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### 3. IDEOLOGIES INSIDE TEXTBOOKS

*Vietnamization and Re-Khmerization of Political Education  
in Cambodia during the 1980s*

#### INTRODUCTION

This chapter analyzes school textbooks in Cambodia during the 1980s when the People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK) was in power. Our paper focuses on the portrayal inside textbooks of Democratic Kampuchea (DK), which was the regime that preceded the PRK and is commonly known as the Khmer Rouge. Education during this period attempted to unify survivors of the auto/genocide that occurred during the DK period (1975–1979) and was used as a political tool to create favorable public sentiment for the ruling power in the capital, Phnom Penh (Okada, 1998). In the early 1980s, Cambodia was still experiencing military conflict because the DK regime continued to control territory in northern Cambodia, maintained sizeable domestic support, and received international aid from China, the USA, and Thailand (Haas, 1991). The PRK, moreover, was not recognized as the legitimate power of Cambodia at the United Nations and only received aid from the Soviet sphere of influence, which was quickly deteriorating both economically and politically during this period. In this environment, education generally, and textbooks in particular, were used as technologies of power by the PRK to propagate a particular political imaginary among Cambodians in order to solidify domestic support.

Government-approved textbooks typically reflect the political philosophy of the ruling powers, which Apple (1993) termed “official knowledge” (p. 3). The official knowledge contained within textbooks tends to present desirable images of a country and its people, but subtle—and sometimes not-so-subtle—messages can also be found to depict certain political agendas, which Jackson (1968) termed the “hidden curriculum.” Through official knowledge codified in textbooks and the hidden curriculum contained within, certain ideologies are instilled in a country's youth to dictate which political forces should be included and which should be excluded from the “social imaginary” of a nation (Taylor, 2004). Taylor's (2004) term “social imaginary” is instructive in understanding school textbooks because they promote “common practices and a widely shared sense of legitimacy” (p. 23) that newly installed governments require. Textbooks, in other words, are political tools used to build norms, values, and legends within society.<sup>1</sup> Importantly, however, unlike

Anderson's (1991) claim that textbooks can help construct an imagined community based on inclusion, social imaginaries are often constructed by strategically separating out "segregated or repressed or excluded" people from society (Balibar, 2002, p. 163). As Brehm (2014) wrote of Balibar's ideas of nation-building through schools, "He nevertheless sees exclusion as a socially necessary outcome of a national community of citizens and emphasizes the power of the state in forging national identities" (p. 320). This form of intentional exclusion is precisely what occurred in Cambodia in the 1980s when the PRK was threatened by the last throes of DK power and influence.

In this study, we review Cambodian government-approved textbooks in order to learn how the PRK authorities sought to portray DK. Although this period in Cambodian education has been explored through textbooks by other authors (e.g., Dy, 2008; Ngo, 2014), our chapter extends previous findings by looking at this period over time. By analyzing textbooks at the beginning, middle, and end of the PRK period, our chapter captures the slight changes in textbooks during this period, suggesting there was more fluidity in the textbooks than either Ngo or Dy implied. The slight changes in the textbooks during the 1980s illustrate the political evolution Cambodia experienced both within domestic and international politics.

A major finding during this period was the "neo-Khmerization" within textbooks (Ngo, 2014). After the fall of the Khmer Rouge, the newly installed PRK government "sought to reconnect the Cambodian people to a glorious ancient past under the Angkor Empire and remind them that they came from a culture of greatness and were capable of building a great nation" through school curricula and textbooks (Ngo, 2014, p. 158). Neo-Khmerization, in other words, was an effort by the ruling powers of the PRK to construct a shared social imaginary based on particular historical legends. Although we find "neo-Khmerization"—what we call "re-Khmerization"—we also find slight shifts across the PRK period that suggest changing domestic and international politics. Ngo would have been unable to see these changes since he analyzed only one textbook from 1988 when discussing the PRK.

Dy (2008), however, did notice the "politically charged, propagandistic ways [in textbooks], which sought to instill in them [i.e., Cambodian youth] a desire for violence, hatred, and revenge [towards DK]" (p. 6). We extend Dee's clear articulation of the political nature of textbooks not only towards the continuous fighting between the PRK and the DK but also towards PRK's allies, namely Vietnam, which not only helped the PRK overthrow the DK government but also helped administer the country during the 1980s (Clayton, 2000). In particular, we situate the PRK government within the larger geopolitical influence of communist countries, such as the Soviet Union, Cuba, and Vietnam. It was Vietnam that had the most direct influence on Cambodia, since it acted as the stage on which the group called the Kampuchean United Front for National Salvation, which would later turn into the PRK, overthrew the Khmer Rouge. During the 1980s, after Vietnam signed a friendship agreement with Cambodia, Vietnamese advisers participated in all state activities in Cambodia. For this reason, we add the idea of "Vietnamization" to the

process of “re-Khmerization” and examine it inside textbooks over this period. By analyzing different textbooks across the 1980s, we show not only the slight changes in the “hidden curriculum” in the exclusion of DK and its supporters but also the inclusion of Vietnam and its socialist leanings.

The chapter proceeds first with an overview of the historical context of Cambodia from the late 1970s through the 1980s. In particular, we look at the two education reforms that took place under the PRK: the education reforms of 1980 and 1986. We then turn to our methods for selecting and analyzing the textbooks. This is followed by our findings in three subsections—one that looks at excerpts from a 1979 textbook, which came before the first education reform under the PRK; one that looks at excerpts from textbooks in 1982, which capture the 1980 education reform; and one from 1988, which captures the 1986 education reform. After presenting our findings, we conclude the chapter by discussing the importance of “re-Khmerization” and “Vietnamization.”

#### HISTORICAL CONTEXT

In 1979, a group of Cambodian rebels backed by the Vietnamese army overthrew the Khmer Rouge regime, known officially as DK. The newly installed government in Cambodia was known as the PRK and was headed by Heng Samrin, the government’s chairman. The aim of the PRK was to build a socialist nation with the support of the Vietnamese government. This task proved difficult because during the DK period (1975–1979), roughly 1.7 million people were killed (Kiernan, 1996). One of the main priorities of the PRK was to educate those who had survived the genocidal years of DK. This section details the educational historical background of Cambodia during the 1980s when the PRK was in power. Although there have been many education reforms in Cambodia since independence from French colonialism in 1953 (see Table 1), we focus primarily on the education developments between 1979 and 1989 when two major education reforms occurred. The section proceeds with an overview of the PRK and the role of Vietnam in Cambodia and then turns to the 1980 and 1986 education system reforms.

