 40% of those deaths were children below fifteen years old.

The effects of the Khmer Rouge regime on Cambodian demographics and society more widely have been profound. Immediately after the conflict years, the 1980s experienced what has come to be termed the Cambodian “baby boom” (Walque, 2006). Unlike prior to the 1970s, Cambodia had a significantly higher fertility than surrounding Southeast Asian countries. This has led to a situation today where the nation enjoys a “demographic bonus” whereby '58.7 per cent of the total population is in the productive age', which provides the potential for high economic productivity. (MoP, 2013, vii). Below, Figure 1 demonstrates the consequently unusual “bottom heavy” population pyramid.

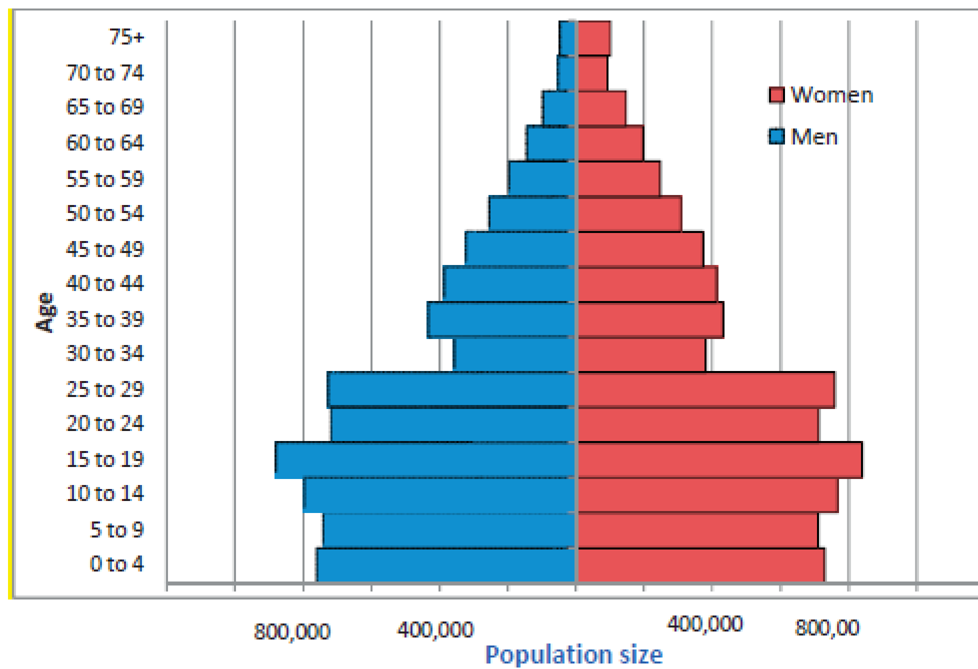

Figure 1: Population pyramid for Cambodia, 2010 (Source: United Nation, 2011)

As well as the age structure of the population, the spatial structure of Cambodia's population is very different to its neighbours', due to the Khmer Rouge legacy. As aforementioned, a mass evacuation of the cities was conducted in the 1970s. Understandably, Cambodian society is now mostly rural, 'with about 20% of the population being urban in 2010 compared to more than 40% for the Southeast Asian region' (MoP, 2012, 8). Having said that, as most migrants are young people looking for employment or education, Cambodia's rate of urbanisation has been much higher recently meaning that this dynamic is shifting. Moreover, approximately half of all rural migrants in Cambodia chose to move to Phnom Penh, contributing to the city's status as one of the fastest growing in the world (CDRI, 2007, 50)

Furthermore, improvements in physical infrastructure and the wider creation of an enabling environment for investors have triggered a high demand for labour in the urban-concentrated industries, which include garments, construction, tourism and services. Coupled with the "demographic bonus" and the fact that Cambodia is a predominantly rural country, high rates of rural-urban migration are seemingly unavoidable and have driven the explosion of Phnom Penh, which doubled in population in the space of only ten years (MoP, 2012, 94). In fact, the population of Phnom Penh rose from 570,000 in 1998, to 1,240,00 in 2008, and has continued to grow although recent reliable statistics are scarce; this equates to an extraordinarily high growth rate of 8 per cent a year. What is more, 80 per cent of this population growth was

fuelled by migration, as oppose to other, possibly misleading, factors such as the redrawing of the city boundaries (MoP, 2013, viii).

The RGC's neoliberal economic policies, focusing on private sector development, have capitalised on the willingness and ability of workers to move to urban areas, due to the conditions outlined above. That said, as revealed by the Cambodia Rural Urban Migration Project (CRUMP), development policies should have greater concern with the complex processes of migration to ensure the improvement of livelihoods, along with the wider economic benefits. A number of social issues related to migration in Phnom Penh have been researched, which the upcoming section aims to explore in more detail (MoP, 2012).

4.3. Migration to Phnom Penh

In urban areas, particularly Phnom Penh, the population dynamics are shifting dramatically as the city is becoming dominated by young adults. Of note for the issue of social exclusion, the CRUMP report reveals that many young migrants travel to Phnom Penh alone and that roughly 50% of migrants to the city already knew someone for their place of origin (MoP, 2012). The report also notes that young migrants in Phnom Penh network less with persons from their village of origin in comparison to similar internal migration destinations around the world; this is attributed to the relatively speedy migration seen in Cambodia as there has not been enough time for social networks to become deep-rooted.

Furthermore, an in-depth research study by the Cambodian Development Research Institute (CDRI) proposes that the integration of rural-urban migrants in Phnom Penh is very shallow, with factors including that migrants spend most of their time either at work or their accommodation (CDRI, 2007). Out of the free time migrants do enjoy, much is spent meeting people from their place of origin or other migrants from rural Cambodia, contrary to the findings of the CRUMP report. The high frequency of home visits and remittance sending also suggests strong ties held with places of origin; a trend that may justify the potential value of research into identity formation and cultural exchange between the rural and urban spheres, and its impact on feelings of social exclusion. Both reports cited above, by the CDRI and MoP, provide extensive data on patterns and experiences of migration to Phnom Penh and their occasional discrepancies could be explained by the five year time gap between their dates of publishing. Nevertheless, it is obvious that more in-depth, qualitative data would add legitimacy to their findings and perhaps reveal underlying reasons for certain trends.

It is important to note that migration is always complex and unpredictable, especially on such a large scale, and that it makes development strategies all the more challenging to formulate. However, given the current conditions in Cambodia, migration should certainly be considered as both a driver of development and as a challenge for policy makers. More information is needed about the diverse consequences of migration and data collected from research should be 'used for enhancing the impacts of migration by determining implications and needs of Cambodian individuals and communities in the face of this rapid and unavoidable demographic change' (MoP, 2012,110). Research, such as this project, can therefore offer valuable insights into how such dynamic changes to lives are experienced by the migrants themselves. Insights like these can guide policy to ensure considerations for the wellbeing of all actors in development processes

Chapter 5. National Discourses

The following discourse analysis of newspaper articles and music videos aims to map out the dominant cultural constructions of migrants' rural place of origin and their urban destination, along with their relationships to both places. I argue that such constructions have power in their influence over popular imaginations of reality and how they therefore how they shape practice, performance and policy related to migration. Comparison with individual narratives in later chapters, constructed through the life history interviews, will allow for a discussion on the extent to which they complement, contrast or even oppose each other.

5.1. Rural homogeneity

Analysis of Cambodian newspaper articles from 2004 to 2015 has revealed several interweaving and dominant discourses around rurality. These commonly repeated threads guide particular ways of talking about the rural place in relation to migration. Similarities and differences between texts have been traced, allowing for the mapping out of the dominant discursive formation of rurality. The following dominant discourses have relevance as they all contribute towards Cambodia's regime of truth - the function of discourses and how certain ones are understood as true in society - which in turn give meaning to the experiences of migration.

Firstly, the texts construct the notion that migrants are fleeing rural areas in Cambodia on exodus and that individuals have "no choice" but to leave behind their villages. Within texts, common references to starvation and rural poverty as triggers of migration contribute to sensationalist understandings and imaginations of mobility. In addition, headlines such as 'Rural poor flock to cities' (Marshall, 2006), 'Rural poor flood to Phnom Penh from Prey Veng' (Rith and Poynton, 2006), 'Young Cambodians in "exodus" to Phnom Penh' (Ellen, 2012) and 'Young Cambodians leave the countryside behind' (Phearon, 2012) all overtly reinforce this discourse.

These notions of "exodus" and "fleeing" are in line with conventional, structuralist understandings of migration that do not tend to move far beyond identifying "push" and "pull" factors. From a poststructuralist perspective though, such an approach can be viewed as problematic as it constructs migrants as passive victims of wider, uncontrollable forces. This overlooks the agency and power of individuals and households to control their social setting

through decision-making and relationships with other members of communities, rather than being seen as passive victims of the environment, national and global forces, as well as historically embedded social structures. Furthermore this discourse of the "rural masses" constructs a homogenised notion of rural-urban migrants that overlooks diversity of individual motivations for, and experiences of, migrating.

As Mills (2012) notes, mobility away from rural areas, towards urban areas, is not always equally accessed or does not always have the same "push" motivations. In fact, access to mobility reflects inequality within rural communities as it is often those with relatively greater assets who are in the position to migrate. However, the "rural masses" discourse suggests that migration is an "all-or-nothing" flight *away* from crises and limited opportunities. Whereas, in reality, migration is often used as a tool within the wider context of a household's plan *towards* creating a more stable income. This is another way in which the dominant, homogenous discourse of rurality overlooks the diversity of individual experiences and complexity of mobility.

