CULTURES OF AID: CHINESE AID TO CAMBODIA

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Cambodia is one of the poorest countries in Southeast Asia. The United Nations Human Development Index ranks Cambodia as 137 out of 182 countries in terms of quality of life. Cambodia is also an aid dependent country, with nearly half its annual budget coming from aid. Since the Paris Peace Accords in 1991 and subsequent United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) period, OECD-DAC (Development Assistance Committee) (or ‘traditional’) donors have entered Cambodia in large numbers. These traditional donors allocate aid according to the OECD-DAC consensus. This consensus is based around international agreements such as the Millennium Development Goals, The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the Monterrey Consensus of the International Conference on Financing for Development. The traditional donors have, since the early 1990s, created and dominated the aid ‘culture’ in Cambodia.

Recently, however, another donor has come to the fore in Cambodia, and that is China. China has strong historical, social and economic links with Cambodia that go back to ancient times. China has been disbursing aid to Cambodia since the 1950s. However, it has only been since 2006 that China has come to the fore as an aid donor, due in part to the large amount of aid it is currently pledging to Cambodia but also to the growing role China is playing on the wider global stage. China is now one of the largest donors to (as well as investors in) Cambodia. China, however, is often considered a ‘rogue’ donor by the traditional donors both at the global scale and within Cambodia, as China does not conform with DAC policy on aid and development. This leads to certain representations of China that do not always accord with the ‘realities’ of China’s aid program.

This thesis explores aid cultures in Cambodia, in particular the encounter between Chinese aid and western aid. Theoretically this thesis situates itself at the intersection between (post)development geography and cultural geography, drawing on ideas such as representation and encounter to understand how Chinese and western aid come together in the context of Cambodia. By doing so, this thesis fills a gap in the existing literature by looking at aid as a culture, and exploring China’s aid from a (post)development/cultural geography viewpoint, rather than an economic or international relations stance. Arising from this theoretical stance come three primary research questions: How do those with different cultural sets come together in certain contexts, namely aid; what cultural encounters do we see in this mix between traditional donors and new donors; how do discourses around ‘the other’ play into aid dialogues in Cambodia?

This thesis investigates these research questions through qualitative methods, including interviews, discourse analysis and participant observation. Analysis is undertaken of western aid to Cambodia, with a focus on the history and statistics of aid, aid coordination, development policy and critiques of traditional aid in order to highlight the existing aid culture in Cambodia. An analysis is then undertaken of China’s aid to
Cambodia, looking at the aid figures and aid structure before investigating representations of China's aid and looking at an indicative case study of one Chinese aid project in Cambodia. Finally the encounter between western aid and Chinese aid is analysed with particular reference to three types of western aid actors in Cambodia and how they encounter and represent China and its aid program.

Through the above investigation, three main findings are arrived at: a) that a particularly western aid culture has been created in Cambodia, one which can be seen as a 'site of knowledge' for western aid; b) that Chinese aid is deliberately constructed and represented in certain ways by the West for its own purposes much as Said (1995) outlined in his work *Orientalism* regarding the relationship between the West and 'the other'; and c) whilst global aid discourses influence the encounter between China and the West in Cambodia, Cambodia itself is not a passive player in this encounter, using it for its own advantage by playing off China and the western donors against one another.
Acknowledgements

This thesis would not have been completed without the supervision, inspiration, cooperation and friendship of the following people and organisations:


Kate Griffiths
25 March 2011
Statement of originality

The work presented in this thesis is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, original except as acknowledged in the text. I have not submitted this thesis, either in full or in part, for a degree at this, or any other institution.

Kate Griffiths
25 March 2011
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List of acronyms

ADB  Asian Development Bank
AsDF  Asian Development Fund
ASEAN  Association of Southeast Asian Nations
AusAID  Australian Agency for International Development
BOT  Build Operate Transfer
BRIC  Brazil, Russia, India, China
CBNRM-LI  Community Based Natural Resource Management Learning Institute
CCC  Cooperation Committee for Cambodia
CDC  Council for the Development of Cambodia
CDCF  Cambodia Development Cooperation Forum
CEPA  Culture and Environment Preservation Society
CIB  Cambodia Investment Board
CIDA  Canadian International Development Agency
CIVETS  Colombia, Indonesia, Vietnam, Egypt, Turkey, South Africa
CMDG  Cambodian Millennium Development Goals
COMECON  Council for Mutual Economic Assistance
CPP  Cambodian People's Party
CRDB  Cambodian Rehabilitation and Development Board
DAC  Development Assistance Committee
DFID  UK Department for International Development
DK  Democratic Kampuchea
EIS  Environmental Impact Statement
EU  European Union
EXIM  Export-Import Bank
FAO  Food and Agriculture Organization
FDI  Foreign Direct Investment
GATT  General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
GDCC  Government Donor Coordination Committee
GDP  Gross Domestic Product
GMS  Greater Mekong Strategy
GNI  Gross National Income
GRUNK  Royal Government of National Union of Kampuchea
ICORC  International Committee of Reconstruction of Cambodia
IFI  International Financial Institution
IMF  International Monetary Fund
IPRCC  International Poverty Reduction Centre in China
IRN  International Rivers Network
JICA  Japanese Agency for International Development
MCRRRC  Ministerial Conference on Rehabilitation and Reconstruction of Cambodia
MDG  Millennium Development Goals
MIME  Ministry of Industry, Mines and Energy
MRC  Mekong River Commission
NGO  Non Government Organization
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tr>
<td>ODA</td>
<td>Official Development Assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OECD-DAC</td>
<td>Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development-Development Assistance Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>PDOE</td>
<td>Provincial Department of Environment</td>
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<td>PDOWRAM</td>
<td>Provincial Department of Water Resources Management and Meteorology</td>
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<tr>
<td>PMIME</td>
<td>Provincial Department of Industry, Mines and Energy</td>
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<tr>
<td>PRK</td>
<td>People's Republic of Kampuchea</td>
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<td>RGC</td>
<td>Royal Government of Cambodia</td>
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<tr>
<td>SIDA</td>
<td>Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>TWG</td>
<td>Technical Working Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNBRO</td>
<td>United Nations Border Relief Operation</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Development Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNHCR</td>
<td>United Nations Refugee Agency</td>
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<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>United Nations Children's Fund</td>
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<td>UNTAC</td>
<td>United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia</td>
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<tr>
<td>WB</td>
<td>World Bank</td>
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<td>WBI</td>
<td>World Bank Institute</td>
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<td>WFP</td>
<td>World Food Programme</td>
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<td>WTO</td>
<td>World Trade Organisation</td>
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Notes to reader

Definitions

Throughout this thesis, the term ‘the West’ has been used to denote the countries of Western Europe, North America, Australia and New Zealand in line with conventional usage of the term. Where the thesis refers to the ‘western aid model’ the term includes countries such as Japan and Korea both of which are seen to follow the broad approach associated with the ‘western’ countries. The term ‘the South’ has been used to refer to countries which do not make up the ‘the West’ and which are often otherwise known as ‘developing’ countries.

The term ‘traditional’ donors is used in this thesis to denote donors who form part of the OECD-Development Assistance Committee (DAC). This term is used interchangeably with the term ‘western donors’. Donors outside this grouping are variously referred to as ‘new’ or ‘non-DAC/non-traditional’ donors.

The term ‘aid’ has been used throughout this thesis, according to conventional usage, to refer to both western ‘aid’ (also known as Official Development Assistance [ODA]) and Chinese ‘aid’ (also known as ‘development cooperation’). However, it is noted that the use of the all encompassing term ‘aid’ is somewhat problematic in that Chinese and Western ‘aid’ are not necessarily directly comparable and that this is a term not always used by China or western donors themselves. An explanation of why the term aid has been used, and the associated connotations with doing as such, are addressed in more detail in the body of the thesis (see Chapter Three in particular).

All monetary values are in US dollars, unless otherwise stated.

Khmer names

Khmer names are traditionally written [surname] [first name] in contrast to the English language convention of [first name] [surname]. When Khmer authors are cited in this thesis, the surname has been used as the citation (irrespective of the written order of the name).
Chapter One: Introduction

This thesis explores aid cultures in the context of Cambodia. In particular it looks at the aid encounter between western (or traditional) donors and China in Cambodia. This chapter begins by giving a background to this thesis. It then moves onto the research objectives, the methodology and methods, before giving an outline of the thesis structure.

My initial interest for this thesis was sparked by a series of high profile media articles in the western media in 2006 that claimed that China had pledged $600 million in 'aid' to Cambodia, almost matching the entire traditional donor pledge of $601 million for that year. Many of these media reports expressed concern at China’s large aid pledge, presenting the pledge as a threat to western interests in Cambodia. In 2006 I was employed as a Research Assistant on an AusAID funded Cambodia Development Resource Institute (CDRI)/University of Sydney project that was looking at water governance in Cambodia. This project instigated my initial interest in Cambodia. The media articles and their representations of aid and China furthered this interest.

Initial investigations of the research around Chinese aid showed that there were several gaps in the literature. Prior to 2006, there had been very little research conducted at all on China as an aid donor, despite the fact that China had been a donor since the 1950s. The literature, when it did exist, focussed on China as an aid recipient rather than an aid donor. Since 2006, nonetheless, as China has begun to play a more significant role globally, research on China as an aid donor has expanded significantly (e.g. Chin and Frolic, 2007; Lancaster, 2007; Rowlands, 2008), particularly in regard to Africa (e.g. Brautigam, 2009; McCormick, 2008; Davies, 2007). However, despite the fact there has been so much recent research on China as an aid donor, most of this research comes from a fairly narrow international relations/economics perspective. This thesis attempts to fill the empirical gap by focussing not on Africa, but rather Asia; and it departs theoretically from existing work by approaching the subject not from an international relations perspective, but a (post)development/cultural geography viewpoint.

Background

Cambodia, along with Laos, is one of the poorest countries in Southeast Asia. The United Nations Development Programme Human Development Index ranks Cambodia as 137 out of 182 countries in terms of quality of life (UNDP, 2009). It is a also a corrupt country, with Transparency...
International in 2010 rating Cambodia 154 out of 178 countries in terms of levels of transparency. Most pertinent to this thesis, however, is the fact that Cambodia is also an aid dependent country, with nearly half its annual government budget coming from aid, making the question of aid in Cambodia particularly important, and the role of large non-traditional donors, such as China, particularly significant.

Most western bilateral donors are represented in Cambodia, as are the big multilateral agencies including the World Bank, Asian Development Bank (ADB) and United Nations (UN). Added to this, there are also several hundred local and international NGOs represented in Cambodia. Japan has been the largest bilateral aid donor to Cambodia for many years, followed by the United States and the European Community. The traditional donors have, until recently, had a monopoly over aid in Cambodia creating a particularly western-dominated aid culture. Particular foci of the traditional donors include decentralisation and de-concentration, good governance, democracy reforms, governance, judicial reform, and agricultural development. These development goals are all pursued within the framework of international agreements such as the Millennium Development Goals, The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the Monterrey Consensus of the International Conference on Financing for Development. Traditional aid in Cambodia has been criticised, however, for its donor-driven nature, the fragmentation of aid, the reliance on technical assistance (specifically the hiring of foreign consultants) and the lack of aid effectiveness in areas such as good governance and anti-corruption measures.

Today, however, the aid landscape within Cambodia is rapidly changing with 'new' donors appearing, including Thailand, the Gulf States and China. This is in line with changes on the global aid landscape – Brazil, India and China being just three of the ‘new’ donors disbursing aid in regions as diverse as the South Pacific, Latin America and Africa. In Cambodia’s case, the most significant of these new donors is China. China and Cambodia have a long historical relationship – the two were trading with each other as far back as the Angkorian period and beyond. China has also been giving aid to Cambodia for much the same length of time as the traditional donors, with Cambodia receiving its first instalment of Chinese aid in 1956. Nonetheless, it was not until 2006 that the traditional donors and western media began to really take note of China as an aid donor in Cambodia. In 2006, China pledged a reported $600 million worth of aid to Cambodia. This aid came without the usual governance, social and environmental conditions that come with traditional aid. The media and the Cambodian government reported that the $600 million China pledged was to be aimed primarily at large infrastructure projects such as dams and transportation infrastructure. Significantly, this figure of $600 million almost matched the $601 million pledged that year by the traditional donors combined. Whilst the figure of $600 million has subsequently been questioned, it is not disputed that since 2006 China has become one of the largest donors to Cambodia.
This thesis explores the existing aid culture in Cambodia and the encounter between traditional donors and China. The concept of the cultural encounter is used to look at how those with different cultural sets (i.e. China and the West) come together in an aid context; and what cultural encounters occur within this context between traditional and new donors. That is, it looks at development with reference to place and the construction of that place and space through representation and encounter to analyse aid cultures and, in particular, how the West constructs and encounters both its own aid and that of Chinese aid within the context of Cambodia.

Theory and objectives

The research on which this thesis is based draws on two key bodies of geographical literature: development geography and cultural geography.

Development geography is concerned with understanding the notion of ‘development’ within a spatial context. Within the development geography paradigm, this thesis uses concepts drawn from critical development and post-development theory as well as ideas around aid and aid effectiveness. Theoretical ideas central to the thesis include the notion that development is essentially a western discourse; that the West has a monopoly over aid and the rules and definitions that come with aid; and that more critical analysis, particularly that arising from the South, is needed regarding the discourse of development. Cultural geography looks at the meanings, interpretations and re-interpretations people use to construct place and space. Within the cultural geography paradigm, this thesis draws on notions of representation, particularly discourse analysis, and postcolonial encounters. As such it considers how representations can construct a ‘reality’; what and how ‘the other’ is created; and the effect of discourse and representation on the aid encounter.

Key literature which this thesis draws on includes Said’s *Orientalism* (1995), Escobar’s (1995) work on (post)development theory, Mohan and Power on Chinese engagement in Africa (e.g. Mohan & Power, 2008; Mohan & Power, 2010) and Mawdsley’s work on ‘new’ donors and representation (e.g. Mawdsley 2008, 2010).

Arising out of the theoretical context come the central research questions:

- How do those with different cultural sets come together in certain contexts, namely aid?
- What cultural encounters do we see in this mix between traditional donors and ‘new’ donors?
- How do discourses around ‘the other’ play into aid dialogues in Cambodia?
This thesis therefore looks at aid as an 'encounter' between western donors and 'new' donors. Thus it looks not so much at the arguments for or against Chinese aid itself, but rather at the cultural encounters between Chinese and western aid in Cambodia and the role representation plays in these encounters.

**Methodology and methods**

The methodology used in this thesis is that of the qualitative tradition, in keeping with predominant research methodologies in cultural and development geographies. Qualitative research methodologies allow for the study of human experiences and human environments through the use of non-quantitative methods such as interviews, participant observation, discourse analysis and focus groups:

Qualitative research is used in many areas of human geography. In a broad sense, qualitative research is concerned with elucidating human environments and human experiences within a variety of conceptual frameworks (Winchester, 2005:4).

Crucial to qualitative methodologies, particularly those used in cultural and development geographies, is the place of the researcher in the research, or the notion of 'critical reflexivity'. The researcher must be aware of, and acknowledge, the position they themselves occupy in the research: 'The researcher is an instrument of the research and accordingly we suggest they should acknowledge their position' (Mansvelt and Berg, 2005: 257).

Within the qualitative methodology, various methods can be used. Winchester (2005) breaks these methods down into three broad categories: oral (e.g. interviews), textual (e.g. discourse analysis) and observational (e.g. participant observation). All three methods have been used to varying degrees in this thesis. For example, one of the primary methods relied on throughout this thesis is discourse analysis – specifically discourse analysis of written text (as opposed to images, landscapes or other 'texts'). Discourse analysis arises from the post-structuralist tradition advocated by proponents such as Foucault (1979). According to Waitt (2005:166)

The priority in discourse analysis is upon the effects of a particular cultural text on what an individual may do or think by unravelling its production, social context and intended audience. The methodological strength of discourse analysis lies in its ability to move beyond the text, the subtext, and representation to uncover issues of power relationships that inform what people do and think.

Throughout this thesis official (e.g. government agencies, public authorities) and unofficial (e.g. media, academic, civil society literature) data has been used (Cloke et al, 2004) as sources of information. However, in using official and unofficial data as sources of information, this information has not been taken merely as is, but rather it has been interpreted to take into account
how this data has been constructed, for whom and the voice that is used. This data has then been used variously throughout the thesis to both represent positions and/or to support the argument. For example, a newspaper article may be used to highlight how China is represented by the media, or it may be used to support an argument this thesis is making regarding Chinese aid.

In addition to discourse analysis, interviews with key informants form another key part of the research method. Interviews with a range of aid actors in Cambodia, such as bilateral donors, multilateral donors and local and international non-government organisations (NGOs) took place in two primary fieldwork phases in January/February 2009 and August/September 2009. Nineteen semi-structured and unstructured interviews were conducted primarily in Phnom Penh, with each interview lasting between 45 and 90 minutes. The data from these interviews were analysed to inform the thesis conclusions.

Finally participant observation was used to gain an understanding of the aid landscape in Cambodia. For the duration of this thesis, I have been employed as the Sydney coordinator for an AusAID funded project looking at water governance in Cambodia. By working on this project I gained insight into the aid culture in Cambodia. In addition to this work, I also attended aid-related workshops, conferences and meetings in both Cambodia and Australia to gain a broad overview of the aid culture in Cambodia, including the people and organisations involved, the policies as disseminated and put in place, and the representations of aid and development in Cambodia.

Thesis structure

This thesis is divided into eight chapters, including the introduction and conclusion chapters.

The second chapter provides a theoretical insight into (post)development, aid, representation and encounter. It analyses the discourse of western development and looks at how notions of aid are intertwined with that of development. It then goes on to explore representation and encounter through the lens of cultural geography, critical geopolitics and postcolonial studies. The idea of this chapter is to provide a theoretical background to the rest of the thesis by highlighting where this thesis posits itself within the existing literature, where the gaps exist in the literature and how this thesis may go some way towards filling these gaps.

The next chapter (Chapter Three) moves from the theoretical context of western aid and development, to a study of Chinese discourses around aid and development. It analyses Chinese notions of development, Chinese 'aid' (including how much, where it is going and what it is used for) and how Chinese aid is represented and encountered by the West. The aim of this chapter is to highlight what Chinese 'aid' is and to provide a link between
Chinese theory, discourse and development and to present the context for contemporary Chinese aid to Cambodia.

Chapter Four moves away from theory and development discourses, to explore the case study for this thesis - Cambodia. In order to understand the aid encounter in Cambodia it is important to first understand the context in which this encounter takes place and the local conditions which may affect this encounter. This chapter focuses in particular on Cambodia's place in the world and its relationship to China and the West. It begins with a historical overview of foreign relations between Cambodia, China and the West from ancient times until the present. It then moves on to look at government, governance and politics in Cambodia, and economy trade and investment as an indicator of the local context into which aid is disbursed.

Chapters Five and Six turn to a discussion of first western aid and then Chinese aid to Cambodia. In order to understand the aid encounter between China and the West in Cambodia it is necessary to not only understand the context within which the encounter is taking place, but also to understand the background to both China and the West's aid to Cambodia. This background is provided through an exploration of the history of aid to Cambodia and the current aid culture in Cambodia.

Chapter Five begins with an historical overview of western aid, starting with the French colonial period which, it is argued, laid the foundations for the current western-dominated aid culture in Cambodia. The chapter then moves on to discussing the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) period and subsequent formation of a western aid culture. This culture is explored through looking at aid figures, aid coordination and development policy in Cambodia. The final part of the chapter turns to an exploration of critiques of aid to Cambodia.

Chapter Six, like Chapter Five, begins with an historical overview of Chinese aid to Cambodia starting from the 1950s until the present day. It then goes on to question some of the western assumptions regarding Chinese aid to Cambodia, including an analysis of the reported and actual aid figures and aid structure of Chinese aid. The chapter goes on to look at a case study of one Chinese 'aid' project in Cambodia – that of the Kamchay Dam – and the assumptions and representations regarding this project. The chapter concludes with a brief analysis of China's role in the existing aid culture in Cambodia.

Chapter Seven brings together the previous chapters to analyse the encounter between Chinese and western aid in Cambodia. The chapter begins by describing the encounter between traditional donors and China based on fieldwork findings. This section is broken down by actor, and analyses the encounter between bilateral donors and China, multilateral donors and China, and NGOs and China. An analysis is then provided as to why these particular encounters occur. The third part of the chapter goes on to relate the encounter back to the theory, looking at the aid culture in
Cambodia through the lenses of (post)development, aid, representation and encounter.

Finally, the thesis concludes with a brief chapter that outlines the summary of findings, the theoretical implications of the thesis, the limitations and opportunities for further research.
Chapter Two: Theorising Development and Culture

This thesis is broadly based within the theoretical nexus of (post)development geography and cultural geography. That is, it looks at development discursively with reference to place and the construction of that place and space through representation and encounter. Within the development discourse aid plays a leading role, aid being a means by which 'development' can, in principle, be attained. This thesis draws on theoretical concepts in critical geopolitics and cultural geography to analyse aid narratives and, in particular, how the West constructs and encounters both its own aid and that of Chinese aid within the context of Cambodia. This chapter looks at the theory behind development, aid, representation and encounter.

Development and post-development

Development means different things to different people. Broadly speaking, development could refer to progress, advancement of human quality of life or perhaps even 'making things better'. However, in the context of this thesis, development refers to the discourse of international development. This section outlines how the development discourse arose; it considers different theories of development and the institutionalisation of development; and examines critiques of development, including post-development.

Development as a discourse relating to the South was 'invented' (to use Escobar's language) by the West after World War II at a time when the world was looking to leave war behind and move onwards. This period was characterised by the end of colonisation, the need for reconstruction of war torn economies and the beginning of the Cold War. Whilst initially development focused on European countries devastated by war (i.e. the Marshall Plan), the term quickly came to refer to the development of the South. It was, in fact, US president Truman who is often attributed with first using the concept of development to assist 'underdeveloped' countries when he said in 1949:

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1 Arturo Escobar is a Colombian anthropologist interested in non-Eurocentric and alternative approaches to development. He is considered one of the leading figures in post-development theory. This thesis draws on many of his ideas (see Escobar, 1995).
We must embark on a bold new program for making the benefits of our scientific advances and industrial progress available for the improvement and growth of underdeveloped areas...

... The old imperialism - exploitation for foreign profit - has no place in our plans. What we envisage is a program of development based on the concept of democratic fair dealing (Truman, 1949)

There have been several prevailing theories in development studies since the 1950s. These theories have included modernisation theory, dependency theory and neoliberal theory.