*Table 1. Education system reform in Cambodia*

<i>Historical period</i>	<i>Education reform</i>
Kingdom of Cambodia (1953–1970)	1958, 1967
Khmer Republic (1970–1975)	None
Democratic Kampuchea (1975–1979)	None
People’s Republic of Kampuchea (1979–1989)	1980, 1986
State of Cambodia (1989–1993)	None
Kingdom of Cambodia (1993–present)	1996, 2005

*The Role of Education in the PRK*

One month before his inauguration as chairman of the PRK in 1978, Heng Samrin declared in a Kampuchean United Front for National Salvation report that socialism promised peace and justice, and he emphasized the fact that Cambodia had experienced suppression in two forms: invasion by foreign powers, such as French colonialism and American imperialism, and destruction of the country by Pol Pot and Ieng Sary (two leaders of the Khmer Rouge). In particular, he harshly criticized genocide, so as to direct the public's anger toward Pol Pot and position him as a common enemy. With national reconstruction as the primary goal, he used criticism of Pol Pot as rhetoric for unifying the population.

In 1981, the Constitution of the PRK was established and contained the same sentiments as those expressed in the Kampuchean United Front for National Salvation 1978 Report. The constitution was highly critical of the long-term suffering imposed by France and the United States and the genocide under Pol Pot. The constitution proclaimed that these events had destroyed the nation's rich cultural infrastructure that had been handed down over the centuries since the Angkor period (9th to 15th century). It then stated that socialism was utopian—emphasizing collaboration between patriotism and proletarian internationalism as the only way for Cambodia to achieve independence, peace, freedom, and happiness and to eventually enjoy the fruits of victory.

With regard to national education, the PRK Constitution specifically sought to remove all remnants of reactionary and decadent influences while promoting the creation of ethnic and progressive cultures. The major goal of education in post-Khmer Rouge Cambodia was to comprehensively develop society on the basis of Marxist-Leninist ideology. This kind of educational philosophy was significantly different from that of earlier periods. Until the middle of the 1970s, when the DK regime took power, Cambodian education was heavily influenced by the French educational system and focused primarily on academic aspects. Then, during DK times, there was no education because the institution was seen as a colonial remnant. Compared to these past experiences, the foundation of education during the 1980s was based on socialist ideology, aiming to place education within the context of society.

The PRK Constitution stipulated the establishment of primary, secondary, and higher education systems and the promotion of preschool and adult literacy education in order to eradicate illiteracy (Article 22). This meant that the emphasis was on education not solely for the elite but for the public at large. Other features of the new constitution included the encouragement of academic, scientific-technological research that was “useful for the nation and the public,” the promotion of academic interchanges with other “socialist countries” (Article 23), the promotion of cultural exchanges with other countries (Article 24), and the promotion of sports and physical activities (Article 25). Achievement of these goals was defined as a mission for the government.

The school education curriculum comprised five elements, in line with socialist educational philosophy: intelligence, revolutionary ideology/moral education, labor, art, and sports. Particular emphasis was placed on helping students to learn a wide variety of disciplines for acquiring knowledge and skills so as to be able to apply them to daily living; engage in production activities and other forms of labor in an orderly and disciplined manner, from the standpoint of relating intellectual work to physical labor; and participate in social activities such as sports and art. The goal of education was to help students develop socialist qualities by relating theory to practice, learning to production, and school to society (Ministry of Education, 1983, 1985).

Recognizing the urgent need to rebuild the Cambodian educational system, the PRK carried out successive reforms of its education system, once in 1980 and again in 1986. In 1980, national education was resumed with a shortened schooling period of 10 years: the 4-3-3 system. In 1986, the schooling period was extended to 11 years: the 5-3-3 system. These educational reforms laid the groundwork for the subsequent development of the Cambodian national education system. Before turning to these reforms in detail, it is important to understand the extent to which Vietnamese government officials influenced the PRK and its education system.

#### *Vietnamization of Educational Content*

Most Cambodian government administrative departments had been placed under the direction of Vietnamese advisors since 1979. Vietnamese advisors were assigned to government agencies from the national level through the local level, not only in the education field but in all fields. According to Clayton (2000), all decisions had to be agreed upon by both the Cambodian and Vietnamese governments. Without the approval of Vietnamese advisors, nothing could be implemented. The Vietnamese government provided Cambodia with technical support to assist the resumption of school education and reconstruction of the education system, which was seen as part of the Vietnamization process.

In this subsection, we refer to a paper written by Martin (1994, pp. 230–238) concerning Vietnamization in the education field in order to clarify how educational content was affected by the Vietnamization process (see also Vickery, 1986, pp. 156–159). According to Martin, students at the primary level in those days attended classes for 4 hours a day, 6 days a week. Outside of classes, students were mainly engaged in social labor (cleaning at school, farm labor, and political propaganda activities in local areas). Students in the last year of primary school, or 10-year-old students in fourth grade, learned about political ethics in national language classes.

Vietnamese textbooks were translated for use in Cambodian schools. Some were written by Khmers but had to be censored and submitted for approval to Vietnamese specialists. These textbooks emphasized appreciation of the Vietnamese people and good relationships with Vietnam. They depicted DK as evil and were designed to foster student hostility towards Pol Pot. The learning experience of Kholo, one

of the authors, also supported Martin's report on the textbook addressing political ethics in the 1980s. The descriptions presented in this textbook referred back to 1930, when the Indochina Communist Party was formed, followed by a depiction of the resistance against French colonial rule. When dealing with the post-independence years, emphasis was placed on the struggle against "the American imperialists." Other than these descriptions, hardly any information on Khmer history and cultural assets were included in the textbook. Students learned about communist theory and "fraternal friendship" between the three Indochina countries, but received only limited education regarding the ancient history of their own country, Khmer history, and national unity.

For the government at the time, an existing socialist education system such as that used in Vietnam was regarded as a convenient model for use in formulating a socialist nation. Students were required not only to acquire general knowledge but also to participate in various kinds of social activities. This curriculum was based on the socialist educational philosophy of connecting learning and practice, education and society, and education and industry. Technical support from Vietnam in the educational field contributed significantly to the reconstruction of education in Cambodia. With this history in mind, we turn to the 1980 and 1986 education reforms.

### *The 1980 Education Reform*

Soon after the PRK was established, the Ministry of Education started taking action to reconstruct the school education system. On February 26, 1980, a circular on reopening national education was issued and, on September 24, a new school year began after nearly 4 years' absence (Kholo, 2003). Of the 6.7 million people who survived the Khmer Rouge genocide, 947,317 were enrolled in primary schools in 1980. The number of teachers/staff totaled 21,605 in 5,290 schools (Ayres, 2000, p. 138). Whereas in the lower secondary level, there were 5,104 students with 296 teachers/staff in 14 schools, in the upper secondary level there were only 301 students with 20 teachers/staff at a single school.