Furthermore, when analysing the discourses of rurality, themes of tradition, backwardness and agriculture can be seen to construct rural places as culturally fixed, homogenous and non-progressive. Descriptions of rural places are dominated by references to rice farming and traditional ways of life. Any number of extracts could have been selected for particular focus; the quote below, from an article published in The Cambodia Daily, is typical of descriptions made by articles across the years.

'The road to Kandal province's Tuol Kraing village winds through fertile farmland, skirting burgeoning vegetable fields and rice paddies. The village, a picturesque line of traditional wooden houses along a small dirt road, abuts a canal dotted with pumping machines. The irrigation canal and machines were constructed throughout the village's Kraing Yov commune in the late 1990s as part of Prime Minister Hun Sen's campaign to alleviate rural poverty. And yet, amidst the apparent bounty, more than 200 families in the village each pooled their last $0.50 earlier this month the hire trucks to carry them to Phnom Penh.'(Pyne and Naren, 2004)

Although it is possible simply to perceive the above extract from The Cambodia Daily as a neutral description of a place, the choice of words and content do more than that. They construct meaning; conforming with, and reinforcing, a particular regime of truth. The text is absolute in framing rural development as null and ineffective. By focusing on the failure of rural development projects, the text promotes the notion of the rural place as unchangeable and impermeable. This notion connects strongly to the "rural masses" discourse, again suggesting the migration is an escape from poverty and backwardness.

The analysis of contemporary music videos that depict rural life supports the dominant discourses constructed through the newspaper articles from the last decade. Images used in scenes set in the countryside relate to traditional Cambodian culture, and highlight its difference from urban or cosmopolitan culture. For example, 'Rom Kalok' by Sereymum is a popular song often played around the time of Khmer New Year. The video focuses on a large party obviously held in a provincial village; as shown by the wooden house on stilts, dirt tracks and farm animals. At the start of the video, the village is entered by a group of young men driving new looking motorbikes and big cars. Due to the cosmopolitan clothes they are wearing and the Phnom Penh number plates of their vehicles, it is assumed that they have travelled from Phnom Penh. These characters are then shown bringing the song into the village – due to the pumping beat, electronic sound effects and loud, shouting vocals – and the villagers, identified by their traditional Cambodian clothes (white shirt and red chequered scarf), appear confused by the seemingly out of place music. Some villagers accept the song and are seen awkwardly dancing to it. Although intentionally humorous, this scene reinforces the stereotype of rural culture as simple, traditional and incompatible with change.

In addition, the stories told through the songs reinforce the notion of rural backwardness. Another example comes from 'Sa Art Ey Sa Art Yang Nis' (roughly translated as "So Beautiful") – a song by Khan Jame. It is sung by a group of three men who, in the video, play the characters of tree provincial villagers. Similarly to the village characters in 'Rom Kalok', they are depicted as awkward and, also, slightly stupid. The video centres on the men's pursuit of the "most beautiful girls". During the pursuit, they try peering over fences to get a good view of the girls and keep having accidents - such as one of them getting their foot stuck in an animal trap or them overcooking food. Again, by portraying the rural characters as stupid and imbecile, through the use of slapstick comedy, the video reinforces the discourse of rural backwardness.

5.2. Urban vulnerability

Insights from the analysis of the newspaper articles point towards two contrasting, almost extreme, discourses of urbanity, which have meaning for the life courses of migrants that move to Phnom Penh. Firstly, frequent descriptions of the risks faced by migrants, including prostitution, drugs, crime and street life, construct the image of a life in the city existing between vulnerability and destitution. Such constructions add layers to the depiction of migrants as passive victims, again denying agency and pedestalling the influence of external forces.

'About a quarter of the total Cambodian population are internal migrants: people who have moved from their district of origin for at least three months. Three quarters of them, about 2.5 million people, are youth aged 15 to 29. Away from familiar surroundings and trusted people, young people unfortunately can be exposed to all kind of threats, from violence and exploitation to substance abuse and Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs). Labour migration also places youth at risk from criminals, including those involved in human trafficking.' (Van der Vaeran, 2013)

A number of statistics related to the number of migrants are used by the above extract from a Phnom Penh Post article to function as empirical evidence, and are followed by a number of seemingly evidence-based statements. The use of statistics and statements works to silence any 'conflicting ideas or uncertainty' a reader may have, constraining how one may imagine the reality of migrants (Tonkiss, 1998, 255). Statistics are used to legitimise the effects of truth; with the aim of displaying a remarkably significant population of young urban migrants as at risk. In addition, by listing multiple risks, the text works to construct a notion of the city as dangerous. With this textual device, there is a possible sub-text that renders young migrants as vulnerable, innocent victims; not as possible actors of social change or controllers of their own being. This construction of the "vulnerability" discourse again points towards an exclusion of agency in the migrant discourse, as uncontrollable external processes take the power of self-determination away from young migrants.

The music videos analysed also offer a few depictions of urban vulnerability. The urban "vulnerability" discourse is supported by stories of loneliness in the city. This is formed

through frequent references to changing family roles and emphasis on the aloneness experienced in typical life paths to city. The following extracted lyrics, for example, are translated from ‘Nek Ptas’ by Aok Sokun Kanha; a song about a young women’s life since migrating to Phnom Penh from the Cambodian countryside.

“when it's raining, I am crying.
My body is in Phnom Penh
but my heart is in the village,
I dream that I'm with my parents.
I hear my parents' voices everyday”

Images used in the video for ‘Nek Ptas’ display further layers of the urban vulnerability discourse. Emotive scenes show the main character crying and thinking of how she misses her homeland, emphasising her vulnerability in the city. Furthermore, Figure 2 shows a still from the same video. The juxtaposition of the main character with the urban built environment creates the sense that she is overwhelmed by her surroundings and lacks a connection with the places she now inhabits.

Figure 2. Still from the music video for ‘Nek Ptas’ by Ouk Sokun Kanha

5.3. The city as progress

Looking beyond the urban discourse of vulnerability, the second extreme is the more dominant of the urban discourses. Recurrent mentions, linked to urbanisation, of a growing middle class, emerging markets, increased wealth and materialism construct the notion of the city as a place of change and progress. This "city as progress" discourse is an extreme to the "vulnerability" discourse, as it frames the migrant journey as one towards a space of prosperity and progress, as opposed to destitution.

'Urbanisation can enhance economic benefits driven by rising productivity, fluid labour markets and greater market access. In addition to providing a home to the country's job-seeking youth and growing middle class, cities can become hubs for businesses, industries and transportation and gateways for a growing number of tourists.' (Sidgewick and Izaki, 2013)

This extract from an article published in the Phnom Penh Post is typical of the descriptions of urbanisation found in the newspapers. Although references to straining transport infrastructure and shortages of affordable housing attach negative meanings to the urban discourse, frequent mentions of the booming economy and job creation paint a mostly positive picture and, indeed, one of progress.

Several headlines identified in the articles promote themes of change and development in Phnom Penh; these include 'Urbanisation and growth' (Sidgewick and Izaki, 2014) and 'Seeking Cambodia's emerging middle class' (Morton and Kimsay, 2014). However, it is a deeper reading of the texts that truly reveals the strength of the discursive formation that perpetuates the "city as progress" discourse. Articles related, not necessarily to migration, but to urbanisation and youth contain recurrent mentions of an improving cultural scene and resultant urban lifestyle. These themes support the construction of a utopian urban culture, which is strongly linked to global connections and cosmopolitanism. Furthermore, a focussed reading of passages related to rural places revealed an active of absence of similar references to art, culture or cosmopolitan linkages. Discourses can be highly exclusionary and there is meaning in textual silences like these. Following Spivak (1999), such silences can work to underscore the social differences between people. In this case, when relating the absence of cultural progress in the rural discourse to the presence of it in the urban one, the difference

between rural and urban is underscored and essentialised, which works to reinforce stereotypes.

Mostly, the music videos analysed reinforce the dominant “city as progress” discourse. The videos commonly depict young Cambodians living the “urban dream” – eating in Western branded restaurants, hanging out in coffee shops and using smart phones to message their friends. Many of the videos analysed also contain product placements by brands commonly recognised as having the “emerging middle-class” as their target market. One example is provided by the video for ‘Mean Pel Mean Brak Tae Bat Puk Mae’; a song by Meas Soksophea. The video follows the story of the protagonist, a young woman who works for Cootel – a Cambodian mobile network company. She is shown wearing modern clothes, working in an office behind a computer screen and using her smartphone from her well furnished apartment, trying to call her mother, who is based in her village of origin. The narrative focuses on the protagonist’s busy lifestyle and her failed attempts to make contact with her Mother, which she feels guilty about. Such displays of materialism and consumerism in Phnom Penh guide viewers to imagine certain ways of urban living, which are financially out of reach for the majority of young rural-urban migrants. These are also starkly contrasted with the lifestyle depicted her Mother’s rural home – the Mother in these scenes is shown sitting in her home, waiting for phone calls from her busy daughter. Such contrast between busyness and idleness functions to perpetuate the “city as progress” discourse.

In addition, the music videos show images of Phnom Penh dominated by recently built modern buildings and beautified boulevards, filled with SUVs. For example, ‘Pel Oun Trov Knea’ by Khem depicts the band playing on a rooftop next to the newly built Vattanac and Canadia Tower, which are occupied by luxury retail brands, banks and car manufacturer offices. This selective use of the particular rooftop as a set for the video attach meanings of prosperity and wealth to the urban environment. Given the 'centre-periphery' theory supported by Lefebvre (1996 [1968]) and Millington (2011), it will be interesting to contrast this “city as progress” discourse – this utopian representation of urbanism - with the experiences of migrants, as told through the life histories. Insights into migrants’ use of space will aim to reveal how the urban centre experienced and who has access to the benefits of this urban space.