Modernisation (1950s-1960s) is the idea that developed societies can be distinguished from 'traditional' societies based on their economic, social, cultural and political modernity. In development circles, this led to a belief that all those in the South (who tend to be grouped together without reference to local differences) should follow the same linear path towards development by becoming modernised in the way that the West had become modernised (de Haan, 2009a). Rostow was a key proponent of these ideas with his 'stages of growth' economic model which emphasised growth occurring in five basic stages from 'the traditional society' (e.g. Cambodia or other 'undeveloped' nations) to the 'age of high mass consumption' (e.g. USA and other 'developed' nations) (Rostow, 1960).

In the 1960s, a counter theory to modernisation arose. The dependency theorists, as they were known, critiqued the traditional development discourse to argue that poorer states were not merely 'backwards' versions of wealthy nations. Dependency theorists, arguing from a neo-Marxist viewpoint, claimed that resources in fact flowed from the periphery (third world) to the core (first world) as a result of development and that therefore development served mainly the West, not poorer nations. Thus underdevelopment was a result of development elsewhere. One of the key founders of dependency theory was the economic historian and sociologist Andre Gunder Frank who, drawing on Latin American models, argued that the relationship between developed and underdeveloped countries was a result of exploitation of peripheral third world countries by core first world nations (Frank, 1978). De Haan (2009a:71) states, however, that:

Dependency theory made little impact on mainstream thinking within the aid industry, but its ideas are reflected in the movements and writings that see the World Bank and IMF as instruments used to maintain global capitalism and injustice.

Today, conventional development theory is dominated by neoliberalism. Neoliberalism based on neoclassical theory, emphasises that development is achieved through a focus on the market and lack of government interference (Hodder, 2000; Willis, 2005). This capitalist ideology has been the default position of development since the end of the Cold War when debate about what development is and how to achieve it (i.e. the ideology of...
development) dissipated in light of the dominance of a de-politicised development agenda:

Critical theory within development studies became increasingly sidelined specifically from the beginning of the 1990s onwards as a result of the quickly growing hegemony of a depoliticised, post-cold war globalisation discourse and a depoliticisation of the development debate in general (Schuurman, 2009:834).

Current thinking around development tends to be informed by practice, rather than theory: 'the strength and weakness of development thinking is its policy-oriented character ... it is problem driven rather than theory-driven' (Pieterse, 2010:4). For example, models of 'good development' such as the Asian tigers (Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea, Hong Kong), the BRICs (Brazil, Russia, India, China) or the newly anointed CIVETS (Colombia, Indonesia, Vietnam, Egypt, Turkey, and South Africa) inform the practice of development in the South as 'models' to follow. Alternative discourses based on the theory of development do, of course, exist. For example, the idea of participatory development which has, at least in rhetoric, been adopted to some extent in mainstream development thinking. However, it is still predominately the practice of development that informs development thinking today.

Development, in an international development sense, can be seen therefore as a notion that arose out of western ideas and values. It is based on notions of capitalism and democracy and arises out of a belief that the West can help the 'undeveloped' to 'develop' along the same paths that the West did through industrial growth and capitalist expansion. The language of development itself, for example 'developed' to refer to the West and 'developing' to refer to the South, implies a linear progression towards a certain standard of living and success, usually that seen in the West. As Escobar (1995:26) says: 'A type of development was promoted which conformed to the ideas and expectations of the affluent West, to what the Western countries judged to be a normal course of evolution and progress.'

Simultaneously, over the last sixty years, development has become increasingly institutionalised. This is seen through the growth of organisations, institutions and structures concerned with development. Development institutions include the World Bank (formerly the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development), the International Monetary Foundation (IMF), the United Nations (UN), bilateral organisations such as AusAID and DFID, and various local and international Non Government Organisations (NGOs). These organisations 'implement' development via in-country agencies; hold meetings and conferences such as the UN Millennium Summit and the International Conference on Financing for Development to determine the path of development; and measure and assess the progress of development through quantitative means such as the Human Development Index, Gross National Product (GNP) per capita and the Human Poverty Index. It is these western-dominated structures that are
today producing the language of development and therefore shaping the broader discourse of development.

Development practice and the current neo-liberal development ideology has, however, always had their critics. One particular school of critique that has arisen since the 1990s, are the post-development theorists (e.g. Escobar, 1995; McGregor, 2009). The post-development theorists argue that the current development discourse is based on eurocentric assumptions and that, following on from Foucault’s post-structuralist analysis of discourse per se, the discourse of development has to be critically analysed in order to understand development and its faults. As Gibson-Graham (2005:6) state: ‘The challenge [of postdevelopment thinking] is to imagine and practice development differently.’ That is, development needs to also be considered from the viewpoint of the South, and from the (often) competing interests in the South (such as the elites and poor, or the mainstream and indigenous), rather than only from its existing Eurocentric standpoint. It is within this critical view of development discourse that this thesis sits.

**Aid**

This thesis takes development, and particularly post-development, as one of its broader platforms for analysis, however it is more specifically concerned with one of the components of development, namely aid. Development and aid are inextricably linked. As Pronk (2004:1) says ‘international development assistance – ‘aid’ – has long occupied a prominent place in debates on development. However, perceptions of its role and significance have changed dramatically over the years.’ This section goes on to look at the history of modern aid; the definitions, statistics and assumptions of western aid; differences between different DAC aid donors; and critiques of aid.

Aid was formalised as an intrinsic part of ‘development’ in 1960, with the formation of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC). The transfer of aid from the West to the South was initially a response to modernisation theory that stated that poorer countries were lagging behind wealthier countries in terms of economic development. Poorer countries needed money to assist with investment and economic growth, and this would then lead to economic development. Of course informal aid did exist between the West and the South prior to the 1960s, for example aid was disbursed in the 1950s to assist war-torn countries; and during the days of colonisation when France and Britain gave non-administrative aid to their colonies (de Haan, 2009a). However, this thesis is most concerned with the modern aid narratives embedded within the international development framework.

It was after the formation of DAC, that ‘rules’ began to be written as to what constituted aid, how it was given and what the aid agenda would be. The initial DAC member countries included the US, UK, France, Germany and Canada. Today, DAC consists of 24 member countries, including Japan and
South Korea. South Korea is the most recent DAC member nation, joining in 2009. DAC was originally formed in order to collect and maintain data on aid flows. Today, DAC, according to its website, defines and monitors global standards in development and is a forum for sharing and exchanging views and lessons on development (OECD-DCD/DAC, nd). DAC works in collaboration with multilateral donors such as the United Nations (UN), World Bank (WB) and Asian Development Bank (ABD). With the World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) participating as permanent observers. DAC member countries are estimated to provide 90–92% of total global aid (Hammad and Norton, 2009), although this figure is hard to quantify with any clarity as not all non-DAC donors provide aid figures.

The principle underpinning aid, at its most basic, could be as simple as ‘those who can, should help those who are in extreme need’ (Riddell 2007). However, in reality the giving and receiving of aid, and its relationship to development is much more complicated than this. Aid (or ‘Overseas Development Assistance’ as DAC refers to it) has been defined by the OECD (2008a:1) as:

Official Development Assistance is defined as those flows to countries and territories on the DAC List of ODA Recipients and to multilateral development institutions which are:

(i) provided by official agencies, including state and local governments, or by their executive agencies; and
(ii) each transaction of which:
  a) is administered with the promotion of the economic development and welfare of developing countries as its main objective; and
  b) is concessional in character and conveys a grant element of at least 25 per cent (calculated at a rate of discount of 10 per cent).

Covered by this definition, are bilateral aid flows from country to country and multilateral aid flows from multilateral development organisations such as the World Bank and United Nations. Not covered by this definition are, theoretically, military assistance, cultural aid, and lending with the pure purpose of export promotion – although in practice aid often encompasses these forms of aid, just under different names. For example, aid to Afghanistan or Iraq may not be called military aid but often it serves a military purpose.

DAC has kept in-depth statistics of all aid pledges, disbursements, recipients and various other quantitative aid statistics since its inception. Thus it is known that total net ODA in 2008 from DAC donors was US$119.8 billion. This was an increase, in real terms, of 10.2% from the previous year. The five top donor countries (by volume) were the United States, United Kingdom, France, Japan and Germany; and the top five recipients of aid were
Nigeria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Sudan. By sector, the largest area for OECD aid the ‘social’ sector, which covers health; education; population programmes; water supply and sanitation; and government and civil society. The social sector made up 39% of ODA commitments in 2006 (OECD 2008b).

As various ideologies have permeated development since the 1960s (see previous section), so too have they influenced the aid agenda. In the 1960s, when modernisation was the prevailing development discourse, aid was prefaced on the idea that less developed countries (or ‘traditional’ societies) should be assisted to progress towards ‘developed’ (i.e. western) states. In the 1970s the basic needs agenda was foremost in aid circles. This agenda was concerned with providing ‘basic needs’ such as upgrading of literacy, or health maintenance skills to those in the South (Hunt, 2004). This shift in aid thinking occurred against a background of global change: the 1970s ‘was a period of adjustment, and a process of global liberalization began with the collapse of the economic regulation that had dominated since the end of World War II’ (de Haan, 2009a:72). In the 1980s neo-liberalism came to dominate aid. Deregulated markets and economic liberty became the accepted norm to achieve ‘development’. This new world era saw the rise of the Washington Consensus. The Washington Consensus was based on the shared policy themes of Washington Based institutions – namely free market policies: ‘The so-called consensus highlighted the need for policies of fiscal discipline, market-determined exchange and interest rates, protection of property rights, liberalization, privatization, and openness to trade’ (de Haan, 2009a:75). This thinking saw the rise of the controversial, yet widespread, structural adjustment programs of the IMF and World Bank (Hunt 2004).

Today ‘the Washington Consensus continues to be criticized, even though many of its basic principles have never been abandoned’ (de Haan, 2009a:78). Nonetheless, the Consensus has changed somewhat since the 1980s. Whilst the basic tenets may have been retained, ‘add on’ policies have also been added that allow for a greater focus on poverty reduction and the role of institutions and governance. This newer aid agenda is often referred to as the ‘post-Washington consensus’:

The new approaches take into account many of the earlier critiques, concluding that the policy prescriptions were not wrong - certainly not regarding the need for macro-economic stability - but that they were insufficient. The new approaches stress the complementary role of the state with regard to the market and hope that the processes of democratization will support a vibrant market economy (de Haan, 2009a:80).

Today the Washington and post-Washington consensus can be seen to be encapsulated in key strategic aid documents and milestones such as the Millennium Declaration (2000) which led to the Millennium Development Goals, the Monterrey Consensus on Financing for Development (2002) and the
Paris Declaration of Aid Effectiveness (2005) (see Table 2.1). This western-led aid agenda based on the principles of neo-liberalism, has gone on to become the accepted ‘norm’ of global aid practice today as espoused by the OECD-DAC.

Within this DAC consensus on aid, different countries have varying approaches to aid. However, this thesis argues that whilst different countries may have different approaches to aid, these differences are largely subsumed within the overarching development discourse: members of DAC are ‘expected to have certain common objectives concerning the conduct of their aid programmes. To this end, guidelines have been prepared for development practitioners in capitals and in the field’ (OECD, 2003).

Table 2.1: Key international aid agreements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Summary</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Millennium Development Goals</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>• Eight international development/anti-poverty goals agreed upon by all UN member states. To be achieved by 2015.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Goals: end poverty and hunger, universal education, gender equality, child health, maternal health, combat HIV/AIDS, environmental sustainability, global partnership.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monterrey Consensus on Financing for Development</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>• Key agreement on financing for development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Key areas of finance for development adopted at the conference:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1. Mobilising domestic financial resources for development.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Mobilising international resources for development: foreign direct investment and other private flows.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3. International trade as an engine for development.</td>
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<td>4. Increasing international financial and technical cooperation for development.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5. External Debt.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6. Addressing systemic issues: enhancing the coherence and consistency of the international monetary, financial and trading systems in support of development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paris Declaration of Aid Effectiveness</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>• International agreement to increase efforts in harmonisation, alignment and managing aid for results.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Aid effectiveness goals: Ownership, alignment, harmonisation, results, mutual accountability.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Perhaps the country that stands out as having the most 'alternate' approach to aid within the DAC member countries is Japan. Japan has been critiqued, particularly in the past, by the West for its approach to aid which has not always been seen to fulfil the general aid consensus. Critiques of Japanese aid from the West include Japan’s focus on infrastructure that benefits Japanese investment, and aid allocation only to countries that will support Japan politically or economically (Kondo, 2007). Other DAC nations also have differing emphases in their aid programs. For example, European aid, particularly that from the Scandinavian countries, tends to emphasise poverty reduction and social and humanitarian outcomes whereas American aid usually has a stronger geopolitical and foreign policy focus. As Riddell (2007: 55) says: 'The core purpose of United States aid today is neither poverty eradication nor even the promotion of economic growth in poor countries. Rather, it is to “protect America” using bilateral aid programmes to foster democracy and freedom.'

There have been many critiques over the years of DAC aid and whether this aid does, indeed, assist in achieving development (e.g. Bauer, 1971; Easterly, 2006; Moyo 2009). One long-standing critique of DAC aid, is that it perpetuates a neo-colonialist system whereby the West retains power and control over the South. This critique arises out of the dependency critique of development. For example, Hayter (1971:9) in one of her critical texts about aid says that:

I believe, now, that the existence of aid can be explained only in terms of an attempt to preserve the capitalist system of the Third World. Aid is not a particularly effective instrument for achieving this; hence its current decline. But, in so far as it is effective, its contribution to the well being of the peoples of the Third World is negative, since it is not in their interest that exploitation should continue.

The theme that aid 'does not work' is continued by Hancock (1989:xiii) although he argues not from a neo-colonial/dependency theory perspective, but rather claims that the aid industry has 'hijacked our kindness' in order to cover up corruption, greed and failure. Numerous other critiques have gone on to question aid in terms of its commitment to poverty reduction (e.g. Randel et al., 1995; Greenhill & Watt, 2005); the gap between rhetoric and reality in the programs of donors (e.g. Rowlands, 2008); and the need for radical reform of aid if it is to achieve its objectives (Greenhill, 2006)

Today, however, the aid landscape is changing. The dominance of the DAC donors is being challenged. Many so called ‘new’ donors are entering the aid landscape. These non-traditional donors include countries such as China, India, Saudi Arabia, Brazil and Thailand. These donors have the potential to bring with them their own ideas and philosophies on what aid is, how it should be used and what aid should achieve. This presents an implicit challenge to the traditional DAC donors and their current monopoly on aid:
By quietly offering alternatives to aid-receiving countries, emerging donors are introducing competitive pressures into the existing system. They are weakening the bargaining position of western donors in respect of aid-receiving countries, exposing standards and processes that are out of date and ineffectual. The result is a serious challenge to the existing multilateral development assistance regime (Woods, 2008:224).

**Representation and Encounter**

This section draws upon theoretical insights in cultural geography and critical geopolitics to look at encounter and representation in aid and development.

**Cultural Geography**

Culture in itself can be seen in various ways. A dictionary definition may define culture as 'customs, institutions, and achievements of a particular nation, people, or group' for example African culture or youth culture; or alternatively, culture can be defined as synonymous with 'high culture' which tends to refer to a refined understanding of the arts or other manifestations of human achievement (Oxford English Dictionary, 2008). The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is an example of a development organisation which uses 'culture' according to such a dictionary definition. According to the UNESCO website, UNESCO places '... culture at the heart of development policy [which] constitutes an essential investment in the world's future and a pre-condition to successful globalization processes that take into account the principles of cultural diversity' (UNESCO, 2008). However, it is also possible to go beyond these rather narrow viewpoints to consider culture as much broader than this. According to Shurmer-Smith and Hannam (1994:216): 'The economy is cultural, politics is cultural, artefacts are cultural and nature is cultural'. It is this idea that culture imbes, and is relevant to, all aspects of understanding that cultural geography has to come to adopt in recent years.

Cultural geography is a sub-discipline of geography that looks at the meanings, interpretations and re-interpretations people use to construct place and space. As cultural geographers Anderson and Gale (1999:4) state: 'if culture can be defined at all, then it refers to those shared codes of understanding, communication and practice that set one of many contexts for human thought and action.' That is, people *construct* spaces, places, landscapes, regions and environments and it is these constructions that cultural geography recognises and studies:

Culture is a process in which people are actively engaged ... a dynamic mix of symbols, beliefs, languages and practices that people create, not a fixed thing or entity governing humans ... People grasp, interpret and re-present their worlds with the use of symbols and
vocabularies through which they construct cultures and geographies (Anderson and Gale, 1999:4)

Cultural geography as a discipline has not always, however, considered culture in this way. Early cultural geographers such as Carl Sauer considered culture as much more material than today’s cultural geographers. They were inclined to study culture as a way of life. For example, attempting to understand how cultures developed out of, and influenced their landscapes: ‘Cultural geography is therefore concerned with those works of man that are inscribed into the earth’s surface and give to it characteristic expression’ (Sauer, 1931:622). However, in the early 1990s, following on from Marxist and post-structuralist ideas, cultural geography began to reject meta-narratives and the narrow definitions of culture as merely a ‘thing’, but rather to see culture as a process by which people interpret and reinterpret their worlds. In the context of this thesis, cultural geography is useful as it provides the theoretical underpinnings for considering how space and place are represented, perceived and encountered and how we create these meanings and interactions through discourses, scripts and narratives. For example:

The meanings attached to the term development are produced within and by a particular cultural context, that of the so-called West—or, more precisely, the political, economic, and social institutions of Euro-American societies, generating a particular discourse of, or way of talking about, development. Seen in this way, it becomes clear that development is a cultural artefact, rather than a natural process which can be accelerated and guided by development planning (Schech and Haggis, 2000:1).

However, before a detailed analysis of cultural geography is undertaken and its relationship to representation and encounter in aid and development further explored, it is important to make mention of another theory that this thesis draws on: that is critical geopolitics. Cultural geography and critical geopolitics are intrinsically linked in their ability to add layers of understanding to geography and geopolitics respectively.

Critical geopolitics

Geopolitics is a term that was first coined in 1899 by conservative Swedish political scientist Rudolph Kjellen. He originally used the term to describe the ‘science which conceives of the state as a geographical organism or as a phenomenon in space’ (Braden and Shelley, 2000:15). Today the term, at its broadest, refers to the intersection between geography and politics and how this plays out in international relations, or to put it another way, the study of inter(national) politics, foreign policy and geography. Geopolitics is, therefore, about how states exert power both within and beyond their boundaries.
Critical geopolitics arose in the late 1990s as an alternative means by which to analyse geopolitics. It draws on concepts in postmodernism and post-colonialism to understand the world. A problem with conventional geopolitics, as seen by scholars such as O'Tuathail (1996) and Agnew (2003), is that critical geopolitics tends to assume that 'the world is independent of our beliefs and understandings about it' (O'Tuathail 2006:6). Critical geopolitics, therefore, seeks to uncover the meaning, practices and representations inherent within geopolitics. Like cultural geography, it draws on discourse analysis and other poststructuralist concepts to rethink and redefine geopolitics:

rather than defining geopolitics as an unproblematic description of the world political map, it treats geopolitics as a discourse, as a culturally and politically varied way of describing, representing and writing about geography and international politics (O'Tuathail, 2006:3).

In other words, critical geopolitics recognises that there is 'no such thing as a value-free political decision and all political decisions have spatial consequences' (Blacksell, 2006:148)

In order to relate geopolitics and critical geopolitics to this thesis in a more concrete way, it might be useful to take a look at Agnew's (2003) outline of the modern stages of geopolitical imaginations from its beginnings in imperialism, through the Cold War to today's 'new world order'. This outline highlights not only the different geopolitics that have influenced the world in contemporary times, but also indicates ways in which geopolitical spaces are 'written' using specific scripts and narratives.

Geopolitics as a field of study was born in the nineteenth century in the era of imperialism. This was when the British Empire was in its ascendancy and its main rivals were France, Germany and Russia. The geopolitical script of the day was one of empires and colonies; supremacy of European over non-European; and expansionism and empire building. The European world was expanding out of its known territory and colonising 'free space' to further its own aims. It was also during this time that the United States began its rise towards becoming one of the most powerful nations in the world. The West was 'carving up' the world and at the same time furthering the spread of its ideas, theories and philosophies (Dodds, 2007).

After the World Wars, global geopolitics became dominated by a new script – that of the Cold War and the rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union. Ideology and geography become intertwined. The world came to be represented as first world (i.e. the non-communist world), second world (i.e. communist states) and the third world (i.e. the poor and developing non-aligned states). It was within this third world that the battle for ideological supremacy took place between the US and the Soviet Union. This produced the 'domino theory', which 'marked the apotheosis of Cold War geopolitics as a type of power/knowledge that completely ignored the

After the end of the Cold War in the 1990s, globalisation and neo-liberalism came to dominate the 'new world order'. Neo-liberalism, as discussed earlier, argued for deregulated markets and economic liberty. Its ideologies were expressed through global organisations such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The United States has positioned itself as the sole super power in this 'new world order'. However, with the recent global financial crisis and the concurrent rise of China on the economic and political stage, this 'new order' may rapidly be changing. It is within this changing 'new world order' that this thesis is situated, by looking at the aid encounter between China and the West in Cambodia.

The next sections go on to look more specifically at two aspects of cultural geography and critical geopolitics; namely representation and encounter. What do these terms mean in the context of this thesis; how do representation and encounter relate to aid and development; and how can representation and encounter be used as a framework for understanding the aid culture and the changing nature of aid in Cambodia?

**Representation**

Representation is a term used by cultural geographers and those engaged with critical geopolitics to refer to 'a set of practices by which meanings are constituted and communicated' (Johnston et al, 2000:703). If we take this definition, representations become not only reflective of reality, as would be a conventional definition of representation, but they also construct reality. This construction of reality can occur through numerous means, including via texts, words, pictures and landscape. For example, Australia is often constructed in the United Kingdom as a place of sand, sun and relaxation, as a result of television soaps such as *Home and Away*, alternatively, place and space can also be constructed through discourse, such as via the discourse of development or geopolitical scripts.

