

SOCIALINĖS ANTROPOLOGIJOS IR ETNOLOGIJOS STUDIJOS

LIETUVOS

24(33)

2024

ETNOLOGIJA

LITHUANIAN ETHNOLOGY

STUDIES IN SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY AND ETHNOLOGY

LIETUVOS ISTORIJOS INSTITUTAS
LITHUANIAN INSTITUTE OF HISTORY

VILNIUS 2024

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Leidyklos adresas / Address of the Publisher:

Lietuvos istorijos institutas

Tilto g. 17, LT-01101 Vilnius

<www.istorija.lt>

Redaktorių kolegijos kontaktai / Editorial inquiries:

El. paštas / E-mail: etnolog@istorija.lt

Žurnalas registruotas / The Journal is indexed in:

European Reference Index for the Humanities (ERIH)

EBSCO Publishing: Academic Search Complete, Academic Search Ultimate,

Energy and Power Source, SocINDEX with Full Text, Sociology Source Ultimate

Modern Language Association (MLA) International Bibliography

Scopus

Leidybą finansavo Lietuvos mokslo taryba pagal Valstybinę lituanistinių tyrimų ir sklaidos 2016–2024 metų programą (Sutartis Nr. S- LIP-22-43)

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The Cambodian Genocide: Historical Knowledge and Development among Second and Third-Generation Democratic Kampuchean Regime Survivors

Dovilė Grickevičiūtė

Vytautas Magnus University

International ideas about education and development, promoted in Cambodia by financial donors such as the World Bank, influence how the second and third generations of Cambodian genocide survivors interpret their reality and history. They believe that the destruction of the education system and the almost total massacre of educated people during the genocide (1975 to 1979) slowed down the country's development. Young people often perceive the loss of human life as a loss of resources. In this article, I argue that this perception of people as resources is what bridges development, education and the history of Democratic Kampuchea. The historical interpretations among young people are similar to the interpretations advocated by Cambodian politicians, and resonate with the World Bank's ideas on development.

Keywords: development, education, international impact, human resources, historical knowledge.

Tarptautinės idėjos apie švietimą ir vystymąsi, skleidžiamos Kambodžoje jos finansinių donorių, tokių kaip Pasaulio Bankas, daro poveikį tam, kaip antroji ir trečioji iš Kambodžos genocidą išgyvenusių asmenų kilusi karta interpretuoja savo gyvenamą tikrovę ir istoriją. Jie mano, kad švietimo sistemos naikinimas, beveik visiškai išsilavinusių žmonių išžudymas genocido laikotarpiu (1975–1979) lėmė sunkesnę šalies raidą. Jaunimas dažnai prarastas žmonių gyvybes suvokia kaip prarastus išteklius. Straipsnyje teigiama, kad šis žmonių kaip išteklių suvokimas yra tai, kas sieja raidą, švietimą ir Demokratinės Kampučijos istoriją. Jaunimui būdingos istorinės interpretacijos panašios į interpretacijas, skleidžiamas Kambodžos politikų, ir rezonuoja su Pasaulio Banko vystymosi idėjomis.

Raktiniai žodžiai: vystymasis, švietimas, tarptautinė įtaka, žmogiškieji ištekliai, istorinės žinios.

Introduction

The Democratic Kampuchean (DK) regime (1975–1979) (or Khmer Rouge) is commonly known for the genocide that resulted in almost two million deaths.¹ It was led by the Communist Party of Cambodia, with Pol Pot as its leader. Death took away a substantial portion of the population. Pre-DK Cambodia was a state of seven to eight million inhabitants. Around 60% of the deceased were victims of executions (Tabeau, Zwierzchowski 2013: 238). Many died from starvation or disease. Educated people, teachers and students were among the targeted groups. Ethnic minorities, state officials and soldiers of the former regime, wealthy people, and those ‘contaminated’ by foreign influences were executed in great numbers as well. Almost every household was affected by the genocide. Despite this, the first real attempts to persecute the perpetrators of the genocide were made only in 1997. They began with discussions between the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) and the UN about creating an international tribunal.² This led to the establishment of the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC), a hybrid court that started its work in 2006.

After DK ended in 1979, its memory came to be used for political purposes. The Cambodian People’s Party (CPP) (the ruling party in Cambodia) has employed the imagery of DK both to distance itself from the regime and to present itself as the saviour of the country (Lobba, Pons 2020: 606). Cambodia’s long-time prime minister Hun Sen³ has often claimed the central spot in such memory politics.⁴ It has also been common to attribute all of the development that happened in Cambodia from 1979 to 1993 (and often until now), as well as the end of the civil war, to the efforts of the CPP or Hun Sen. DK history, as well as embargoes put on Cambodia during the People’s Republic of Kampuchea (PRK) regime, and a lack of international aid until 1993, has often been used to explain the persisting issues (Learn from Cambodia’s past, Hun Sen tells ‘democratic’ nations 2019) (Phat 2023). Such memory has become a leverage when demanding that Western countries and international organisations abstain from interfering in

¹ There is no clear consensus regarding the number of deaths in the genocide (as well as other types of statistical data related to DK history). However, most scholars provide numbers that fall between 1.5 and three million.

² Pol Pot and Ieng Sary were previously tried in absentia in 1979 by the People’s Revolutionary Tribunals. However, these tribunals were mostly performative (Gidley 2017: 107–108).

³ Hun Sen held the position of prime minister from 1985, and was replaced by his son Hun Manet in August 2023. He was among the Khmer Rouge army officers who defected to Vietnam in 1978 in the attempt to escape internal purges (Chandler 2008: 277).

⁴ Brinkley describes seeing multiple posters before the 2008 general election with statements that ‘Hun Sen saved Cambodia from the Khmer Rouge’ (Brinkley 2009). There are books, films and monuments depicting Hun Sen’s heroism.

Cambodian politics. DK history came to be used to bargain for donations as well (Ayres 1999: 207). After 1993, Cambodia gradually became 'one of the most aid-dependent countries in the world, with net ODA [official development assistance] received equivalent to 94.3 percent of central government spending between 2002 and 2010' (Ear 2013: 16). The memory of DK (as well as the memory of some other periods) became entangled with the development discourse, which in turn shaped it.