The dominant "city as progress" discourse, mapped out here, is oppositional to the previously identified discourse of rural homogeneity, suggesting a non-permeable cultural divide between the urban and the rural. This constitutes an essentialism of the rural-urban divide, building perceptions that view rural people as all occupying the same social position; below that of urban people. The images and language from both media sources perpetuate rural-urban hierarchies and possess the ideological power to frame popular imaginations as so. These symbolic hierarchies overlook (and lead people to underestimate) both social inequality and cultural fluidity within and between rural and urban communities; notions of social heterogeneity and cultural stagnation are instead promoted. The discourses highlighted in this chapter construct and reinforce such notions. The following chapters, through the narrative analysis, this project will aim to uncover the diversity of migrants' lived experiences and challenge discursively dominant rural-urban distinctions.

Chapter 6. Relational Exclusion

All names mentioned in the following chapters are not real and have been changed for reasons of confidentiality

Social networks can engender social inclusion for some, yet also possess the capacity to exclude others from opportunities found in urban spaces. As Korinek et al (2005, 779) note, the level of a migrants' social inclusion can depend on multiple levels of social ties and multiple sources of social interaction. The quantity of social ties forged by a migrant in a destination is not necessarily an appropriate measure of integration into the new urban environment. Therefore, an in-depth qualitative approach is essential in exploring the quality, strength and diversity of social ties, and their influence on migrants' inclusion in the city. This chapter firstly constitutes an analysis of narratives related to social networks before extending the social networks to a more collective conception, focussing on the interaction between different social groups in Phnom Penh.

6.1. Social relations

Overwhelmingly, the majority of participants interviewed in the study claimed to have possessed a very small number of social or kinship ties with people living in Phnom Penh, before migrating to the capital. This supports the findings of previous, large-scale quantitative research into rural-urban migration in Cambodia by the Ministry of Planning (MoP, 2012). Upon arriving in the city, the narratives show that it can take several weeks or months to forge new friendships and social networks. When this does occur, the migrants interviewed tend to possess a small number of close friends, usually colleagues or fellow students also originating from the rural areas of Cambodia.

For example, Kiri is a 26 year old newly appointed research assistant at the Royal University of Phnom Penh where he has recently graduated from. He grew up in a small village in Takeo province and, due to good test scores, obtained a scholarship that would fund his degree in biodiversity, which he would not have otherwise been able to afford, much like many of his high school friends who have stayed in Takeo.

> *"When I first arrived in Phnom Penh, I found it very boring because sometimes there are no relationships between people. I only knew one person in the city. In the evenings and weekends, I didn't have anywhere to visit and felt scared because of crime. In Phnom Penh, I felt like I was lost. I didn't like my new life. Actually, for the first five months of my degree, I travelled with a taxi back to my province every weekend." (Kiri, 26)*

Nonetheless, he remained positive about the move due to his opportunity to study. Over time he developed a small group of friends, mostly through his course and all of whom originate from different rural provinces in Cambodia. Kiri feels that they share similar incomes and lifestyles so it is relatively easy to maintain strong relationships; they will sometimes visit cheap restaurants and karaoke bars together.

Where Kiri's story is distinct is in how he has used his educational attainment to take advantage of the opportunities offered by the urban environment as well as improve his level of social inclusion within Phnom Penh. This is a pattern that is reflected in the narratives of other students originating from rural provinces. The stories of both young men and women suggest the important role of education as an enabler of upward social mobility for migrants, especially for women. This follows the conclusions of research in Turkey by Secor (2003), which suggest that women perceive higher education in the city as the best opportunity for life betterment. Narratives held by women migrants who are not students, such as the garment factory workers, offer insights into barriers faced by women not able to, or who do not chose to, pursue higher education.

Returning to the topic of social relations, the narratives of low paid workers show more prevalence of small, tightly-knit social networks with people of similar origins and lives. The garment factory workers in this study were interviewed in their homes, which were located very close to the factories where they work and were part of purpose built blocks to specifically accommodate them. Nary for example, the 26 year old seamstress from Kampong Chhnang, lives in the same block as many of her colleagues and friends. She claims that all of her friends are from the rural provinces as well and work in the factory with her. Outside of work, she does very little with her free time, mostly staying in their accommodation block and cooking rice in the evenings. Such narratives and the limited social activities show that

migrants construct their own social groups that are neither “rural” nor “urban” in character. The life histories explained that social networks in the villages revolved around kinship ties and most social activities took place outside. In Phnom Penh, the migrants’ social lives are based around their homes, with little dispersion into other urban places, and most interaction is with fellow rural migrants.

6.2. Interaction between social groups

Beyond the tightly-knit friendship groups created by young migrants in Phnom Penh, social relations tend to lack diversity. Despite Kiri’s (26, research assistant) relative success and pride in making friends with fellow migrants at university, he has made no strong relationships outside of this small group. In particular, he has no notable ties with people of different social statuses and holds some negative feelings towards rich people in Phnom Penh. Kiri perceives the city as relatively economically segregated; “in the province, most families are the same but, in Phnom Penh, some places are concentrated with rich people but some places are very poor”. However, he lives in a middle-income neighbourhood and expresses contentment at not being connected to people from poorer areas of the city.

This disillusionment and lack of ties between different social groups is typical of the experiences described by participants in this study. Those in full time employment identify a lack of free time as a reason for their social ties to exist mainly with colleagues that have similar backgrounds to themselves. Understandably, the students interviewed have created ties with fellow students who are, most of the time, fellow rural-urban migrants. Such lack of interaction between groups can constitute a form of collective social exclusion. This is because, as Walker (2010) explains, diverse social networks act as informal resources for migrants to successfully build lives alongside both institutional and market urban structures, which offer the chance for social mobility.

In addition, narratives of discrimination point towards less covert forms of relational exclusion among rural migrants. Many interviewees claimed feelings of being looked down upon by those, who they class as, “the rich”. 24 year old Arun is a prime example. After finishing school and learning English, he left his home in nearby Kandal province for the city five years ago, aged 19. He now works as waiter in a restaurant catering for tourists in the beautified riverside area of downtown Phnom Penh. He claims:

"About 80% of rich people in Phnom Penh have bad characters. They are rich and they can do anything. Actually they don't think about the poor people. If there is a road accident between a rich person in a car and a poor person on a motorbike, the rich person will get very angry and will not forgive, even if the poor person says sorry. The rich people depend on power and money. They always trick the poor people." (Arun, 24)

Furthermore, Arun feels sorry for the "poor people" who come to Phnom Penh to work in the factories who, he claims, do not have enough food and often faint. Following this, the narrative of discrimination is also dominant among the life histories of those Arun refers to as "poor people"; the low-paid workers in this study.

6.3. Differences between social groups

Through descriptions identified in migrants' life histories, perceived differences between social groups reinforce the notion of a fragmented urban society, as built by narratives of discrimination. Seyha, aged 27, has been living in Phnom Penh a little longer than many of her fellow migrant workers and has worldly views on the city's social inequality. She moved from a small village near the Vietnamese border, in Prey Veng province, back in 2008.

"With Cambodian culture, there is a big difference between the rich and the poor. It is not the same as in Western countries where the rich and poor are equal. In Cambodia, it is different." (Seyha, 27)

As the leader of the factory's workers union, she has dedicated her free time for the past few years, campaigning to balance the scales between the low-paid factory workers and profit-making owners. In this position, through frequent meetings with factory owners, government officials and foreign NGO workers, she has gained insight, unique among her peers, into the lives of the others in Phnom Penh – the urban elite.

Further interviews with low-paid workers offer similar narratives. Whereas Seyha's opinions on social differences in the city were forged through interaction with other groups, most have few opportunities to gain life experience interacting with people from different backgrounds.

Therefore most stories from low-paid workers are from a position of little knowledge. For example, 30 year old Kesor, originally from Siem Reap province, doesn't feel very connected to rich people in Phnom Penh and she feels like she knows very little about them. Living in Phnom Penh, she claims that migrants tend to only talk and socialise with fellow migrants. Likewise, she believes that different social groups do the same:

> *"Rich people from Phnom Penh have their own jobs, their own businesses, so they don't care very much about the poor. The poor people, like me, work in the factory and the rich people work in the offices or somewhere like that, so we don't see each other."(Kesor, 30)*

On the other hand, some garment factory workers, such as Rotha, a 30 year old from Prey Veng province, claim to know some rich people in Phnom Penh. However, she says that most of these people are not very friendly to her. For example, she believes that their bosses, because they are rich, are able to go out and enjoy life. Rotha says that her life is not even comparable to the life of her bosses. Furthermore, reinforcing the narrative of discrimination, the bosses at the factory look down on the seamstresses, such as Rotha; "they just want to step on us". She also claims that the bosses frequently curse at the workers, making them feel belittled.

Through a simplistic reading of the migrants' stories, it is easy to assume a uniform understanding of what is meant by "rich" and "poor" in Phnom Penh. This is certainly not the case and perceptions vary depending on the individual. However, a number of significant indicators identified from the narratives are used by migrants to define social differences between the "rich" and "poor". The "rich" are seen to eat out and hold celebratory events in the city's restaurants whereas the "poor" tend to cook or hold events in the home. In addition, perceptions assume the "rich" to spend their leisure time visiting Phnom Penh's beautified public spaces, such as the Riverside and Koh Pich ("Diamond Island"), and to own cars and smartphones. This is in contrast to the "poor", who are seen to be confined to their peripheral neighbourhoods and are therefore more likely to stay at home.