It is representation via discourse that this thesis is most concerned with. Discourse, as used by cultural geographers, refers to: 'a specific series of representations, practices and performances through which meanings are produced, connected into networks and legitimised' (Johnston et al, 2000:180). For example, the 'discourse' of aid and development, can be seen as the institutionalised way of thinking, writing and discussing aid and development as promoted by the West and put into practice by associated aid and development institutions such as the World Bank, Asian Development Bank or AusAID. It is also the way in which 'the other' is represented. The 'other' is used in this sense to represent Said's (1995) notion of 'them and us' to refer to the West and the Orient, as being an 'us and them' dichotomy: for example, the ways in which China may be constructed by the West both geopolitically, and in terms of aid and development.
Associated with the idea of discourse, as used in this sense, is also of course the notion of power. The discourses of aid and development are almost exclusively those that have been produced by the wealthy, powerful West. Alternative visions of development, particularly those emanating from the South are rarely heard. Thus a discourse can be seen as not merely a neutral entity, but rather something infused with meaning and power. Therefore, if we take development as a discourse, rather than being neutral, it becomes a system of knowledge inseparable from related regimes of practice (Forsyth, 2005:560). The notion of discourse, as used in this sense, arose from Foucault's work on power and the relationship between power, knowledge and discourse. As Anderson and Gale (1999:8) say in their text on cultural geographies: 'The discourses that organisations articulate to interpret themselves to each other and the world at large can clearly uphold unequal relations between people and places.'

One of the key proponents of using discourse to analyse how power, culture and knowledge are connected through representations of place is Edward Said. Said, in his seminal text *Orientalism* outlined how the East is constructed by the West for its own purposes. Said undertook an analysis of western discourses on the East, including reading novels, poems, scientific texts and academic texts to look at how the East is represented and represented by the West. He concluded that the construction of the East by the West is undertaken by, and in relation to, the West in order to maintain the West's position of superiority and power over the east, or the 'other'. He labelled this image or construction of the Orient by the west as 'Orientalism'. In Said's (1995:7) own words: 'Orientalism depends for its strategy on this flexible positional superiority, which puts the Westerner in a whole series of possible relationships with the Orient without ever losing him the relative upper hand.'

This construction of 'the other' and the re-presentation of certain narratives for the purposes of maintaining power relations can also be seen occurring throughout modern geopolitical scripts. For example, it could be said that 'colonialism was ... legitimised through the (mis)representation of other cultures and places as primitive, savage and uneducated, in need of western civilisation and enlightenment' (O'Tuathail et al., 1998:246). In a more contemporary example, we can consider George Bush's 'axis of evil', a term coined by President Bush in 2002 to describe Iran, Iraq and North Korea and thus justify his 'war on terror'. This narrative placed the West as the 'civilising' force that could 'save' the world from the evil 'other'. As McGregor says: 'these scripts reflect the spatially and temporally embedded cultures and politics of the scripting parties' (McGregor, 2005:193). This thesis considers the scripts that the West creates about China and how this plays into aid cultures in Cambodia.

However, it is not only the West that creates representations of the East. The East also manipulates its own image, as seen, for example, through the discussion on Asian values that gained brief attention in the 1990s. 'Asian
values’ was a concept put forward primarily by the Prime Ministers of Singapore and Malaysia, based on the ancient philosophy of Confucianism, to argue that there are Asian traits, ideas and values to which all Asian nations subscribe and which leads to a particularly Asian way of successfully pursuing development. These Asian values such as valuing community over the individual, emphasis on hard work, and primacy of family were used to highlight the supposed differences between Asian values and western values. However, the notion of Asian values was criticised both within and without Asia, as being a means by which to justify the authoritarian regimes common in Asia; and as being a misnomer, as Asia is made up of numerous cultures with various values and ideas, not one culture with one set of values (McGregor, 2008). As Schech and Haggis (2000:80) say: ‘the Singaporean government explicitly inverted modernization theory to argue that Asian traditional values were superior to those of the modern West.’

Encounters

Encounter, according to the dictionary, can be defined as ‘an unexpected or casual meeting’ or ‘a confrontation or difficult struggle’ (Oxford English Dictionary, 2009), both of which may be apt when speaking of aid in Cambodia, but how do we define encounter in relation to cultural geography, and what does it mean in the context of this thesis? Geographies of encounter in a cultural geography context, are usually conceptualised in the sense of geographies of conquest, colonisation and settlement. For example, studies of indigeneity, imperial networks of knowledge and power, and geographies of home, nation and empire (Blunt, 2005) are all studies of encounters in one form or another.

When thinking about the cultural encounter in Cambodia between the West and ‘the other’ in the context of aid, it is perhaps useful to consider some forms of encounter between the West and the South, such as colonialism and postcolonialism, in order to provide a theoretical background for how encounters are conceptualised and how they can play out in a development context.

An early form of encounter between the West and ‘the other’ was, of course, colonialism. Colonialism began in the fifteenth century when Europe expanded its territories into Africa, Asia and the New World. Prior to colonialism, there had been contact between the West and the ‘other’ but it was spasmodic and without structure or organisation. By contrast, from the fifteenth century, European nations were in the process of systematically colonizing the world through the settlement of people in remote or ‘alien’ outposts. According to Fanon (1963) the colonial encounter was one of subordination and domination of new territories and people by the imperial powers, political and legal domination, dependency and exploitation, and institutionalised racial and cultural inequalities.

Colonisation officially ended in the twentieth century, however the colonial encounter can still be seen to be taking place today, just by a different name
or type. For example, the 'weaker' nations in the South, could still be seen as being controlled and used by the more powerful western nations for their own means. Thinking along these lines, the encounter between West and South in terms of development could be seen as merely a newer form of traditional colonial encounter. For example, the choice to grant or not grant loans by international financial institutions such as the World Bank, is often portrayed as a form of neo-colonialism, or 'control' by the West over the South. In the 1980s, further thinking began to emerge about the colonial encounter: this new thinking was termed postcolonialism.

Postcolonialism is closely aligned to cultural geography and critical geopolitics, with representation being one of its main paradigms. The main proponents of postcolonialism include Edward Said and Arturo Escobar. These theorists fundamentally changed critical studies of colonialism and the colonial encounter, by inserting culture into thinking around colonialism. Postcolonial studies emphasise the importance of 'the other' and the de-centralising of the West when looking at postcolonial encounters. As Shurmer-Smith points (2002:68) out: 'the main thrust of postcolonial studies is to make Eurocentric views of the world problematic.' Escobar's work, in particular his 1995 text titled *Encountering Development: The making and unmaking of the third world*, is a seminal text which looks at the postcolonial encounter. In this text, Escobar criticises the whole western-led development discourse; he discusses the systematic production of knowledge and then goes on to imagine a postdevelopment regime of representation. Slater (Slater 2003:427) furthers this theme of de-centering the West and questioning existing development discourses in the postcolonial encounter when he says:

> a post-colonial perspective would underscore the particularity and limits of western visions which purport to have universal relevance, and which are frequently employed in discussions on aid and development as a kind of gold standard for what are seen as aspiring democracies in the global south

Not only does postcolonialism 'de-centre' the West, it also highlights the importance of representation to the encounter. For example, Escobar talks of using 'regimes of representation [which] can be analysed as places of encounter where identities are constructed ...' (Escobar, 1995:10). Shurmer-Smith (2002:131) also talks of the importance of considering representation in regard to cultural encounters: 'Representation is never just cold reporting; it influences the ways in which people encounter spaces and places.' Thus ideas put forward by postcolonialist theorists turns the encounter into one in which representation becomes crucial.

In the context of this thesis, the concept of the cultural encounter is used to look at how those with different cultural sets (i.e. China and the West) come together in an aid context; and what cultural encounters we see within this context between traditional and new donors. This is undertaken keeping in mind postcolonial notions around encounter and the importance of
representation to uncover layers of meaning within the encounter. In the context of this thesis, however, we deviate from the usual type of cultural encounter envisaged by a colonial or postcolonial paradigm, by not looking at a traditional encounter between coloniser and colonised or North and South, but rather instead considering how the West and what could be considered ‘the other’ (in this case China), encounter each other in a third context, i.e. that of Cambodia.
Chapter 3: Chinese Aid and Development

Whilst much has been written about China as an aid recipient, until recently there was little formal or informal study undertaken on China as an aid donor. In the last few years, however, China's role as an aid donor has come to the fore with academics, policymakers and the media taking an interest in China as a 'new' donor. This is particularly the case in regard to Chinese aid to Africa. This chapter looks at Chinese notions of development, Chinese 'aid' (including how much, where it is going and what it is used for), and how China and Chinese aid is imagined and encountered by the West.

**China's development discourse**

Chinese development discourses are poorly understood in the West. This is partly because Chinese aid strategies are often not transparent, with even the amount of aid disbursed a state secret (Bräutigam, 2009). However, development studies also often places a western 'lens' on the study of development, which has the effect of excluding alternative understandings such as that of Chinese development discourses (Schmitz, 2007). Cook (2009a:2) identifies this gap in Western knowledge on Chinese development discourse:

An account of China's own "discourse" around development, how policies are made and different agendas pursued, and which development ideas are adopted and adapted in China's own development plans would provide a valuable perspective to inform western development debates, while helping to build mutual understanding of respective approaches.

Mohan and Power (2009:27) also state:

... we need a much closer reading of Chinese literatures on development theory and international relations, and more importantly an ongoing analysis of China's actual development trajectories and their realization in foreign policy to come to any real conclusions about a Chinese 'development' discourse as such.
Harcourt (2007:2) furthers Cook and Mohan and Power's stance by saying that 'the entry of China into development poses some interesting questions for the transformation of the development discourse itself.' What can the West learn from China and what can China learn from critical thinking around development? 'While there is an enormous amount of research on China – inside and outside the country – this knowledge has barely been reflected in the international development debate and community' (Glyde, 2008). This section attempts to look at what we can say about the development discourse in China and how this relates to China's overseas aid program.

There are two development discourses to consider when thinking of China. There is the discourse of development within the country, and then there is the discourse of development outside the country - the later being the discourse into which overseas aid might fall. This thesis is primarily interested in the second discourse of development. However, this section will first briefly look at the internal discourse of development. This internal discourse is important as 'there has been growing interest in drawing out the lessons from China for other countries' (de Haan, 2009b:12), particularly when it comes to China as a 'new' source of aid or even as a new development model for the South (Cook, 2009b:1). An understanding of internal development discourses may also provide an idea of how China will develop its foreign aid strategies.

Over the last 70 years, China has implemented a number of internal development paths. Historically these development discourses have differed quite substantially, both in ideology and practice, to those espoused by the West. For example, during the 1950s to 1970s development in China was based around ideas of socialism, and particularly 'Maoism'. This development path was often seen by those critical of the western development approach as an 'alternative' to the free-market neoliberal approach favoured by the West (e.g. Buchanan, 1970). Today, however, China's internal development discourse can be seen to be much more similar to that of the West, being based more on market-oriented capitalism than the old socialist/Mao principles.

China's 'alternative' internal development path began with the 'Great Leap Forward' led by Chairman Mao Zedong from 1958 to 1962. The aim of the Great Leap Forward was to turn China from an agrarian economy to a modern communist state based on socialist principles of development: 'this was a highly ambitious plan to use the power of socialist economics to increase Chinese production of steel, coal and electricity' (Mitter, 2008:57). The 'modern state' was to be achieved through collectivization, industrialization and agriculturalization. However, the Great Leap Forward turned out to be an economic failure and caused the deaths of at least 20 million people largely through famine (Mitter, 2008).

The Great Leap Forward was followed by 'The Cultural Revolution'. During this time religion was banned, connections with both the West and the
Soviets were frowned upon, and ‘non-communists’ were sought out and persecuted:

The “Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution” that broke out in 1966 was many things, but at bottom it was a struggle over development strategies by then perceived not as mere alternatives, but as contraries (Maxwell, 1979:2).

The Cultural Revolution officially lasted until Mao’s death in 1976.

In 1978, Deng Xiaoping came to power and commenced opening up China onto the global stage. The ‘alternative’ path to development based on socialist ideals began to be abandoned in favour of a more market-oriented approach. This change in approach resulted in subsequent rapid economic growth and poverty reduction: ‘Since 1979, with the introduction of reforms, China’s GDP has grown at an average of 9.8 percent per annum, per capita income has increased fifty-fold and some 500 million people have been lifted out of poverty’ (UNDP 2010:i). Whilst 16% of China’s population still lives in poverty and a quarter lack access to clean drinking water (House of Commons & IDC, 2009), ‘China’s rapid economic development in the past two decades has generated the most rapid decline in absolute poverty ever witnessed’ (UNDP, 2005a).

China’s rapid development has generated much discussion in the media and amongst academics. Whilst China has today moved away from radically alternative models of development towards a more market-based approach, it is still represented by some in the West as having a unique development model, one which has allowed for rapid economic growth and poverty reduction. One model that is often put forward by those in the West to explain China’s rapid growth is the ‘Beijing Consensus’ or ‘China model’ (Ramo 2004; Halper, 2010; Kurlantzick, 2007; Zhao 2010). The Beijing Consensus was a term coined by Joshua Cooper Ramo, former editor of Time magazine, in 2004. The Beijing Consensus is a counterpoint to the Washington Consensus, and suggests that China has achieved its remarkable development through an alternative development path to that of the West. The basic tenets of the Beijing Consensus are that China’s development path has been based on innovation and knowledge led growth; that there has been a focus on the quality of life rather than economic performance; and that there has been self-determination (Ramo, 2004). Encompassed within this definition is the notion of a regimented society which provides cheap labour in order to fuel economic growth.

Whilst some have accepted the Beijing Consensus as a convenient way to explain China’s rapid development, many others have chosen to critique it. For example, Nordtveit (2009:160) points out that:

Chinese scholars underline that there is not one Chinese model, but several, tried out with various success and drawbacks. Some academics have pointed to the unclear nature of the Beijing
Consensus, while others again deny its very existence ... China’s government officially denies the existence of a Beijing Consensus’ (see also Suzuki, 2009; The Economist, 2010).

Kennedy (2010:476) goes on to state that:

Whereas the BC and China Model may have some lasting resonance on matters political, given the problems of these terms and the flexibility of standard economic theory, it should be clear that the economic significance of these ideas should not be overstated. There are individual elements of the China’s experience that deserve study and perhaps adoption by others, but they do not add up to a distinctive model.

According to Nordtveit (2009), the official Chinese path of development is not the western-coined Beijing Consensus, but rather that of Xiaokang or a ‘well-off’ society which is people-centred and embraces poverty alleviation, education, health and environmental protection (China Daily, 2005). The rhetoric of Xiaokang is very similar to that espoused by western development discourses. It is so similar, in fact, that the concept of Xiaokang has been adopted not only by the Chinese government2, but also the United Nations Development Program in China as the path towards development and modernization in China. The UNDP highlights the similarities by aligning Xiaokang with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs):

China is forging ahead to achieve Xiaokang in an all around way by adoption of a “new development concept” incorporating more reforms and innovations, emphasizing the vision again of “five balances,” and putting people’s interests first. The government is facing a lot of challenges to address emerging issues in the process of Xiaokang/MDGs attainment, namely, rural issues, integrated public security, transformation of government and administration reform, rural-urban & regional balanced development, environmental protection, way of economic growth, etc (UNDP, 2005b).

Xiaokang forms part of the overall current Chinese socio-economic ideology of the ‘scientific development concept’: ‘This [scientific development concept] emphasizes that people should be the ultimate end of development, in order to balance economic and social development and build a harmonious society’ (UNDP, 2008:27). Indeed the current Five Year Plan for Economic and Social Development for the People’s Republic of China (National Development and Reform Commission, nd) points out that:

Based on scientific approaches to development, we should focus on independent innovation, improve institutions and mechanisms, promote social harmony and enhance China’s overall national

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2 Deng Xiaoping re-introduced the term xiaokang in 1979 (Nordtveit, 2009)
strength, international competitiveness, and risk-handling capacity in an all-round way.

According to He (2009), China has many slogans, rhetoric and statements referring to development, many of which are similar to the West’s development discourse. The challenge in China, as in the West, is how to put development theory into practice.

It is also important to recognise the degree to which China’s internal development discourse has, in fact, been influenced by the western practice of development (contrary to popular belief, or that espoused by the Beijing Consensus). The degree of international influence on development in China is perhaps not surprising considering China has been one of the world’s largest recipients of aid to date (Nordtveit, 2009). Aid disbursements to China are certainly decreasing as China’s economy grows, however, in 2008 China still received $1,489 million in net ODA. The largest donors to China in 2008 were Japan, Germany and France and the largest sector for aid was education (OECD nd[a]). China is also party, as an aid recipient, to international aid agreements such as the *Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness* and the *Millennium Development Goals*. As Wang (2007:41) says:

> International influences have been an important force shaping China’s new approach to development. The influence comes from international organizations, foreign governments, the international NGO network and business corporations ... in the area of sustainable development [in particular], China seems to have been remarkably ready to embrace foreign input.

China’s overseas aid program, by contrast, appears to fit not so much into what would be recognised in the West as a development discourse per se, but rather seems to sit within China’s overall foreign policy discourse. The discourse of international development is one that has, to date, been western dominated: ‘Development studies and the idea of “international development” originated in “developed” countries and for many in China it is still viewed as being very euro-, or Western-centric’ (Institute of Development Studies, 2009), therefore it is understandable that China would not necessarily frame its aid program in a western type ‘development’ discourse. Certainly China prefers to use different language to the West when talking of ‘development’, referring not to aid, for example, but rather ‘economic cooperation’ and rather than talking of aid recipients, talking of ‘development partners’ (for example, see Xinhua 2010a; Xinhua 2010b; Xinhua 2010c).

China’s foreign policy discourse is based on the *Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence*. This policy was formulated by Premier Zhou Enlai in 1954 and is still in use today, highlighting a continuity in China’s foreign aid discourse over the last sixty years. The central tenets of this policy are mutual respect for sovereignty, mutual non-aggression and non-interference, equality and
mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence. These principles are the fundamental principles China purportedly adheres to in fostering and developing friendly relations with all the countries in the world (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China, 2000). More recently, China has also adopted another defining discourse around foreign policy – this is the idea of a ‘Harmonious World’ as set out by President Hu Jintao. This replaces the previous foreign policy discourse of ‘peaceful rise/development’. Harmonious World is a Confucian concept that President Hu Jintao has brought into foreign policy discourse to refer to the relationship between the countries of the world: ‘We maintain that the people of all countries should join hands and strive to build a harmonious world of lasting peace and common prosperity’ (Hu Jintao, quoted in Xinhua, 2007a). In relation to development, a harmonious world implies that:

Developed countries should shoulder a greater responsibility for a universal, coordinated and balanced development in the world while developing countries should make fuller use of their own advantages to develop themselves (Hu Jintao, quoted in Xinhua, 2007b).

Whilst both the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence and Harmonious World can be seen to play into China’s foreign policy discourse, perhaps the policy most closely related to aid and development within the Chinese foreign policy discourse is that of the principle of South-South cooperation. South-South cooperation is based on notions of mutual support and non-interference, but also refers to countries from the South working together to achieve solutions to common development challenges. According to Yi Xiaozhun (cited in Xinhua, 2010a), the Chinese Vice-Minister of Commerce:

Promoting South-South Cooperation and help each other among the developing countries’ [sic] is the centerpiece of development cooperation. ‘As the developing countries are at similar levels of development and facing similar economic and social development problems, they can better appreciate the development needs of each other.

The UNDP in China has worked alongside China to assist develop a strategy of South-South cooperation. China is also a key donor to the UNDP Voluntary Trust Fund for the Promotion of South-South Cooperation which aims to promote a South-South dialogue (UNDP, 2005b); and the FAO Food Security South-South Cooperation Program (Brautigam, 2010a).

China’s aid

China has, perhaps surprisingly, one of the oldest articulations of foreign aid principles in the world. In 1964 during a visit to ten African countries, Chinese premier Zhou Enlai set out the *Eight Principles for China’s Aid to Foreign Countries* (Table 3.1). These principles emphasised equality, mutual benefit, and respect for the recipient’s sovereignty and are still in use today (Cotterrell and Harmer, 2005). The eight principles of aid are in line with the
Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence which, at least in theory, govern China's foreign policy today. The eight principles set out the theoretical basis on which China's aid rests and incorporate ideas such as non-interference and a lack of conditionalities. However, these aid principles have not been translated into direct policies as such, with no formal aid or development assistance policy having been published by the Chinese government to date (Chin and Frolic, 2007; Cook 2009b; Bailey, 1975). The one exception is the 'One China policy' whereby China will only grant aid to those countries which formally recognise the People's Republic of China as the sole government of both China and Taiwan.

Table 3.1: The Eight Principles for China's Aid to Third World Countries

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Principle</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Emphasize equality and mutual benefit</td>
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<td>2. Respect sovereignty and never attach conditions</td>
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<td>3. Provide interest-free or low-interest loans</td>
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<td>4. Help recipient countries develop independence and self-reliance</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Build projects that require little investment and can be accomplished quickly</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Provide quality equipment and material at market prices</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Ensure effective technical assistance</td>
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<td>8. Pay experts according to local standards</td>
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Source: Chin and Frolic, 2007

Cooper (1976) suggests that China’s present aid system may have arisen out of China’s traditional style of foreign relations – that of the tribute system ‘whereby foreign countries brought gifts to the Chinese emperor and received more valuable gifts or trade concessions in return’ (1976:4). Brautigam (2009:24) continues this theme:

As an empire, China evolved a tribute system: a long tradition of exchanges with smaller nations in its sphere of influence. Visiting missions from the kingdom of Siam or Malacca would affirm the dominance of the emperor by ritual kowtowing. They would pay nominal tribute to him, and be rewarded with generous gifts and the right to trade. These diplomatic gifts foreshadow the practices today. For most recipients, Chinese aid is institutionalised through a bureaucratic planning process. But ‘gifts’ of aid packages are frequently announced along with other agreements during the visits of high-level Chinese dignitaries to developing countries, or the visits of those leaders to Beijing.

Chin and Frolic (2007) and Brautigam (2009:13) also point to the fact that China's aid has also been influenced by China's role as an aid recipient: 'the content of their [China's] aid reflects what they believe worked for their own development. And, surprisingly, much about the way they give aid reflects what they learned from all of us [the West].’ For example, 'China's engagement in Africa often simply repeats patterns established by the West,
and especially Japan, in China.’ However, this does not mean that China follows existing international aid norms when it comes to aid policy. As Glosny points out (2006:16):

... as is the case in many other areas, China is reluctant to completely accept and adopt western foreign aid norms, given that it had no role in establishing them. A more subtle expression of this discontent is that given that western norms represent the history, culture and situation of those countries, and because China differs from them in all of these areas, it will have to diverge from these norms and chart its own path. Still others even question whether or not these norms are good for the developing countries themselves.

