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Fairness, Globalization, and Public Institutions

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Expectations and Realities

Opponents of globalization argue that the process of globalization creates development gaps and increases inequity. Yet there are many positive opportunities for developing countries, including Cambodia, to benefit from the process. However, before Cambodia puts all of its expectations and faith in the global system, it needs to have a model that is compatible with globalization. This is where the problem lies. For Cambodia, in particular, the main question is how to construct and finance development or create a development model that is compatible with its own social values and practices.²⁴ What are Cambodia's development options, and which can Cambodia afford? Like many developing and post-conflict countries, it is the international financial institutions (IFIs) and international economic institutions that influence national development models. The former expects the latter to implement structural reform and complex technical operations to accommodate the market economy.²⁵ This in many ways increases the burden of policy and financial planning. IFI policy planners need to keep in mind that the majority of the developing nations are not able to build or accommodate the market economy overnight without risking political and social instability. In such a case, the market system coerces developing countries with market pressure and eventually co-opts them into crippling economic and political debts.

Conclusion

Globalization is causing Cambodia to adjust its social and political values. The state, while retaining its legitimacy, finds that its credibility, functionality, and efficiency are challenged by the market system, global information, and the rising level of knowledge. It is the duty and opportunity of Cambodian youth to find the successful balance of traditional and global for their future.

FURTHER THOUGHTS

A Brief History of Cambodia

Yongseok Seo

Indian Influence in Premodern Cambodia

THE FIRST WAVE of global influence in early Cambodia came from India. According to Chinese records, Funan, located in modern Cambodia, was the first ancient kingdom to appear in Southeast Asia. The kingdom of Funan flourished as a strategic place of maritime trade between India and China from the first to

the end of sixth century. Indian cultural influence on the Funan kingdom was conspicuous, including the foundation myth of the kingdom that has persisted as the legend of Cambodia's origins.

Angkor was one of two Indianized states in Southeast Asia in the ninth century that represented Hindu religious views (see Osborne, *Southeast Asia: An Introductory History*, 21–22). (The years between AD 802–1431 in Cambodian history were called the Angkor period. Angkor maintained a huge imperial image from the eleventh century and ruled over a large region of Southeast Asia. Angkor Wat is a temple that has Indian/Hindu architecture.) Most of the kings during the Angkor period followed Hindu rituals (Coedès, *The Indianized States of Southeast Asia*). Angkor flourished until the end of the twelfth century, when it began to receive pressure from Thailand. As Thailand's influence on Angkor grew, the Khmer gave up Angkor and moved their capitol to Phnom Penh. At the end of the fifteenth century the Angkor kingdom in Phnom Penh collapsed as the result of a Vietnamese invasion, and Cambodia fell under the influence of Vietnam. For the next several centuries, external pressures from both Thailand and Vietnam caused the gradual decline of the Cambodian kingdoms and ultimately led to Cambodia becoming a French protectorate in 1863.

The West's Encroachment and French Colonial Rule

Like other East Asian countries, Cambodia had to face pressure from Western imperialism in the nineteenth century. In the early 1880s, France diverted its attention to Cambodia after colonizing Vietnam. In 1884, the French colonial government in Cochin China forcefully required the Cambodian king to sign an unequal treaty that seriously undermined the sovereignty of Cambodia. However, the French had to face a nationwide demonstration of Cambodians who rallied against the treaty. France's reputation was heavily damaged by the demonstrations, and nationalism took root among the Cambodian people after this uprising.

From Independence to Civil War

Cambodia was under Japanese control during the Pacific War. In March 1945, the Cambodian prince Norodom Sihanouk declared independence, but France did not recognize it. After a series of struggles, Cambodia was granted independence by the Geneva Agreement in July 1954. It was, however, a prelude to tragedy for the Cambodian people. Cambodia, like many other East Asian countries, became an arena of competition of Western ideologies. Global pressure forced newly reborn Cambodia to choose communism or capitalism as their national ideology. Although Prince Sihanouk initially established a communist autocracy

after independence from France, he attempted to maintain a neutral position for Cambodia by taking sides with neither China nor the United States as the Vietnam War broke out.

However, in 1970, while Sihanouk was on a foreign tour, a military coup took place in which right-wing military general Lon Nol took power. As a result, a pro-Western military government was established in Cambodia in 1972. Lon Nol's government was unstable from the beginning. The leftist Khmer Rouge guerillas began a civil war against the Nol government in 1975. At the end of the Vietnam War, the Khmer Rouge overthrew the American-backed Nol government. Supported by China, the Khmer Rouge established a communist government, headed by Pol Pot. The Pol Pot government was a brutal autocracy that killed millions of innocent people, including many noncommunist political, military, and religious leaders as well as the bourgeoisie. It is estimated that more than two million people were killed between 1975 and 1979 (Osborne, *Southeast Asia: An Introductory History*, 199).