Ayres is one of the few scholars who wrote about how DK memory came to be incorporated into the development discourse. In his article 'Tradition, Modernity, and the Development of Education in Cambodia', Ayres discussed the history of educational development in Cambodia since 1953 (when Cambodia gained its independence from France), and the role of international donors in shaping this development (Ayres 2000). Ayres believed that development ideas that focused on education as the force that drove economic growth had the greatest influence in forming the Cambodian development discourse. Such development ideas were imported into Cambodia primarily by the World Bank. Memory and knowledge about DK among the younger generations has been little researched. Melander et al. (2016) were among the few who researched the transmission of the memory of the Democratic Kampuchea regime from the first generation survivors (those who experienced the DK period directly) to the second generation survivors (the children of the first generation). They also discussed the younger generation's beliefs and feelings about the regime, and the experiences of their parents, how the younger generation were affected by the regime. The authors claimed that both generations provided similar descriptions of the DK regime and had similar emotional responses. Burcu Münyas wrote about the transmission of memory as well (Münyas 2008). Münyas focused not only on the families of the victims but also of the perpetrators. The researcher discussed how the memory of DK was transmitted by the first generation's family members, by schools and through memorialisation practices. Münyas expressed a belief that the transmission practices at the time (prior to 2008, when the article was published) were more harmful than effective. With almost no formal education about DK (from 2000 to 2007 the history of DK disappeared from public school curricula almost completely), the second and third generations' knowledge about the DK regime was based mostly on the stories of first generation survivors (family members, neighbours or teachers who spoke about their experiences during classes). The stories proved to be a very limited source. Various myths explaining the happenings under DK came to be common (for example, that the perpetrators of the genocide were not Khmer). Most of the rest of the research done on the second and third generations (the children and grandchildren of the first generation) focused on the transmission of trauma. There is almost no scholarly literature

discussing foreign influences, or the effects of international ideas on knowledge about the Khmer Rouge regime (or other historical periods) either.⁵ In the context of these approaches, I claim that Cambodian historical knowledge, knowledge about the DK regime, is reinterpreted under the influence of ideas of modernisation. The linkage between development, education and DK history is often made by perceiving historical human losses as the loss of human resources.

In this article I will focus on knowledge about the DK regime among second and third-generation survivors, and how this knowledge was shaped by international ideas of economic development, with education and human resources as its driving force.⁶ Such development ideas are not new to Cambodia, but were present during the regimes before DK. Sihanouk, the leader of the Sangkum Reastr Niyum regime (1955–1970),⁷ (see Figure) allocated large percentages of the national budget to education (sometimes reaching 20%) in order to develop the country. Human capital theories were also present during the Khmer Republic (1970–1975) (Ayres 2000: 449–450). These ideas disappeared from the Cambodian political arena with DK, and reemerged with international development efforts in 1993. The development discourse has been promoted by a diversity of international actors since then. However, I will concentrate on the World Bank. First, I will discuss recent Cambodian history, as well as the recent history of education in Cambodia. I will start by describing the DK period and the regime's attitude towards education and educated people. I will proceed by describing political and educational situations under the PRK, the SOC (State of Cambodia), and the Kingdom of Cambodia. These historical periods had a great effect on the current education situation, and on the social memory of DK. Second, I will discuss the development discourse promoted by the World Bank⁸ and how it is used in Cambodian politics. I follow Ayres' argument, which states that the World Bank's ideas of economic development had a great effect on

⁵ The effects of the Holocaust memory were briefly discussed by Benzaquen (Benzaquen-Gautier 2012) and a few other scholars.

⁶ The World Bank, as well as many other international organisations, has promoted ideas that education is the basis of sustainable economic growth via building human resources. Education is also believed to reduce poverty.

⁷ The Sangkum Reastr Niyum regime (1955–1970) is often considered to be the golden age of Cambodia. It was established by the then king Norodom Sihanouk in 1955 (Kiernan 2004: 158, 162).

⁸ The World Bank is one of the most influential players in the field of education worldwide. Tarabini claims that 'on the one hand, it has become the largest funder of education in the world; on the other, it has been consolidated as the only international body with enough capacity, power and resources to co-ordinate global initiatives in the field of educational development [...] As a consequence, the WB is the international organism with the most power and capacity – financial, political and technical – for setting and spreading the current global agenda for development' (Tarabini 2010: 206).

recipient countries, including Cambodia (Ayres 2000: 445–446). In 1999–2006, the World Bank was the third largest donor in Cambodia (World Bank 2010b: XVII), and the third largest donor in the sphere of education in 2001–2006 (Prasertsri 2008: 8). Third, I will discuss how grade 11 and grade 12 students treat the themes of education and development when discussing the history of Democratic Kampuchea (sometimes in relation to other periods such as Sangkum Reastr Niyum), and its effects on their ‘today’. I will argue that international ideas about education and development, promoted by many of Cambodia’s foreign donors (the UN, ASEAN, the World Bank, etc), have an influence on how students interpret their lived realities and history. During my research, educated skilled people dying in great numbers under DK was often associated with the loss of resources. Students believed it to have hindered later economic (and other) development in the country. It is important to note that by this I do not argue that the DK period and the loss of life did not have very real effects on Cambodia for generations to come. On the contrary. However, there were other important factors that shaped Cambodia in its current state (such as cultural incompatibility with some governmental and international policies) (see Ayres 2000: 455–458).

In 2022–2023 I conducted doctoral research in Cambodia, in the Kandal and Prey Veng provinces, with Kandal 1 (a village in the Kandal province with a high school where I volunteered as an English teacher) as my main research site. My main interest lay in knowledge about the Democratic Kampuchea regime, and how it was passed to the younger generation. This article is based on 29 semi-structured interviews with grade 11 and grade 12 students from three different public schools. A total of 24 interviews were conducted in the Kandal province, with students from two different schools. The other five students lived and studied in the Prey Veng province. All the students interviewed were 18 years old or more. Most of the interviews were conducted in the schools, some in a café near Kandal 1. Most of the interviews were conducted with an interpreter present. Most were conducted in Khmer; however, some students replied to my questions fully or partly in English. While I approached some of the interviewees myself, many of them were contacted via other teachers or one of my interpreters. Most of the students listed first-generation survivors (family members, relatives, neighbours who lived through and remember the Khmer Rouge period), school (history teachers, school history textbooks, teachers of other subjects) and the Internet (mostly YouTube and Facebook) as their main sources of information about the Khmer Rouge period. Education and development (mostly economic) were common themes in the interviews. They often emerged when students were asked to relay their general knowledge about the DK regime, or to imagine a Cambodia where DK never existed. None of the students were asked about development or education specifically (other than inquiring about their learning

1863–1953 – Cambodia as a French colony
 1953–1955 – the Kingdom of Cambodia with Sihanouk as its king
 1955–1970 – Sangkum Reastr Niyum with Sihanouk as the leader of the regime. Sihanouk's father Norodom Suramarit becomes king
 1970–1975 – the Khmer Republic with general Lon Nol as its leader
 1975–1979 – Democratic Kampuchea with Pol Pot as its leader
 1979–1989 – the People's Republic of Kampuchea with Hun Sen as prime minister from 1985
 1989–1993 – the State of Cambodia
 1993 and since – the Kingdom of Cambodia
 2023 – Hun Sen's son Hun Manet replaces Hun Sen as prime minister

Figure. Relevant historical periods

processes about the history of DK). The themes of education and development were often deeply interconnected. The mass killings of educated skilled people (sometimes referred to as human resources) and the destruction of the pre-DK education system were believed to have greatly hindered the economic growth of the country, and caused the interviewees to have fewer opportunities.