China is often referred to as a ‘new’ or ‘emerging’ aid donor. However China has been giving aid since the mid-1950s, much the same length of time as the traditional donors (Bartke, 1975; Cooper, 1976; Law, 1984). China’s official aid program began in 1953 with a large grant to the socialist North Korea at the end of the Korean War. Aid then quickly followed first to the rest of Asia and then globally (including Africa, the Middle East, Latin America and even Malta [Bartke, 1975]). According to Brautigam (1998), by 1975, China had aid programs in more African nations than the United States. This early aid was based on Maoist principles and reflected the development agenda within China at the time:

China’s development assistance was designed to help post-colonial regimes modernize and become self-reliant, and focused on agricultural aid, technical assistance, and projects that could be completed quickly. The central aim of this assistance was to help developing countries feed and clothe their people. Loans to support local projects were usually provided interest-free. The Chinese referred—and continue to refer—to their development assistance as ‘poor helping the poor’ (Chin and Frolic, 2007:4).

From the 1970s, however, China’s aid agenda began to change focus somewhat, once again reflecting changes occurring within China, namely the policy shift towards reform and opening up. It was also at this time that China became a recipient of foreign aid (Glosny, 2006). According to Chin and Frolic (2007:4):

During this period, China also became interested in competing with other nations for natural resources in the developing world. As a result of these debates, by the mid-1980s, Chinese authorities shifted official policy toward development assistance projects that provided economic benefits both to China and recipient countries.

Perhaps the most well known of China’s aid projects from this period, was the Tanzam railway. The railway connected landlocked Zambia to the ports of Tanzania and was built between 1970 and 1975 at a cost of $500 million—the largest ever Chinese aid project at the time. The project was funded by
an interest free loan. The Tanzanian and Zambian governments had previously approached several western bilateral and multilateral donors to fund the project but all had refused (Bailey, 1975). During this time, Chinese aid was often seen as an alternative to western and Soviet aid:

The last decade [1965-1975] has witnessed a growing disillusionment with Western and Soviet aid, both among the recipients and the donors. This has aroused a great deal of interest in Chinese assistance as an important alternative for the Third World (Bailey, 1975: 587).

Despite China’s established role as an aid donor, however, from the end of the Cold War to the end of the 1990s, little attention was paid by the West to Chinese aid, instead the focus of western attention was on development within China. Nonetheless, China has continued to give aid – and since about 2000, this aid has once again come to the fore as the amount and breadth once again increases and China’s place on the global stage becomes increasingly important:

China is the most dynamic country in the world with growth and change occurring at an absolutely dizzying pace. The excitement and stresses of rapid change are palpable in Beijing, in Shanghai, in ‘small’ cities like Kunming (population: only 5 million). They are also increasingly evident in China’s aid program, the structure and management of which we are just beginning to get a picture (Lancaster, 2007:6).

According to the Chinese Statistical Yearbook 2005 (National Bureau of Statistics), Chinese aid was $731.2 million in 2004 (although both Glosny (2006) and Lancaster (2007) state that this figure is too low and Chinese aid today is likely to be in the region of US$1.5 billion per year). The highest proportion of Chinese aid today goes to Asia (Woods, 2008; Chin and Frolic, 2007). According to Chin and Frolic (2007:12) 40% of Chinese aid goes to Asia, 25% to Africa, 13% for Latin and Central America and 10% for other countries (including the South Pacific). The largest recipients of Chinese aid are Iran, Pakistan and North Korea (Rowlands 2008). However, when looking at these aid figures, it is important to keep in mind that the actual volume and spatial distribution of Chinese aid today are still a state secret (Brautigam, 2009). The figures above are based on those figures which the Chinese government has released and/or reports from recipient countries themselves. Brautigam also points out that the media often over-inflate China’s aid, particularly as a result of confusing loans (which are often at a market-rate line of credit and are thus actually investment) with aid.

It is also important to keep in mind the fact that China does not define its aid the same way that the OECD-DAC countries define their aid. China, in fact, has no official definition of its aid. Brautigam (2010a) states that China does not always include debt relief or scholarships as official aid (unlike the DAC countries) but it does count military aid and loans for foreign-aided joint
ventures and cooperative projects in its official aid. Indeed Brautigam goes so far as to say: ‘that the lion's share of China's officially supported finance is not actually official development assistance (ODA)' (Brautigam, 2011: 752).

This raises the question of whether Chinese 'aid' can be considered aid at all, particularly in the context of aid and development debates? Certainly China itself does not refer to 'aid' but rather 'development cooperation' (much as the West refers to 'aid' as Overseas Development Assistance). And there is no denying that Chinese aid does not necessarily meet the criteria of 'aid' as defined by the West. However, it could also be argued that whether China's 'aid' meets the definition of ODA or not, it is still aid in terms of assisting the South meet development objectives (whether these be western defined poverty reduction and democracy goals, or Chinese defined infrastructure goals). Even Brautigam does not deny this link saying that despite the fact China's aid is not primarily based on ODA, it still may be 'developmental' (Brautigam, 2011:752).

China itself may not call aid, 'aid', but it is increasingly paying attention to, and participating in, western aid circles, thereby indicating that China itself sees its 'development cooperation' as being somewhat similar in principle to western aid:

The Chinese government has also begun to engage directly with foreign aid agencies to learn from their arrangements and processes and tentatively, to collaborate with them. They have sent teams to visit London and Stockholm to learn how these governments manage their aid. The have developed a considerable dialogue with the British Department for International Development on international aid and development issues. They have begun to collaborate with the Canadian government on technical assistance activities in developing countries. They have signed a memorandum of understanding with the International Finance Corporation about collaboration on environmentally sustainable projects in emerging markets. And they have joined or expressed interest in joining donor coordination groups in a number of African countries (Lancaster, 2007:6).

This thesis, whilst noting the differences between Chinese and western aid – uses the term ‘aid’ for both western ODA and Chinese development cooperation in line with media, policy makers and other researchers. This is in order, predominately, to come to a clearer understanding of how the broader concept of aid has come to be and is (mis)represented both in relation to Chinese and western aid.

Aid is administered within China by the Department of Aid to Foreign Countries within the Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM) with some strategic oversight played by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Rowlands, 2008; Brautigam, 2009). China's Export-Import Bank (EXIM) extends concessional loans for loan-based aid (Chin and Frolic, 2007). The structure of Chinese aid is somewhat different to that of OECD-DAC member countries. China
does not have its own aid agency such as AusAID or the UK Department for International Development (DFID) rather its aid comes through the Chinese Embassy in each nation:

The Chinese Economic and Commercial Counselor's office attached to China's Embassy will designate one or more staff to oversee the aid program, trouble-shooting, monitoring, and checking up at their completion. These officials are not expected to be experts in development (Brautigam, 2009:109).

China disburses both grants and concessional loans as part of its aid program. A majority of Chinese aid goes towards infrastructure development, although it is estimated that 10-14% of total aid from China also goes towards humanitarian assistance (Cotterrell and Harmer, 2005:18). China has also provided US$2.13 billion in debt relief to 44 recipient countries (Woods, 2008). There are various types of aid according to Brautigam (2009:105):

China has at least nine types of aid: medical teams, training and scholarships, humanitarian aid, youth volunteers, debt relief, budget support, turn-key or 'complete plant' projects (infrastructure, factories), aid-in-kind, and technical assistance. Some of these are new, but others have been in place for a very long time.

According to Chin and Frolic (2007), China's aid responds to requests from recipient countries, rather than being an initiative of the donor.

Most of China's aid is bilateral, although increasingly China has also been disbursing aid through multilateral channels (Brautigam, 2009). China is a member of the World Bank, Asian Development Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and has pledged aid to the Asian Development Bank for both the Greater Mekong Strategy and the Indochina Regional Poverty Reduction Centre (Glosny, 2006). China has also contributed $120 million to the replenishment of the African Development Fund (House of Commons & IDC, 2009). Since 2005, China has been disbursing aid to the World Food Program (WFP); it has also distributed aid via the UNHCR after various natural disasters, most notably after the Asian tsunami in 2005 and the Haitian earthquake in 2010. China does not, generally, disburse aid through non-government organisations (NGOs), although aid is sometimes disbursed through the Red Cross Society of China (e.g. $1 million in aid to Haiti) and the China Charity Federation (Cotterrell and Harmer, 2005).

China is not a member of the traditional aid grouping of the OECD-DAC. However, there is evidence China is increasingly cooperating in existing aid structures. For example, the China-DAC study group was formed in 2009 by the OECD and the International Poverty Reduction Centre in China (IPRCC) in order to share experiences and promote learning on growth and poverty reduction (OECD, nd[b]). The IPRCC itself is also an example of a partnership between OECD and China. The IPRCC was initiated and established by the
Chinese aid and development

Chinese government, UNDP and other international organisations in 2004. It is based in Beijing and its main aim is related to training, exchange and research related to poverty reduction (IPRCC, nd). The previously mentioned South-South cooperation with the FAO and UNDP and the multilateral aid mentioned above are also examples of China’s cooperation with other donors.

Representations of China

There have been many critiques of China’s ‘aid’ in the western literature. These include that Chinese aid: does not prioritise poverty reduction but that rather China is merely seeking natural resources to fuel its own growth; that Chinese aid bypasses environmental and good governance standards as a result of its lack of conditionality; that it supports corrupt regimes through its non-interference policy; that only Chinese companies and labourers benefit from Chinese aid as Chinese aid is generally tied; and that there is a lack of transparency around Chinese aid meaning that it is not clear what is aid or investment, that the disbursement process is not known and that the volume or distribution of Chinese aid is unclear. However, many of these critiques have also been questioned (e.g. Brautigam, 2009; Woods, 2008):

Indeed, there is now some evidence that countries with intensified aid and trade links with China are enjoying higher growth rates, better terms of trade, increased export volumes and higher public revenues (Woods, 2008: 4).

China has been traditionally cast as the ‘other’ in its relationship to the West. To use Said’s notion of Orientalism, China fits into the Orient, which the West constructs and reconstructs for its own purposes. Over time, Western images of China have varied, from positive to negative:

At certain times, particular dominant groups have designated China in a range of ways, as worthy of admiration, sympathy, curiosity, fear, ridicule, hostility, conversion to Christianity, or as a means to profit. Western images of China are both interesting and an active part of a series of power relationships (Mackerras, 1999: 8).

As Mackerras points out in the quote above, and following on from the ideas of Foucault (1979) and Said (1995), the construction of an image is often about power relations. This is also a central theme in critical geopolitics, which ‘draws our attention to the constitutive role of discourse in establishing and maintaining hegemonic regimes of representation’ (Mawdsley, 2008:510). In the case of China, the image emanating from the West is best described as one which always places the West in the superior position:

It appears to this writer that the dominant images [of China] ... have tended to accord with, rather than oppose, the interests of the main Western authorities or governments of the day. There has indeed
been a ‘regime of truth’ concerning China, which has affected and raised ‘the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true’ about that country (Mackerras, 1999:178).

These images do not necessarily reflect ‘realities’ within China, but, rather these representations reflect the ideas of those in the West: ‘The main determinant of Western images of China is the West itself ...’ (Mackerras, 1999:183).

According to de Haan (2009b:9)

The way China has been described in recent years has been marked by great controversy, between, put simply, those who see China’s rise as a threat, and those who stress the positive aspect of China’s development and its increasing role in Africa and elsewhere.

The threat discourse has been particularly strong since the 1990s (Mackerras, 1999). For example, fears that China is going to challenge America’s hegemony and ‘take over the world’ can be seen through the titles of recently released books on China: *When China Rules the World: The End of the Western World and the Birth of a New Global Order* (Jacques, 2009); *China Shakes the World: A Titan’s Rise and Troubled Future - and the Challenge for America* (Kynge, 2007); *China, Inc: How the Rise of the Next Superpower Challenges America and the World* (Fishman, 2006).

The western media, in their representations of China are almost overwhelmingly negative (Liss, 2003; Mawdsley, 2008), not only having a tendency to describe China as a threat, but also representing China as somewhat ‘behind’ the West: ‘Ethnocentrism usually results in negative images, because anyone who judges China with the standards and value systems of the West will find it deficient and backward’ (Mackerras, 1999: 184). China, according to the media, becomes a nation with a poor human rights record; a country which prioritises economic development at the expense of the environment; and is secretive and has non-democratic institutions. Examples of just a few headlines gathered from the western media are outlined on the following page:
Nonetheless, there is also a discourse within the West that sees China as an opportunity, notably as an economic opportunity - that is, that there is money to be made from China and as such China, from a business viewpoint, can be seen as presenting opportunities (Liss, 2003; Mackerras, 1999). For example, Doing Business In China: How to Profit in the World's Fastest Growing Market (Plafker, 2008) or the book China Now: Doing Business in the World's Most Dynamic Market (Lam and Graham 2006) which boasts that 'The opportunities are as big as China itself. With this book as your personal tour guide, you'll be able to reach a whole new world of clients and consumers.'

These western representations of China itself, also extend to representations of China’s aid and development programs. Books, research reports, policy papers and newspaper articles on China and its aid and development program have proliferated since the 2000s when the West began to (re)notice China as an aid donor, particularly in regard to Africa. It was around this time, that Moisés Naim famously named China as a ‘rogue donor’, suggesting that China’s aid program was non-democratic, non-transparent and stifling progress (Chahoud, 2007). However he was only one of many to represent China as a threat. As Mohan and Power (2008:24) point out, China’s presence in Africa has been described as everything from a ‘scramble’, ‘mad dash’, resource grab’ to a ‘rape’.

A common western interpretation of China’s aid program is to incorporate it within the foreign policy framework of ‘soft power’, thereby implying that China is using its aid program in order to gain influence over the rest of the world. All donors use aid for their own geopolitical purposes, but in China’s case, this association is usually emphasised and negatively critiqued:

### Table 3.2: China in the western media

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Headline</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Human rights</td>
<td>Skepticism greets China's plan to address human rights (LA Times, 7/11/2008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>China accused of human rights abuses in secret 'black jails' (Daily Mail, 12/11/2009)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>China rights 'worsen with Games' (BBC, 29/7/2008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>China's Boom Is Bust for Global Environment, Study Warns (National Geographic News, 16/5/2005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-democratic/secretive</td>
<td>China seeks to halt book that faults its Prime Minister (New York Times, 7/7/2010)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No more appeasement, West must push China to democracy (Sydney Morning Herald, 20/5/2008)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author
... we are beginning to observe a new layer of criticism, which is centered around the relatively novel concept of Chinese soft power. Put simply, the main thrust of this argument states that Beijing is propagating its authoritarian model of economic growth as a source of attraction to create a sphere of influence among non-democratic states (Suzuki, 2009:780).

Kurlantzick in his 2007 book on China's soft power, goes so far as to call this soft power a 'charm offensive' whereby China is 'charming' the rest of the world to its side: 'In the worst-case scenario, China eventually will use soft power to push countries to choose between closer ties to Washington and closer ties to Beijing' (xii). However, as Suzuki (2009:786) points out, 'this lopsided view of Chinese soft power seems to stem from the fact that the vast majority of the works on China are written by western-based scholars or analysts for a Western policy audience.'

Other critiques of China's aid program emanating from the West, focus on the fact that China's aid is somehow less worthy or altruistic than western aid as China's aid focuses on economic growth rather than poverty reduction (unlike, by implicit comparison, western aid):

China's approach to supporting development in third countries, whether in Africa, or in neighbouring poor states such as Cambodia, clearly differs from the 'western' model of development pursued by OECD DAC donors such as the UK, who seek to address the basic human needs of the poor ... (House of Commons & IDC 2009:34).

Brautigam (2009) and Woods (2008) amongst others have pointed out, however, that many of these western representations of China's aid program have been exaggerated and/or pay little heed to reality. For example, Brautigam goes through each of the specific criticisms aimed at China's aid in Africa, such as the accusations that China is making corruption worse, or that China ignores environmental and social standards, and comes to the conclusion that:

China's rise in Africa is cause for some concern, but it need not evoke the level of fear and alarm raised by some who have condemned China's aid and engagement as destabilizing, bad for governance, and unlikely to help Africa to end poverty. Many of the fears about Chinese aid and engagement are misinformed, the alarm out of proportion (Brautigam, 2009:307).

Other authors such as Guerrero and Manji (2008), state that there are many perspectives on China other than those perpetuated by the West, and that these perspectives are worth considering. For example, Fu Tao (2008) argues in relation to civil society cooperation in Africa, that China's aid may have a positive affect:
the circumstances of civil society in China today are very different from what they were ten years ago. The similar interests of African and Chinese civil society in ensuring the equitable distribution of the benefits and opportunities arising from economic development are a strong foundation for future cooperation (Guerrero and Manji, 2008:6).

Other research has pointed out that the West deliberately criticises China's aid program, 'to enhance the legitimacy of western approaches to democracy and development aid' (Mohan and Power, 2008:36). That is, to take the focus away from the controversies surrounding western aid and its lack of effectiveness. Along these lines Mawdsley (2008:521) points out one of the main narratives of British newspapers when looking at China's aid to Africa is '... a benign West being undermined by a ruthless and unscrupulous China.' She goes on to say that:

Above all, the dominant, if by no means universal narrative that runs through many of the articles is that the mistakes of the past have been addressed, and the West is now the architect and energiser of a new drive towards good governance and development, with aid now accompanied by ethical conditionalities, while reformed commercial practices promise investment and trade that will enhance development rather than line the pockets of kleptocratic elites (2008: 520).

This representation of western aid implies that China now has to 'catch up' to the West which has learnt from its mistakes the best way forward. Indeed Chin and Frolic (2007), in their research report for the Canadian International Development Research Centre, state that China's aid is 'evolving' as China is increasing its focus on western development goals such as capacity building and social development and is partnering with western multilateral donors such as ADB and UNDP.

Nonetheless, China's aid program is not always represented as a threat or as a lesser version of western aid: this is particularly the case when listening to voices from the South. As Mohan and Power (2008:31) say 'from an African perspective for the first time since the end of the cold war African countries have more choices about who to turn to for aid and investment and can play donors off against one another.' The 'Chinese path of development' is being viewed once again as a possible alternative for countries in the South:

This interest was manifest at the 2006 forum on China-Africa cooperation, during which many African leaders expressed interest in the development path of China as an alternative to the western development discourse and aid (Nordtveit, 2009: 162).
For example:

A number of Cameroonian politicians and administrators find the aid and cooperation from China "better" than the aid from traditional donors, because a colonial past does not hamper it. Also, China’s own development is seen as a model for development (Nordtveit, 2010:106).

**Summary**

This chapter has summarised development discourses within and outside China; it has looked at China’s overseas aid program, including whether China’s ‘aid’ is aid at all, and it has considered representation and how this plays into discourses around aid and development. Highlighted by this chapter is the fact that China’s internal development discourse is not that dissimilar to that espoused by the West, at least in theory, although this has historically not always been the case. When it comes to China’s external development discourse, the rhetoric used by China usually falls within that of foreign policy discourses – which appear to have changed little since China began giving aid in the 1950s. However, no matter what the discourses espoused by China, the West also creates its own discourse around China and its aid and development program. Thus China’s aid comes to be represented in particular ways by the West which may pay little heed paid to the actual ‘reality’ of China’s aid.
Chapter Four: Cambodia, China and the World

The previous two chapters have provided an insight into both western and Chinese development discourses and how these play out globally. This chapter now comes to the case study that this thesis uses for its exploration of aid encounters – that of Cambodia. Cambodia is a small country of 14 million people located in Southeast Asia in between the much more powerful nations of Vietnam and Thailand; and Laos to the north. Cambodia has a long history of linkages with China in terms of foreign relations, trade and migration. By contrast, Cambodia’s relationship with the West goes back only two hundred years or so and is based on a relationship of colonialism, aid and development. This chapter explores the foreign relations, economy, society and politics of Cambodia with particular reference to the ongoing relationship with China and the rest of the world, as a precursor to understanding both China and the West’s aid relationship with Cambodia.

History

Early Cambodia-China relationship

China and Cambodia have a long history of trade, tribute and cooperation. The first recordings of a civilisation on Cambodian soil go back to the first century AD, with an ancient civilisation called Funan. The Funanese were seafarers who traded with both China and India. Trade between the Funanese and China was ‘intense’ according to Chandler (1983), with Buddhist religious objects being among the main items traded. From the third century tribute was also sent to China from Funan. According to Chinese sources, the ancient Funan empire ‘was able to send more than 25 diplomatic missions to China between the third and seventh centuries, with tribute. The gifts included gold, silver, ivory, elephants and rhinoceros, and the plumage of kingfishers’ (Freeman 2004:36). The tribute relationship with China continued with the Chenla empire, the successor of Funan. Chenla sent ambassadors to China from the seventh century (Mabbett and Chandler, 1995). The close relationship between China and Funan and Chenla is highlighted by the fact that most of the information regarding both these ancient empires comes from Chinese texts (Chandler, 1983).

Following on from the ancient kingdoms of Funan and Chenla, in the ninth century arose the new kingdom of Angkor, which was, for the next seven centuries or so, one of the most successful powers in the region. By the time Angkor Wat itself was built in the twelfth century, the Khmer empire of
Angkor covered most of what is now Thailand, the south of Vietnam, southern Laos and part of the Malay peninsula. Trade routes had been established with lands as far apart as India and China (Freeman, 2004). It was an extremely powerful empire, so successful it was known to the Chinese as 'Cambodia the Rich' (Mabbett and Chandler, 1995:175).

During this time, and continuing until the fifteenth century Cambodia maintained a strong relationship with China based on trade, tribute and migration from China to Cambodia. More than a dozen tributary missions were sent to China between 1371 and 1419 (Chandler 1983). The aim of tribute missions to China during these years was to ensure that China recognised Cambodia and as such afforded it sovereignty and trading rights (Fairbank, 1942). According to Osborne (2008:19), 'the Cambodian court at Angkor increasingly looked to trade with China as a way to maintain its prosperity.' There was also a well-established Chinese community at Angkor. For example, Chinese diplomat Zhou Dabuan lived at Angkor between 1296 and 1297 in the court of the King Srindravarman. He has provided much of the current knowledge about Angkor (Mabbett and Chandler 1995).