Leading up to 1975, when Pol Pot assumed power, the education system in Cambodia still followed a French style 6-4-3 system. This meant that primary education lasted for 6 years, lower secondary education lasted for 4 years, and upper secondary education lasted for 3 years. As shown in Table 2, in 1980, the Ministry of Education replaced the old French system and converted it to a 4-3-3 system. Recognizing an urgent need to reconstruct the education system, it also reduced primary education by 2 years. In 1986, when another education reform was implemented, the Ministry of Education extended the duration of primary education again to 5 years, so as to provide more substantial education. Since 1996, the duration of formal education in Cambodia has included 6 years of primary education, and the 6-3-3 system continues to be in use.

Education reform in 1980 required foreign assistance in addition to Cambodian government contributions. Given Cambodia's devastated situation, there were

*Table 2. Duration of school education under different education systems*

<i>Education system</i>	<i>Number of years of schooling</i>		
	<i>Primary</i>	<i>Lower secondary</i>	<i>Upper secondary</i>
French colonial system <sup>2</sup>	6	4	3
1958 education reform	6	4	3
1967 education reform	6	4	3
Khmer Republic (1970–1975)	6	4	3
Democratic Kampuchea (1975–1979)	No education system		
1980 education reform	4	3	3
1986 education reform	5	3	3
1996 education reform	6	3	3
2005 education reform	6	3	3

high expectations for United Nations’ assistance. However, only a limited number of United Nations agencies were allowed to conduct aid activities. In fact, since the United Nations did not recognize the Heng Samrin regime as the legitimate government of Cambodia, little assistance was actually provided. For instance, UNICEF, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and the World Food Programme supplied emergency and humanitarian assistance to Cambodia. Water, food, school rebuilding materials, teaching materials, literacy education, and medical treatment were provided by these three (permitted) agencies (Mysliweic, 1988).

On the other hand, socialist countries such as the Soviet Union actively participated in providing bilateral assistance to Cambodia. Vietnam also had a major impact on education reform because many of the Cambodian professors at higher education institutions had been massacred, so Vietnamese professors played an important role in re-establishing higher education in Cambodia.

Education experts sent from Vietnam placed considerable emphasis on basic education, including the development of textbooks and curriculum reform. Vietnamese experts took the lead in translating Vietnamese school textbooks into Khmer and, in 1980, 39 textbooks were translated into Khmer in accordance with the advice they provided. While the Ministry of Education described this project as a Cambodian initiative, Vietnamese advisors played leading roles throughout this phase (Clayton, 2000). These Vietnamese experts not only examined the contents of all textbooks but also strictly censored and endorsed the new curriculum. Mean while, the educational administration system was restructured so as to be more decentralized, similar to the restructuring that had taken place in Vietnam’s educational administration.

Table 3 compares the primary school curricula introduced in 1955, which was the first after independence from the French, and 1980, which was the first after the genocidal regime of the Khmer Rouge. Unlike the education in the post-colonial

period, Khmer was used as the sole medium of instruction in Cambodian primary schools in 1980, and the 1980 curriculum omitted French language lessons. Although Cambodia was, for a time, influenced by the French educational system and French culture, the Ministry of Education under the PRK removed all French influence from the Cambodian education system (Ayles, 2000).

In a similar fashion, the secondary education curriculum excluded lessons in foreign languages such as French. However, at the upper secondary level, a limited range of foreign language programs were initiated. Out of 32 to 35 lesson hours per week, students were required to study either Russian or Vietnamese for at least 2 hours (Clayton, 2000). In addition, on October 20, 1980, a “Foreign Language School” was founded, and Russian, Vietnamese, Khmer, and other languages such as Spanish and German were taught there. The aim of this school was to train secondary school language teachers and professional interpreters. Spanish and German were introduced to help Cambodia obtain assistance from Spain and East Germany (Vickery, 1986). This arrangement shows how the prospect of foreign assistance from the Soviet sphere of influence affected Cambodian education.

*Table 3. Primary school curricula in 1955 and 1980*

<i>Curriculum in 1955 (10 subjects)</i>	<i>Curriculum in 1980 (11 subjects)</i>
1. Moral education	1. Moral and political education
2. Civics	2. Khmer
3. Khmer	3. Mathematics
4. French	4. History
5. Mathematics	5. Geography
6. History	6. Science
7. Geography	7. Manual work
8. Science and hygiene	8. Practical knowledge
9. Manual work and draftsmanship	9. Painting
10. Physical education	10. Art
	11. Physical education

*Source: Bilodeau, Pathammavong, and Lê (1955, p. 5) and Ayles (2000, p. 3).*

According to a Ministry of Education document, as of October 1981 the “Foreign Language School” had 12 lecturers, all of whom were foreigners. At the beginning of the 1980s, Cambodia suffered from a shortage of teachers due to the Pol Pot purge of intellectuals. It became necessary to train Russian and Vietnamese language teachers for secondary education because there was no alternative but to depend on foreign instructors to maintain the education system. Russian and Vietnamese classes were designed to prepare members of the younger generation for studying abroad in the Soviet Union, Vietnam, and other communist countries. Besides taking language lessons, students in upper secondary schools spent 4 to 6 lesson hours



participating in social activities such as farming and political propaganda meetings. Thus, the Soviet Union advanced its Cold War political ideologies into Cambodia through the medium of education.

### *The 1986 Education Reform*

In 1986, another education reform was implemented. This time, the schooling period was extended to 11 years and the 5-3-3 system was adopted to provide children with a more substantial education. A Public Education System Decree was proclaimed in order to reinforce this system (see Table 4). For instance, at the end of each educational level (i.e., primary, lower secondary, and upper secondary), students were expected to sit for standardized national examinations in order to complete their courses (Article 2). Upon gaining a pass result in each exam, the student would then receive a diploma. The age for entering primary education was set at 6 years (Article 3). Continuous learning through to secondary education, vocational schooling, and higher education was also encouraged (Article 4 and 5).

This decree not only determined the structure of the education system but also laid out the government's educational principles, including its philosophy that students had to develop a patriotic spirit and collaborate with socialist countries such as Vietnam and the Soviet Union (Article 1). Politics, revolution, the labor market, agriculture, arts, and engineering were all emphasized. These were closely related to the principle of state ownership of the means of production (Article 6). The original theory that education should be combined with markets and production was designed to produce highly skilled human resources that could contribute to the national development of Cambodia (Article 7). All these articles highlight linkages between education, work, and patriotism and show that it was the intention of education policy to promote a simultaneous realization of Vietnamization (based on socialist ideology) and re-Khmerization (based on patriotism).