Education in Cambodian history

Education politics during the Democratic Kampuchea regime

The Khmer Rouge came to power after a long armed conflict, replacing the Lon Nol regime (1970–1975). The DK regime ruled the country for three years, eight months and 20 days, until it was overthrown by Vietnamese forces on 7 January 1979. Days after their victory, the Khmer Rouge started to empty the cities, moving masses of people to rural areas. Schools, embassies, borders, foreign and local news agencies and television stations were soon closed, as well as many other forms of media and means of communication (Kiernan 2008: 9). Markets were closed too, money, religion and private property were banned, and attempts at free movement were punished, often by death. Even colourful clothes were not allowed: everybody had to wear black (Chandler 2008: 255).

According to Kiernan, 'Democratic Kampuchea was a prison camp state, and the eight million prisoners served most of their time in solitary confinement' (Kiernan 2008: 9).

Most of the population did physical work, often ten to 12 hours a day. Many of the first-generation survivors I interviewed remembered being woken up early and going to sleep late at night, and being given watery rice porridge for every meal. Depending on the location, attempts to get extra food could result in violent punishment and even death. People soon started dying from overwork and starvation (Chandler 2008: 264). Many were also separated from their families; children were put into children's camps. However, living conditions differed from region to region. A few of my first-generation interviewees spoke of the harsh conditions and starvation in the Battambang province. One of them claimed that most of the 'new people' (former city people) starved to death during the first year. Chandler paints a similar picture. According to him, the conditions were exceptionally harsh in the Northwestern Zone (currently the Battambang and Pursat provinces) because it had higher crop production quotas than other regions (Chandler 2008: 258). In contrast, Prey Veng (or the former Eastern Zone) is often described as a place with relatively good living conditions and better food.⁹

The population was divided into two main classes: the 'new people' (or 17 April people) and the 'old people' (or 'base people') (Kiernan 2008: 164). According to Ayres, the Khmer Rouge saw cities as corrupt and contaminated by Western influences (Ayres 1999: 209). On the other hand, the 'old people' were considered to be the basis of the new society. Many educated people, teachers and students, were considered to belong to the 'new people'. The 'new people' would often receive less food and worked in worse conditions than the 'old people'. According to Chigas and Mosyakov, the 'new people' increasingly became scapegoats for the lack of success when fulfilling production quotas. Claims were made that they committed treason and attempted to sabotage the goals of the revolution (Chigas, Mosyakov 2023).

Mass executions of educated people and other groups of unreliable individuals began with the start of the DK regime. Besides educated people, most of the victims belonged to these main groups: ethnic minorities (according to Kiernan, around 100% of the Vietnamese, 50% of the Chinese, 40% of the Lao, 36% of the Cham, and 40% of the Thai people, perished under DK [Kiernan 2008: 458]), former state and army officials, and soldiers in Lon Nol's army (de Walque

⁹ However, many of those who were in the Eastern Zone during DK claimed that everything changed after the arrest of Sao Phim, the leader of the Eastern Zone, in 1978. The arrest marked the start of purges and mass killings in the zone. Some of my first-generation interviewees remembered barely surviving the mass killings.

2005: 358). Sothy believes that 90% of Cambodia's teachers were killed (Sothy 2020: 36). Procknow provides lower numbers. According to him, around 75% of primary and secondary school teachers, 67% of primary and secondary school students, 96% of post-secondary school students, and 75% of teachers and 91% of university faculty members were executed. A large number of teachers managed to flee Cambodia before the establishment of DK. A total of 90% of school buildings, libraries and equipment were destroyed by the Khmer Rouge (Procknow 2009).

According to Chandler, despite the rapid destruction of the former education system, some types of schooling continued to exist. There were some primary schools for the children of the 'old people' in 1976. Children of the 'new people' were allowed to study in them by 1977 or 1978. A technical high school was established in Phnom Penh in 1978 (Chandler 2008: 263). Education was also included in the four-year plan in 1976 (Chigas, Mosyakov 2023). A small number of school textbooks was printed and distributed to some of the teachers (Procknow 2009). However, it seems that the formal education system was never fully established. Children were often taught in buffalo stables or under trees. They were usually taught by elderly locals with no teaching qualifications. Children rarely had tools to study, they often had to make them themselves. Students were taught mainly reading and writing, work skills, and Khmer Rouge ideology (Ayres 1999: 214–215). Chigas and Mosyakov believe that the goal was not to eliminate education as a whole, but to destroy the 'contaminated' education system of the previous regimes, and to create an education system that would serve the party's purposes (Chigas, Mosyakov 2023). The violence of the regime and the destruction caused by it had long-lasting effects on Cambodia and its people. As we will see in the third section of this article, second and third-generation survivors not only believe it hindered the development of the country, but also negatively affected their own lives.

Education under the People's Republic of Kampuchea and the State of Cambodia

The PRK was established in 1979. The Vietnamese army was stationed in Cambodia throughout the PRK period. It was withdrawn from Cambodian territory only in 1989, a few months after the establishment of the SOC (Chandler 2008: 285). While the Vietnamese occupation ended the genocide (the genocide is recognised as having happened in 1975–1979), the violence continued throughout the regime. After being overthrown, the Khmer Rouge retreated to mountain areas along the Thai border and resumed organised military actions (Rowley 2006: 202, 214). Some parts of Cambodia were controlled by the Khmer Rouge

until the end of the civil war in 1997–1999.¹⁰ The new regime was not recognised internationally, and representatives of the Khmer Rouge continued to hold UN seats for 12 years after the fall of DK (Kiernan 2013: 350). This also meant that there was little aid from the international community (Ayres 2000: 452).

The PRK's relations with Vietnam meant that the state ideology and the development trajectories were formed under the influence of and by Vietnam and the Soviet Union (Clayton 1999: 341, 343). The education sector was no exception. Creating socialist workers with a proper revolutionary mindset was proclaimed to be the most important function of education (Ayres 2000: 452). Education also played an important part in attempts to legitimise the regime (Gidley 2017: 108). Efforts were made to distance the PRK from its predecessor regime (many members of the PRK regime used to belong to the Khmer Rouge). Maintaining the appearance of distance from DK continued to be relevant after the election organised by the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) in 1993. Many of those with power under the PRK retained their political positions.

The mass killings during DK created a great shortage of teachers. Literacy levels were low. One third of primary school teachers had not completed lower secondary school in 1994 (World Bank 1994: 114). According to the World Bank, 65%¹¹ of the Cambodian population was illiterate in 1990 (World Bank 1993b: 304). Teacher training became a priority. It continued to be prioritised after the election in 1993 (Duggan 1996: 368, 371).

Education politics and international influence at the beginning of the Kingdom of Cambodia regime

An international conference on Cambodia was organised in Paris in October 1991. It resulted in arrangements to disarm the warring sides in Cambodia, to repatriate the refugees from Thailand, and to organise elections (Chandler 2008: 287). A peace agreement was signed on 23 October (United Nations Peacemaker). However, the civil war continued for a few more years. The United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia was to organise and observe the election.¹² Funcinpec, a royalist party led by Prince Norodom Rannaridh, won. However, the CPP (Cambodian Peoples' Party), led by Hun Sen, contested the results, claiming 'fraud, unfair play [...] partiality, and a variety of other misdemeanours' on the UN's and UNTAC's part (Roberts 1994: 158). A coalition was

¹⁰ There is no clear consensus about when the civil war ended. While most of the KR leaders and military forces had defected by 1998, the KR fully gave up arms in 1999.