By the sixteenth century the Chinese had also come to dominate the city of Phnom Penh which was by then Cambodia's most important trading port (Willmott, 1967). Chinese merchants in Phnom Penh married and established lives in Cambodia going on to form the Chinese ethnic minority which still exists in Cambodia today. The importance and dominance of Chinese traders in Cambodia's early history is highlighted by the number of business words in the Khmer language that have been borrowed from Chinese. For example, the Khmer word *haang* (shop) has been borrowed from Chinese, as have the numbers from thirty to ninety (*samsap, saesap* etc) (Willmott, 1967; Edwards, 2009). Edwards (2009) says that traditionally the Chinese and Khmer economic roles complemented each other. Khmer men have traditionally been more interested in politics than commerce, whilst Khmer women act as market traders. Thus Chinese men married Khmer women to facilitate trade and commerce networks, whilst the political ambitions of Khmer men were not thwarted by the Chinese:

From early Cambodian history until the dawn of the twentieth century, virtually all Chinese immigrants to Cambodia were male, and mostly settled permanently in Cambodia, marrying Khmer women and establishing families (Edwards, 2009:191).

Edwards (2009:174) goes on to say that the Chinese have been part of Cambodia for so long that 'ethnic Chinese are an integral part of the geography and genealogy of Cambodia' today.

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3 Estimates put the population of Chinese in Cambodia today at around 300,000 – 340,000, with at least 90% of these Chinese being born in Cambodia (Edwards, 2009).
European contact

In contrast to China's early and dominant role in Cambodia's trade, foreign affairs and migration, Europeans were completely unaware of Cambodia until the sixteenth century (Osborne, 2008). It was not until 1563 that Cambodia was shown on a European map (Osborne, 2008). The earliest European contacts with Cambodia were the Portuguese missionaries who attempted (generally unsuccessfully) to convert the Buddhist Cambodians to Catholicism. They arrived in the sixteenth century on the back of the seaborne expansion of the Spanish and Portuguese empires (Osborne, 2008). By the end of the sixteenth century, European traders knew of Cambodia and Phnom Penh, at least, housed traders from Portugal and Spain, although in much smaller numbers than their Chinese counterparts (Osborne, 2008). These early European traders were joined briefly in the seventeenth century by traders from Holland and Britain as these nations expanded their territories and trade routes (Chandler, 1983:85).

However, it was the French colonisation of Cambodia (1863–1953) that truly established the relationship between Cambodia and the West. France was seeking to expand its empire during the nineteenth century and had turned to Asia as one place in which to do this. Between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries after the Angkor Empire had declined and eventually disappeared, Cambodia gradually lost its remaining independence and power to Thailand and Vietnam (Freeman, 2004). This paved the way for French colonisation of Cambodia – as Cambodia looked for a way to protect their territory from Vietnam and Thailand. The French, for their part, initially thought Cambodia could become an important trade route to China via the Mekong; they also wanted to halt the expansion of the British Empire in Asia (Osborne, 2008; Aldrich, 1996). In 1863, Cambodia became a French protectorate and in 1887, Cambodia became part of French Indochine – made up of Vietnam and Cambodia, and later Laos. The French encouraged the export of raw goods from Cambodia – for example rubber and rice, and imposed taxes on the local citizens (Tully, 2005). According to Osborne (2008:84) whilst the French colonisation of Cambodia halted incursions by Thailand or Vietnam, it also saw the interests of Cambodia somewhat subsumed beneath those of the French: 'the inherent inequality of a colonial system in which the interests of the colonizing power overrode all other considerations.' For example, the French gave preference to building the economy through cash crops rather than focussing on health, education or equality which may have been of more use to everyday Cambodians.

In contrast to the Chinese who migrated to and settled in Cambodia, the French settled in Cambodia in relatively small numbers and tended to return eventually to France. Osborne (2008) cites a figure of 6,000 French in Cambodia, as compared to perhaps 300,000 Chinese living in Cambodia at this time (Edwards, 2009). During the period of French colonisation, there were many Chinese living in Cambodia as a result of the close historical trade links between Cambodia and China. Willmott (1967:40), however, says the French disliked the Chinese, 'because they were diligent, clever and
quick’, and according to Edwards (2009:181) ‘Chinese were increasingly cursed in French colonial reports as greedy traders or vice-ridden workers whose greatest pleasures in life were opium, gambling and extortion.’ Nonetheless, despite this apparent discrimination, the number of Chinese in Cambodia increased during the period of French colonisation, probably due to the convention China signed with France and Britain in 1860, which recognised the rights of Chinese subjects to emigrate and to receive recognition and protection for their labour (Edwards, 2009).

**Independence, Isolation and 1991**

In 1956, Cambodia gained independence from France. For the first time in almost one hundred years Cambodia could set its own path towards growth and development. However, after years of French colonisation and centuries of Chinese domination of commerce, it was still foreigners who controlled large parts of the Cambodian economy and who influenced politics and foreign affairs. The period from independence until 1991 is expanded upon in Chapters Five and Six where the geopolitics of both western aid and Chinese aid is outlined, however a brief summary is given below of the level of involvement of both France and China in Cambodian society from independence until the Paris Peace Accords in 1991.

In terms of the Cambodian economy, after independence the Chinese dominated the rice, pepper and salt trades, as well as being involved in most commercial enterprises, including transport. The French, by contrast, dominated the rubber trade, and the French and British dominated the banking industry (Osborne, 2008). France, the US and China were also disbursing large amounts of aid to Cambodia during the period immediately following independence which assisted in propping up the Cambodian economy. The French had a strong presence in the country as a result of their recent colonial role: the French trained the Cambodian military, they educated the Cambodian elite, they presided over the large rubber plantations and they dominated Cambodia’s cultural institutions (Osborne, 2008). By the 1960s, however, it was the Chinese who were Cambodia’s largest ethnic minority. Most Chinese were involved in commerce, including roles as shopkeepers, moneylenders, and rural processors for industries such as fishing (Willmott, 1967). By 1967, there were 170 Chinese schools in Cambodia. The Chinese press in Cambodia had also expanded after independence: ‘by the 1960s, Chinese newspapers greatly outnumbered the Khmer and French language papers, and were the most widely distributed in Cambodia’ (Edwards, 2009: 199).

Politically, the Cambodian government had adopted a ‘neutral’ stance in relation to the Cold War politics of the time (i.e. Cambodia had not aligned with either the Soviet or Western bloc), and was courting both the West and China. In 1958 the Chinese offered to protect Cambodia from Vietnam, whilst Cambodia agreed to the ‘one China’ policy, closing the Taiwanese embassy in Phnom Penh (Richardson, 2010). Cambodian Prime Minister Sihanouk met many times with both Mao Zedong, Chairman of the
The Communist Party of China, and Zhou Enlai, the Premier of China: 'cultivating[ing] a profound, friendly relationship with different generations of Chinese leaders' (Long, 2009:5). Richardson (2010:39) says that until 1965, 'the leaders on both sides of the relationship appear to have looked for every opportunity to meet, exchange telephone calls, or otherwise publicly praise one another.' At this time, Cambodia was also courting the West. The US was giving large amounts of aid to Cambodia as a means to ensure Cambodia did not side with the Communists, and whilst Sihanouk 'criticized the Americans ... they aided his economy and his army' (Osborne, 2008:125). The French were also disbursing aid to Cambodia during this time with Sihanouk under the misguided belief that France could prove protector for Cambodia in the face of the Vietnam War (Osborne, 1984).

However, the relationship with both China and the West was to change dramatically from 1970 as Cambodia was thrown into political turmoil and eventually civil war. In 1970, Lon Nol overthrew Prime Minister (and former King) Sihanouk in an American backed coup, and established himself as leader of Cambodia. The Americans were backing Lon Nol in an attempt to stop the spread of communism in Southeast Asia. This move drew Cambodia inextricably into the Vietnam War as the US bombed both the communist Viet Cong and Khmer Rouge Cambodian hideouts. Between 1969 and 1973, 550,000 tons of bombs were dropped on Cambodia by the US, and nearly half the population were uprooted becoming refugees (Mysliwiec, 1988). The Lon Nol coup caused, in turn, China to pull out of Cambodia entirely. However, China continued to support Sihanouk and recognise the Royal National Union Government of Kampuchea who were in exile in China. Sihanouk was given a residence in Beijing from which to continue diplomatic relations with China as the head of Cambodia's government (Richardson, 2010). The Royal National Union Government of Kampuchea included not just Sihanouk, but also Pol Pot, who was to go on to lead the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia. Pol Pot considered himself a student of Mao and was greatly influenced by the Cultural Revolution and 'Great Leap Forward' that Mao was implementing during the 1960s in China.

In 1975, the Khmer Rouge seized Phnom Penh and forced the evacuation of all its citizens. The Khmer Rouge were to be in power in Cambodia for the next four years. When the Khmer Rouge seized Phnom Penh, the US, French and other foreign embassies, including that of the Soviet Union, were shut down and all expatriates (other than Chinese expatriates) were forced to leave the country as Cambodia closed its doors to the international community. They were not to return until the early 1990s. China, however, continued to provide support to Cambodia throughout the Khmer Rouge period:

... the Chinese government in Beijing was to be Democratic Kampuchea's most important supporter, sending hundreds of advisors to Cambodia. China maintained its support for the Khmer Rouge both throughout the entire period of the Pol Pot regime, and afterwards through the 1980s as its remnants fought a guerrilla war
against the new Vietnamese-supported regime in Phnom Penh (Osborne, 2008:145).

During the Khmer Rouge period the country was devastated – with between one and two million Khmers dying from disease, hunger, hard labour or execution as Pol Pot attempted to implement his vision of an agrarian utopia (Kiernan, 1996; Mysliwiec, 1988):

The country, by 1979, had no currency, no markets, no financial institutions and virtually no industry. There was no public transport system; no trains ran and the roads were damaged and unrepaird. There was no postal system, no telephones and virtually no electricity, clean water, sanitation or education' (Mysliwiec, 1988:11).

It is estimated that during this time, the numbers of Chinese in Cambodia fell from 400,000 to 200,000 as Chinese migrants, along with native Khmers, were persecuted for being urban merchants (Edwards, 2009).

In 1978, Vietnam invaded Cambodia and installed a pro-Vietnamese/communist government. As a result China withdrew its support from Cambodia. The US and ASEAN also refused to recognise the new government in Cambodia and/or lend support to Cambodia due to the communist nature of the Vietnamese government. Cambodia became isolated from the rest of the world and was forced to rely almost entirely on Vietnamese and Soviet support for its massive reconstruction effort. During this period China continued its support of the Khmer Rouge. The US also supported the Khmer Rouge alliance at this time, in a bid to halt Vietnamese and Soviet expansion in Southeast Asia. The Khmer Rouge were even given a place at the UN as a result of support from China and the West: 'Vietnam and the PRK were shunned as international pariah's while Pol Pot's sinister entourage basked in the sun of international recognition (Tully, 2005:217). In 1989, the Vietnamese withdrew from Cambodia. This left Cambodia economically unstable and led to the subsequent Paris Peace Accords (1991) and UNTAC period (1992-1993) which saw both the West and China re-establish their relationship with Cambodia (which is discussed in more detail in the following chapters).

**Government, governance and politics**

Since the UNTAC period of 1992-1993 and the UN sponsored elections of 1993, Cambodia has officially been a democracy. It is a multi-party state operating within the framework of a constitutional monarchy, meaning the King still reigns but does not have the power to govern (Slocomb, 2006). In 1985, whilst the nation was still under Vietnamese control, Hun Sen was confirmed as the nation’s Prime Minister. Hun Sen is leader of the Cambodian People’s Party (CPP) and is still Prime Minister today. He has consolidated his power over time, and today it could be said: 'Hun Sen presides in a regal manner over everything that happens in Cambodia; like
Cambodia, China and the World | 47

many kings, he has no respect for pluralism, an independent judiciary or the separation of powers’ (Chandler, 2010:229).

Hun Sen's government has had changing policies towards both China and the West. In a 1988 essay, Hun Sen named China the ‘root of all that was evil in Cambodia’ (Marks, 2000). However, by the mid-2000’s, Hun Sen had done an about-turn and in 2006 publically named China as ‘Cambodia’s most trustworthy friend’ (BBC News, 2006). Cambodia has subsequently publically thanked China for maintaining neutrality and not interfering in Cambodia’s internal affairs (Long, 2009). This change in attitude has corresponded with increased aid and investment from China. Evidence of the Hun Sen government’s attitude towards China is also reflected in the increasing freedom ethnic Chinese in Cambodia have today to express their views and culture. Today there are at least two Chinese language newspapers in Cambodia, a proliferation of Chinese schools and numerous Chinese associations:

The past five years has seen a massive renaissance of Chinese cultural identity across Cambodia. The Association of Chinese Nationals in Cambodia (ACNC) now has branches in every province, whilst numerous districts and some villages have formed their own Chinese Association (Edwards, 2009: 211).

Van and Sokmady (2009:269) go on to say 'Chinese people have integrated easily into Cambodian society, even customising some Khmer cultural practices into Chinese rituals, yet they are still working to keep alive their identity, language and traditions.'

The West, in contrast to China, is often criticised by Hun Sen. This criticism of the West appears to have increased as China’s aid and investment also increases. (Chandler 2010:230). For example, in 2006, Hun Sen was quick to point out that aid from the traditional donors was only $1 million more than China’s aid but that China’s aid did not come ‘laden with conditions’ like traditional aid (Perlez, 2006). In 2008, Hun Sen criticised the UNATC period for bringing only AIDS to Cambodia: ‘The most UNTAC left in Cambodia was the AIDS disease. They spent $2 billion, but when they left, the Cambodian factions were still fighting each other’ (KI media, 2008). And in 2009, Hun Sen criticised western donors for the conditions attached to their aid: ‘On several occasions [in 2009], Hun Sen attacked Western donors for their unsolicited advice about governance, impunity, corruption, and human rights’ (Chandler, 2010:230). Nonetheless, the Cambodian government is careful not to go too far with its criticisms and still pays at least lip service to the West, projecting a semblance of liberal democracy tailored to western donors: ‘senior ministers ... are fluent in the jargon of good governance and sustainable development’ (Global Witness, 2007:10).

These changing attitudes towards both China and the West by Hun Sen and the CPP can be seen to be a function of the political culture in Cambodia. Cambodian politics is based on a patronage network, where deference is
paid to those most likely to provide security. In the past it was the West who provided security to Cambodia, but increasingly this role is falling to China (Weggal, 2007). Hun Sen nominally adheres to western development discourse and notions of democracy, good governance and strong civil society. However, in practice the political culture in Cambodia remains based on a patron-client system. In general, Cambodian political culture could, in fact, be seen to be more in line with Chinese political culture than western political culture. For example, the close ties between the judicial system and the government which exist in both Cambodia and China; the control of the government largely by a single party which is mandated by law in China, and the practice in Cambodia; and the tight control of civil society which is expressed in both China and Cambodia through regulation of NGO activity and other such measures: ‘Various studies of China’s political culture have identified a number of features that are not conducive to collective action and civil society activism. These include elitism, fatalism, and lack of cooperative spirit and group solidarity’ (Lu, 2005:6).

Patronage is important to Cambodia (and indeed Southeast Asia generally) and has a long history. At one level, patronage might mean poor rural villagers pledging their loyalty to wealthy or powerful local people (or patrons). These patrons, in turn, use their influence and resources to help clients protect their security. However, in Cambodia the patronage system is not restricted just to the local level, but occurs throughout all levels of relationships in Cambodia. For example, within government, Ear (2009a) points out that intra-elite patronage systems run both vertically and horizontally across and within ministries. This patronage system also occurs between business and government:

Alongside the concentration of personal power in the hands of this narrow group of formal office-holders, in recent years larger numbers of Cambodian businessmen have been establishing connections with the government. Known as ‘khnorng’ (literally, ‘back’ in Khmer and indicating backing from powerful patrons), government officials see such connections as a mechanism for eliciting gifts from businessmen, both for personal enrichment and from which to make party contributions during election periods (Ear, 2009b:2).

This strong patronage network and historic ties to the patron-client system, are often cited as one explanation for the relatively weak democracy in Cambodia:

The 1993 United Nations-sponsored elections were intended to create a new state in Cambodia following the installation of a framework for constitutional democracy. However, given the deep-rooted existence of patron-client networks, a new state characterised by independent institutions has never taken root (Un, 2006:229).
Un goes on to talk of the 'hybrid democracy' that has arisen in Cambodia as a result:

a 'hybrid' democracy has evolved in Cambodia in which elections are regularly held and internationally endorsed. However, there are inherent defects beneath the façade of free and fair elections that result from the domination of the electoral arena by a single political party – the Cambodian People's Party (CPP) (Un, 2005:203).

Slocomb (2006:392) says that 'on more than one occasion CPP leaders have referred to the democratic process as a sports game', highlighting the ruling party disregard for the notion of democracy. As Ojendal and Lilja (2009) say, the problem with democracy in Cambodia is that it suffers legitimacy problems as a result of being an arrangement born of an external intervention. That is, the traditional form of government in Cambodia is not democratic and never has been – this is indeed a western idea which has been imposed on Cambodia - thus the government tends to pay democracy lip service in order to keep western donors happy, rather than believing in its fundamental principles. China, in contrast to the West, is not interested in imposing democratic principles on Cambodia preferring to work within the existing political culture in Cambodia.

Intrinsic within this patronage system is corruption, as patronage networks are based on 'gifts' of money. Western donors in Cambodia are interested in promoting good governance and anti-corruption measures in Cambodia, however it is corruption that forms the backbone of much of Cambodia's political culture. According to Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index, Cambodia is particularly corrupt with levels of corruption on the increase. Cambodia's transparency rating has dropped from 130 out of 158 in 2005 – the first year it was ranked – to 158 out of 180 in 2009. Global Witness (2007; 2009) has also highlighted this corruption in two damning reports on Cambodia's logging and extractive industries. Patronage in Cambodia goes not only hand in hand with corruption, but has also meant one of the largest bureaucracies in the world:

These patronage systems have prompted continual expansion of the number of positions in government, from one election to the next – creating an entire Senate in 1999, and the largest cabinet in the world, comprising one Prime Minister, seven Deputy Prime Ministers, 15 Senior Ministers, 28 Ministers, 135 Secretaries of State and at least 146 Under-Secretaries of State, in 2003 (Ear, 2009b:2).

According to Sjoberg and Sjoholm (2006), patronage and corruption sit alongside the lack of transparency and the silencing of political opponents. Again, this is much more similar to Chinese political culture than the West's. Hun Sen certainly seems preoccupied with the elimination of opposition or perceived threats to his power (Slocomb 2006), as can be seen by the fact that ordinary citizens are afraid to speak out: 'in the current political climate ... those who speak out against abuses are threatened or attacked' (Global
Witness, 2007:89). As a result of this fear of speaking out, civil society in Cambodia is still considered weak. This has been particularly so since the early 2000s, when the government’s willingness to tolerate demonstrations and public protests lessened considerably (Hughes, 2007a). However, despite the weakness of civil society there are, in fact, hundreds of NGOs operating in Cambodia although this can be seen to be more the result of the influence of traditional donors in Cambodia rather than the strength of civil society. The majority of NGOs in Cambodia are sponsored by international donors and/or speak the language of international civil society:

... in Cambodian politics, it is international organizations promoting neo-liberal approaches to governance, rather than any potentially radical transnational ‘civil society’ networks, that have determined the new sites and modes of political participation in post-UNTAC Cambodia (Hughes, 2007b: 835).

The Cambodian government has in recent years, threatened to curtail the activities of these NGOs which tend to advocate for governance reforms, anti-corruption measures, and human rights. For example, since 2008, there has been a proposed law on the table in Cambodia that will regulate NGOs and restrict their activities.

Economy, trade and investment

Since the re-emergence of Cambodia onto the global stage in the early 1990s, Cambodia’s economy has shown remarkable growth. With the opening up of the economy in the 1990s came increased foreign investment including increased trade volumes (both exports and imports) to and from the country; and increased foreign direct investment, with the economy growing at around 10% per year between 2004 and 2007 alone (ADB, 2009). This growth has occurred on the back of integration into the global economy, the encouragement of both local and foreign investment, and the privatisation of state assets (Chap, 2010).

Today both China and the West have significant economic interests in Cambodia. For example, many of the big cooperations such as woodchip factories and beer factories in Cambodia are owned and run by Chinese. According to a Chinese member of the Cambodian Chamber of Commerce, 80% of the Cambodian economy is controlled by the Chinese (Edwards, 2009). This point is expanded upon by Long (2009:9) who says ‘Cambodians with Chinese ancestral connection enjoy substantial support from this overseas web in establishing their trading activities’4. Burgos and Ear (2010:638) conclude that ‘economically, Cambodia and China will always maintain a symbiotic relationship, owing to the large number of Chinese-

4 Although it must be noted that not all Chinese in Cambodia have links back to China or to the ethnic Chinese tycoons in Phnom Penh. Edwards (2009:223) points out that both Cambodians themselves as well as international organisations in Cambodia such as the UN, often erroneously stereotype ethnic Chinese in Cambodia 'as universally wealthy and powerful' (Edwards, 2009:223).
Cambodians.' However, it is not just China that has an interest in the Cambodian economy, the West is also involved in the Cambodian economy. For example, the US is one of Cambodia's largest export markets, and third largest source of FDI to Cambodia. A further example of the current high level of western activity in the Cambodian economy is that fact that the economy is heavily dollarized: the dollar and riel can be used interchangeably and the dollar is used for almost all transactions over a certain value.

The growth of the Cambodian economy has largely been prefaced to date on three main industries – the garment industry, tourism and construction. The garment industry accounts for around 14% of Cambodia's GDP and is the number one source of investment funds to Cambodia (Ear, 2009b). The garment industry in Cambodia is dominated by Chinese. Burgos and Ear (2010) estimate that there are around 3,000 Chinese-registered companies operating in the garments and textiles field in Cambodia. Garments also form Cambodia's largest export market (90% of all exports), with the United States being Cambodia's largest importer, followed by Israel and Germany (ADB 2009). Imports to Cambodia, by contrast, come largely from the region, with the largest number of imports coming from Thailand, followed by China and Vietnam (ADB, 2009).

Another source of finance for the Cambodian economy is Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). Since 1994, Cambodia has encouraged Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) to the country, becoming a full member of the World Trade Organisation in 2004. In the 1990s, around 50% of FDI to Cambodia came from ASEAN nations, 20% from OECD and 25% northeast Asia (ADB, 2006). Today, however, the majority of FDI to Cambodia comes from China followed by South Korea and the United States. Most FDI to Cambodia is concentrated in the garment sector. The country's largest foreign direct investment project to date, however, is the Chinese Koh Kong seacoast development project. This project was approved in 2008 at a cost of $3861 million (Tong and Hem, 2010).