The primary education curriculum was based on the above-mentioned decree. There were 11 subjects in the primary education curriculum: moral education, Khmer language, mathematics, history, geography, science, manual work, painting, art, physical education, and homeroom. Within this curriculum, Khmer language lessons accounted for 43% of the total instruction hours and geography accounted for 18%, whereas mathematics, history, science, manual work, painting, art, physical education, and homeroom each accounted for only 1% to 8%. The least amount of time was devoted to history, at just 0.8% of the total study hours. It is striking to note that so few teaching hours were devoted to the study of history. However, it may be understandable that this newly established socialist state, which had just gone through a series of civil wars and experienced genocide, was reluctant to teach its own recent history to students.

The secondary education curriculum comprised 15 subjects: moral education, Khmer language, philosophy, foreign languages, history, geography, mathematics, physics, biology, chemistry, engineering, painting, art, manual work, and physical

*Table 4. Public education system decree, 1986*

<i>Article</i>	
1	Public schooling shall be carried out under national control. Students shall develop respect for the nation and work together as honest citizens with [the people of] other socialist countries. Students shall have ethical standards and be responsible, revolutionary, knowledgeable, skillful, and healthy in order to protect and develop the nation.
2	The duration of engagement in the public education system shall be 11 years (primary education 5 years, lower secondary education 3 years, and upper secondary education 3 years). At the end of each educational level, students shall sit for national examinations in order to complete their courses of study. For those who achieve passing grades in the respective examinations, the following forms of certification shall be granted: Primary Education Completion Certificate, Lower Secondary Education Diploma, and Upper Secondary Education Diploma.
3	The legal age for entry to primary education shall be 6 years or older. Students shall attempt to complete the full educational program.
4	In lower secondary education, students shall develop their abilities, a sense of duty, and skills for protecting the nation. After graduation, students are encouraged to continue studying at secondary schools, vocational schools, or normal schools.
5	In upper secondary education, students shall obtain knowledge and skills to enable them to contribute to the prosperity of the nation. Students are expected to develop into good citizens with knowledge and skills in accordance with the national policy on human resources development. Students are encouraged to continue studying through higher education.
6	Education shall be implemented in every sector of the nation. Particular emphasis shall be placed on politics, revolutionary awareness, the labor market, agriculture, arts, and engineering.
7	Education shall be implemented in accordance with national policy. First, education shall provide a link between markets and practical experience. Education shall serve as a link between markets and production. Education shall also serve as a link between markets and schools. Second, education shall foster revolutionary awareness, fighting spirit, exertion, and creativity.
8	This decree shall remain in effect until altered or abrogated by any new provisions.
9	This decree shall take effect as of November 20, 1986.

*Source: Ministry of Education (1987, pp. 4–7).*

education. Foreign languages included Vietnamese and Russian, which were taught as preparatory subjects for higher education (Clayton, 2000) or for study abroad in either Vietnam or the Soviet Union (Khlok, 2003). This language policy was understood to reflect the shortage of Cambodian instructors in higher education

facilities (only 87 instructors in 1,000 survived the Pol Pot genocide). Consequently, because only experts from allied countries were available, Vietnamese and Russian were the only foreign language options (Khlok, 2003). The language policy in the 1986 secondary education curriculum could, therefore, be regarded as a legacy of Vietnamization, carried over from the 1980 education reform.

This section has outlined the history of educational reform in Cambodia during the 1980s. It was shown that Vietnam played an important role in reestablishing education in Cambodia when the PRK came to power. Moreover, the international influence in Cambodia at the time primarily came from the Soviet sphere of influence. This influence translated into foreign language policies that emphasized the Russian and Vietnamese languages, as well as saw teachers from Soviet-supported countries teaching inside Cambodian schools. Despite the consistent influence of Vietnam especially and the Soviet Union generally during this time, the education system also experienced changes. This mainly occurred by increasing the number of years a child attended school as well as the introduction of standardized examinations. With this history in mind, we turn to an analysis of textbooks that were published during the 1980s. After we detail our methods in the next section, we describe our findings in section 4.

## METHODS

We focus specifically on nationally approved textbooks printed in the 1980s in order to explore information the PRK sought to make available to Cambodian youth. Textbook analysis of this period of history is indispensable because nationally approved textbooks represent the official written evidence illustrating exactly how the topic of DK genocide was taught in school during the 1980s and how the new government's desired image of the nation was depicted. Exploring the PRK's political orientation and the intentions expressed in these textbooks was our main research focus and, in order to address this topic, Khmer language textbooks and moral/political education textbooks were the primary sources referred to.

In order to study the official curriculum of the PRK period, we examined textbooks across three periods: before the 1980 reform, after the 1980 reform, and after the 1986 reform. This provides a comprehensive look at the ways in which history and ideology worked through the curriculum. Specifically, we analyzed a Khmer language textbook printed in 1979 (third grade), a moral/political education textbook issued in 1982 (fifth grade), and a moral education textbook published in 1986 (fifth grade). Although we wanted to analyze textbooks in the same grade, we were limited by the availability of textbooks, as described below. Our selection of textbooks, therefore, spanned both primary and lower secondary education in the 1980s. In this paper, we studied these three textbooks in chronological order (1979, 1982, and 1986). We focused on Khmer language textbooks and moral/political education textbooks because these specific subjects were thought to most accurately reflect a country's political philosophy. Comparing Khmer language education and

moral/political education enabled us to see whether there was any continuity in the discourse of political philosophy regarding these subjects.

Each textbook was translated from Khmer to English, and each table of contents was included in this paper to illustrate the books' overall structure. To facilitate further discussion, we also sampled and extracted relevant sections (two readings from the 1979 textbook, one from the 1982 textbook, and one from the 1986 textbook) and discussed what was described in each.

Textbooks and policy documents were collected in March 2008 in a reference room at the Department of Teacher Training, General Department of Education, Cambodian Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, with the permission of the Ministry. In addition to collecting textbooks, we gathered primary sources of policy documents published in the 1980s at the reference room of the Ministry of Education in order to gain a better understanding of the contents of the textbooks mentioned above.

Our selection of materials was limited by the availability of archived documents. The reference room resembled a storage room, with broken typewriters and computers strewn about in an untidy manner, along with the various books. Books and documents were not categorized and were either jammed into the shelves or simply piled up on the floor. The working conditions were not well organized, and since no database had been compiled, the available materials were limited. To make matters worse, textbooks and policy documents prepared in the 1980s had been printed on low-quality paper, and their state of preservation was extremely poor due to the humidity and dust in the reference room. Many of the relevant materials we found there had suffered worm-hole damage, rendering them illegible. Given these circumstances, the number of textbooks and policy documents we were able to use for this study was limited, which restricted our analysis.

## FINDINGS

The main findings in our analysis center on the ideas of Vietnamization and re-Khmerization. In this section, we explore these two ideas in depth over three periods: before the 1980 reform, after the 1980 reform, and after the 1986 reform. Collectively, our findings provide a window through which we can explore the dynamic nature of education policy and practice in the 1980s.