¹¹ Data from the World Bank would indicate that literacy levels gradually increased in the 2000s. They were at 74% in 2004, and at 84% at 2022 (World Bank 2023a).

¹² The Khmer Rouge refused to disarm, and boycotted the election, despite signing the Paris Peace Agreement.

formed as a result with Hun Sen and Norodom Rannaridh as prime minister.¹³ Soon Funcinpec had very little power over Cambodian politics (Chandler 2008: 288–289). A violent coup in 1997 put Hun Sen and the CPP in full control of the country (Chandler 2008: 291).

The Paris Peace Agreement and the 1993 election opened the way to greater international influence. The UN, USAID, SIDA (the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency), the ADB (Asian Development Bank) and the World Bank were among the many donors that provided aid and loans for the education sector (Song 2015: 36–37). Some of the donors provided advisory services as well. Unesco and UNDP (the United Nations Development Programme) funded an education seminar in 1994. Its purpose was to create guidelines for national policy for the development of education. These and other recommendations by international advisors were incorporated into the 1996 educational reforms, as well as the MoEYS' (Ministry of Education Youth and Sport) 1995–2000 Education Investment Plan (Song 2015: 37). International ideas (such as child-centred education) about education that later became part of education reforms, entered Cambodian education politics mainly via aid and loans (Song 2015: 43).

The World Bank and the development discourse in Cambodia

The World Bank: development theories and aid

The World Bank has long had a great influence on the global development discourse. It was one of the powerful international proponents of the human capital theories of the 1960s and later (Obamba 2013: 86). While Cambodia had relations with the World Bank in the 1960s and 1970s (it received some aid from the World Bank throughout the Sangkum Reastr Niyim and Khmer Republic regimes (World Bank 2023b), and became a member of the International Development Association (which belongs to the World Bank) in 1970 (World Bank 1970), it is hard to tell what kind of effect it had on the state development discourse and the policy-making process at the time. However, Ayres believes that the World Bank played a crucial role in re-importing development ideas into Cambodia after 1993 (Ayres 2000). Duggan shares a similar opinion, but believes that the Asian Development Bank contributed a lot as well (Duggan 1996: 362, 371). According to Crowley-Thorogood, while the ADB made great financial contributions, 'the World Bank leads the development agenda in Cambodia, as a much larger and politically powerful organisation internationally. There are

¹³ According to Roberts, Sihanouk (who was to become king of the new state) suggested the coalition feared instability (Roberts 1994: 158). Frost mentions that 'Sihanouk later indicated that he had acted because of threatened violent action by CPP elements' (Frost 1994: 85–86).

many references throughout the ADB policy directives to World Bank objectives and ideologies' (Crowley-Thorogood 2010: 19–20).¹⁴

The role of education in economic growth was discussed in a few publications by the World Bank. A substantial part of the 1991 'World Development Report: The Challenge of Development' was devoted to the benefits of education. It was argued that 'education promotes economic growth' and that a 'one-year increase in schooling can augment wages by more than 10% after allowing for other factors' (World Bank 1991: 56). The 1998–1999 report stated that education played a critical role in sustaining South Korea's economic growth (World Bank 1999: 44). In the 2018 report, Jim Yong Kim (the president of the World Bank at the time) expressed the belief that education was one of the main factors (together with 'smart, innovative government policies and a vibrant private sector'), that boosted South Korea's economy (World Bank 2018: XI). According to him, education 'drives long-term economic growth, reduces poverty, spurs innovation, strengthens institutions, and fosters social cohesion'¹⁵ (World Bank 2018: XI). It is important to mention that health is an equally important part of these development theories. According to Worthman, promoting physical well-being has to go together with education in order for capital to be embodied successfully (Worthman 2011: 434). People had to live healthily to be able to produce economic value. However, health was not mentioned (as important to the economy) in the interviews with the students. Because of this, I will focus on education, and will not discuss health in great detail.

The World Bank started funding projects in Cambodia in diverse sectors in 1993. The first project funded was the Emergency Rehabilitation Project (World Bank 2015: 290).¹⁶ Transport, agriculture, health, education, power and water supply were seen as the key sectors that had to be rehabilitated (World Bank 1993a). In the 1997 report, this project was described as part of the more general initiatives to rehabilitate Cambodia that sprung from the 1992 Ministerial Conference in Tokyo. The Emergency Rehabilitation Project was meant to help the state of Cambodia to 'obtain quick external financial and technical assistance to help restore critical economic assets' (World Bank 1997: V, 2).¹⁷

¹⁴ The UN Development Programme (UNDP), ASEAN, the Asian Development Bank, and other influential international organisations, have promoted human capital theories as well.

¹⁵ These ideas about education are expressed on the World Bank's website as well (World Bank 2024a) (last update: 25 03 2024).

¹⁶ It had credit to the amount of 67.7 million US dollars (World Bank 1997). Later, there were some follow-up projects in the spheres of agriculture, energy, water supply, and roads.

¹⁷ The World Bank's projects in Cambodia are listed on the World Bank's website (World Bank 2024b).

Strengthening human resources increasingly became a priority after the initial rehabilitation efforts. The importance of human resources to Cambodia's sustainable development was discussed during the World Bank's Country Assistance Strategy meetings in 1995 (World Bank 1995b) and 1997 (Gaoseb 1997), as well as other meetings. In the 1997 meeting, Godfrey Gaoseb (who soon became the executive director of the World Bank) stated that:

Perhaps the most critical problem facing the country is that of capacity and institution building at all levels of society. While the international community has been extremely generous with the provision of technical assistance, particularly in assisting the Cambodian authorities to put together their economic program, it is critical that whatever efforts are made in this area should be lasting and should address both short-term and long-term issues. We are therefore pleased to note the emphasis being placed in the CAS on developing human resources through education and improved health services (Gaoseb 1997: 2).