This surge of Chinese investment to Cambodia has been a cause of concern for the media, civil society and some academics, much in line with the concern expressed at Chinese aid to Cambodia – as is discussed in depth in the next few chapters. Concerns raised in regard to Chinese investment include the fact that the numbers of Chinese migrants to Cambodia may increase sharply:

Accompanying the flood of Chinese trade and investment is a deluge of Chinese migrants, especially from Guangdong and Fujian provinces. Observers estimate the number of recent Chinese migrants to Cambodia to be anywhere from 50,000 to 300,000 - exact figures, they say, are impossible to get because of the inaccessibility of Cambodia's many remote provincial areas. With the recent development of roads linking the two countries through Laos, speedy
bus trips between Yunnan and Cambodia open the way for Chinese laborers and hawkers to move south (Fullbrook, 2006:).

Other fears include that Chinese investment in Cambodia is simply a means by which to protect its own security interests (Burgos and Ear, 2010; Mydans, 2009); and that Chinese investment in Cambodia (particularly hydropower) threatens natural resources and local communities (e.g. see Ek, 2008; Middleton, 2008).

However, despite the fact that China is the largest investor in Cambodia, they are not the only large investor. South Korea and the United States are the second and third largest sources of approved FDI to Cambodia (Tong and Hem, 2010). The level of South Korean investment is so great that The Asia Times (Cain, 2008a) says: ‘If South Korean investors actually complete all the projects they have announced and launched, the once colonial Phnom Penh will soon come to resemble a mini version of high-rise Seoul.’ However, in contrast to Chinese investment, there has been little overt criticism of South Korea’s investment, or investment from the West for that matter. For example, in the media, FDI from countries other than China tends to be buried in the business pages of international broadsheets and negative consequences of FDI tend to be blamed on the investment climate and/or the actions of the Cambodian government. For example, a report from The Guardian (Levy and Scott-Clark, 2008) named ‘Country for Sale’ talks about foreign investment and the buying up of all Cambodia’s land – but rather than blame this on the countries buying the land, blame is laid at the feet of the Cambodian government for allowing it to occur. Alternatively, the investment conditions within Cambodia are blamed for any issues arising, rather than the source of FDI when it comes to non-Chinese investment:

Beyond the problems of attracting foreign capital, businesses here say they are confronted with numerous local barriers, the most frequently cited being the extremely limited access to domestic capital, and high transportation and electricity costs (Marks, 2010).

In 2005, oil and gas reserves were found off the Cambodian coast. This has also attracted foreign interest in the Cambodian economy and has the potential to greatly increase the amount and diversity of foreign investment in the country. Similarly, the prospect of mineral extraction in inland areas of Cambodia has recently attracted much investment attention both inside and outside Cambodia. The oil reserves alone could earn the government between $1 billion and $2 billion annually in revenue (Rutherford et al, 2008). Potential revenue from mining is unclear due to a lack of transparency on behalf of the Cambodian government, but in 2006 alone, the government approved $403 million worth of investment in mining (Global Witness, 2009). Civil society, the media and international development agencies have pointed out the potential negative consequences to Cambodia of investment in these resources if they are mismanaged:
Rather than using these millions to lift its people out of poverty, Cambodia’s government could instead continue to follow the example of neighbouring Burma, where an autocratic elite uses the money generated from the country’s natural resource wealth to rule over an impoverished majority with little regard for their welfare or rights (Global Witness, 2009:11).

Nonetheless there has been widespread local and international interest in developing these resources. Interested foreign parties to the oil and gas reserves have included the US, South Korea, Thailand, China and Australia: ‘The prospect of oil riches has sparked off a ‘black gold’ rush involving American, Australian, Chinese, Indonesian, Japanese, and Korean companies, all battling for potentially lucrative rights’ (Global Witness, 2009:11). Currently Chevron (a US company) has done the most exploration of their block. Exploratory mining licences for gold, bauxite and other minerals have gone primarily to South Korean, Chinese and local firms (Rutherford et al, 2008) but also to Australian, French and US companies (Um, 2008). Each company pays $50,000 for a licence, although some companies appear to pay more (Global Witness, 2009).

However, despite the fact that many foreign countries are involved in oil, gas and mineral exploration most critiques towards the investing countries themselves tend to be reserved for China (e.g. see Rutherford et al, 2008; Lazarus, 2009):

The rush of foreign countries whose oil companies have staked claims includes China, which controls one of the six potential fields in the gulf. China has become Cambodia’s biggest commercial investor, its biggest aid donor and its hungriest consumer of raw materials, pushing ahead with major hydropower and road-building projects (Mydans, 2007).

Recently, the Australian owned BHP Billiton was accused of bribery in relation to bauxite exploration rights in Cambodia however, this was not reported in the media, as a blight against Australia’s name, but rather a problem with BHP itself, or of the Cambodia government: ‘[this issue] underlined the caution needed in dealing in some developing countries’ (Durie, 2010). This is in contrast to the standard reaction when China is involved – that is to blame China itself, rather than Chinese firms or the Cambodian government.

Nonetheless, irrespective of the level of foreign involvement in the Cambodian economy, it is important to note at this point that Cambodia remains one of the world’s least developed countries, with an estimated GDP per capita in 2009 of US$775. Cambodia is still predominately an agrarian economy. Until recently, 80% of the labour force were farmers, although by 2006 this figure had dropped to just under 60% as labourers moved into the manufacturing, construction and tourism industries (Tong and Hem, 2010). Inequality is rife, with economic development being highly concentrated in a
few metropolitan areas. Rapid economic growth is clearly evident in Phnom Penh:

In Phnom Penh, dramatic new skyscrapers are under construction, along with vast housing developments and shopping malls. The traffic at rush hour is regularly gridlocked as the new wealth spawned by increases in land values finds its way into Toyota and Lexus salesrooms (Hughes, 2009: 209).

However, this growth is not so evident in rural areas where most of the poor are located: ‘What appeared as a bonanza for rich tycoons and for the moderately landed middle classes took the form of increased vulnerability and desperately high food prices for the poor’ (Hughes, 2009a:209). According to Hughes (2009a), inflation rose 26% in the first half of 2008 alone. It is also necessary to note at this point that the economy and the provision of social services are also still both heavily dependent on aid with at least half of the annual national budget funded from foreign sources (Slocomb, 2006). This is discussed in more detail in Chapters Five and Six.

Summary

This chapter has set out to provide some background to the case study for this thesis – that of Cambodia. It has analysed the history, politics and economy of Cambodia with specific reference to the links between Cambodia, China and the West. The main findings of this chapter are that Cambodia has had a long and varied history with China based on trade, tribute and migration. By contrast, Cambodia’s relationship with the West is much more recent, beginning with the period of French colonisation and culminating in the UNTAC period and current presence of many western donors today in Cambodia. Politically, Cambodia can be seen to have more in common with China than the West especially in regard to the political culture of patronage, the dominance of one political party and the suppression of civil society; however nominally, Cambodia is a democracy with values based on western ideas such as good governance, sustainability and human rights. In terms of the economy, Cambodia is integrated into the global economy and relies on both China and the West for both trade and foreign direct investment.
This chapter explores western, or ‘traditional’ aid to Cambodia by looking at the history of western aid and the culture of western aid in Cambodia. It explores western influence in Cambodia from the period of French colonisation and argues that the traditional aid donors, particularly since the UNTAC period, have come to dominate the aid landscape in Cambodia and consequently have created an aid culture in Cambodia dominated by the OECD-DAC consensus. Whilst traditional aid to Cambodia has certainly led to some positive outcomes – for example, increased life expectancy and economic growth – aid to Cambodia has also been critiqued for not achieving stated goals such as good governance and anti-corruption measures, poverty reduction and effective natural resource management.

Aid History

French colonisation: 1863-1953

Formal aid to Cambodia from the West did not begin until after independence in 1953. However, western influence over Cambodia began before this with the period of French colonisation: the first ever sustained western presence in Cambodia. The nineteenth century was the height of French colonialism and during this time, Cambodia became a French colony. The French were keen to stake a claim in Southeast Asia to both counter the British influence in Thailand and Burma; and to explore the opportunities the Mekong River might present for trade (Osborne, 2000). By 1859, France has seized Saigon and had Cambodia in its sights. During the mid-1800s, there was a struggle for power in Cambodia for the right to be King. It was during this period that Cambodian King Norodom signed a treaty with France, and thus in 1863 Cambodia became a French protectorate (Osborne, 1984). By 1887 Cambodia had become a fully integrated part of French Indochina: an artificially constructed region made up of present day Cambodia, Vietnam and Laos.

The French colonisation of Cambodia is generally regarded as having had both positive and negative effects upon Cambodia. The French were responsible for imposing taxes, building transport infrastructure such as railways and roads, land reforms, building of provincial cities, and bureaucratic institutions (Ross, 1987). The colonial period in Cambodia also saw for the first time the export of agricultural commodities, principally rice and high quality rubber. Mabbett and Chandler (1995:233) claim that
French colonialism was a relatively painless affair. From a Cambodian perspective its advantages probably outweighed its defects. Cambodia enjoyed continuous peace for the first time in centuries and its land was protected from more powerful neighbours. Others are more critical of this period. 'Cambodia was to be reformed irrespective of the wishes of its inhabitants, who were viewed as an inert background to events, not as participants in them' (Tully, 2005:vii). Implicit in this was the idea of mission civilisatrice or the 'civilising mission' whereby 'Europeans bore a responsibility to bring civilisation to the uncivilised' (Aldrich, 1996:92). According to Osborne (1984), the French saw Cambodia as 'theirs', thus they were present as colonisers for 'their' own benefit. For example, the French saw nothing wrong with allowing Vietnamese immigration into Cambodia to staff the rubber plantations and form the civil service despite the effect this would have on Cambodian national identity.

Nonetheless, whether French colonisation was positive or negative for Cambodia, it did leave a lasting legacy which is still evident today. From a geopolitical viewpoint we can see that France was integrating Cambodia both into the regional and global economies through colonisation. It was also imposing European ideals and values upon Cambodia for the first time. Conversely France was also painting a picture of Cambodia and Cambodians to those outside it, as a nation to be 'civilised'. Today in Cambodia some of these lasting legacies remain, in the aid money France gives to Cambodia, in the French institutions that still exist in the country today, even in the architecture and layout of Phnom Penh today. Thus began Cambodia's substantive relationship with the West. This was a relationship of coloniser and colony, as opposed to donor and recipient, nonetheless, it is important to consider this period as it paved the way for western interest in Cambodia and part of today's western 'claim' on Cambodia.

The 'golden age': 1953-1975

Aid as we know it today, did not become a major part of Cambodia's economy and development until after independence in 1953. Cambodia did receive small volumes of military aid in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Chandler (2008) says that between 1948 and 1949 the French sought military aid from the US to counter communism in Indochina. In 1950, the US initiated a program of economic aid to Indochina (including Cambodia): 'in order to assist them in restoring stability and permitting these states to pursue their peaceful and democratic development' (US Department of State, 1950:370). Nonetheless, it was not until independence that Cambodia saw the sustained influx of aid and its associated structures, institutions and power relations.

Cambodia achieved independence from France in 1953. The period 1953 to 1970 is often referred to as a 'golden age' in Cambodia's recent history (Osborne 2008:129). Sihanouk was in power, Cambodia was at peace and the country was doing relatively well economically (Osborne 2008). The French influence was still strong, as Osborne (2008:129) says: 'In Phnom
Penh the French seemed to be everywhere, their presence symbolized by the fact that Sihanouk’s doctor was a French army colonel.’ He goes on to say that the French trained the Cambodian military, they educated the Cambodian elite, they presided over the large rubber plantations and they dominated Cambodia’s cultural institutions. However, this period was also the height of the Cold War and a time of increasing tension and conflict in the region between the United States, China and Vietnam. The geopolitics of the period influenced the volume, structure and culture of aid. During the first few decades of independence, large volumes of aid were being received by Cambodia from the West, from China and from the Soviet Union as Cambodia, despite asserting its neutrality, became increasingly involved in the wider geopolitics of the Cold War.

One of the largest donors to Cambodia at this time was the United States. A US mission to Cambodia was set up in 1954 (Vachon 2004). The initial US aid program consisted of development aid, but also a large proportion of military aid (Ross, 1987). By the early 1960s, ‘US aid accounted for about 30% of Cambodia’s police and military budget, about $12 million a year’ (Rinaldo 1997). Marsot (1969) says that US aid to Cambodia between 1955 and 1963 was up to $340 million. Other countries, such as France and Japan were also disbursing aid during this period but the amounts they were pledging were small compared to the US pledges (OECD 2010). Osborne (2008) says that the US drove much of Phnom Penh’s economy from independence to the early 1960s.

In 1963, however, US aid was halted at the request of the Cambodian government. Osborne (1984) says that Sihanouk stopped this aid in order to avoid making Cambodia a ‘client of the US’ (as had happened in Laos and Southern Vietnam). Nonetheless Cambodia continued to receive aid during this period from other western nations. Cambodia received around $85 million in aid between 1963 and 1969, with France being one of the largest donors (OECD-DAC 2010). According to Ross (1987) the aid structure during the 1960s was usually that of a joint enterprise between foreign interests and local participation:

to avoid the appearance of undue dependence upon foreign aid, Cambodia insisted upon ‘project sharing’, that is, participation of its own in specific enterprises, such as the French-sponsored oil refinery and truck assembly plant at Sihanoukville. This stipulation imposed by Phnom Penh also had the effect of holding down the scale of many aid projects and the amounts of loans extended to the Cambodian government.

In 1970, Sihanouk was deposed from power by Lon Nol. Lon Nol abandoned Sihanouk’s supposed neutral policy and sided with the United States against North Vietnam. This led to a dramatic increase in aid as Cambodia became embroiled in the Vietnam War. In fact between 1970 and 1975, $649 million in western aid came into Cambodia – the majority of this was directly from the US, as opposed to other western donors – although Japan also
contributed around $36 million and France $25 million during this time (OECD-DAC, 2010). Cambodia also joined the World Bank in 1970, becoming its 115th member (although Cambodia’s first funding from the World Bank was not received until 1993). US aid to Cambodia peaked, as the United States began bombing Cambodia and Cambodia thus became a battlefield of the Vietnam War. According to Chandler (1993:220): ‘From the beginning of 1971 until April 1973 ... United States aid was the dominant factor in almost every aspect of political, economic and military affairs in Cambodia’.

However, this era of western aid to Cambodia was soon to cease and was not to resume until 1991. After the Khmer Rouge seized power in 1975, western embassies were closed and diplomatic ties halted. During this period, western aid was replaced with Chinese aid (as is discussed in further detail in Chapter Six). During the subsequent period of Vietnamese control between 1978 and 1989, the US embargoed Cambodia and blocked lending from the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the Asian Development Bank. Bilateral aid from western nations was also ceased, as the West refused to recognise the Vietnamese presence in Cambodia. Instead Cambodia relied on aid from the Soviet Bloc. The United Nations did provide some humanitarian relief through UNBRO – the United Nation’s Border Relief Operation - but this was largely aimed at border camps in Thailand, although some did go directly to Cambodia, particularly between 1979 and 1981 when it was estimated that $700 million in western humanitarian/emergency aid flowed to Cambodia (Hourn, 1998).

A limited number of UN agencies (UNICEF, WFP, FAO and UNHCD) and international NGOs (including Oxfam, World Vision and the American Friends Service Committee) maintained a small presence in Cambodia during the period of Vietnamese control. In fact, according to the UN, western NGOs came to acquire a greater comparative significance in Cambodia between 1979 and 1989 in the absence of major UN and western bilateral aid. International NGOs were involved not just in traditional development work such as grassroots or community based development activities, but also large-scale infrastructure and local and international advocacy activities (OSRSG-UN 1992; NGO Forum 1996; Mysliwiec, 1988). The enhanced role of western NGOs, and the isolation of Cambodia from western aid were to end in the early 1990s with the Paris Peace Accords and United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) peacekeeping operation. It is this era that has shaped the present day aid landscape in Cambodia and which is discussed in detail in the following sections.

The UNTAC period: 1992-1993

After the withdrawal of Vietnam, and the Paris Peace Accords of 1991 (which gave the UN full authority to order a ceasefire in Cambodia), the UN mounted its biggest ever (at the time) operation towards peace building and

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5 For a more detailed account of the nature of American aid in the region at the time see Phraxayavong (2009) History of Aid to Laos: Motivations and Impacts. This book focuses on aid to Laos, but there are several parallels with Cambodia, in particular the use of US aid to influence the politics and military strategy of the day.
democracy in a single country. This was called the UNTAC peacekeeping mission and took place between 1992 and 1993. This mission was endorsed by the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council (France, China, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom and the United States) in 1990. The UNTAC operation saw the United Nations, for the first time ever, take over the administration of an independent member state and organise and run an election. It also had a mandate over military arrangements, civil administration, maintenance of law and order and repatriation and resettlement of Cambodian refugees and displaced persons. At its peak, UNTAC numbered over 21,000 military and civilian personnel from more than 100 countries. The UNTAC operation cost $1.6 billion, saw the election of a supposedly democratic government and the opening up of Cambodia onto the global stage (United Nations, 2003).

Whilst the UNTAC mission was considered a success in that it achieved its goal of holding democratic elections, there were also several critiques aimed at the operation. For instance, even though local elections were held and over 90 per cent of the populace voted, the actual election results were not upheld by the United Nations. Hun Sen (the former and current Prime Minister) was allowed by the UN to ignore the will of the voters in 1993 when he refused to give up power (Osborne, 2008). UNTAC has also been criticised for promoting pro-western alternatives with little thought or consideration for the local context. For example, UNTAC could be seen as responsible for the dollarisation of Cambodia and the promotion of neo-liberal economic policies such as the privatisation and reduction of state responsibility over basic goods and services in Cambodia (Ghosh, 2003a). The whole UNTAC mission itself could be seen as promoting western ideas around democracy and ‘western assumptions regarding political conflict resolution’ (Roberts, 2007: 28; Hughes, 2007a) rather than allowing for local or alternative narratives.

Certainly the UNTAC period provided the pre-conditions for western donors to enter the country and to instil a certain aid culture. Cambodia went almost overnight from international isolation to a nation with many bilateral donors, multilateral donors, and international NGOs. The number of donors and volume of aid was disproportionate to the tiny population. Of course this was also a nation that had been devastated by war. In 1991 the country could not produce enough rice to feed itself, 80% of road bridges had been destroyed, only one third of Phnom Penh’s water requirements could be met, and farmers had only 12% of the fertilizer required to grow rice (Hiebert, 1991a). It therefore was a nation in need of aid. However, the legacy of the western aid culture which began with the UNTAC period did, and has, extended far beyond its initial mandate:

Cambodia represented virgin territory for players of the ‘aid game’. Unsullied by previous developmental mistakes (at least at the hands of Western aid practitioners), Cambodia was wide open to new projects, programs, and development experiments ... Aid markets are dynamic; the ready availability of financial resources tended to draw
new agencies to undertake new activities or to implement the
programs of others. Careers were to be made in Cambodia (Curtis,
1998: 72)

**Aid as a culture**

This section goes on to talk about the 'aid culture' that has been created in
Cambodia by the western donors since the UNATC period. An aid culture can
be seen as the set of shared attitudes, values, goals and practices created by
structures, mechanisms and policies through which aid flows. In the case of
Cambodia, this is the shared language, committees, principles, structures,
procedures and philosophies that the western donors have put in place
around aid and development. For example, the western ideas and systems
put in place to coordinate aid, the western paradigms of sustainable or
participatory development that influence Cambodian government
development policy, and the setting of aid agendas by western donors to
determine how, why and where aid money should be spent. These all
combine to form a particular aid culture. This section analyses this aid
culture by looking at aid figures, aid coordination, development policy and
critiques of western aid in Cambodia.

**Aid figures**

There are at least thirty-three bilateral and multilateral donors providing
aid to Cambodia. Most OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC)
member countries are represented in Cambodia as are the big multilateral
agencies including the World Bank, Asian Development Bank and UN
agencies. Around 70% of Cambodia's aid comes through bilateral donors,
the rest through multilateral donors; two thirds of this aid is in the form of
grants as opposed to one third which is loans (Cambodian Rehabilitation
and Development Board, 2010a). Cambodia is a member of a majority of the
large western aid, development, trade and monetary bodies, including the
United Nations, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the Asian
Development Bank, ASEAN and the World Trade Organisation.

Most of the traditional multilateral and bilateral donors not only provide
direct aid to Cambodia, but also channel portions of their aid money through
local and international non-government organisations. Since the UNTAC
period, hundreds of NGOs have set up in Cambodia with the Cambodia NGO
database (Cambodian Rehabilitation and Development Board, 2010b) listing
265 international NGOs and seventy-two local NGOs as having current
projects in Cambodia. Large international non-government organisations in
Cambodia include Oxfam, *Medecins sans Frontieres*, Care International and

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6 The statistics used in this section have come primarily from two sources - OECD international development
statistics online database; and the Cambodia ODA database, overseen by the Cambodian Rehabilitation and
Development Board of the Council for the Development of Cambodia. The OECD statistics are of higher quality, but
report only on DAC donors. The Cambodia ODA database reports on all donors to Cambodia, but may have
problems with accuracy relating to lack of staff training, lack of data input from donors and problems with data
validation (Cambodian Rehabilitation and Development Board, 2008). All statistics in this section should be read
keeping this in mind.
World Vision International. Local NGOs which receive foreign aid funding include: NGO Forum, Cooperation Committee for Cambodia (CCC) and the Cambodian Human Rights and Development Association (ADHOC), amongst others. According to the \textit{Cambodia Aid Effectiveness Report 2008} (Cambodian Rehabilitation and Development Board, 2008), between 1992 and 2007, NGOs provided around 8\% of the total aid to Cambodia.

From the UNTAC period, aid disbursements to Cambodia from the traditional donors have been large, both in volume and per capita. In 1991, net disbursements from DAC donors totalled US$49.93 million; this had risen to $342.23 million by 1995. In 1998 many donors halted or lowered their aid to Cambodia as a result of the 1997 coup instigated by Hun Sen which was seen by members of the western aid community as a threat to the democratization process put in place by UNTAC (as is discussed further in Chapter Six) (Hughes, 2007a). However despite some drop off in the total levels of aid, by 2000 aid was back at around $395 million per year and by 2009 net aid disbursements from traditional donors (both bilateral and multilateral) had topped $700 million (Figure 5.1). Whilst DAC aid has been increasing globally in recent years, as seen in Cambodia, what makes the Cambodian case particularly interesting is the per capita aid. In terms of aid as a percentage of Gross National Income (GNI) in Cambodia in 2006 DAC aid was 7.5\% of GNI. This compares to an average of 3.1\% for low income countries in general. In terms of aid per capita, in 2006 DAC aid amongst Asian aid receiving countries was $4.81, in Cambodia the average net aid receipt in 2006 was $37.26 (World Resources Institute, 2007).