### *Khmer Language in 1979*

What was the nature of Vietnamization and re-Khmerization in Cambodian textbooks before the first education reform under the PRK? In this section, we examine one Khmer language textbook for third graders that was printed in 1979. We chose this particular Khmer language textbook because it was issued immediately after Pol Pot fell from power. It vividly described how people had struggled to survive in the face of atrocity.

*“Pol Pot and Ieng Sary Committed Homicide” (Lesson 4).* As shown in Table 5, the 1979 Khmer language textbook comprised 72 lessons filling 239 pages. To help the reader understand the content, 53 hand-drawn sketches were inserted throughout the textbook. According to a legend with explanatory notes appended to the textbook, the table of contents was divided into five sections comprising 29 readings, 8 reading-aloud lessons, 13 compositions, 10 grammar lessons, and 12 history lessons. These five sections were designed to build knowledge towards practical applications following different pedagogic approaches: reading, reading-aloud, composition, grammar, and history. For example, Lesson 1 was “Murder of Chainy’s Family by Pol Pot and Ieng Sary” (reading), Lesson 2 was “Learn and Progress!” (reading-aloud), Lesson 3 was “Composition” (composition), Lesson 4 was “Pol Pot and Ieng Sary Committed Homicide” (reading), and Lesson 5 was “Vowels” (grammar). Each of the sections used different pedagogic approaches. This illustrates how the structure of the Khmer language textbook was consciously arranged in a pattern so that knowledge could be acquired from readings, reading-aloud sections, and history sections and then put to practical use in Khmer language compositions and grammar sections.

As for the topics themselves, the textbook discussed three main themes: (1) the question of what happened under DK rule; (2) the social revolution that occurred under PRK rule; and (3) a description of the country (farming, fishing, and culture). The topic covered at the beginning of the textbook was the events during the Khmer Rouge period. Examples include “Murder of Chainy’s Family by Pol Pot and Ieng Sary” (Lesson 1), “Pol Pot and Ieng Sary Committed Homicide” (Lesson 4), “Toul Sleng Execution Site” (Lesson 7), “Torture at the Toul Sleng Execution Site” (Lesson 10), “Medical Treatment of Pol Pot and Ieng Sary” (Lesson 13), “Criticize Pol Pot” (Lesson 26), and “3 Million People Killed by Pol Pot and Ieng Sary” (Lesson 65). These lessons described murder, execution, and torture carried out by the Khmer Rouge with vivid accompanying illustrations. In the middle section of the textbook, there was much discussion of the country of Cambodia itself: e.g., “Rice Farming” (Lesson 8), “How to Breed Animals” (Lesson 24), “How to Cultivate Peppers” (Lesson 33), “How to Produce Salt” (Lesson 35), “Railway Train in Cambodia” (Lesson 38), “Fishery in Cambodia” (Lesson 46), “The Revived National Culture” (Lesson 53), and “Buddhism after Destruction of the People” (Lesson 55). The last part of the textbook dealt mainly with PRK revolutionary topics, such as “Cambodia-Vietnam Friendship” (Lesson 47), “Revolution” (Lesson 50), “New Army Development” (Lesson 57), “Agriculture Revolution” (Lesson 63), “Vietnam—Our Friend” (Lesson 64), “Socialist Country—Vietnam” (Lesson 67), “Moscow” (Lesson 68), “Cuba” (Lesson 70), and “Cambodia and Socialist Countries” (Lesson 72). The way in which these topics were addressed in the textbook, therefore, provided a time-series description using three exclusive topics: the first criticized the former period of DK (the past); the second reminded readers of the social functions underlying the current state of the country (the present); and the third emphasized revolutionary developments and prospects for the future (the future).

*Table 5. Table of contents of 1979 Khmer textbook (third grade)*

#	L*	Contents	#	L*	Contents
1	R	Murder of Chainy's Family by Pol Pot and Ieng Sary	29	G	Sentences
2	A	Learn and Progress!	30	R	Rice Farming at Battambang
3	C	Composition	31	C	Composition
4	R	Pol Pot and Ieng Sary Committed Homicide	32	H	New Victory
5	G	Vowels	33	R	How to Cultivate Peppers
6	H	Brave Solider	34	G	Order Sentences
7	R	Toul Sleng Execution Site	35	R	How to Produce Salt
8	A	Rice Farming	36	C	Composition
9	C	Composition	37	H	Examine What Happened in History
10	R	Torture at the Toul Sleng Execution Site	38	R	Railway Train in Cambodia
11	G	Syllables	39	A	Do Not Forget!
12	C	Composition	40	G	Question Sentences
13	R	Medical Treatment of Pol Pot and Ieng Sary	41	R	Machine Factory1
14	C	Composition	42	C	Composition
15	H	September	43	H	New School Year
16	R	Chinese Communist Party	44	R	Machine Factory2
17	A	Our Rice Field	45	G	Conversation
18	G	How to Read Vowels	46	R	Fishery in Cambodia
19	R	Our Nation's New Life	47	A	Cambodia-Vietnam Friendship
20	C	Composition	48	C	Composition
21	H	Brave and Strong Nation	49	R	Pchoum Ben
22	R	Rice Farming in a Busy Farming Season	50	H	Revolution
23	G	Phrases and Clauses	51	R	Literacy
24	R	How to Breed Animals	52	C	Conversation
25	C	Composition	53	R	The Revived National Culture
26	H	Criticize Pol Pot	54	C	Composition
27	R	How to Cultivate Tobacco	55	R	Buddhism after Destruction of the People
28	A	Brave Army	56	H	New Fishery
			57	R	New Army Development
			58	A	Sun Rises
			59	G	Order Sentences

Table 5. (Continued)

#	L*	Contents	#	L*	Contents
60	R	Cambodian Coast Guard	66	R	Rice Farming on the Mekong Delta
61	C	Composition	67	H	Socialist Country—Vietnam
62	R	One Brave Girl	68	R	Moscow
63	H	Agriculture Revolution	69	G	Grammar
64	R	Vietnam—Our Friend	70	R	Cuba
65	A	3 Million People Killed by Pol Pot and Ieng Sary	71	H	Workers in the Angkor Period
			72	R	Cambodia and Socialist Countries

\*L indicates legend; R, reading; A, reading aloud; S, song; C, composition; G, grammar; H, history.

Source: Ministry of Education (1979).

Below, we introduce the textbook example of “Pol Pot and Ieng Sary Committed Homicide” (Lesson 4), which was one of the political principles underlying the revolution of the PRK. This story features a young girl named Chainy describing how Khmer Rouge soldiers murdered her family members and how brutal it was to lose her family for no reason:

Chainy cried for a while, then wiped away her tears. Then her tears overflowed once more.