While there were a few projects with an educational component in the 1990s (such as the Social Fund projects), the first project fully devoted to the sector was launched in 2000. The Education Quality Improvement project was a follow-up to the 1997 Country Assistance Strategy and its goal to strengthen Cambodia's human resources. Later education projects were at least partially devoted to strengthening Cambodia's human resources base. In the report on the Education Sector Support Project (2005), human resources are seen as crucial for sustainable development (World Bank 2012). According to the project appraisal of the Higher Education Quality and Capacity Improvement Project (2010), improvements in the higher education sector have substantial economic effects (World Bank 2010a: 17). In the Stakeholder Engagement Plan of Cambodia's General Education Improvement Project (2022), it is stated that education has important an effect on the country's development (World Bank 2021: 4).¹⁸

Certain historical interpretations suggested by the World Bank itself regarding the Economic Rehabilitation Credit state that Cambodia suffers from

¹⁸ One of the other projects was the Economic Rehabilitation Credit project that started in 1995. It focused on rehabilitation in areas of macroeconomic management (including health care and education), the private sector, and administration (World Bank 1995a: 3, 18), and had funding of 45.5 million US dollars in total (World Bank 1998). There were five projects that were either about education or included some education-related funding in 1999–2006: Social Fund I project in 1995, Social Fund II project in 1999, Education Quality Improvement project in 2000, Emergency Flood Rehabilitation in 2001, Education Sector Support project in 2005; in total, 123 million US dollars (World Bank 2010b: 30). Education for the Fast Track Initiative Catalytic Fund which started in 2008, Higher Education Quality and Capacity Improvement Project in 2010, Cambodia Global Partnership for Education Second Education Support Project in 2014, Early Childhood Care and Development for Floating Villages Project in 2016, Secondary Education Improvement Project in 2017, Cambodia Higher Education Improvement Project in 2018, and the Cambodia General Education Improvement Project in 2022, was around 320 million US dollars in total.

a 'shortage of skills owing to the elimination and emigration of the educated during the 1970s', as well as a lack of aid under the PRK and the '20 years of war and dislocation' (World Bank 1995a: 3, 12). According to the Project Appraisal Document of the Higher Education Quality and Capacity Improvement Project, the highly educated people who could have become 'the competent staff needed to cope with today's rapid expansion were either eliminated by the Khmer Rouge or moved overseas' (World Bank 2010a: 10). The authors of the 1996 World Bank report 'Cambodia: From Recovery to Sustained Development' expressed the belief that 'perhaps the greatest loss to Cambodia was the depletion of its human capital by mass genocide and large-scale exodus of the most educated citizens during 1975–79, the years of Khmer Rouge rule' (World Bank 1996: I).

Ideas of economic growth, Democratic Kampuchea and Cambodian education politics

The human capital discourse was integrated into Cambodian politics and policy-making, and became entangled with local historical perceptions. As per Charlene Tan, the 'development of human capital for the economic progress' became the 'overriding aim of schooling in Cambodia' (Tan 2007: 16). The most important governmental policy documents on education in the 1990s came to exist as a result of 1993 and 1994 seminars on education (attended by MoEYS officials and representatives of Unesco and Aidab), and was greatly influenced by the World Conference on Education in 1990 in Thailand (McNamara 1999: 103–104; MoEYS 1994). These documents were the education development plan *Rebuilding Quality Education and Training in Cambodia*, *Education Sector Review*, and *Investment Framework Education Sector 1995–2000* (McNamara 1999: 103–104).¹⁹ The plan stressed the importance of education and human resources for the successful development of Cambodia:

The needs for reconstruction are enormous and neither the human nor the financial resources available are sufficient to cope with the task. This is why Cambodia wishes to convince its own citizens and international aid sources alike that their actions should focus on the factors that are most important to its development. The education and training of the country's human resources is one of them (MoEYS 1994: i).

Education policy documents were often prepared by consulting international development partners in the 2000s as well. The *Education Strategic Plan*

¹⁹ Some of the important general rehabilitation policy documents, such as the 1994 National Programme to Rehabilitate and Develop Cambodia, the First Five-Year Socio-Economic Development Plan (1996–2000), and the Public Investment Programme (1996–1998) covered education as well (MoEYS 2000: V) (Teramoto 2002: 101).

(2001–2005; 2004–2008; 2006–2010; 2009–2013; 2014–2018; 2019–2023) was among these documents. According to the 2010 World Bank report, the ADB, Unesco, the World Bank and other donors participated in creating the first Education Strategic Plan for the 2001–2005 period (World Bank 2010a: 30). The role of international players was recognised in 2004–2008 (MoEYS 2004: 8) and other Education Strategic Plans (their participation is often indicated by words such as ‘stakeholders’ or ‘development partners’).

The Strategic Plans generally emphasise the importance of education in sustainable development. For example, according to the 2004–2008 plan:

The Ministry of Education Youth and Sport is mandated to ensure development of an effective human resource base through providing and enabling education opportunities for all Cambodian people in order to increase economic growth, enhance living conditions and enable a well-trained and educated workforce (MoEYS 2004: 6).

A similar position was expressed in the latest Education Strategic Plan (2019–2023). The authors of the document believed that the development of human resources was one of the priority areas that would allow Cambodia to ‘attain upper-middle-income country status by 2030, and high-income status by 2050’, and for Cambodia to develop a ‘knowledge-based economy that can compete globally and regionally’ (MoEYS 2019: 14–15). Education became an essential part of many other important development policy documents as well: the Socio-Economic Development Plan (2001–2005), the National Strategic Development Plans (2006–2010; 2009–2013; 2014–2018; 2019–2023), the Rectangular Strategies (2004; 2008; 2013; 2018), etc. They often spoke of the importance of developing human resources.²⁰

These views are repeated in the statements made by Hun Sen as well as other Cambodian politicians. The importance of education and human capital were mentioned in Hun Sen’s speeches over the years. In a 2001 speech at the Royal University of Phnom Penh, he spoke about the increasing significance of education’s role in development processes (social and economic) in today’s world (Hun 2002). Human resources were mentioned in 31 out of 121 of Hun Sen’s speeches published by Cambodia New Vision: Cabinet of Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen, PM of the Kandal Province Constituency, in 2002. Human resources (or human capital) were mentioned in 47 out of 126 speeches in 2006 (‘Human resources should be seen as a key factor for national development’

²⁰ According to the 2001–2005 Socio-Economic Development Plan, education is a fundamental human right, that ‘enables children and adults to access many other rights throughout their lives’ and is ‘the key to human asset accumulation and greater equality, and investment in education and training is critical for economic growth’ as well as for reducing poverty (Royal Government ... 2002: 29, 241). Human resources were the top priority in the fourth phase of the Rectangular Development Strategy (Royal Government of ... 2018: 30).

[Hun 2006]), 25 out of 61 in 2012 ('Nevertheless, I am of the view that among the four above-mentioned resources [natural resources, workforce, capital and entrepreneurship] human resources are very fundamental for every kind of development' [Hun 2012]), 38 out of 118 in 2018 ('It is required that we are making efforts altogether to ensure economic growth and advancement [...] Education has become the highest priority. Human resource training is our utmost priority' [Hun 2018]), 16 out of 88 in 2023 ('We cannot lack human resources. To develop a country, we have to have enough human resources' [Hun 2023; *Cambodia New Vision ... 2024*]).