Japan has been the largest bilateral aid donor to Cambodia for years, followed by the United States and Australia (see Figure 5.2). In fact, between 1992 and 2007, Japan provided 20\% of all aid to Cambodia according to the \textit{Cambodia Aid Effectiveness Report 2008} (Cambodian Rehabilitation and Development Board, 2008). The Cambodia ODA database says Japan currently has 227 aid projects running in Cambodia. In 2008, Japan's net aid to Cambodia was $114.77 million, the United States was $69.78 million and the European Community was $37.46 million (OECD-DAC, 2010). Other large DAC donors to Cambodia include the Asian Development Fund (AsDF), the soft loans arm of the Asian Development Bank (ADB), and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) (OECD-DAC, 2010). It is important to note, however, in the context of this thesis, that in the last few years, China has become one of the biggest donors to Cambodia – and it looks set to overtake Japan as the largest donor within the next few years, as is discussed in the following chapter.
Figure 5.1: Total DAC aid disbursements to Cambodia 1991-2009

![Graph showing total DAC aid disbursements to Cambodia 1991-2009.](image)

Source: Graph created by author from OECD statistics (OECD, 2010).

Figure 5.2: Overview of DAC aid to Cambodia 2006-2008

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cambodia</th>
<th>Top Ten Donors of gross ODA (2007-08 average) (USD m)</th>
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<td>Receipts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Net ODA (USD million)</td>
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<td>Bilateral share (gross ODA)</td>
<td>72% 70% 62%</td>
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<td>Net ODA / GNI</td>
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<td>Net Private flows (USD million)</td>
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<tr>
<td>For reference</td>
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<td>Population (million)</td>
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<td>GNI per capita (Atlas USD)</td>
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<td>50%</td>
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<td>60%</td>
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<td>80%</td>
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<td>90%</td>
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<td>4%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Sources: OECD, World Bank, www.oecd.org/dac/stats
From 1992 to 2007, the main sectors to have received aid in Cambodia were: governance and administration (17.5%), health (12.9%), transportation (11.8%) and rural development (11.3%) (see Figure 5.2). The four largest donors to Cambodia tend to focus on specific sectors, for instance, a third of US aid goes to health, the largest proportion of Japanese aid goes to agriculture, and the ADB focuses on education, and water and sanitation. The majority of NGO aid goes to health (25%), followed by governance (16%) and education (12%) (Cambodian Rehabilitation and Development Board, 2008). Technical cooperation usually represents around half the total aid to Cambodia (Chanboreth and Hach, 2008), although in the last couple of years this figure has been technically revised downwards as the US re-categorised its technical cooperation as 'investment assistance'. Nonetheless, the level of technical assistance is still relatively high at 39% (Cambodian Rehabilitation and Development Board, 2008).

It is important to note, at this point, that Cambodia also receives aid from non-western or non-DAC donors (as mentioned briefly above). For example, Cambodia receives aid from countries such as China, South Korea (a DAC donor only from 2009), Thailand, Kuwait and Qatar (Cambodian Rehabilitation and Development Board, 2010). These donors are of increasing importance in Cambodia not only in terms of their aid but also in terms of how their aid fits in with the existing aid culture in Cambodia. The next chapter goes on to look at one of these non-DAC donors in detail – China, the focus of this thesis – and outline the history, structure and culture of Chinese aid to Cambodia.

Aid coordination

Aid coordination refers to the planning and procurement of aid by the government of the recipient nation, and the integration of this aid into national development goals and strategies. Aid coordination is particularly significant in Cambodia due to the large numbers of donors in Cambodia and the central role aid plays in the Cambodian economy. Since the UNTAC period, aid coordination mechanisms in Cambodia have been dominated by the traditional donors. The following section looks at aid coordination mechanisms in Cambodia since the UNTAC period, and the degree to which an aid culture has been created based on western discourse and practice around aid coordination.

The largest and most important aid coordination mechanism in Cambodia today is the annual donor/government meeting7. These meetings began in 1992, and provide a forum for the donors and Cambodian government to come together to request aid, to make aid pledges, and to discuss development agendas. Whilst today these meetings are nominally run by the RGC, they have a long history of being both run and structured by western donors (Figure 5.3). For example, the first annual donor/government

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7 I refer to these meetings as 'annual', although they are sometimes held bi-annually
meeting was held in 1992 in Tokyo and was named the Ministerial Conference on Rehabilitation and Reconstruction of Cambodia (MCRRC). It ran under the co-chairmanship of Japan and UNDP and was concerned, not surprisingly, with achieving the mandate of the UNTAC operation, i.e. peace and democracy (Curtis, 1993). Between 1993 and 1995, these meetings were re-named the International Committee on Reconstruction of Cambodia (ICORC) and were held alternatively in Tokyo and Paris and chaired exclusively by Japan and France respectively (Hourn, 1998).

Table 5.3: Donor/Government meetings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Chair</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Ministerial Conference on Rehabilitation and Reconstruction of Cambodia</td>
<td>Tokyo</td>
<td>Japan/UNDP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993-1995</td>
<td>International Committee on Reconstruction of Cambodia</td>
<td>Tokyo/Paris</td>
<td>Japan/France</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996-2001</td>
<td>Consultative Group</td>
<td>Tokyo/Paris</td>
<td>World Bank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002-2006</td>
<td>Consultative Group</td>
<td>Phnom Penh</td>
<td>World Bank/RGC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007-2010</td>
<td>Cambodia Development Cooperation Forum</td>
<td>Phnom Penh</td>
<td>RGC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author

From 1996 these meetings became known as Consultative Group Meetings. Consultative Group Meetings are not unique to Cambodia, but rather a standard format used by the World Bank in a number of aid recipient countries as a forum to bring together governments and donors to discuss such DAC-OECD policy as macroeconomic policy, good governance/anti-corruption and ODA effectiveness (e.g. see Vietnam Consultative Group meeting; Yemen Consultative Group meeting and Philippines Consultative Group meeting). In 2002 the location of Consultative Group meetings was moved from Tokyo/Paris to Phnom Penh and the meetings became co-chaired by the World Bank and the Royal Government of Cambodia in a move to give 'ownership' to the RGC. After 2006, the Consultative Group meetings were reformatted once again to become the Cambodia Development Cooperation Forum (CDCF), although in practice these meetings are not much different to the Consultative Group meetings. Like previous donor/government meetings, CDCF meetings are attended by government, donors, NGO representatives and private sector representatives. The CDCF is officially chaired solely by the RGC, but the World Bank is still the lead donor facilitator, and is responsible, along with the RGC, for opening and closing remarks.

Whilst these donor/government meetings are a useful aid coordination tool necessary in an aid dependent country such as Cambodia, they can also be seen, however, to foster a culture of aid dominated by traditional models. For example, Consultative Group meetings are a model developed by the World Bank and used in numerous countries without taking into
consideration local context. Whilst these meetings have now been reformatted to give the RGC more ownership, the agenda of these meetings is still based on traditional 'best practice' as to what 'good' development is i.e. good governance, anti-corruption and neo-liberal economic reform. Whilst non-DAC donors are invited to these meetings, to date they are not usually asked to contribute in terms of the agenda or speaking to agenda items (see CDCF agendas 2007, 2008, 2010 [Cambodian Rehabilitation and Development Board, 2011]): thus an aid culture based on western development values and practices is created and maintained.

Annual donor-government meetings can be seen as the most high profile aid coordination mechanism in Cambodia, however another important aid coordination mechanism and one which also reflects a particular aid culture in Cambodia are the sectoral and thematic Technical Working Groups (TWG). These working groups were initially set up by traditional donors after the 1999 Consultative Group meeting as a means to create a dialogue with the RGC (Royal Government of Cambodia, 2006a). They were significantly revised and adjusted in 2004 by the RGC following the 2003 Rome Declaration on Harmonization. There are currently 19 Technical Working Groups all led by the RGC but co-lead by traditional donors (Figure 5.4). According to the Government's Guideline on the Role and Functioning of Technical Working Groups (Royal Government of Cambodia, 2007):

TWGs are intended to serve primarily as coordinating and supporting bodies; they are not intended to substitute for or to duplicate the functions of ministries and agencies. TWGs are accountable to their host ministries and agencies, and the TWG Chair, as the Government's lead representative in a TWG, is therefore the sole decision-making authority in the TWG.

The development sectors the working groups focus on include 'partnership and harmonization', 'public administrative reform' and HIV/AIDS.

Coordinating the TWGs is the Government Donor Coordination Committee (GDCC). This Committee was first set up in 2004, and is responsible for strengthening and improving aid coordination mechanisms and aid effectiveness. This Committee meets two to three times per year and is led by the RGC with support from the World Bank.

The whole GDCC-TWG mechanism, is based on DAC 'best practice' around aid, as can be seen through its basis in the Rome Declaration on Harmonisation and the following statement from the Cambodian Government:

Although the GDCC-TWG mechanism pre-dates the Paris Declaration and the OECD-DAC Guidelines, the overarching objectives of the mechanism are entirely consistent with these global initiatives (Royal Government of Cambodia, 2006a:2).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TWG</th>
<th>Chair/Co-Chair</th>
<th>Lead/Co-lead DP facilitator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture and water</td>
<td>H.E. Mr Chan Tong Tves H.E. Mr Veng Sakhon</td>
<td>Ms. Mitchell Katherine AusAID Mr Ian Russell FAO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decentralisation and de-</td>
<td>H.E. Mr. Prum Sokha H.E. Mr. Nao Thuok</td>
<td>Ms. Janelle Plummer World Bank Mr. Richard Bridle UNICEF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>concentration</td>
<td>Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>H.E. Im Sethy</td>
<td>Mr. Richard Bridle UNICEF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fisheries</td>
<td>H.E. Mr. Nao Thuok</td>
<td>Mr. Jacob Kahl Jepsen Royal Danish Embassy/DANIDA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food security and nutrition</td>
<td>H.E. Mr. Rath Virak Council for Agriculture &amp; Rural Development</td>
<td>Mr. Jean-Pierre de Margerie WFP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forestry and environment</td>
<td>H.E. Chheng Kim Suno</td>
<td>Mr. Jacob Kahl Jepsen Royal Danish Embassy/DANIDA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>H.E. Dr. Ing Kantha Phavi</td>
<td>Ms. Sophie Baranes UNDP Mr. Yukiharu Kobayashi JICA Cambodia Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>H.E. Mr. Mam Bunheng H.E. Nuth Chansokha</td>
<td>Dr. Pieter JM van Maaren WHO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIV/AIDS</td>
<td>H.E. Nuth Sokhom Chair of National AIDs Authority</td>
<td>Dr. Ms. Dora Warren US Embassy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infrastructure and regional</td>
<td>H.E. Mr. Tram Iv Tek H.E. Mr. Prak Horm</td>
<td>Mr. Yasujiro SUZUKI JICA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>integration</td>
<td>Ministry of Public Works and Transport</td>
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<tr>
<td>Land</td>
<td>H.E. Mr. Prak Horm</td>
<td>Mr. Hady Raid German Embassy Mrs. Linda Wishart CIDA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partnership and Harmonization</td>
<td>H.E. Mr. Chhieng Yanara CDC/CRDB</td>
<td>Ms. Elena Tischenko UNDP Mr. Karl-Anders Larsson SIDA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning and Poverty</td>
<td>H.E. Mr. Ou Orhat</td>
<td>Mr. Douglas Broderick UN Resident Coordinator Mr. Qimiao Fan WB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduction</td>
<td>Ministry of Planning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Sector Development</td>
<td>H.E. Mr. Sok Chenda Private Sector Development Committee Council for the</td>
<td>Mr. Stephane Guimbert WB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Development of Cambodia</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Public Administrative Reform</td>
<td>Mr. Ngo Hong Ly Council for Administrative Reform</td>
<td>Mr. Stephane Guimbert WB Ms. Katharina Huebner CTZ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Financial Management</td>
<td>H.E. Dr. Aun Porn Moniroth Minister attached to the PM Secretary of State</td>
<td>Mr. Stephane Guimbert Sr. Country Economist WB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ministry of Economy and Finance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Water Supply, Sanitation</td>
<td>H.E. Mr. Chea Sophara Minister</td>
<td>Mr. Richard Bridle Representative, UNICEF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and Hygiene</td>
<td>Ministry of Rural Development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Cambodian Rehabilitation and Development Board, 2010b
Non-DAC donors do not play a role in the TWGs or GDCC. As Fitzgerald and Strange (2004:6) say: 'The practice of many donors ... is to source their models and expertise for Cambodia in Europe, North America or Oceania. [However] this may not always be the best practice, or the most cost-effective ...'

The government body responsible for coordinating aid in Cambodia is the Council for the Development of Cambodia (CDC). The CDC was set up in 1994 and consists of two operational bodies: the Cambodian Rehabilitation and Development Board (CRDB) and the Cambodia Investment Board (CIB). The Cambodian Rehabilitation Development Board is the focal point for the mobilisation of aid, for coordination of aid with all development partners (multilateral, bilateral and NGOs), and for coordination with and between Royal Government ministries and agencies on aid allocation and utilisation issues. The CRDB acts as secretariat for CDCF, GDCC and TWG meetings and is also responsible for the Cambodia ODA database and annual Cambodia Aid Effectiveness Report. The CRDB performs an important function in terms of coordinating aid, however rather than leading aid coordination, the CRDB follows the lead of the western donors. For example, following on from the Rome Declaration on Harmonization in 2003 at which traditional donors decided harmonization and alignment of aid activities was a priority, the CRBD was entrusted with expanding aid management information systems within government and becoming the secretariat to the newly formed Government Donor Coordination; and following on from the outcomes of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness in 2005 the CRDB was assigned the task of producing an annual aid effectiveness report, which is now tabled at all Cambodia Development Cooperation Forums.

**Development policy**

Whilst aid coordination contributes to creating an aid culture, so too does development policy. In Cambodia, official development policy is very much based on western development paradigms of sustainable or participatory development. Policy is written and endorsed by the government, but donors drive the policy agenda, and as such ensure a culture that is based on western notions of development, as seen below in the analysis of Cambodian development since the UNTAC period.

Prior to 1995, Cambodia's development policy was based on the idea of a socialist/centrally-planned economy, as summed up by the 2nd Socioeconomic Rehabilitation and Development Program 1991-1995. However, following on from the UNTAC period in Cambodia and the subsequent influx of DAC donors into Cambodia, new development plans were required that could supplement a market-led economy, as espoused by the western donors in both discourse and practice. Thus in 1996, the 1st Socio-Economic Development Plan 1996-2000 was published which set out to define the Government's development priorities. Whilst the plan was prepared by the Royal Government of Cambodia, it was done so with considerable assistance from the Asian Development Bank (ADB). The plan
identified three pillars of development: sustainable economic growth; sustainable human development; and sustainable management and use of natural resources. It also emphasised social development and direct targeting of vulnerable groups with a focus on 'bottom up participatory rural development and an outwards looking labour-intensive industrial development strategy, aimed at encouraging domestic and foreign investment in the sector' (Livingstone, 1998:207). The emphasis of the 1st Socio-Economic Development Plan was very much in line with the outcomes of the UN-sponsored Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development in 1996 which placed social development and social justice at the forefront of the global development consensus. According to Livingstone (1998) much of this plan also appeared to represent UNICEF influence in its emphasis on poverty. In 2001, the RGC introduced its 2nd Socio-Economic Development Plan 2001-2005. Whilst supposedly a Government-led planning document, this plan was funded by the Asian Development Bank and was written by an ADB consultant (Greenhill and Watt, 2005).

In 2003, the National Poverty Reduction Strategy 2003-2005 was introduced by the RGC as a requirement of the International Monetary Fund (IMF). This strategy was funded by the World Bank in Cambodia; and partly written by one of the World Bank's own consultants (Greenhill and Watt, 2005). The International Monetary Fund requires a country to have a national poverty reduction strategy to ensure continued funding. According to the IMF website (International Monetary Fund, 2010):

Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) are prepared by member countries in broad consultation with stakeholders and development partners, including the staffs [sic] of the World Bank and the IMF. Updated every three years with annual progress reports, they describe the country’s macroeconomic, structural, and social policies in support of growth and poverty reduction, as well as associated external financing needs and major sources of financing.

However, according to Greenhill and Watt (2005:45), PRSPs are donor-driven and relate little to the needs or wants of individual countries:

In some cases such as Cambodia, PRSPs have even been written by aid-financed foreign consultants, making ‘ownership’ little more than a donor fiction.... In short, donors own reluctance to relinquish ownership of their programmes has restricted the space in which countries can pursue their own priorities and governments can become more downwardly accountable to citizens.

In 2006, a new national development framework was implemented by the RGC – the National Strategic Development Plan 2006-20108. This replaced both the 2nd Socio-Economic Development Plan 2002-2005 and the National Poverty Reduction Strategy 2003-2005, to become the ‘single all-
encompassing RGC document for the next five years’ (RGC 2005:ii). The introduction of this plan was an attempt by the RGC to limit the number of development plans it was working to. As Greenhill and Watt (2005:26) say, multiple development plans imposed by the traditional donors in Cambodia has led to a problematic aid culture of time and resource wastage and lack of ownership on behalf of the Cambodian government:

In Cambodia, ... [there are] three separate strategic plans, all supposedly ‘country owned’: the 2nd Socio-Economic Development Plan (SEDPII), funded by the Asian Development Bank and written by one of their own consultants; the National Poverty Reduction Strategy (NPRS), funded by the World Bank and largely written by a World Bank consultant; and the UN’s MDG strategy for the country. While the government of Cambodia is now making efforts to develop its own plan, amalgamating all three, the result has been a diversion of time and resources in a country that can scarcely afford either, and widespread confusion as to which document is the Cambodian government’s guiding strategy.

The new plan draws heavily on the Cambodian Millennium Development Goals (CMDG) implemented in 2003, which followed on from the 2000 United Nations Millennium Declaration. Whilst goals such as ending poverty and hunger, and universal education and health care are useful and necessary for a nation such as Cambodia, the means to achieve these goals are imposed by traditional donors. There is little room for real input from the Cambodian government or consideration of alternative development practices.

Critiques

The following section goes on to look at some of the specific critiques of the aid culture in Cambodia including its donor driven nature, the fragmentation of aid, the reliance on technical assistance and the lack of aid effectiveness in areas such as good governance and anti-corruption measures. This is not to say that traditional aid has not achieved successes in Cambodia – it has – but rather that the specific aid culture created in Cambodia as a result of western discourse and practice is itself problematic.

Perhaps one of the most consistent critiques of the aid culture in Cambodia is that it donor-driven. That is, western donors set the agenda and determine how, why and where aid money should be spent. As seen in the sections above, donors have a lot of influence in coordination of aid and in the writing and implementation of government development policy. Donors themselves usually acknowledge that this is the case (Hughes, 2009b). For example, there are few demand-driven projects in Cambodia most being donor-driven in both identification and design with RGC having a minimal say in selection of projects (Godfrey, 2002). In a specific example of the donor-driven agenda in Cambodia, Ear (2009a) talks of the influence donors have had on a public health issue in Cambodia – that of avian influenza. In
2008, $35 million was pledged by traditional donors to fighting avian flu. This was despite the fact that the threat of avian influenza in 2008 in Cambodia was low:

Except for a human case in December 2008, there had not been a single outbreak in either animals or humans since April 2007 ... Cambodia’s epidemic waves were mild and the number of human cases were few compared to neighbouring countries (Ear, 2009a:16).

Of far greater concern in Cambodia at the time in terms of public health were malaria and dengue fever outbreaks. Combating avian flu was a donor-driven agenda, motivated by donors’ own concerns:

In the context of avian influenza, donors are too often motivated by concerns other than protecting livelihoods, just as traditional aid activities are often dominated by the need to tie aid to donor countries, avian influenza activities have been overtly focused on detecting and preventing pandemic as a threat to the donor countries themselves (Ear, 2009a:1).

This donor-driven agenda can also be seen when analysing donor disbursements against the RGCs own development priorities. Aid disbursements received from donors do not match up with the RGC’s stated development priorities. Transportation, education and rural development are all rather underfunded when it comes to aid disbursements, whilst governance and administration; community and social; and agriculture and food all receive more funding than requested (Cambodian Rehabilitation and Development Board, 2008).

Another consequence of a donor-driven aid culture is that a high proportion of the best-educated local people either work for donor agencies or international non-government organisations; or have been assigned to donors’ projects as counterparts. In western countries those who want to earn high salaries usually look to the financial services or similar industries, however, in Cambodia, these same people look to NGOs and aid agencies. This raises the price of educated labour; hinders the development of skill-intensive production and exports; and creates a donor-driven workforce more beholden to the donor’s agenda than anything else. Donor funding also eases pressure on the RGC both to increase collection of revenue and to raise the salaries of government employees (estimated to currently be at 45 cents per day in Cambodia), as so many senior officials receive salary supplements for working as project counterparts on donor driven projects (Godfrey et al, 2002; Ear, 2007).

Fragmentation and lack of coordination amongst donors is also a problem with the traditional donor-driven aid culture in Cambodia, despite the supposed emphasis on aid coordination as outlined in the previous section. Problems with aid fragmentation include government time being taken up with donor meetings and reporting; proliferation of forms and formats to be
adhered to; setting up of parallel systems; and emphasis on reporting to donors rather than government:

The costs of aid fragmentation in Cambodia include the establishment of about 100 parallel project implementation units, the existence of 400 donor missions, reviews, and studies per year, and the provision of duplicated technical cooperation and funding (Chanboreth and Hach, 2008:2).

As Hughes (2009b:137) points out, setting up individual monitoring systems and individual projects units makes it easier for donors to monitor their aid investment, but this makes it much harder for ‘the government to link up various types of assistance into long term developmental strategies.’

Another critique of the aid culture in Cambodia is the high reliance on technical assistance. Technical assistance (or ‘technical cooperation’) can be defined in various ways, but here it is used to refer primarily to payments to foreign consultants and advisors. During and immediately following the UNTAC period, many foreign consultants were brought into the country. The Khmer Rouge period in Cambodia had meant that there were very few professionals left in the country. However, this legacy of bringing in foreign consultants and thus reliance on external direction, rather than reliance on local experts or consideration of local conditions, has continued until today. In general, according to Chanboreth and Hach (2008:11), technical assistance does not positively impact upon development results in Cambodia:

Recent evidence has highlighted that TC has failed to yield the intended result and, in some cases, has had an undesirable impact on sustainable capacity development in Cambodia. In general, TC is poorly coordinated and supply-driven.