I saw what these men were doing. They killed my younger brother in the forest and slashed the flesh and bones from his body. I ran to my mother to tell her that my brother had been chopped into pieces. My mother and I went to see his corpse in the forest. They found us and tied my mother to a tree and did cruel things on her. Soon, she died.

I became very scared and went back home to tell my older brother to leave the house as quickly as possible. Soon, the bad guys might attack us as well. My guess was right. Those guys chased us and my brother was caught, then beaten and shot. I left the village where I had lost my mother and two brothers. I ran as long as my strength lasted and reached another village called Rovian, in Pursat Province. There, I came across members of the Kampuchean United Front for National Salvation and I was rescued by friendly Vietnamese forces. I survived! But, I had lost my family and they were not with me anymore. Scenes of my family members being killed have remained vivid in my memory.

What happened in the forest was nothing short of brutality. Over the past 3 years, 3 million of our brothers and sisters have been slaughtered. Now, we must all come together in revolution to fight against our enemies. We also need to restrain our rage and hostility toward the enemies and continue our

endeavors to reconstruct the country, devoting ourselves to preserving our society. (Ministry of Education, 1979, pp. 14–16)

Considering that this reading material was targeted at third graders in primary schools, the content and pictures in the textbook could hardly be seen as promoting reconciliation. In fact, they were more likely to foster direct antagonism against the Khmer Rouge. This particular story appeared to have had two objectives. First, it played on readers' compassion and got them to sympathize with Chainy and bear a grudge against the Khmer Rouge. This was likely to work because a significant number of Cambodian people were dealing with similar experiences of losing family members. Those who had suffered injustice, family deaths, torture, starvation, and disease could be expected to be seething with hatred toward the Pol Pot regime.

The second objective of this story was to construct a basis for nurturing a sense of wholehearted support for the Kampuchean United Front for National Salvation. In the story, members of the United Front, which was the forerunner of the PRK government, were impressively and dramatically depicted as having saved Chainy's life. In addition, the Vietnamese forces, supporters of the PRK, appeared to treat Chainy in a "friendly" manner, giving readers a positive impression of the new regime. Thus, we see that the intention was to create an anti-Khmer Rouge ideology while disseminating the political propaganda line of the new government—in other words, "Vietnamization."

*"The Revived National Culture" (Lesson 53).* The 1979 Khmer textbook covered such topics as anti-Pol Pot ideology and propaganda of the PRK. Political unity among socialist countries such as China, Vietnam, Laos, Russia, and Cuba was emphasized in five lessons. On the other hand, everyday Cambodian practices such as rice farming, pepper/salt production, fishing, and livestock husbandry were also studied. The relationship between Buddhism and the national culture was also described in the textbook. An extract from Lesson 53, "The Revived National Culture" in the 1979 Khmer textbook, demonstrates how the revival of national culture (i.e., re-Khmerization) after the massacre was described to students:

Under the Kampuchean United Front for National Salvation, our national culture came to life again, like a magnificent graceful flower blooming in a mixture of beautiful colors. A few artists have survived the massacre. Our nation will never forget the genocide that took our culture away from us. Surviving artists will strive to learn new art forms and to overcome this difficulty. Skilled techniques should be highly appreciated. There was a dance performance in our new country. In this public performance, the dancers danced deftly and the dance movements and hand gestures continued so beautifully, without stopping. They performed both a popular dance and a classical dance. The classical dance, handed down from the Angkor Dynasty, was performed with great respect and was highly appreciated. This dance form has various repertoires, including the dance of Apsara (a heavenly nymph) and the Paradise



of God. The dancers on the stage looked like divine angels that had descended from heaven. In the middle of each item, musicians played beautiful tunes. We are very proud of this wonderful dance and we must develop, cherish, and protect Khmer arts as part of our national spirit. (Ministry of Education, 1979, pp. 156–157)

“The Revived National Culture” lesson contained three messages. The first message suggested that the national culture of Cambodia had been destroyed by the genocide during the DK period. This lesson stressed that the culture should never have been taken away from the people, but did not directly advocate that the new political administration was the key to rehabilitating this culture. The logic was arousing the anger of survivors who suffered from the loss of culture would directly lead to the creation of anti-Pol Pot ideology.

The second message reminded readers that Cambodia had a national culture, using concrete examples of popular and classical Cambodian dance forms. Specifically, the author used lyrical terms to describe the classical dance as “performed respectfully and highly appreciated” and the dancers “as if they were divine angels.” These emotional phrases were intended to make readers realize the importance of their culture.

The third message defined the national culture of Cambodia as being rooted in the Angkor Dynasty. A sketch from Lesson 53 depicted two different female dancers, making it easy to compare and find similarities between them. One dancer appeared in a relief on an Angkor monument, while the second was a living contemporary classical dancer. The two women were wearing almost identical costumes, accessories, and ornaments. Their hands were in similar positions, one splayed on the lower abdomen and the other poised above the head. Their gestures were almost identical. This visual representation of the classical dance heritage from the Angkor Dynasty was intended to arouse a sense of nationalistic pride among young Cambodians.

### *Moral and Political Education in 1982*

In the previous section we analyzed Khmer language textbooks published before the 1980 reform. We discussed how the Khmer Rouge genocide was criticized, stressing the need to recover from the destruction and to build a new nation by fostering a sense of national pride based on a particular social imaginary. There were traces of support for Vietnam and other communist countries, which we have called “Vietnamization.” In this section, we examine a Grade 5 moral and political education textbook printed in early 1982 and analyze how morals, ethics, and politics were taught after the education reform of 1980. How did moral and political education contribute to the construction of a new society after the mass devastation of the Khmer Rouge period? In what ways can re-Khmerization and Vietnamization be seen in the official curriculum after the 1980 reform? We use the example of a

moral and political education textbook printed in 1982 for discussion purposes to see whether there is any continuity in terms of political philosophy with the Khmer language textbook published in 1979.

*“Love and Take Pride in the Culture of Our Motherland” (Lesson 5).* As shown in Table 6, the moral and political education textbook from 1982 comprised 28 lessons and was 76 pages long. There were no sketches or pictures and no legend of explanatory notes to categorize the table of contents, unlike the Khmer language textbook discussed in the previous section. Compared to the Khmer language textbook, this textbook was rather simple in structure, and all lessons were presented in a storytelling format.