While such indicators suggest that the "rich" and "poor" constitute two exhaustive and mutually exclusive social categories, as perceived by migrants, individual narratives construct

a greater diversity and variance. For example, Chanmony explained the complex social hierarchy that governs attendance to Phnom Penh's karaoke bars. She is a 20 year old student who left her family in Siem Reap province to study midwifery at one of Phnom Penh's universities, two years ago. From childhood, she has interacted with people from a diverse set of backgrounds including foreign tourists, who visited her village of origin, NGO workers, who ran education projects she attended, and local politicians. Since moving to Phnom Penh, she has made the most of opportunities to disperse further into different parts of society, through friendships with wealthier course-mates who originate from Phnom Penh and part-time translation work for international NGOs. Despite her relatively wide set of social interactions, she claims to feel uncomfortable visiting any of the karaoke bars in the city, due to her background as she believes her parents would not approve. Chanmony claims that only certain people from Phnom Penh visit the karaoke bars; a social activity which has been framed as a display of urban identity by multiple participants in this study.

"Not many of my friends from the provinces go to karaoke bars. But some of my friends from university, who come from Phnom Penh, go to nice, family karaoke bars if it is a special event like a birthday. Some other students pretend to be rich, act like gangsters by selling drugs and doing illegal things. They often go to karaoke bars in big groups. If I went to a karaoke bar like that, I would feel uncomfortable and too scared to visit again. Those places are also pretentious. Young people in Phnom Penh who are actually rich go to a different type of karaoke bar. I think I would like those places and would like to visit some time." (Chanmony, 20)

Such in-depth depictions of Phnom Penh's different social groups provide insight into the place of rural migrants in an ever changing and more globalised urban social environment. Rural migrants, even those who are well educated and interact with different social groups such as Chanmony, negotiate their own complex social positioning, facing challenges posed by both their social backgrounds and new social relations. The differences between social groups in Phnom Penh are certainly perceived as more complex than the spectrum between "rich" and "poor".

Chapter 7. Spatial Exclusion

Since the 1990s, neoliberal development strategies and globalisation, brought about by the opening of the Cambodian economy, have been some of the most significant processes in shaping the physical and social structure of urban space in Phnom Penh (Springer, 2009, 139). The unbridled promotion of free-market economics by the Cambodian state has constituted urban development projects and regulations aimed at attracting foreign investment in the short term. Springer (2009) argues that such actions have overlooked long term notions of democratic citizenship and public value, leading to an ordered regime of public space that serves the interests of the elite. Following Harvey (2001), such a privileging of neoliberalism by the Cambodian state has germinated a process of 'flexible accumulation' whereby increasingly temporary labour relations are exploited spatially in a way that maximises the potential for capital accumulation. In other words, space becomes a medium and locus for struggle between the privileged and the under-privileged, with inequalities surfacing through claims to the dominant urban sphere; “the centre”. Harvey (2001) labels this as a class struggle inscribed in space in typical Marxist fashion and, in Phnom Penh, this is starkly visible in the geographical peripheralisation of low-paid workers; mostly migrants from rural areas. However, the extent to which individuals are included in accessing and using urban space can be seen in less obvious forms, such as through individuals' behaviours and practices over space, which can be covertly governed by social norms, and through their conceptualisation of space. Therefore, this chapter aims to map out migrants’ spatial relations with both the “centre” and the “periphery” through an analysis of both perceptions of place and spatial practices.

7.1. Life on the periphery

Low-paid workers’ labour market relations and, by proxy, neighbourhoods are inherently peripheral, as explained by Harvey's theory of flexible accumulation (2001). In Cambodia, labour markets are flexible and the wages are relatively low on a global scale. Furthermore, the ready-made garment industry is foot-loose; meaning that low start-up costs allow, in the capitalist world, garment companies to produce where profit margins are highest. Helped by foreign investment incentives from the state, this has resulted in factories being built on the edge of Phnom Penh. When conducting life history interviews as part of this research, notes were made detailing the living conditions experienced in the surrounding neighbourhoods. Next to the factories, the migrant workers live in either large-scale, purpose built

accommodation blocks or makeshift clusters of self-built homes, constructed using wood and corrugated iron. By and large, the garment factory workers share rooms with one or two others, often relatives or close friends. Their rooms usually consist of a raised wooden platform for sleeping, sitting and socialising along with a small unit to store cooking equipment. Alternatively, some of the purpose built accommodation blocks are unadorned square rooms with little furniture except for hammocks. The inhabitants tend to cook and wash up outside their rooms or in small communal corners. Most of the buildings are situated very close to each other, leaving little public outside space. In addition, most of the garment factory worker's neighbourhoods are not served by garbage collection, further lowering the quality of the built environment.

Nary, who is now 26 years old, lives in one such neighbourhood on the southern edge of Phnom Penh. She moved to the city after divorcing her husband who she had lived in Kampong Chhnang province with up until the age of 21. She left her child in the village to be looked after by Nary's mother. After initially staying with a relative in the capital, she found a job working in a garment factory and consequently moved into a very small room in a wooden accommodation block directly next to her new place of work, a Chinese-owned garment factory. Nary claims to like the neighbourhood as she is close to relatives such as her niece. However, the neighbourhood is far away from places to buy food, such as markets, and she can feel quite isolated living there.

"I don't visit anywhere else apart from my room and the rooms of my neighbours. I never visit the centre of Phnom Penh because it is too expensive to travel there. But, if I had more money to afford transport, I would like to visit the city centre to go for walks and buy nice food next to the river." (Nary, 26)

Looking beyond spatial practices can unpack more implicit perceptions of the dominant urban sphere and migrants' relation to it. During the nine years another garment factory worker, Leap, has lived in Phnom Penh for, she also claims to have hardly ever visited anywhere outside of her neighbourhood, which is close to her factory. Likewise, she spends most of her time working and, during her occasional time off, she just watches her friend's television. Leap's narrative is distinctive where she states no desire to visit anywhere else in Phnom

Penh, such as the urban centre. She suggests that urban living is not very community focussed or inclusive, giving the example of celebratory events, when families opt to rent out restaurants. This is in contrast to the province where she claims villagers join at each other's houses to happily celebrate parties and weddings.

Leap's narrative can be interpreted in multiple ways. Conceivably, her rejection of any desire to recognise the benefits of accessing the urban centre could form an act of resistance. Instead of displaying regret for not accessing the centre, she attaches unattractive cultural meaning to the urban space, claiming that she prefers ways of life in her homeland. However, given her peripheral spatial and labour relations with the city, her resistance is formed through opinions rather than experience. Leap clearly states that the dominant urban sphere is not "inclusive" on a general level, but, given her description, those who can afford to be part of it are included and view it as desirable. Despite her resistance, Leap arguably experiences socio-spatial exclusion from the "centre" on a tacit level. Through social norms and low-paid migrants' peripheral positioning in relation to the dominant urban sphere, urban spaces are produced to be used and accessed by members of certain social groups, who feel comfortable or can afford to perform socially acceptable practices.

7.2. Accessing the centre

The low-paid migrant workers experience spatial exclusion on multiple levels; from their limited access to urban space to their distant conception of the urban "centre". Their narratives are self-affirming and little variance was identified between individual's peripheral use of space. Conceivably, low-paid workers' spatial practices are dictated and highly influenced by their labour relations first and foremost. Translating this conception to the reality of higher educated migrants, the education and employment practices of such migrants offer greater opportunities to access the urban "centre" and spatially integrate into the city. However, analysis of their narratives reveals a more complex and restricted use of space than may be expected.

Heng, for example, is a 21 year old student from a small village in Svay Rieng province, where he lived with his disabled father, his mother, who is a farmer, and his younger sister. Throughout life, he has enjoyed studying and it has been his dream to attend university. When he finished school, neither he nor his family had enough finances to support tuition fees or living costs in Phnom Penh. Therefore, he found a full-time job in a Phnom Penh restaurant,

which he worked for one year, before beginning his studies and continuing the job on a part-time basis.

"When I first arrived in Phnom Penh, it was difficult to be in the city because of the traffic and it was very busy. Phnom Penh is modern but not like other cities in the world – I think they are more modern. I have to live in a room with three other students. The neighbourhood is very far from the centre of Phnom Penh, maybe seven kilometres. When I go to university, I have a long cycle ride and it is too hot." (Heng, 21)

Heng feels, like many migrants in Phnom Penh; that he has to settle for a lower quality of life and a smaller house than he could have in the provinces. During his free time, he will visit his local market to buy cheap food, walk along the riverside to relax and he describes his main hobby as studying in the library, although many of other students on his course will visit the fairground in the city centre.

Heng's narrative is one of several that could have been chosen from the life histories. It displays a transition to living in the city, but settling for the margins. Due to the hierarchised nature of space in Phnom Penh, Heng lacks the social privilege to benefit from the urban "centre" as he is tacitly restricted to certain areas of the city, the "periphery". Although Heng, and other students interviewed, display certain forms of engagement with the "centre", this is usually through education or employment and much of their lives remain outside of the privileged centre.

Unlike Heng, who is enrolled at a private institution, Davuth (25, from Kampong Cham province) attends a well renowned public university – the Royal University of Phnom Penh (RUPP) – which is located in north-west Phnom Penh. Having shared with fellow students for three years, the master's student now lives alone in a small one room apartment, approximately three kilometres from the RUPP campus. Naturally, Davuth spends a lot of his time at university and identifies the campus as an important place in his life. Furthermore, he claims that Koh Pich ("Diamond Island") is the place he most values in Phnom Penh, along with other central sites such as the Royal Palace. He explains that he enjoys frequently visiting the centre of Phnom Penh, next to the river, for the fresh air, abundance of young

people and the opportunity to watch fishing boats. Davuth's positive description of his engagement with urban public space during his free time suggests inclusion in the benefits of city living. However, this is not to assume he feels part of a privileged social group or feels comfortable accessing all areas of Phnom Penh. He explains that “rich” people live in areas of the city where they have a lot of private security guards to control who is on the streets and which are close to a lot of services and amenities. This is contrasted to “poor” neighbourhoods, which have inadequate access to health facilities. Although Davuth's narrative suggests a beneficial use of public space, his residence in a peripheral neighbourhood and the elite’s control of certain areas still leaves him experiencing a certain degree of social exclusion on a spatial level.