The development discourse has become deeply entangled with historical interpretations in Cambodia as well. According to Ayres, DK is often blamed for current issues in Cambodia's education sector. The Khmer Rouge destroyed the education system and the human resources. It is believed to continue to have a strong effect on Cambodia. However, Ayres believes that other issues, such as clashes between Western educational ideas and local practices (the informal patronage-clientship system) and the lack of funding have a substantial effect (Ayres 2000: 441, 456–458). In one of his 2002 speeches, Hun Sen stated that 'between 1979 and 1989 we faced the serious legacies left by the Khmer Rouge, especially the lack of human resources.' The current minister of Economy and Finance and Deputy Prime Minister Aun Porn Moniroth also claimed that Cambodia was still experiencing the after-effects of the DK regime (Aun 2007). The current deputy prime minister (since the election in August 2023) and minister of education (since 2013) Hang Chuon Naron has expressed such beliefs as well (Hang 2018: 9). On the other hand, Sangkum Reastr Niyum (and sometimes other historical periods) is idealised for its rapid development. In one of his speeches, Hun Sen goes as far as to say that if Sihanouk had never been overthrown in 1970, DK would have never been established:

If the Long Nol group had not overthrown Samdech Samdech Preah Norodom Sihanouk, about 34 years ago, our country might have developed as fast as neighbouring countries [...] In this regard, one might say that were it not for 18 March 1970, there would be no 17 April 1975, and no 7 January 1979, and that is a chain of history (Hun 2004).

Hang Chuon Naron, on the other hand, believes the Khmer empire to have been the golden age of Cambodian history, because of its rapid development and the human resources that drove it (Hang 2018: XV). These examples show that both development and education as its driving force, among other things, are used to determine whether times were good or bad. Human resources were in a good state, and they were destroyed by DK.

With Hun Manet replacing his father Hun Sen as the new prime minister, a developmentalist approach to education will most likely continue to dominate.

According to the *Khmer Times*, Hun Manet believed that human resources played an important role in economic growth, that it was ‘the nation’s greatest asset’ (Punreay 2023). It is also important to mention that Hun Sen is not withdrawing from politics. He was appointed president of the Supreme Council of the King (Sok 2023), a role that is said to be equal in power to the prime minister (Narim 2023).

Education and development in the interviews with second and third-generation survivors

Connecting education, development and the people

Development (mostly economic) was often mentioned when discussing human losses in DK. Twelve out of 29 second and third-generation survivors I interviewed spoke about how the loss of skilled and educated people negatively affected Cambodia’s development. These people were sometimes referred to as ‘human resources’ (*thonthean manus* in Khmer). The development ideas of the students resonated with the ideas advanced by the World Bank and Cambodian politicians. Many students saw human resources (or educated, skilled people) as the embodiment of education and development potential. It was often through this perception of people as resources that development, education and DK history (as well as the history of other regimes) were linked. The loss of human resources in DK was believed to have contributed significantly to setbacks in the Cambodian economy and the slower pace of development.

Sotheary spoke about educated people as the main resource for development:

So, another country like I mentioned Asia. The country in Asian they ... when the country doesn’t have, like, a Khmer Rouge, so *brotes hnueng kue aphivadtth khlamng* [translation from Khmer: the country is very developed] [...] But the Cambodia is also lost a lot of smart people like teacher, professor. Yes. It really hard to develop country again, because all of smart people is have to die a lot of. Because the country is ... Because when the country need to development, they need the smartest people [Sotheary, a female 11th-grade student, 18, Kandal 2, originally in English].

Sangha contrasted educated and skilled people with the uneducated. He believed educated and skilled people brought development. On the other hand, uneducated people were thought to contribute to development very little, and perhaps even hinder it:

During the Sangkum Reastr Niyum era, people were living in peace and development, but during Democratic Kampuchea, we lost a lot of educated and skilled people. They were taken to be killed by the [Khmer Rouge] leaders. And only uneducated people existed [in the country]. Many people were killed by the

leaders. So it is really important [to be interested in these two historical periods]. We can see the differences between the Sangkum Reastr Niyum and Democratic Kampuchea era [Sangha, a male 11th-grade student, 18, Kandal 2, originally in Khmer].

Piseth indicated that he saw development as progress in various sectors, not just economics. However, he still believed human resources to be the main source of such progress:

One more thing, I can say that the Khmer Rouge era was a time in which it was attempted to eliminate the poor and [create] a balance between rich and poor. But it was conducted in extreme ways, so almost all of the people were poor, and many human resources were lost, and [later on] the country lacked development. All of that affected us a lot. It meant that Cambodia was not developing by moving up, but it fell to the bottom. So [I] can say that it was a dark era, and all sectors [of the country] were very gloomy. Almost all things were lost, especially human resources, which is considered to be the basis of the country, were also lost. Many people were challenged by many problems, such as food supplies, which also affected their health, and [regarding] education, many skilled [people] were lost. The people [who survived] only understood rice production. So [I] can say that the [Khmer Rouge] era was very gloomy [Piseth, a male 11th-grade student, 18, Kandal 2, originally in Khmer].

Piseth saw the almost complete elimination of educated people and the resulting lack of development as almost accidental. The Khmer Rouge intended to create an equal society. They chose wrong, extreme methods, and that caused the regression. Both Piseth and Sotheary spoke about the general loss of human life in their interviews as well, while Sangha focused on the loss of people as resources.

Fourteen out of the 17 remaining students (those who did not link education with development) still mentioned the lack of development, or at least the lack of prosperity, caused by DK. Many of these students did not specify the reasons for it. However, some thought that it was caused mainly by the destruction of the infrastructure, the destruction of natural resources, political instability, and other reasons. Bourey, for example, believed that it was the destruction of the former systems of production (not only by the Khmer Rouge, but by the war as well) that stopped economic growth.

If there was no Pol Pot period, I think our country would be prosperous, because our country has natural resources. Our country is generally an agricultural country. When there was war [there were armed conflicts before and after DK], it damaged it, it stopped the progress. And after the end of that period [Democratic Kampuchea], our country started [moving forward] again. I think that if there was no [Pol Pot] period, our country would be able to move [forward] faster [Bourey, a male 12th-grade student, 18, Kandal 1, originally in Khmer].

Educated people most often embodied the lost development potential. However, that was not the case all the time. Other types of loss were sometimes seen as the most economically important. Also, education was considered to be important in its own right as well. Losses related to education mattered even if they were not directly connected to development. For example, later in the interview Bourey spoke about the high levels of illiteracy as one of the issues caused by DK.