The textbook comprised three main themes: what happened under DK rule, the social revolution occurring under the PRK, and what students ought to do in society. Unlike the Khmer language textbook printed in 1979, anti-Pol Pot ideology was limited to only two sections: “Oppose the Reactionaries Pol Pot, Ieng Sary, Khieu Samphan, and Their Political Party Diffusing Chinese Ideology to Destroy Our Families, Schools, and Country” (Lesson 7) and “Do Not Repeat the Tragedy” (Lesson 28). Topics regarding social revolution under the PRK covered three sections: “Protect the Legacy of the Revolution and Seek Prosperity for the People” (Lesson 8), “Unite Vietnam, Laos, and Other Socialist Countries” (Lesson 9), and “Learn about Soldiers and the Revolutionary Army Fighting for Our Country” (Lesson 22). In contrast, the topic that filled almost the entire textbook (23 of 28 lessons) was what students ought to do in society. The textbook focused mainly on topics related to the Cambodian people and their country. Terminology indicating a collective framework was often used to remind readers about national identity. “People” (រដ្ឋបាល) was used in five lessons (Lessons 4, 8, 17, 25, and 27), whereas “country” (ប្រទេស) appeared in six lessons (Lessons 3, 4, 6, 7, 22, and 24), “nation” (ជាតិ) in one lesson (Lesson 10), and “motherland” (មាតុភូមិ) in one lesson (Lesson 5). Subsequent lessons emphasized patriotism derived from cultural traditions: “Love Various People Living in Our Country” (Lesson 4) and “Love and Take Pride in the Culture of Our Motherland” (Lesson 5). The word “motherland” (មាតុភូមិ), in particular, was used to invoke the image of ancestors having lived in Cambodia for a long time. In the following quote, traditional Cambodian culture is explained from Lesson 5, “Love and Take Pride in the Culture of Our Motherland”:

In our motherland, we have a wonderful culture. We should be proud of our culture, and we need to work hard to improve its qualities every day. Our culture has an ancient heritage, including arts and crafts and elegant sculptures, particularly symbolized by Angkor Wat. Preah Vihear is also a great temple. The National Museum houses culturally valuable items. Dance is also an art form, and our dancers are highly skilled. In the People’s Republic of Kampuchea,

*Table 6. Table of contents of 1982 moral and political education textbook (fifth grade)*

<i>Lesson</i>	<i>Content</i>
1	Love Our Family
2	Love Our School
3	Love Our Country
4	Love Various People Living in Our Country
5	Love and Take Pride in the Culture of Our Motherland
6	Take Pride in Our Traditions While Reconstructing the Country
7	Oppose the Reactionaries Pol Pot, Ieng Sary, Khieu Samphan, and Their Political Party Diffusing Chinese Ideology to Destroy Our Families, Schools, and Country
8	Protect the Legacy of the Revolution and Seek Prosperity for the People
9	Unite Vietnam, Laos, and Other Socialist Countries
10	Establish Yourself as a New Citizen with Love for Our Nation
11	Respect Parents and Grandparents
12	Take Good Care of Parents and Grandparents
13	Love Brothers and Sisters
14	Make Efforts to Develop Our Nation
15	Introduce Our New Culture to Our Families
16	Protect and Help Parents and Neighbors
17	Engage in the Struggle for Happiness of People and Country
18	Respect Senior Citizens
19	Love Children
20	Respect Women
21	Solid Friendship
22	Learn about Soldiers and the Revolutionary Army Fighting for Our Country
23	Be Tolerant Towards People in Need
24	Respect and Protect Our Country
25	Respect the Nobility of Our People
26	Be Honest, Devoted, and Good
27	Wish for the Happiness of the People of Our Country
28	Do Not Repeat the Tragedy

*Source: Ministry of Education (1982).*

we definitely share a belief in developing our culture. There is a strong desire to enhance our culture. (Ministry of Education, 1982, pp. 12–13)

“Love and Take Pride in the Culture of Our Motherland” clearly set out to establish the fact that ancient heritage, arts and crafts, and dance performances belong to the motherland, Cambodia, by using the example of Angkor Wat to represent an unbroken historical continuum stretching from the time of the Angkor Dynasty through the present. The Preah Vihear temple was also presented as a possession of Cambodia, directly referencing nationalism and the ongoing political border conflict between Cambodia and Thailand. Although such a nationalistic emphasis may not be unique to the textbooks in this period, it is important to show how overt the emphasis was on creating a Khmer culture that was seen as having been destroyed under the Khmer Rouge. In other words, re-Khmerization continued to be a central theme in the official curriculum after the 1980 education reform.

Thus, both the Khmer language textbook and the moral/political education textbook were directed towards igniting a patriotic spirit and played a propaganda role in fostering national unity in support of simultaneous Vietnamization and re-Khmerization. It is essential to recognize that these textbooks were primarily developed under Vietnamese influence, incorporating socialist ideology. However, what was actually presented in these textbooks was the importance of Khmer identity. This means that one of the intentions of the Vietnamization of political ideology was to foster the admiration of Khmer culture and patriotism. Such tendencies were strengthened in the 1986 education reform, as shown in the next section.

### *Moral Education in 1988*

The 1986 education reform marked a significant change in moral education. Before 1986, moral education was called “moral and political education.” After the 1986 reform, the word “political” was removed from the title. With regard to this change, we can assume that there was an urgent need to politicize moral education after 1979 in order to disseminate the ideology of the new socialist state that would replace the Pol Pot regime in the early 1980s. However, by the mid-1980s, the situation had changed, with conditions throughout the country becoming more stabilized, so it was not necessary to outwardly politicize moral education so highly in order to proclaim the socialist ideology. The government could simply focus on nurturing a sense of morality among students instead of connecting social morals and values with the political ideology of socialism. In this subsection, we analyze a Grade 5 moral education textbook printed in 1988 to see if there are any differences in terms of structure and topics compared with the Khmer language textbook from 1979 and the moral and political education textbook from 1982. This analysis allows us to explore how the efforts of re-Khmerization and Vietnamization changed during the 1986 reform effort.

“*Blossoming National Traditions*” (Lesson 1). The 1988 textbook comprised 25 lessons filling 95 pages (Table 7); thus, although the textbook was larger than in 1982, it contained fewer lessons. There were 35 hand-drawn sketches for these 25 lessons, which was a significant change from the 1982 textbook, which contained no sketches. As with the 1982 moral and political education textbook, there was no legend of explanatory notes to categorize the table of contents, although a descriptive title was included so that students could easily see what they would be learning in each lesson at a single glance.

Three main topics were discussed throughout the textbook: what happened under DK rule, social revolution under the PRK, and what students ought to do in society. Anti-Pol Pot ideology was addressed in only one lesson, “Ideology of Pol Pot and Ieng Sary: Misconduct for Revolution” (Lesson 4). Social revolution under the PRK was discussed in 12 lessons in the first half of the textbook: “Appreciate the Party and Expect a Bright Future” (Lesson 2), “Unity Among Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos” (Lesson 3), “Think About the Future Beyond the War: Omens of a Bright Nation” (Lesson 5), “Respect the Authority of the Nation” (Lesson 7), and “Appreciate Those Who Fought for the Nation” (Lesson 8). On the other hand, topics dealing with what students ought to do in society were covered in 12 lessons in the last half of the textbook. “Work for Production” (Lesson 13), “Obey the National Law” (Lesson 15), “Love and Respect the People” (Lesson 17), and “Disagree with Businesses that Break the Law” (Lesson 23) were aimed at helping students understand social norms. “Preserve Your School’s Honor” (Lesson 16) and “Search for the Truth” (Lesson 22) were introduced to foster morality.