In 1978 Vietnam invaded Cambodia with the support of Cambodian communists who opposed Pol Pot. Vietnam pulled its troops out of Cambodia in 1988, and the UN Security Council approved a plan for a UN-monitored cease fire and elections. This was the first time that global pressure brought about peace (instead of war) in Cambodia. A peace agreement was signed in Paris, and UN Peace Keeping Forces entered Cambodia to enforce the armistice in 1991. Under UN supervision, an election occurred in 1993, and the current government was elected. Despite its splendid history and culture, Cambodia is a country that has been the victim of external pressures. Of all countries in the region, Cambodia has probably had the bitterest experiences with "globalization" over the centuries.

Notes

1. Gabriel Quiroga de San Antonio, *A Brief and Truthful Relation of Events in the Kingdom of Cambodia* (Bangkok: White Lotus Co., 1998). The God King theory originated in India, but the Khmer adopted this divine theory as the foundation of their socio-political civilization. Currently, Cambodia's political practice is a hybrid of Confucianism and Buddhism as the country emerges from inner conflict. However, the advent of globalization is challenging both philosophies.

2. *Ibid.*, 74.

3. *Ibid.*, 78.

4. See also David P. Chandler, *The History of Cambodia* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, Inc., 1998).

5. J. T. McAlister, Jr., *Southeast Asia: The Politics of National Integration* (New York, NY: Random House, 1973), 74-90.

6. Michael Vickery, *Cambodia, Cambodia: 1975-1982* (Chiangmai: Silkworm Books: 1999).

7. David P. Chandler, *The Tragedy of Cambodian History: Politics, War, and Revolution Since 1945* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1991), 14–46.

8. Charles Twining, “The Economy,” in *Cambodia 1975–78*, ed. Karl Jackson (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1989), 150.

9. William Shawcross, *Cambodia's New Deal* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1994).

10. Ibid.

11. These were the four political regimes of Cambodia prior to the Vietnamese invasion in 1979. Each of the regimes believes that its legitimacy was forcefully deprived by the other regimes and that Cambodia's problems are rooted in foreign intervention. It is also important to note that these four contentious groups were not simply political parties—they were political regimes that sought to regain their legitimacy.

12. CICP, Special Lecture Series, *Democracy and Development* (Phnom Penh, Cambodia: 2002).

13. CICP/World Bank Institute, “Development Debates and Poverty Reduction: Policy Dialogue,” presented at the National Conference on Sustainable Development, Poverty Reduction and Good Governance in Cambodia (September 20–21, 2001), Government Palace, Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

14. Joel S. Midgal, Atul Kohli, and Vivienne Shue, *State Power and Social Forces: Domination and Transformation in the Third World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1994), 143–155. In many ways, this process co-opts the technical aspects of a centralized administration regime, but it does not co-opt the patriarchal tradition. In the case of Cambodia, globalization is severely testing the administrative and political structure of the Cambodian operating system. The political elite continue to informally consolidate their power to withstand the external challenges from the global system.

15. J. S. Robert Ross and C. Kent Trachte, *Global Capitalism: The New Leviathan* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990), 1–65.

16. Ibid.

17. Royal Government of Cambodia, *SEILA Program Document 2001–2005* (Phnom Penh: December 2000).

18. Jeffrey A. Kaplan, “As Cambodia Considers AFTA,” *The Cambodian Journal of International Affairs* 1 (Fall 1996): 20–28.

19. UNDP, “A Breakthrough in Cambodian Election Broadcasting,” *Equity News* (Cambodia, August 2003), 1–24.

20. Cambodia Development Resource Institute (CDRI), “A Study of the Cambodian Labor Market: Reference to Poverty Reduction, Growth and Adjustment to Crisis,” *Working Paper* no. 18 (Phnom Penh: August 2001).

21. JICA, *The Kingdom of Cambodia: From Reconstruction to Sustainable Development* (Tokyo: JICA, 2002), 11.

22. Ibid.

23. Ministry of Defense, *The White Paper 2002* (Phnom Penh: MOD, 2002).

24. Prime minister of Cambodia Hun Sen's speech, “At the Consultative Group

Meeting” (Phnom Penh, 2002), 6. In this speech, the prime minister identified three areas for building the foundations for pro-poor development: (1) fiscal policies that enhance revenues and direct expenditure in favor of pro-poor public investment; (2) assurance of sustained economic growth and macroeconomic stability; and (3) formulating and implementing appropriate sector policies, including attention to social development via increased investment in health and education, mainstreaming gender issues, ensuring the development of ethnic minorities, land reform, and sustainable development

25. IMF has been working on restructuring Cambodia’s economy since 1994. Basically, the Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility (ESAF) is to deconstruct the traditional economy and substitute the old economic regime with the free market economic system. In most developing economies in Asia, the five-year plan is incompatible with the current market model, especially after the fall of communism. Given the pattern of the global trend, capital flow, technological acceleration, and market development, a country such as Cambodia cannot accommodate anything less than a five-year plan.