Chapter 8. Identity

Migrants maintain a strong sense of belonging to their villages of origin and the extent to which migrants engage with negotiating a new urban identity varies greatly. Identity has been used as an analytical lens to help interrogate this process, by exploring migrants' own sense of self and their positioning within wider society. The formation of migrant's identities is composed of multiple factors – including their interpretation of places, their feelings towards different cultures and their future aspirations – which this chapter aims to investigate. Identity, as a concept in itself, has significant permutations for social exclusion as well as being constitutive of relational and spatial exclusion.

8.1. Stories of place

Unanimously, migrants interviewed during this study retell stories of rural poverty experienced during their childhood, helping their parents make enough money to get by through farming or informal businesses. However, their stories also show a huge diversity in family relations and experiences of education during childhood. Both topics have significant impact on identity formation and individual's conceptions of "home". Therefore, an analysis of such narratives is required for a background understanding of migrant identities.

Family structures in Cambodia have traditionally offered the main support networks for people and most conformed to the model as common in society. There has been a general shift from less conformity to more complexity in recent years, a trend reinforced by narratives found in the life histories. Take Mealea for example, a 27 year old originally from Koh Kong province - situated on the coast near Cambodia's border with Thailand - who now works as a chef at an international school in Phnom Penh. Growing up, she lived with her single mother, three sisters and two brothers. Like many others interviewed, she had many chores during childhood including housework for neighbours and friends; as a result, her school attendance suffered and she often missed three days of classes a week. On reflection, she finds a period during her teenage years when her mother left them as the most difficult time. Along with her older sister, Mealea was forced to look after her younger siblings, niece and nephew for a short time. Upon returning, Mealea's mother warned her not to migrate to Phnom Penh out of fear of prostitution but, aged 17, she travelled to the city, ignoring any such fears.

“I didn’t have a good or a bad relationship with my mother. She was always working late but we never had enough money. It was okay when I was young because I played with my friends and went swimming. But when I was a bit older, my mother left us sometimes and I had to look after brothers, sisters and nieces.”(Mealea, 27)

Mealea’s story of family disruption is distinct and out of the ordinary, yet its complexity is not uncommon. Davuth, the 25 year old student at the Royal University of Phnom Penh (RUPP), also claims to have experienced tough family relations growing up. After initially living with his mother, father and younger sister in a village in Kampong Cham province, he was forced to live with his uncle’s family, this time in Kampong Thom province. Aged 13 onwards, Davuth was often beaten and worked extremely hard for his uncle; cooking, cleaning their house and feeding pigs on the farm. Davuth remembers crying every day but, when he tried to explain how he was treated to his mother, she sided with his uncle who rejected all claims. To the present day, Davuth suffers emotionally from this period of his childhood. Since he has grown older and migrated to Phnom Penh, he has come to realise how unusual his family history is, especially compared to his friends at university who mostly left home for the first time around the age of 20. Narratives such as those found in Mealea’s and Davuth’s life histories oppose commonly held notions of rural areas as socially homogenous places of traditional, supportive family structures and homes.

Despite diversity of childhood experiences identified through narrative analysis, a common thread between migrants’ life histories is the nostalgia described towards the rural place. Boupha is a 23 year old Master’s student of Biodiversity at RUPP and her nostalgic narration of her village of origin typifies migrants’ retelling of their “homeland”.

“I liked it in the village because it was natural and easy. When I was younger, I used to bicycle to my school in the next village. It was beautiful and there was fresh air. Also, I had a lot of friends” (Boupha, 23)

She describes her warm feeling towards the “friendly people” living in her small village close to the border with Vietnam, most of whom are farmers. There is a strong sense of community

and the villagers often help each other organise events and celebrations such as weddings. Education has always been a significant part of Boupha's life, which she has always enjoyed, and she remembers her school's "natural" setting, "fresh air" and the "good friends" she made there. Outside of school, Boupha would help her parents on their farm, help cook and clean during her vacations. During free time, she liked to play games with her friends and take walks into the surrounding countryside. Such gleaming narratives construct migrants' place of origin as a rural idyll. The dominance of this construction throughout the life histories suggests a commonly held nostalgia for the rural place.

The provinces of Cambodia, or the "homelands" of the rural migrants in Phnom Penh, offer little opportunity for young people to further their education beyond high school or find gainful forms of employment. The young people move to Phnom Penh after finishing school, if they made it to through all grades, to further their education or find work, depending on household income or educational achievements (MoP, 2012). These well researched motivations for migrating to Phnom Penh are universally mirrored by the life histories of the participants in this study. As could be expected, few of the low paid workers interviewed finished high school with some leaving school completely as early as grade 3. Migration was triggered by knowledge of job opportunities in Phnom Penh and motivations were thus mostly described as purely economic. On the other hand, the students interviewed tended to graduate from high school around the age of 19 and migrated to Phnom Penh to enrol in one of the many universities there. Across both migrant categories, their initial migration is retold with a sense of inevitability and, while some explicitly cite parental pressures, most participants strongly affirmed that migrating was their free choice. While these findings related to migrants' backgrounds and motivations for moving reveal little new, they provide an insightful context for how different migrants negotiate new identities once living in Phnom Penh, as the following sections will explore.

8.2. Claiming an urban identity

Despite migrants' overwhelming nostalgia for their homelands, many also possess positive feelings towards their new home; Phnom Penh. It was reasonably common in the interviews for respondents to describe the city as "modern" and to real off reasons why they perceive it as a desirable place to live, such as the new buildings or streetlights. However, the ease at which migrants feel accepted by their new urban environment is generally less assured. The

following analysis of narratives explores how young migrants negotiate new urban identities and the challenges faced by them as a result.

Arun is a 24 year old single man from a small village in Kandal province, just outside Phnom Penh. His father passed away when he was 10 and, as the first-born son of a large family, he feels responsible as the only man. So after completing high school education and studying English at an educational NGO, he moved to Phnom Penh where he shares a room with his sister and works in restaurant in the city centre, catering mostly for tourists. Since migrating, he has enjoyed the city's liveliness, and being around the "beautiful men and women" of the city. His transition to the urban environment was comfortable; he felt a desire to fit in with his new surroundings and people. During his free time, he likes to visit sites of national cultural importance in Phnom Penh, such as Independence Monument, the Royal Palace and Wat Phnom. These touristic performances display a realisation of national belonging and privileged identity are more commonly a luxury associated with middle and elite classes in the Global South (Mills, 2012, 26). Arun claims to be determined to create a new life for himself and not to follow the same path of his parents, as farmers.

On the surface, Arun's story suggests that he has truly become "urban" and is enjoying a better standard of living as a result. However, a deeper reading of his life history reveals a more complex narrative suggesting more of a hybrid identity. This is firstly shown by his deep roots as he is proud of where he grew up and keeps a photograph of his house saved on his phone to show people. In addition, he frequently visits his village of origin, usually fortnightly as its proximity makes it easy to travel. In contrast, he expresses distaste towards the "poor neighbourhood" where he lives in Phnom Penh, but it is all he can afford. His displays of urban identity are therefore seemingly more through rhetoric and aspirations than practice.

Arun's apparent claim to an urban identity is similar to that of other educated young migrants in Phnom Penh. Many interviewees who are still in education also describe time spent with friends, visiting restaurants and along the Riverside as the main leisure activities. The levels to which educated migrants practice and engage with "urban" life and culture in such ways vary significantly. Chakara, a 23 year old Master's student of Zoology from nearby Takeo province, provides insight into potential factors. He reflected on how he thinks he has changes as a person since migrating to Phnom Penh:

"When I was younger, I cared about making money, working on the farm to help my family. Now I am more motivated to study and discover new things in life – when I graduate from my master's degree, it will be a big step in my life. Studying is the most important thing in my life at the moment. I am very busy and I spend about one hour with friends a day. After studying and learning more from my teachers, I plan to find a job with a good salary."
(Chakara, 23)

Perhaps due to Chakara's postgraduate level of education and the consequent potential for greater financial stability, his story is distinct in that it suggests a more comprehensive adoption of an urban identity. His narrative explicitly describes a departure from rural aspects of his life and self-identification.

However, participant observation, conducted over one month in a hostel, identified less comprehensive integration into mainstream urban society among the roughly 20 young rural migrant staff. Most of the staff initially migrated to Phnom Penh to pursue higher education at one of the capital's universities and their jobs, some part time, supplement their fees and living costs. They therefore arguably fit into the "educated" category of rural migrants and, on the surface, many display membership of a globalised urban youth. For example, common indicators include the ownership of a smart phone, the common use of social media accounts to document their social lives and gain access to news, and fluency in English, useful for interacting with guests at the hostel. However, the individuals rely heavily on their place of work to gain access to "urban" culture; some live on the premises of the hostel and most stay there beyond working hours to make use of internet access, or simply for something to do. Outside of work, they have little spare time to take part in any other activities, which could contribute to the formation of self-supporting urban identities once they stop working there for example. In addition, the hostel suffers from a high staff turnover as migrant workers often return to their villages of origin without warning or reason. This is linked to the maintenance of strong ties with their rural homelands through frequent visits and aspirations to move back "home" after graduating; a common narrative from the life histories, which the next section explores in detail.