The quote below from Lesson 1, “Blossoming National Traditions,” presents new perspectives for young Cambodians with regard to the reconstruction of their nation:

Over 4 years, Pol Pot and Ieng Sary ground down the people, stealing their lives and culture. The cruelly abused nation was finally rescued by the Kampuchean United Front for National Salvation, under which Cambodian traditions were regenerated. I once saw a dance performance at a national youth art festival in Tonle Bassac and could not help being excited by that performing art. I realized that Cambodian art had turned over a new leaf and had begun to flower again after an absence of 4 years. A best wishes dance, a pestle dance, a rice harvest dance, and a *chhaiyaim* dance<sup>3</sup> were presented to me and my fellow audience members at the theater. In each of these dances, I recognized aspects of our national character. We need to maintain and support these dance forms. The dancers on the stage wore *sampot hol*<sup>4</sup> or *sampot chang kben*<sup>5</sup> on the lower body and white silk shirts on the upper body.

In other parts of the world, there are various kinds of performing arts. Like other countries, Cambodia is, I firmly believe, a nation where art, civilization, and tradition have been fostered. (Ministry of Education, 1988, pp. 10–11)

*Table 7. Table of contents of a 1988 moral education textbook (fifth grade)*

<i>Lesson</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Title of reading material</i>
1	Blossoming National Traditions	Appreciate the National Culture
2	Appreciate the Party and Expect a Bright Future	Determine to Work with the Party
3	Unity Among Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos	Unity for Motivation
4	Ideology of Pol Pot and Ieng Sary: Misconduct for Revolution	Examine Our History
5	Think About the Future Beyond the War: Omens of a Bright Nation	War and Me
6	Prepare for the Time When the Nation Needs You	Why Agriculture?
7	Respect the Authority of the Nation	Creating a New Life
8	Appreciate Those Who Fought for the Nation	Tough Soldiers
9	Combine Study and Practice	How to Plant Tomatoes
10	Study for Contributing to the Nation	Good Army
11	Protect Public Treasures	Sam and Sophia Take a Walk in a Park
12	Work for the Public	Value of Work
13	Work for Production	What Kinds of Vegetables to Plant?
14	Understand Tasks Within Your Community	Work for Community
15	Obey the National Law	Watch a Sports Game
16	Preserve Your School's Honor	Sports Game
17	Love and Respect the People	Harbor Workers
18	Do Not Disrespect the Disabled	Brave Worker with Disabilities
19	Keep Your Promise	Honesty
20	Prepare Foods and Dishes, Avoiding Disease	Treat Disease
21	Get to Know Your Creativity and Participate in the Community	Creativity
22	Search for the Truth	Search for the Truth
23	Disagree with Businesses that Break the Law	Two Children
24	Examine Yourself	Work
25	Practice Farm Work	Brave Survivors of the War

*Source: Ministry of Education (1988).*

The reading material entitled “Blossoming National Tradition” highlighted the PRK’s intent in reviving Cambodian culture, which had almost been destroyed during the rule of Pol Pot. Cultural activities introduced in the textbook included folk dances such as the pestle dance, the rice harvest dance, and the chhaiyaim dance, and the narrator suggested that Cambodian national characteristics could be seen in these dance forms. Making comparisons with neighboring countries such as Thailand and Laos, the narrator described Cambodia as being highly civilized with long and proud traditions.

### CONCLUSION

In this paper, we first provided an overview of national education under the Heng Samrin regime and then examined the respective education reforms in 1980 and 1986. Examining these two education reforms, we focused on analyzing the contents of Khmer language, moral education, and political education textbooks. These subjects are considered to be closely related to the image of the country, as depicted by the government.

Textbooks were used as tools to foster patriotism by linking the PRK to a particular reading of history dating to the Angkor period as well as by negatively portraying the PRK’s enemies, namely the DK. These textbooks clearly show that the government aimed to maintain Vietnamization and re-Khmerization in order to achieve national unification. Over the 10-year period, re-Khmerization was used throughout, while Vietnamization took on slightly different meanings after each education reform.

At first, Vietnamization was outwardly antagonistic towards the DK. Textbooks in 1979 and in 1982 proclaimed Cambodia’s support for a socialist utopia and, interestingly, portrayed vivid images and descriptions (in the 1979 textbook particularly) of death and destruction caused by the DK. The fear present in these earlier textbooks slowly disappeared after the 1986 reform. Exactly why this occurred is open to interpretation. On the one hand, by the mid-1980s Cambodia experienced relative stability, at least compared to the decade before. Such a domestic political environment could have allowed the PRK to relax its outward campaign against the DK. On the other hand, after the 1986 reform, the Ministry of Education seemingly became better at instilling political messages in a more covert and nuanced fashion. Removing the term “political” from the title of moral education, for instance, suggests to the casual observer that politics no longer was taught; however, a more critical look reveals that the political aspects were simply hidden and taught through certain morals and historical memories.

Textbooks from the 1980s in Cambodia demonstrate the way in which political ideologies operate through the curriculum. Textbooks were used to construct a social imaginary supportive of the PRK. This required the exclusion of certain groups, namely the DK, but also non-Soviet states that did not support communism. These insights add to the growing literature on the way in which the Khmer Rouge was and continues to be taught in textbooks.

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Since there have been a vast range of studies dealing with this issue, we mention only a few of them here, such as Barnard (2003), Han (2007), Hein (2000), Lall and Vickers (2009), and Vickers and Jones (2005).
- <sup>2</sup> There were many changes to the Cambodian system of education when it was a protectorate of the French (see Clayton, 1995). For our purposes here, we label the schooling cycle as 6-4-3 even though this only occurred near the end of French administrative influence in Cambodia in the 1940s and 1950s.
- <sup>3</sup> *Chhaiyaim* dancing is a popular spectacle featuring comic elements associated with agrarian society. After the harvest, when Khmer peasants and farmers get together to organize ceremonies and festivals celebrating their production, *chhaiyaim* is performed to enhance these events (Sam, 2003, p. 173).
- <sup>4</sup> *Sampot* is a type of skirt that covers the knees and ankles, reaching to the ground like a long loincloth and worn with a silver/gold belt.
- <sup>5</sup> The *sampot chang kben* is worn by wrapping the cloth around the waist, stretching it away from the body, twisting the ends together, and then pulling the twisted fabric between the legs and tucking it in at the back of the waist.

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