Evaluating times, societies, people

Quite a few students chose education and development as criteria²¹ for listing their favourite or most important periods in Cambodian history. A common tendency was to choose the 'best' and the 'worst' historical periods. Rapid development, educational opportunities and good-quality education were often contrasted with the absence of development or (mostly economic) regression and the absence of educational opportunities. The DK regime (which was mentioned the most) and the Sangkum Reastr Niyum regime (which was also mentioned often) were sometimes presented as historical binary opposites (we saw this in the excerpt from the interview with Sangha quoted in the previous sub-section). Many interviewees considered Sangkum Reastr Niyum to be the best period in Cambodian history. Everything that was good in this period was contrasted with the bad during DK. If the country experienced rapid development and had many educated people during Sangkum Reastr Niyum, it experienced the destruction of all sectors, a decline in the economy, the persecution of educated people, and the absence of education during DK. If Sangkum Reastr Niyum was a source of pride, then DK was a source of regret, pain, sadness and sometimes anger. The opposition between Sangkum Reastr Niyum and DK was expressed even more clearly later in the interview with Sangha. When asked to imagine what kind of country Cambodia would be if the Khmer Rouge regime had never happened, Sangha answered:

For me, if there was no [Khmer Rouge] regime, it would mean that Sangkum Reastr Niyum would [still] exist. So [the continuation of Sangkum Reastr Niyum regime] would mean that there would be a lot of many types of educated people among Khmer people [we would also] have leadership [and] educated people who could govern the country [well] so if that [Khmer Rouge] era didn't exist our country would be a fast-developing country like other countries. Because we would have [good] leaders and young people like me would be highly educated. The country would move [forward] very fast and the same for economic

²¹ Other criteria were: the country being either exceptionally powerful or weak, various achievements, losses and pain experienced by the people, etc.

development if there existed many educated people in the country. Other countries would recognise our development [Sangha, a male 11th-grade student 18, Kandal 2, originally in Khmer].

Here too, educated people linked different historical periods and development. Sangha believed DK to be the source of many issues in the current Cambodia. In a way, DK was tied to the present through the killings of educated people and the absence of economic development they caused. On the other hand, Sangkum Reastr Nyium was seen as an ideal. Sangha linked it to now through images of what could have been if DK and the killings had never happened, through images of an alternative and better today. Sangha and some of the other students also saw Sangkum Reastr Nyium as an example to follow, and DK as an example to avoid.

Education (as a source of development) was used to evaluate not only times but also people. The mass killings of educated people were mentioned by 17 of the interviewees. Two of them did not tell me about any other kind of killings. The other mentions of death were mostly in the context of family history. A few interviewees said that after DK ended, only uneducated people remained (for example, the interviews with Sangha, Piseth, Sotheary), which made it hard to develop the country. This dichotomy between the educated and the uneducated, as well as the focus on the educated victims, seems to indicate several things. First, the lives of educated people were valued more than those of the uneducated, because of their role in development. Educated people were seen to cause growth, while uneducated people either did not contribute to it or contributed to it negatively. Second, uneducated people created societies with a lower status value.²² These societies were less developed, and less worthy of pride. The current state of Cambodia, its flaws, being less developed than other countries, were explained through the initial lack of education in society caused by the Khmer Rouge. Third, educated people also seemed to be associated with victimhood more than other groups of people. Ethnic minorities, who were also heavily persecuted, were almost never mentioned. People who had government positions or were part of the army were mentioned less often. However, education and educated people were not valued solely because of their relations with development. The high level and the good quality of education during Sangkum Reastr Niyum were a source of pride. The lack of education in society was considered

²² According to Ridgeway, 'A characteristic, whether nominal [religion, region of origin, race, gender, ethnicity] or graduated [wealth, education, etc], has status value when consensual cultural beliefs indicate that persons who have one state of the characteristics (e.g. whites or males) are more worthy in society than those with another state of the characteristic (blacks or females)' (Ridgeway 1991: 368).

to be an important issue even when it was not directly linked to development. As we will see in the next section, students valued personal education on its own.

Effects of the history of DK on the second and third generation

In some of the interviews, abstract ideas of education and development were personalised. Students shared how the history of DK affected them and other people. A few interviewees spoke of the limited opportunities they had as a result of the Khmer Rouge period. Seiha believed that the history of DK affected her life in a variety of ways. She claimed that Cambodia would be more developed and democratic if the Khmer Rouge had never come to power. She also thought that her father, who had recently passed away, would still be alive. Seiha's family would be in a better economic situation. Family members and relatives who died during DK would also be alive. Seiha herself would have better educational opportunities and could study abroad. Sangha believed that DK affected his and other young people's educational opportunities as well. The research findings presented by Münyas confirm that such sentiments are common. According to Münyas, the main sources of the sense of victimhood among the second and third generations were usually the lack of educational opportunities, economic difficulties and negative emotional experiences, and dealing with the effects of the first generation's trauma. Many of the second and third generation survivors believed that their livelihoods were affected negatively, because their parents could not receive a good education during DK. That resulted in their parents having low-income jobs and being unable to provide a good education for their children. That in turn limited job opportunities and income possibilities for the youth (Münyas 2008: 422–423).

However, some students thought that the DK regime had a smaller effect on Cambodia and on their lives. Sreymom pointed out that the Lon Nol (Khmer Republic) regime was the predecessor of DK. According to her, there were already many issues during the Lon Nol period (suggesting that Sangkum Reastr Niyum was a golden age). The regime was corrupt, violence was prevalent, there was a civil war going on, and there was a great lack of security. Because of that, Cambodia would be in a similar state to how it is now even if DK had never been established.

While education was an important factor to Sreymom when evaluating historical periods, it was individual access to education that mattered. In fact, Sreymom indicated that survivors' lives were affected by DK long after the regime ended, because they had no access to education. Sreymom's grandmother and many other people could not receive any education. She also mentioned the mandatory state education for children introduced during the colonial period

as one of the criteria for listing the colonial period among the most important periods in Cambodian history.

It seems that ideas of the importance of individual access to education were in a large part absorbed from family stories and living environments. Sreymom learned that people (including her grandmother) had no access to education during DK (which was true for many but not all children during DK) from her grandmother. A few other students mentioned that as well. Sochan stated that young people should study because the older generation could not. Similar sentiments were expressed by the interviewees interviewed by Melander et al. Members of the younger generation told the researchers that they were grateful for the life they had, and compared it to the one their parents had had during the DK regime. The researchers also interviewed the first generation, who spoke of the lack of opportunities (including educational opportunities) during and because of DK. They claimed that they encouraged their children to appreciate the life and the opportunities they had, and to put an effort into studying and working (Melander et al. 2016: 329–330). Even though individual educational levels and opportunities were not associated with the development of the country, they were seen as affecting the economic states of families and individuals. On the other hand, it is likely that the first generation had much less to do with the presence of development theories in the narratives of the second and third generations. Almost none of my first-generation interviewees mentioned development, or spoke about the effects the mass killings of educated people had on the country. The first generation was asked a different set of questions, and had a much more personal relationship with DK history than the younger generations. These are important factors. However, the younger generations mentioned development when answering a variety of questions (when explaining why the DK period was important, when providing general information about the period, when describing Cambodia as it would be if DK was never established, and others). That might indicate that there are differences in exposure to the development discourse between the generations. However, more research is needed in order to draw conclusions.

In all the interviews, the DK period was associated with loss. It is not only people (in some interviews specifically educated and skilled people) that were lost, but also aspects of culture (Seiha spoke about lost customs, literature and dances), as well as the prosperity of the country, its development, education and access to education, individual 'could-have-been' livelihoods, and opportunities. Sangkum Reastr Niyum, which often represents the ideal of Cambodia, and its achievements, was also seen as lost (however, not always because of the DK period). This sense of loss affected how students saw and explained both theirs and Cambodia 'today'. Imported notions of education and development

not only influenced the second and third generations' interpretations of lived realities, but were reinterpreted in the historical context.