8.3. Ambivalence towards the city and strong rural ties

Other rural migrants to Phnom Penh possess ambivalence towards the city and little desire to adopt an urban identity. This supports the critical argument promoted by Raum et al (2009), that social "inclusion" and social "exclusion" do not necessarily constitute a binary of "good" and "bad" respectively. In other words, not everyone desires to be "included" in urban culture and therefore, adopting an urban identity is neither an aspiration. Underscoring the stories of ambivalence and disillusionment identified in the narratives is a strong cultural and imagined connection with migrants' rural place of origin.

For example, Akara, a 25 year old cashier at a bar, felt extremely out of place when she moved to the city. She arrived with very little money and her lack of "modern" clothes, shoes or make-up made her feel different to the people around her. Although her job provides enough money for her to live on, she spends very little time outside her workplace or home. She spends all day working and only receives one day off a month, including weekends. Of the other places she might visit in Phnom Penh, such as restaurants, most are too expensive for her. When she does have time off, during holidays, she always visits her village of origin in Kandal province where her mother looks after Akara's three year old son. In the future, Akara expresses no desire to stay in Phnom Penh. She dreams of moving back to her province to live with her son but her short-term responsibilities to make an income restrict her to living in Phnom Penh.

As well as a growing service industry, a large proportion of young rural migrants in Phnom Penh work as low-paid labour in the garment industry. The narratives from such migrants are laden with further ambivalence towards Phnom Penh and reject the notion of urban culture as desirable. Common negative reasons for this disillusionment towards the city include the busyness, pollution, crime and traffic accidents, all of which interviewees claim to experience on a regular basis. Some highlight the widespread access to electricity and new buildings as symbols of modernity, which are lacking in rural areas. However, few migrants, especially low-paid workers, displayed a connection with "modern" urban life, as perceived by them, through their everyday practices.

Nary, a 26 year old who came to Phnom Penh to work in a garment factory, is a prime example of this. Her interview provided a story closely linked to her place of origin, both through her practices and subjective feelings. Nary claims to most enjoy life when she is

spending time with her family. She visits her home village in Kampong Chhnang province twice a year, for Khmer New Year and Pchum Ben – both Buddhist festivals of national importance. It makes Nary happy to see people from the village and to cook food for her family at home. During her visits, she doesn't look forward to returning to Phnom Penh. Nary lacks the money to afford much phone credit and, as a result, only gets to speak to her mother and child on the phone roughly once a month.

The narratives obtained from migrants across the spectrum – from the highly educated to those participating in low paid labour – express varying levels of desire towards adopting an urban identity. However, their senses of place are multifaceted and they all interpret their lives as in between places. The deep roots in their rural "homeland", including frequent contact and visits during national holidays, are uniformly backed up by the other participants in this study, suggesting distinct provincial identities. In their day to day lives through participation in labour markets, education and residency, the migrants are arguably immersed in the city. However, as also reinforced by studies such as Gugler's (1991), urban settling migrants chose to maintain strong links to their homelands, especially in a cultural sense. Rather than becoming urban or remaining rural, migrants construct their own flexible, hybrid identities – juggling aspects of the supposedly fixed, dichotomous urban and rural cultures.

8.4. Perceptions of "urban" and "rural"

Analysis of narratives from the life histories reveals that migrants have complex, and often contradicting, perceptions of what it means to be "rural" or "urban". Kesor, a 30 year old who works in a garment factory, provides a typical example of this. She claims that:

> *"People in Phnom Penh are quite shallow. They want to have white skin and work in the factory, where they can keep out of the sun. But, in the provinces, people work harder, in the rice fields and also doing housework, and they don't care as much about having white skin. Also, city people care more about money and are more selfish. In the provinces, people will share the little money they have by giving it to their mother."(Kesor, 30)*

The main contradiction in Kesor's viewpoint is linked to her labelling of "city" and "province" ("rural") people. While her wider narrative suggests that she identifies more as "rural" than "urban", she attaches negative meanings to those "in Phnom Penh", including those who in the factories of which she is one. It would be naïve to assume that the above quote is an accurate or fixed representation of Kesor's true opinion as it would suggest that she self-identifies as "shallow". Instead, her narrative highlights the struggles young migrants experience in negotiating identities and their new urban environment. The perceived differences, found in the narratives, between rural and urban people are flexible and often inconsistent when relating to individual identity. Migrants are often unsure where they 'fit' on the spectrum between "urban" and "rural", supporting the conclusion that they instead adopt hybrid identities.

Extending analysis of rural-urban perceptions beyond migrants' own opinions offers further insight into their positioning between the two cultures. For example, through exploring how people from migrant sending villages react to and feel about migrants. Pisey is a 29 year old garment factory worker who grew up in a small, isolated village in Kampong Chhnang province. Now, since living in Phnom Penh for ten years, she owns a few "modern" clothes. When she returns to her village, some of the villagers are not happy with her and the other garment factory workers, because they are seen as opposing traditions, partly due to the clothes they wear. Particularly older men in the villages will look down on the women who move to Phnom Penh by themselves, most of whom are young factory workers.

> *"All the women in the factories go home to the provinces for Khmer New Year and Pchum Ben. When we arrive on the buses, some of the villagers say: "now the goblins are coming". Some people from the village are making a joke but other people are mean to us. I don't like it when they do that" (Pisey, 29)*

The roughly translated term "goblins" is derogatory and Pisey explains in the above quote that, while some people say it jokingly, it can be hurtful when she thinks people really mean it. Although simply anecdotal, this extract from Pisey's life history is concurrent with migrants' narratives of in-betweenness. On the one hand, many low-paid migrants in Phnom Penh feel disillusioned by the urban culture and do not aim at becoming "urban". Yet from the

perspective of those who have stayed in the rural provinces, young migrants have strayed too far from “rural” culture to retain the same identities as before they migrated.

8.5. Future aspirations

Many rural-urban migrants aspire to move back “home” when it is economically possible. In the national context, with dominant discourses of an urbanising society, such complexities pose significant questions over the place of such migrants in Cambodia. As shown earlier, high levels of internal migration have been driven by a “demographic bonus” and high levels of economic growth centred in Phnom Penh. As many migrants are not integrating deeply or comprehensively adopting urban identities, linear readings of migration processes in Cambodia have limited capacity in understanding the cultural ramifications.

Aspirations to return to rural homelands are especially dominant among the narratives of low-paid migrants, such as those working in garment factories. For example, 23 year old Jorani would like to move back to her village of origin in Kampong Cham province. However, she is currently single and sees finding a husband as necessary for doing so. In the short term, she would maybe like to learn how to work in a beauty salon, if she stays in Phnom Penh. Working in the factory is not a long term vision for her life and, once she has a husband, she would like to start a small business in her home village. Jorani's plans are parallel to the majority of participants in this study, who do not see a future in Phnom Penh beyond the short term.

The future aspirations of migrants who moved to Phnom Penh to pursue higher education are slightly more diverse. On the one hand, some students interviewed are keen to return to their homelands. Boupha (23, female, master’s student), for example, plans to buy a large house in the countryside where she can bring up a family of her own. As she studies biodiversity, she is passionate about nature and would like to manage a farm, supporting her earlier identified narrative of nostalgia for rural life. Other narratives display more distinctiveness however. For example, Mealea (27, female, chef) and Davuth (25, male, master’s student), have globalised aspirations as a result of opportunities found in the urban environment. Mealea is planning to move to the Netherlands along with her Dutch partner, an expat currently living in Phnom Penh, where she would like to learn the language and find a job. Davuth also dreams of migrating internationally; he is keen to work in the zoology department at Bangkok University due to the quality of their research. Mealea and Davuth represent a small minority

of the rural-urban migrants who see their futures away from their homelands. Having both experienced difficult childhoods, with challenges related to their families, they now display identification with urban culture and claim to feel comfortable living in Phnom Penh for the moment. However, both of their plans to migrate away from Cambodia altogether raise questions over the desirability of Phnom Penh as a future home, to have a family or pursue career aspirations.

Chapter 9. Discussion

In this project, the analysis of life history interviews has brought migrants' subjectivities to the fore. The aim of the interviews' findings has not been to describe a "reality", in order to challenge and dispute the dominant national discourses identified in Chapter 5. That would be over-simplistic. Instead, the findings presented in Chapters 6, 7 and 8 provide insights into how migrants review their own positioning in relation to wider society, be that through their social networks, use of space and cultural identification. As Bakhtin's (1981) view of self advocates, our own image of self only exists in relation to another; which could be another person, a social group, a place, a society or culture. "Reality" is impossible to represent due to its contradictions, fluidity and multiple conceptions. By instead focusing on migrants' subjectivities - or views of self –it is made possible to interrogate the stories told and comment on their wider relevance to social exclusion, given the relational context of the interviews. This chapter will zoom out to connect the insights gained so far in this thesis. It will firstly explore the links between different dimensions of social exclusion, before comparing national discourses with migrants' narratives and, finally, comment on the contextual relevance of this research looking towards the future.

9.1. Social exclusion as intersectional

Social relations, use of space and identity are all dimensions which have been shown to influence migrants' perceptions of their relations with society; their patterns of social exclusion. The different dimensions are mutually constitutive and separating their influence on the lives of migrants can pose a challenge in itself. Nonetheless, the extent to which young rural-urban migrants in Phnom Penh are included, or excluded, by society is certainly dependent to varying degrees on those dimensions. In addition, as one would naturally expect, young migrants tend to move towards greater assurances of their place in society over time, although that may not necessarily fit with dominant urban culture.

For instance, the foundations of identity are inherently rooted in migrants' rural place of origin, and this is not lost as a result of migration. However, rural identities are sometimes reinforced by migration to urban areas as migrants emphasise and strengthen the links to their homeland, supporting previous research into rural connections by Gugler (1991). At the very least, migrants will renegotiate their cultural identities to some extent. Explicit links from this

renegotiation of identity can be traced to both social relations and use of space, supporting the conception of social exclusion as complex and intersectional by theorists such as Room (1995).

Firstly, social relations act as a point of stability and tool of social capital for rural-urban migrants during their time in Phnom Penh. Participants in this study refer back to the time when they migrated, through mentions of the help and support they received from fellow villagers who had already moved to the city – for example, friends, siblings and cousins. This support the findings of previous studies into rural-urban migrants' social networks that highlight the importance of pre-existing social relations in determining the level to which migrants integrate into the new urban environment (Kuhn, 2003; Walker, 2010). In addition, Cambodian migrants retain strong kinship and friendship ties with their rural places of origin, through frequent visits and phone calls. The most important events in Cambodian migrants' lives are strongly linked to both their national identity and rural social ties. These were commonly identified as either Khmer New Year, Pchum Ben, or both; rural community celebrations that act as focal points for migrants' rural identities and social ties. This shows that migrants' links to their homelands – their villages of origin –have significant cultural and social layers, which are mutually reinforcing.

Secondly, this research has shown how identities are intrinsically linked with both migrants' interpretation of place and use of space. Overwhelmingly, migrants participating in this study, when talking about their aspirations, perceive Phnom Penh as a place to build their future and their homeland as a place to live in the future; to be happy. These perceptions reflect the aspirations of rural-urban migrants in Ecuador when asked about their future relationship with the capital city, Quito (Lawson, 1999). This finding shows that migration is a fluid process; that places are not simply perceived as left and arrived. Insights from the life history interviews also suggest that identities are formed through migrants' experiences and use of space. Those – mostly low paid migrants – who are confined to the margins of the city have a peripheral relationship with urban space and therefore display ambivalence towards adopting urban identities. Some students however, who have some connections with the urban centre claim close links with urban culture and to have adopted an urban identity, although the extent to which is often open to scrutiny.

Perhaps most demonstrably and in support of Park's early observation, 'social relations are inevitably correlated with spatial relations' (1952). This conclusion was met following an analysis of US cities with high levels of inward migration from rural areas. Park theorised that rural-urban migrants arrive in highly concentrated, low quality, rental neighbourhoods in inner-city areas. The migrants were shown to only form successful lives for themselves in the city, if they dispersed into mainstream urban society, integrating as they did so. This theory displays distinct similarities with the Phnom Penh, the main difference being that the poor, migrant receiving neighbourhoods are situated on the edge of the city. Migrants in these neighbourhoods only relate socially with other members of their social group, who share similar origins and occupations. This collective separation from the city, both socially and spatially, can be perceived as both a cause and effect of poverty; specifically, poverty by definition of Sen (2000), who termed such social exclusion a 'capability failure' and, therefore, major constituent of poverty.

9.2. Comparing discourses and narratives

This section offers a discussion of the notable comparisons and contradictions between the national discourses and personal narratives of migrants. Discourse analysis of newspaper articles and music videos highlighted the static representation of both the rural and urban spheres. Whereas narratives from the life history interviews point towards greater linkages between both spheres and more fluid conceptions of migrants' own place in society.

On the one hand, the dominant discourse of rural homogeneity - as constructed through the texts and articles - privileges simplistic characteristics of tradition and backwardness and is reinforced by the notion of the "rural masses" exodus. However, migrants' narratives told stories of cultural exchange and diversity, as a result of migration. Socially, migrants retain ties with family members and friends from their rural homelands, which are upheld by frequent phone calls and visits during national holidays. The cultural impact of such exchanges, on the rural places of origin, can also be as longstanding. This is due to migrants' widely held aspirations to return to their homelands in the future, viewing Phnom Penh as a pragmatic place to build their lives in the present. Therefore, social and imagined links between rural and urban culture are reinforced by migration, rejecting the notion of rural places as "left" or as suffering from exodus.

Dominant discourses of urbanity, on the other hand, perpetuate two varying notions of the

“city as progress”, and of vulnerability and destitution. The “city as progress” discourse should be challenged over its inclusivity. Migrants’ narratives revealed widespread patterns of socio-spatial exclusion. Few young migrants that participated in this study described any significant engagement with the urban utopian centre portrayed through the “city as progress” discourse. Low paid migrants often display ambivalence towards such notions of cosmopolitanism and modernity whereas students, through their spatial practices, gain limited benefits from the urban “centre”. By extension, this suggests that the urban “centre” is the preserve of the urban elite and that few my migrants would feel included by the “city as progress” discourse.

In addition, the urban discourse of vulnerability and destitution deserves scrutiny over its compatibility with migrants’ narratives. The discourse works to frame migrants as passive victims, denying them agency and promoting the influence of external forces on their life decisions. However, within the narratives of migration, individuals claimed to have free choice over their mobility. Furthermore, few distinct stories of loneliness were identified through the analysis of narratives. Migrants instead described tightly knit social networks with colleagues, fellow students and neighbours. Of course, missing family members was a common thread but this in itself is not enough to reflect the extreme notion of vulnerability constructed by the discourse.

Dichotomous conceptions of place, as shown to be constructed by the media in Cambodia, arguably reinforce economic and structuralist understandings of migration that suggest migrants universally aspire to become “urban”. The essentialism of the rural-urban divide is in contrast to the fluidity of migrants' experiences and their common adoption of hybrid identities, characterised by varying aspirations and deep cultural roots in the rural homeland. The extents to which migrants are culturally included in popularly represented urban culture, and to which migrants aspire to adopt an urban identity, are therefore deeply questionable.

9.3. The future

In a recent report by Cambodia's Ministry of Planning (MoP, 2012), on the topic of population and migration, clear demographic trends for the future were identified and highlighted. The report recognised the significance of Cambodia's current sizeable young population – or ‘demographic bonus’ - but also realised that this is not finite. In the future, due to a declining fertility rate the MoP predicts an ageing population; the proportion of

Cambodia's population of working age will therefore decline (MoP, 2012, 7). When viewed in isolation, this trend is neither surprising nor remarkable and generally reflects the demographic trends seen across many other countries with increasing incomes. However, when viewed in the context of this paper's findings, it perhaps has more significance. The majority of participating migrants in this study perceive Phnom Penh as temporary in their lives and plan their futures away from the city. Therefore, with a decreasing supply of flexible, young labour that is keen to take up the employment opportunities offered by Phnom Penh's manufacturing industries, this raises questions over the sustainability of Cambodia's high levels of economic growth and urbanisation.

The main issue here is strongly related to social exclusion; which is experienced by rural-urban migrants on multiple, intersecting levels. Related to identity, dominant discourses portray absolute, dichotomous images of urban and rural culture, which do not include the fluidity shown to exist among migrant identities. Furthermore, beyond the tightly-knit friendship groups created by young migrants in Phnom Penh, social relations tend to lack diversity; rural-urban migrants provided narratives of discrimination and collective exclusion from different segments of society. Spatially, access to the urban “centre” is limited to the privileged, while those on periphery, such as many rural-urban migrants, are excluded from the benefits of urban living.

However, this thesis is not attempting to moralistically claim that migrants should easily assimilate or integrate into mainstream urban society. In fact, this form of inclusion is not desirable for the majority of migrants interviewed, which supports the need for more critical conceptions of social exclusion (e.g. Room, 1995; Raum et al, 2009). A more reflexive theorisation of social exclusion views the concept more as a lens that can be used to problematise social inequality and that does not aim to simply label individuals as either "included" or "excluded" from mainstream - or dominant - society. Quoting Appiah, 'we do not need, have never needed, settled community, a homogenous system of values, in order to have a home' (2006, 112). In other words, assimilation is not necessary for rural migrants to live fulfilling lives in urban areas. The influence of migrants on the existing culture and urban environment should not be overlooked, as cultural exchange is a two-way process. Migrants are already changing Phnom Penh and they have the potential to change it further, if they have the opportunities to disperse into different parts of urban society. This supports the widely accepted case that promotion diversity can harbour greater levels of social inclusion.

Linking back to the power of dominant discursive representations, more inclusive discourses could recognise the diversity of beings and experiences that migration brings. Due to the subjective nature of social exclusion, this could allow for individuals to feel more assured over their place in society. More inclusive discourses also have the power to harbour greater levels of socio-spatial inclusion, by deteriorating the tacit rules and social norms that can function to confine the lives of individuals.

Chapter 10. Conclusion

Classically, research in development focussed on economic motivations of migration, with assimilationist assumptions regarding its effects. Such approaches have macro-oriented motivations and can simplify the experiences of migration as a fixed transition from one static place to another. This research has instead taken a poststructuralist approach to researching the process of migration in rapidly urbanising Cambodia. By focussing on the agency of individuals and by appreciating the diversity of experiences, this paper has opened up migration by analysing the dynamic role of social relations, space, culture and identity. Social exclusion has been adopted as a lens through which to explore migrants' fluid and multidimensional relations with their new urban environment and wider society.

Initially, a discourse analysis of newspaper articles and music videos mapped out dominant representations of rurality, urbanity and migration, which have the power to govern popular imaginations of migrants' relationships with society. This laid the foundations of the project, offering comparison for the findings from four months of fieldwork in Phnom Penh. Life history interviews with migrants provided narratives through which to interrogate the impact of migration on their lives and to explore subjective conceptions of their relationships with multiple facets of society. Collectively, these methods have enabled an investigation into patterns of social exclusion among young rural-urban migrants, gathered around four main research questions.

Firstly, discourse analysis unravelled the dominant representations of rurality and urbanity, revealing an essentialism of the rural-urban divide which is reinforced by opposing discourses of rural homogeneity and the "city as progress". Dominant discourses also construct the notion of a "rural masses" exodus and of urban vulnerability, which work to frame migrants as passive victims of external forces, underestimating migrants' agency and capability to make decisions.