Conclusion

The analysis of the interviews shows that international notions of education and development not only shaped the second and third generations' interpretations of their lived realities, but also their understanding of history. Ideas of development often emerged in historical interpretations through the perception of people as resources. The Khmer Rouge regime was seen as the source of current societal and sometimes personal issues, and the lack of opportunities due to delayed development, which was caused by the execution of educated and skilled people. The Khmer Rouge regime never existing (and sometimes the Sangkum Reastr Niyum regime continuing) was associated with images of an alternative and better Cambodia, with a better life and better opportunities for interviewees. Such sentiments probably entered students' narratives from the broader Cambodian cultural and political arena. The similarities between the statements made by students and by politicians (the destruction of education during DK shaped later historical periods; human resources, which were the source of development, were lost during DK) indicate that the development discourse has reached various parts of society, and that it is common to employ it when interpreting Cambodian history.

Students saw Cambodian history, both its dark and prosperous periods, as sources of learning. Strategies that were believed to be successful, to have contributed to development in previous eras, such as investment in education during Sangkum Reastr Niyum (or during the Khmer empire in Hang Chuon Naron's case), were seen as routes that should be taken to achieve prosperity in Cambodia today. Theories of development created believable images of their own effectiveness by entering the historical understanding. Countries with stronger economies also became proof of their effectiveness, and of the universal nature of the approach. This has created the graduation not only of society, but also of people, and even human lives. The lives of educated people were valued more than the lives of the uneducated, because of their perceived ability to cause and participate in development. Historical periods with greater development, and their societies, were seen as something to be more proud of.

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Kambodžos genocidas, istorinės žinios bei antrosios ir trečiosios Demokratinės Kampučijos režimą išgyvenusių kartų raida

Dovilė Grickevičiūtė

Santrauka

Straipsnyje gilinuosi į antrosios ir trečiosios genocidą išgyvenusių kartų žinias apie Demokratinę Kampučiją ir tai, kaip šios žinios buvo paveiktos tarptautinių ekonominio vystymosi ir švietimo, kaip jo variklio, idėjų. Nors tokios vystymosi teorijos buvo propaguojamos daugybės tarptautinių veikėjų, daugiausia

dėmesio skiriu Pasaulio Bankui ir jo vaidmeniui importuojant jas į Kambodžą. Straipsnis grindžiamas 29 interviu su 11-os ir 12-os klasių mokiniais Kandal ir Prey Veng provincijose Kambodžoje.

Demokratinės Kampučijos (1975–1979) vykdytas genocidas nusinešė 2 milijonus gyvybių. Išsilavinę žmonės buvo tarp režimo taikinių. Buvo nužudyta apie 75–90 % mokytojų, 91 % universitetų fakultetų darbuotojų, taip pat daugybė mokinių. Buvusios švietimo sistemos naikinimas turėjo šaliai ilgalaikį poveikį. 1990 m. 65 % Kambodžos gyventojų buvo neraštingi. Švietimo plėtra tapo vienu iš vėlesnių režimų prioritetų.

Tarptautinė parama Kambodžai stipriai išaugo po JTO suorganizuotų rinkimų 1993 m. Įtakingi tarptautiniai veikėjai, tokie kaip Pasaulio Bankas, USAID, ASEAN ir UNESCO, įsitraukė į Kambodžos valstybės politiką. Prieigos prie vystymosi, propaguojamos daugelio šių veikėjų (ir ypač Pasaulio Banko), teikė didelę svarbą švietimui ir žmogiškiesiems ištekliams kaip ekonominį augimą varančioms jėgoms. Pasaulio Bankas suvaidino svarbų vaidmenį importuojant šias teorijas į Kambodžą. Jos padarė poveikį ne tik valstybės vykdomai politikai, bet ir tam, kaip žmonės interpretuoja ir aiškina istoriją bei savo gyvenamą tikrovę.

Antroji ir trečioji režimą išgyvenusius asmenų karta mano, kad švietimo sistemos naikinimas, beveik visiškai išsilavinusių, įgūdžius turinčių žmonių išžudymas sutrikdė vėlesnį šalies vystymąsi. Išsilavinę, įgūdžių turintys asmenys buvo dažnai suvokiami kaip ištekliai. Vystymasis, švietimas ir Demokratinės Kampučijos istorija (taip pat kitų režimų istorija) buvo tarpusavyje susieti per šį žmonių kaip išteklių suvokimą. Švietimo ir vystymosi temos buvo taip pat naudojamos vertinant laikus, visuomenes, žmones. Mokiniai laikė Demokratinę Kampučiją blogiausiu Kambodžos istorijos laikotarpiu, be viso kito, ir dėl išsilavinusių žmonių persekiojimo, išsilavinimo galimybių nebuvimo, režimo sukulto ekonominio nuosmukio ir vystymosi trūkumo. Kita vertus, Sangkum Reastr Niyum režimas (1955–1970) buvo suvokiamas kaip spartaus vystymosi ir klestėjimo laikotarpis. Istoriniai laikotarpiai, kurių metu vystymasis vyko sparčiau, jų visuomenės buvo suvokiami kaip verti pasididžiavimo. Mokiniai laikė Kambodžos istoriją svarbiu mokymosi šaltiniu. Įsitikinimai, kad spartus vystymasis įvairiais istoriniais laikotarpiais rėmėsi stipria žmogiškųjų išteklių baze, tapo vystymosi teorijų efektyvumo įrodymu. Išsilavinusių žmonių gyvybės buvo vertinamos labiau, nei neišsilavinusių žmonių dėl jų gebėjimo skatinti vystymąsi ir jame dalyvauti. Informantai taip pat pasakojo apie Demokratinės Kampučijos istorijos įtaką jų ir kitų žmonių gyvenimams. Kai kurie mokiniai manė, kad jie būtų turėję geresnes išsilavinimo galimybes, jų šeimų ekonominė situacija būtų geresnė, jei Demokratinė Kampučija niekada nebūtų buvusi įkurta.

Antrosios ir trečiosios kartų Kambodžos istorijos ir dabarties interpretacijos buvo paveiktos platesnio kultūrinio ir politinio lauko. Mokinių pasakojimai

turėjo daug panašumų su politikų pasisakymais (kad švietimo sistemos naikinimas Demokratinės Kampučijos laikotarpiu turėjo svarbią formuojančią įtaką vėlesniems laikotarpiams; žmogiškieji ištekliai, kurie yra vystymosi šaltinis, buvo prarasti Demokratinės Kampučijos laikotarpiu) ir rezonavo su Pasaulio Banko prieiga prie vystymosi. Tai ne tik rodo, kad mokinių pasakojimai buvo veikiami tarptautinių idėjų, bet taip pat, kad švietimo diskursas pasiekė įvairias visuomenės dalis, kad yra įprasta juo remtis interpretuojant Kambodžos istoriją.

Gauta 2023 m. rugsėjo mėn.