Secondly, interviews revealed that young migrants often move to Phnom Penh without having close links to many people living there. Social ties are usually formed with a close groups of friends, containing individuals that also originate from rural provinces and have pursued similar forms of employment or education. These findings show that migrants rarely interact with members of different social groups, either out of ambivalence towards doing so or fear of

discrimination. This lack of diversity in social relations suggests that migrant populations experience a collective form of social exclusion in Phnom Penh.

Thirdly, an analysis of migrants' use of space and perceptions of place identified access to urban space as hierarchical. Low-paid migrants are peripheralised through their labour market relations, which in turn confine their spatial practices to the margins of the city. Other migrants tend to experience spatial exclusion at a more tacit level, with access to the benefits of the urban centre limited to the privileged urban elite.

Fourth and finally, young rural migrants to Phnom Penh adopt an urban identity to varying degrees. Some perceive an urban identity as desirable and rhetorically claim membership to urban culture, but this can be questioned by their practices. While others - mostly low-paid workers - commonly feel out of place in the urban environment and can display ambivalence towards urban culture. Therefore, migrants' identities are fluid and often hybrid in nature. Their identity is underscored by strong cultural roots in their homelands, evidenced by frequent visits and future aspirations to return home.

Throughout the project, these dimensions of social exclusion have been theorised as subjective, fluid, overlapping and mutually constitutive. The social, spatial and cultural elements of migrants' narratives investigated via the interviews collide and intersect, supporting critical conceptions of social exclusion as a theory. This research has also challenged the traditional assimilationist assumption that migrants definitively prefer to be included over excluded or that exclusion is not a choice. Ambivalence towards being "included" in the mainstream urban society was in fact a common theme in migrant's narratives. Nonetheless, social exclusion is problematic when it divides people and confines groups based on their positioning in relation to mainstream – or dominant – society. Dispersion into different parts of society, through interactions with people of different backgrounds and positive engagement with public urban space, is necessary to actively encourage diversity, reduce inequality and create a more inclusive society.

However, the static, dichotomous representations of place promoted by dominant discourses, disregard the transformative influence of such cultural exchange through migration. If more time and resources were available in this research project, it would have been insightful to explore the impact of cultural exchange at the village level, as well as the city level. This is as migrants do not perceive their rural homelands as "left" but instead maintain strong links with

their place of origin and aspire to return in the future, contributing towards change and challenging discourses of rural homogeneity. On the other hand, the dominant “city as progress” discourse promotes an image of utopian urbanism, linked to notions of a cosmopolitan, consumerist culture. This discourse fits poorly with the narratives of young rural-urban migrants, contributing towards feelings of relative deprivation and social exclusion. Therefore, the combined topics of rural-urban migration and social exclusion would benefit from further research into urban social inequality that studies the lives of the privileged, as well as the underprivileged. It is through diversity and cultural exchange that greater understanding is created and social inclusion is promoted.

> *‘Hybridity, impurity, intermingling, the transformation that comes of new and unexpected combinations of human beings, cultures, ideas, politics, movies, songs... Melange, hotchpotch, a bit of this and a bit of that is how newness enters the world. It is the great possibility that mass mobilisation gives this world.’ (Rushdie, 1991, 394)*

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Appendices

Appendix A: List of newspaper articles analysed

Headline	Source	Date
Tensions up in Phnom Kulen	Phnom Penh Post	7-1-2015
New Rules to Concentrate Migrant Votes in Capital	The Cambodia Daily	2-1-2015
Migrants' kids at risk: CDRI	Phnom Penh Post	3-10-2014
Seeking Cambodia's emerging middle class	Phnom Penh Post	6-9-2014
Urban planning needed: ADB	Phnom Penh Post	3-07-14
Labor Minister Responds to Brands' Concerns	The Cambodia Daily	26-03-14
Urbanisation and growth	Phnom Penh Post	27-11-13
Challenges for Cambodia's youth	Phnom Penh Post	12-8-2013
Workers Rush Home to Rural Provinces to Cast Votes	The Cambodia Daily	27-7-2013
Demand for cheap rentals outnumbers supply	Phnom Penh Post	20-06-13
Center Helps Rural Women Start Over in City	The Cambodia Daily	11-3-2013
Small town redemption	Phnom Penh Post	19-10-2012
Young Cambodians leave the countryside behind	Phnom Penh Post	19-9-2012
Young Cambodians in 'exodus' to Phnom Penh	Phnom Penh Post	2-8-2012
Having faith in Cambodia's youths	Phnom Penh Post	12-8-2010
Capital Portrait Exhibit Profiles City Posers and Rural Farmers	The Cambodia Daily	2-8-2010
Migration protection 'poor': official	Phnom Penh Post	7-5-2010
Migrant worker jobs hit by regional unemployment	Phnom Penh Post	4-2-2009
Low-income housing plan lacking as capital grows	Phnom Penh Post	2-1-2009
Urban harmony essential, UN says	Phnom Penh Post	7-10-2008
Rural poor flood to Phnom Penh from Prey Veng	Phnom Penh Post	25-8-2006
Rural poor flock to cities	Phnom Penh Post	27-1-2006
Villagers Leave PM's Development Zone to Beg in Phnom Penh	The Cambodia Daily	28-8-2004
Young migrant women get helping hand	Phnom Penh Post	13-3-2003

Appendix B: Discourse analysis mind map

• * Key concepts identified during initial phase of discourse analysis **

URBAN

urbanisation

MACRO

MICRO

RURAL

Appendix C: List of music videos analysed

Artist	Song Title
Khem	Saropheap Sne Ter Oun Min Srolanh
Khan Jame	Sa Art Ey Sa Art Yang Nis
Khem	Pel Oun Trov Knea
Meas Soksophea	Mean Pel Mean Brak Tae Bat Puk Mae
Aok Sokun Kanha	Nek Ptas
Preab Sovath	Kous Tvea Besdoung
Khem	Tngai Saek Oun Kar
Sereymun	Rom Kalok

Appendix D: Discussion guide for life history interviews

INTRODUCTION

- Notify the participant that this research is for my Masters studies at Utrecht University and it is being conducted in collaboration with Indochina Research.
- The interview will aim to find out about their life and their experience of migration.
- Notify the participant that they have been selected on the basis of their age and occupation.
- Consent
    - The interviewee will remain anonymous
    - Is it possible for me to record the interview and make notes?
    - After the interviewee, I will summarise the interview into a story
    - Does the interviewee mind if I take a photograph to help me remember them?
- The interview should take no longer than one hour to complete.

BEGINNING

- Confirm the name, age, gender and occupation of the interviewee.
- Confirm the location that the interview is taking place.
- Note - how does the interviewee appear? (behaviour, mood, dress)

BACKGROUND

- When and where was the interviewee born?
- What was their village/town like? (feeling, people)
- What was the family set-up?
- What was their houses like growing up? (size, style, in relation to others?)

CHILDHOOD

- Questions about their life at home
    - relationships, responsibilities, education, leisure activities
- Looking back, are there any stand-out difficult events or periods?
- Are there any stand-out positive events or periods?

ADOLESCENCE

- What did they get up to when they were a teenager?
- Work, education, leisure activities
- Did their relationships with their family change?
- How? How did it make them feel?

MIGRATION

- How many times have they migrated?
    - Where and why?
- What changed in their life before migrating?
- Why did they migrate?
    - What stand-out or trigger events led to them migrating?
    - Was it their free choice to migrate?
- How was migration made possible?
    - Were they helped by other people?
    - Did they rely on finances to migrate?
- What were their first thoughts about Phnom Penh upon arriving there?
- Are there any stand-out difficult events or periods from when they first moved to Phnom Penh?
- Are there any stand-out positive events from when they first moved to Phnom Penh?

PRESENT

- Have they always had the same job in Phnom Penh? What else?
- Have they always lived there where they do now in Phnom Penh? Where else?
- Describe current occupation further
    - How was it made possible? Help from people?
    - Describe working conditions, constraints and feelings.
    - Do they have any other income-generating activities?
- Where do they live in the city?
    - What is the neighbourhood like?
    - What is their accommodation like? (details)
    - Who do they live with?
- What are the 5 most important places in the city for them?
    - Why? What do these places mean to them?
    - What do they use these places for?

IDENTITY

- Do they feel more attached to Phnom Penh or their village?
    - Are there any differences between city people and village people? What?
- What things bring them enjoyment at the moment?

- What about when they were younger?
- What do they think has stayed the same about them throughout their life?
    - What has changed?
- What 5 things do they most value in life at the moment?
    - Why? What do these things mean to them?

RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHERS

- How do they spend time with friends?
    - Do they have mostly new or old friends at the moment?
    - Where do their friends originate from?
    - Would they say their friends rich or poor?
- What social events or celebrations do they attend
    - Where do they go for social events? Cheap or expensive places?
- Relationships with family members
    - How have these changed over time?
- Relationships with employers and richer households
    - How do they feel about rich people? Who are the rich people?
- Relationships with employees and poorer households
    - How do they feel about poor people? Who are the poor people?

CONNECTIONS WITH PLACE OF ORIGIN

- How often do they visit their village?
    - Why? How does it make them feel?
- How often do they contact people from their village?
    - Why? How does it make them feel?
- Would they prefer to visit their village more or less than they do currently?
    - Why?

EVENTS OUTSIDE THE HOME

- Have they experienced any crime in Phnom Penh?
    - What happened? Feelings?
    - How does this compare with their village?
- How do they feel towards the government?
    - Why?

THE FUTURE

- How do they feel about growing older?
    - What does it mean to them?
- Do they have any concerns/worries for the future?
- What are they looking forward to most in their life?
    - Do they have any plans for the future?
    - Where would they like to live in the future?