Greenhill and Watt (2005:22) go on to note that not only are there numerous overseas consultants in Cambodia, but that they are paid far more than their Cambodian counterparts, creating a false economy:

... in Cambodia the aid spent by donors on 700 international consultants in 2002 was estimated to be between US$50 and US$70m – roughly equivalent to the wage bill for 160,000 Cambodian civil servants. In other words, donor-financed consultants working in the Cambodian government are paid upwards of 200 times what their Cambodian counterparts receive (Greenhill and Watt 2005:22).

There are also questions as to how much of this money actually stays in Cambodia. Godfrey et al (2002) note that at least 20% of technical assistance is paid to personnel not even in Cambodia and Dodd (2006) estimates that up to 80% of aid paid to international aid organisations in Cambodia goes straight out again in the form of expatriate salary packages and running costs.
Aid effectiveness is also problematic in Cambodia. Since 1992, Cambodia has received more than $7 billion in aid money (Hughes, 2009a), mostly from western donors. However, Cambodia is still one of the poorest countries in the world, it is still aid dependent and is one of the most corrupt countries in the world. According to Global Witness:

Cambodia's international donor community has consistently failed to bring the government to book for blatant violations of its commitments to protect the human rights of Cambodians, fight corruption, and to ensure the protection of land and natural resources (Global Witness, 2009:54).

Corruption in Cambodia is well documented. Global Witness, in its 2009 report *Country for Sale* outlined the high level of corruption and nepotism affecting allocation and management of critical public assets in Cambodia, whilst Ear (2007) suggests that corruption may consume as much as the entire aid budget each year. Gillison and Kimsong (2007) note that since 2000, Consultative Group and Cambodia Development Cooperation Forum meetings have set firm benchmarks that are supposed to be met by the RGC, not just in relation to corruption, but also good governance clauses, judicial reform and land reform. Yet these benchmarks are rarely, if ever, met. Nonetheless, the total amount of aid from donors tends to increase each year, not decrease. Hughes (2009:32) points out that this lack of action on behalf of traditional donors when their benchmarks are not met, might suit both donors and the RGC alike: 'a necessary prop to neoliberal policy, in a context where possible alternative forms of development and politics are not discussed, in a conspiracy of silence that benefits elites and donors alike.' Hughes goes on to talk about the western aid culture in Cambodia and says that:

the essential problem is not addiction on the part of recipients [to aid], but ideological attachment on the part of the donors to rigid and doctrinaire templates that cannot work in a post-conflict state on the periphery of the global economy (2009:8).

Lempert (2006) is rather more blunt in an article about Cambodia entitled *Foreign Aid - Creating conditions for the next civil war* saying that 'The international community has substituted a different kind of planning that is closer to treating the country like a colony or a business, in place of sustainable development.'

**Summary**

This chapter has provided a background to the existing aid culture in Cambodia though an historical analysis and an overview of aid coordination, development and critiques in Cambodia. Since the UNTAC period, when Cambodia moved out of international isolation, traditional donors have flowed into the country. They have imposed their own aid culture on the
country – one which involves meeting international development goals but one which often does not take into account local context or alternative development paths. A dominant aid culture has thus been created, one which is entrenched in the policies, institutions and structures of aid in Cambodia today.
Chapter Six: Chinese aid to Cambodia

This chapter analyses Chinese aid to Cambodia paying particular attention to geopolitics and representation. It starts with an historical analysis of Chinese aid before moving on to look at Chinese aid today, including the structure of Chinese aid to Cambodia; a case study of one Chinese aid project – the Kamchay dam in Kampot in Cambodia’s southeast; and the participation of China in the existing aid structures in Cambodia.

History

The first ever disbursements of Chinese aid were in 1953. These went to the communist countries of North Vietnam, North Korea and Mongolia. However, after the Bandung Conference of 1955, China began to disburse aid to some of the neutral countries of Southeast Asia, including Cambodia (Marsot, 1969). The Bandung Conference, held in Indonesia and attended by both China and Cambodia, was a meeting of Asian and African nations to promote economic and cultural cooperation and oppose colonialism and neo-colonialism. China’s presence at the Bandung conference was seen as important as it was considered, at the time, an ally of the Soviet Bloc yet its attendance reinforced its willingness to take a neutral stance and support others who also took this stance. The conference led to the rise of the ‘Non-Aligned Movement’ – a collection of nations not formally aligned with, and opposed to, any major power bloc (i.e. United States or Soviet Union). Cambodia was part of this non-aligned movement. The first instalment of Chinese aid to Cambodia was thus in 1956, only three years after China’s official aid program began: ‘In June 1956, the Chinese provided Phnom Penh with US$22.4 million in equipment as part of an ongoing program of industrial economic assistance’ (Ross, 1987).

According to Cooper (1976), early Chinese aid to Cambodia and other Asian countries, also reflected the ancient tribute relationship: ‘thus he [Mao] looked to Southeast Asia, which had been a traditional area of Chinese control ...’ (Cooper, 1976: 121). Historically, China’s world order was based on the tribute system (as outlined in Chapter Three) which placed China at the centre of its world. The tribute system was characterised by foreign nations giving gifts to China in return for sovereignty and trading rights. This tribute system was at its peak between the mid-fourteenth and mid-nineteenth centuries. Cooper (1976) points out that the Chinese aid system between 1956 and 1975 had many parallels with the ancient tribute system.
For example, most aid agreements were signed in Peking, rather than the aid recipient country, signalling the importance of China in these agreements; important diplomatic business was carried out by Chinese officials during aid missions overseas, as had been the case with the tribute system; the granting of aid involved considerable fanfare and ritual, as had tribute missions; and aid missions represented exchanges of loyalty and friendship enhancing the prestige of ruling groups on both sides, as did ancient tribute missions.

Between 1956 and 1973, China disbursed $69.4 million in aid to Cambodia. This was 2% of China’s overall aid program and was in the form of grants as opposed to loans (Bartke, 1975). In relative terms (the amount of aid compared to the population), Cambodia received more Chinese aid prior to 1968 than any other country (Marsot, 1969). Marsot (1969) goes on to explain why China was so interested in disbursing aid with favourable conditions to Cambodia during this time. After the Bandung conference of 1955, Sihanouk had adopted a neutralist policy for Cambodia – that is, he assumed a position of non-alignment with either the western or Soviet blocs:

In light of subsequent events what matters is that the policy followed was the only sensible one and the only one capable of preventing Cambodia from being drawn into hot war, unlike Laos and above all Vietnam. Had Cambodia aligned herself completely, or even partially, with the Western camp under the influence of the United States, she would without any doubt have drawn on herself the fury and hostility of the Communist camp, and the flames of civil war would not have spared her, especially when at that time the United States was not ready to undertake definite commitments in Cambodia. She would certainly not have been given adequate protection against her two intimidating neighbours (Marsot, 1969:191).

According to Marsot (1969), Cambodia’s neutral stance made Cambodia useful to China for various reasons. For example, Cambodia remaining neutral was an embarrassment to the US and her allies. Moreover, China also saw this neutralist policy as a useful example for other countries to follow - Cambodia could be used as a spokesperson by China as it was one of the rare non-Communist countries to follow such a policy and one of the few non-aligned countries to accept China’s aid. This was particularly helpful to China in light of the growing discontent between China and the Soviet Union. As Bartke (1975:20) says:

Again we clearly see China’s endeavours to befriend the non-aligned countries, whose advocate she aspires to be. That she is pursuing this course with great effect may be seen, inter alia, from the fact that the establishment of diplomatic relations was in many cases promptly followed by agreements on economic and technical cooperation involving aid loans.
Finally, as Cambodia was such a small country, Chinese aid took on more relative importance 'nourishing Chinese propaganda and her prestige on the outside' (Marsot, 1969: 193). Meanwhile, on the part of Sihanouk and Cambodia: 'by establishing friendly relations with China without at the same time breaking links with the West, Sihanouk in some measure was taking out an insurance both for the present and the future' (Marsot, 1969:191).

The aid China disbursed to Cambodia between 1956 and 1973 was used primarily for projects to aid industrialisation (namely factories), although substantial amounts of Chinese aid were also disbursed for other economic and social interests (Marsot, 1969). Bartke (1975) says, more specifically, that Chinese aid to Cambodia was disbursed for: factories (textile mills, glass plants, paper and plywood plants etc); new buildings (e.g. hospitals, Siem Reap airport, a teacher training college, a broadcast station etc); technical experts in the fields of agriculture, light industry, communications and transport, social institutions and the power industry; development of commercial plantations; and planning Cambodia's railways (Bartke, 1975). This compares to US non-military aid which prior to 1962 was invested mostly in the areas of public health, education, and agricultural development, although some also went to infrastructure, for example the United States constructed a highway linking the port of Sihanoukville to Phnom Penh (Ross, 1987).

The arrangements around the giving and receiving of Chinese aid to Cambodia, were that:

The commission in Phnom Penh is to specify the aid projects, arrange the preliminaries, and deal with further problems. The commission in Peking is to arrange substantially the preconditions for the deliveries (Bartke, 1975:36).

According to Marsot (1969:195) 'In the absence of a coherent and concerted [development] plan, China allowed the Cambodian government a free hand in the distribution of the sums credited to it amongst the various sectors'

Between 1970 and 1974 the nature of China's aid to Cambodia changed. Sihanouk was deposed as Head of State in 1970 by Lon Nol. Lon Nol became President of the new Khmer Republic and immediately sided with the United States. However, China was still on friendly terms with Sihanouk who fled to Beijing where he formed, in alliance with Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge, a Cambodian government-in-exile - the Royal Government of National Union of Kampuchea (GRUNK). GRUNK was supported by China who gave 30 million in aid in two instalments in 1972 and 1973 (Bartke, 1975). China had an interest in supporting Sihanouk and the Khmer Rouge as an ally against communist Vietnam as China and the Soviet Union had split in 1960 when Mao 'denounced the leaders of the USSR as revisionists seeking to impose their domination over the rest of the bloc' (Tully, 2005:191).
In 1975, the Khmer Rouge seized power in Cambodia with the full backing of China. At this time, China, was in the last throes of the Cultural Revolution with the Gang of Four dominating foreign policy in China (Richardson, 2010). Pol Pot, with his ultra-Maoist ideals, thus complemented ideological thinking in China at the time and received China's support as a result. When the Khmer Rouge seized power in Phnom Penh, the western donors were expelled from Cambodia and China became Cambodia's only link to the rest of the world:

Beijing soon became its [Cambodia's] only link to the outside world after landing rights were re-established ... on the surface, the relationship seemed to proceed along familiar lines of economic and military aid, diplomatic niceties, and trade (Richardson, 2010:91).

China between 1975 and 1979 provided aid both in the form of military assistance and advisors to Cambodia. According to Chanda (2002:4), China offered an aid package of $1 billion to Cambodia: 'tanks, armoured personnel carriers, patrol boats, jet fighters, guns and thousands of Chinese advisers were poured into Cambodia.' Jackson (1975) also mentions an aid agreement of about $1 billion signed by both China and Cambodia over several years, although the exact amount is a mystery. Estimates of the number of Chinese experts in Cambodia during the Khmer Rouge period range from 500 to 2,000 (Ross, 1975).

Whilst Richardson (2010:100) notes some unease in Beijing towards China's assistance to Cambodia as evidence of the atrocities of the Khmer Rouge became known, she also points out that for China to 'abandon the DK was simply not an option' as 'to leave Cambodia vulnerable to incursions - after two decades of trying to prevent that – was simply inconceivable.' Chanda (2002:3), however, is more blunt in stating that China supported the Khmer Rouge primarily in an effort to maintain the independence of Cambodia against Vietnam:

For the next fifteen years, Chinese foreign policy in Southeast Asia was aimed at the single objective of expelling Soviet influence and presence from its southern border ... The principal locus of the struggle was Vietnam and the principal tool: China's Cambodian allies.

Nonetheless, despite China's support for the Khmer Rouge regime in Cambodia, China immediately ceased aid to Cambodia in 1979 when Vietnam invaded. However, China continued its support of the exiled Khmer Rouge in an attempt to undermine the Vietnamese government. This support for the Khmer Rouge meant China was now in alliance with the United States, who also supported the coalition of which the Khmer Rouge was a part in a bid to undermine communist Vietnam. In 1972, US President Nixon had visited China – the first ever visit by the US to China. This visit

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9 The Gang of Four were a leftist political faction of the Chinese Communist Party who came to prominence during the Cultural Revolution. They are often blamed for the worst excesses of the Cultural Revolution.
had begun to thaw relations between China and the West, as did the end of the Cultural Revolution whose political, economic, and educational reforms were abandoned by 1978 as China moved towards a more ‘conventional’ or western path of development.

Between 1979 and 1990, Cambodia received no aid from China or the West. Instead the Vietnamese-installed government in Phnom Penh was propped up by the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON)\(^\text{10}\) which provided up to $100 million per year in aid ‘it is widely believed that the Soviet’s fund more than 75% of Phnom Penh’s operating budget’ (Hiebert, 1991b:45). A large proportion of this aid money went to defence, although money was also put into rice production, rubber production, timber production and factory restoration (Hiebert, 1991b). China and the West continued to support the Khmer Rouge throughout the 1980s:

China maintained its support for the Khmer Rouge both throughout the entire period of the Pol Pot regime, and afterwards through the 1980s as its remnants fought a guerrilla war against the new Vietnamese-supported regime in Phnom Penh (Osborne, 2008:145).

However, in 1989, with the Soviet Union on the brink of collapse, the Vietnamese pulled out of Cambodia, and with it went COMECON aid. At this time, Cambodia was in danger of economic collapse. This led to the Paris Peace Accords of 1991, as both China and the West quickly went to fill the vacuum left behind by Vietnam’s withdrawal.

**Chinese aid post-1991**

In 1991, China, along with eighteen other parties, was signatory to the Paris Peace Accords which brought peace to Cambodia. This agreement also signified the end of economic sanctions against Cambodia by both China and the West. Highlighting China’s re-engagement with Cambodia was the fact that in 1992, the Chinese State Councillor and foreign minister visited Phnom Penh. A team of Chinese army engineers also joined the UNTAC peacekeeping force in Cambodia (Chanda, 2002). According to Chanda (2002:5), by the early 1990s, China in relation to Cambodia, had ‘returned to the policies of the late 1950s, seeking to gain friendship and influence through political support and economic cooperation in Southeast Asia.’

However, it was not until 1997 that the modern Cambodia/China aid relationship was truly re-established. Prior to this point (i.e. 1992-1997), China was disbursing small amounts of aid to Cambodia but 1997 was a catalyst year in the China/Cambodia aid relationship. In July 1997, Hun Sen sent tanks against co-premier Prince Norodom Ranariddh in a coup attempt. In light of this action, western donors suspended most of their aid to Cambodia as a sign that they would not tolerate coups and other undemocratic actions. However, China did not take the same stance and in

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\(^{10}\) COMECON was an alliance of eastern bloc nations set up by the Soviets to function like the Organisation for Economic Cooperation (OECD). It was in existence from 1949-1991.
August 1997, China granted $6 million in assistance to Cambodia to build wells, which they followed up in December 1997 by offering another $2.8 million in military aid for jeeps and cargo trucks. At the time, China's Premier Li Peng told Hun Sen that China would 'never interfere in Cambodia's politics' and that 'Cambodia's problems must be resolved by the Cambodian people [as opposed to outside nations]' (Chanda, 2002; Marks, 2000). This was significant as traditional aid at the time (and indeed today) comes with many strings attached (e.g. anti-corruption clauses etc) which Chinese aid, superficially at least, does not.

1997 was also the year of the Asian Financial Crisis. The crisis, which began in July 1997, saw sharp reductions in the value of currencies and stocks across most of Asia, including Japan and South Korea. Whilst China was affected by the crisis it did not suffer as much as other Asian economies. Instead China played a role in assisting its Asian neighbours by providing over $4 billion dollars in aid, channelled both though the framework of the IMF and through bilateral channels (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, 2000). While Cambodia was also less affected than other Asian nations by the Asian financial crisis due to being less integrated into the global economy, China's aid to Cambodia at this time could be viewed as part and parcel of China's commitment to provide more aid to the Asian region in general.

Aid figures: fact and fiction

Today China is still pledging large amounts of aid to Cambodia, with aid disbursements having increased steadily since 1997. However, the aid that China is disbursing to Cambodia is often reported by both the Cambodian government and western media and policy makers as being far greater than it actually is. This section explores China's stated aid figures to Cambodia and the figures as represented by the Cambodian government and western interests.

It is often difficult to acquire exact figures regarding China's aid program. This task is made difficult for several reasons: China historically does not release its aid figures, regarding these as a state secret; China does not follow ODA 'rules' around aid definitions; and, the dividing line between aid, trade and investment is often difficult to clarify (see Chapter Three). However, when it comes to Chinese aid to Cambodia, there is, conversely, quite a large degree of transparency. For example China has made aid pledges at the last three Cambodia Development Cooperation Forums and enters (some) of its aid projects into the Cambodia ODA database, which forms the basis for the Cambodia Aid Effectiveness Report. These figures are publically available on the Cambodia Development and Rehabilitation ODA website as run by the Royal Government of Cambodia.

The Cambodia Aid Effectiveness Report 2010 states China is the second largest donor. China's average aid disbursements to Cambodia between 2006 and 2009 averaged $89 million per year. This compares with the
largest donor, Japan, whose average disbursements over the same period were $124 million per year. In recent years, China has increased its aid significantly with 85% of China's total aid to Cambodia being disbursed since 2004. Figure 6.1 shows China's disbursements to Cambodia between 1992 and 2009 as compared to other donors. Figure 6.2 shows China's disbursements since 2002 as compared to DAC aid disbursements. Figure 6.3 shows China's aid projects since 2002 as listed by China itself on the Cambodia ODA database. From these figures it is clear that China's aid is on the increase but that this is in line with that of other donors to Cambodia. It is also clear that China is a reasonably significant donor to Cambodia when looking at the period 1992 to 2010, however it is by no means the most significant donor, even taking into account recent increases in aid.

The figures presented above, however, differ substantially from the aid figures relating to China as publicly announced by the Cambodian government or as outlined in western media and research reports. For example, in 2006, the western media reported that China had, in fact, matched the entire western aid pledge for that year, by pledging $600 million versus $601 million pledged by the DAC donors at the Consultative Group Meeting (e.g. see BBC News 2006; Fullbrook 2006; Perlez 2006). In 2009 it was suggested by various media sources (e.g. Strangio 2010; Keating 2009) that China had pledged $1.2 billion in aid to Cambodia. However neither of these large sums are reflected in the sums China pledges at the CDCF meetings, nor in the Cambodia ODA database. For example, the aid disbursement reported by China for 2006 was only $52.3 million and for 2007 $92.4 million according to the Cambodia Aid Effectiveness Report 2008. Even combined this is nowhere near the $600 million reported by the media. These differences in China's own reporting of its aid figures versus media reports may partly be a problem of definitions, particularly distinguishing between aid and investment, but also one of representation both on the part of the Cambodian government and of western sources.
Figure 6.1: Aid disbursements to Cambodia 1992-2010

Figure 6.2: China and DAC aid disbursements to Cambodia 2004-2010

Source: Author, adapted from Cambodia Aid Effectiveness Report 2010 (Cambodia Development and Rehabilitation Board)

Source: Author, adapted from Aid Effectiveness Report 2008, 2010 (Cambodia Development and Rehabilitation Board)
## Table 6.3: Chinese aid projects in Cambodia 2002-2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Start Date</th>
<th>Completion Date</th>
<th>Budget</th>
<th>Grant/Loan*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>90 Pumping Machines</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>2,000,000.00 CNY</td>
<td>G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present Krom Samdech Euv with construction machinery</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>122,000.00 USD</td>
<td>G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide 1500 extension meters of ZB200 beret steel bridges</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>75,000,000.00 CNY</td>
<td>G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide goods supply to the Krom Samdech Euv</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>2,000,000.00 CNY</td>
<td>G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Units of Equipment for Road Rehabilitation and Maintenance</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>6,800,000.00 CNY</td>
<td>G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 units of excavators</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>12,000,000.00 CNY</td>
<td>G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>400 sets of Police Motor Cycle</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>3,900,000.00 CNY</td>
<td>G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project of Cambodian Human Resources Training</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>550,000.00 USD</td>
<td>G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide the Royal Government of Cambodia with a grant of USD 50,000</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>50,000.00 USD</td>
<td>G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rehabilitation project of the National Road No.7 of Cambodia from Kratie to Trapeang Kriel</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>60,980,000.00 USD</td>
<td>L (2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rehabilitation project of the National Road No.7 of Cambodia from Kratie to Trapeang Kriel</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>2,430,000.00 USD</td>
<td>G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey of Rehabilitation of Office Buildings and Library of Senate of Cambodia</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>43,000.00 USD</td>
<td>G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey on the project of mineral exploration in Cambodia</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>400,000.00 CNY</td>
<td>G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey on the project of New Council of Ministers Building of the Kingdom of Cambodia</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>400,000.00 CNY</td>
<td>G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Resource Development</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td></td>
<td>3,000,000.00 CNY</td>
<td>G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project of New Council of Ministers Building of the Kingdom of Cambodia</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>225,070,000.00 CNY</td>
<td>L (N/S)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project of Purchasing Suppressing Smuggling and Drug Trafficking Equipment</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>500,000,000.00 CNY</td>
<td>L (1.75%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200 Pumping Machines</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>72,917.00 USD</td>
<td>G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 Fire Trucks</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>20,000,000.00 CNY</td>
<td>G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One unit of THSCAN Mobile Container System</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>20,000,000.00 CNY</td>
<td>G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project of the Construction of Greater Mekong Sub-region Information Superhighway Cambodia Section</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>135,000,000.00 CNY</td>
<td>L (2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Rehabilitating the Chau Say Tevoda Temple of Angkor in Cambodia</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>4,500,000.00 CNY</td>
<td>G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide Goods supply to the Krom Samdech Euv, Year 2006</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>2,000,000.00 CNY</td>
<td>G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide Materials for Election</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>1,000,000.00 CNY</td>
<td>G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provision of Preventing and Curing Malarial Medicine</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>1,000,000.00 CNY</td>
<td>G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey on the Project of National Botanical Garden of the Kingdom of Cambodia</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>30,000.00 CNY</td>
<td>G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction of the Prek Kdam Bridge(975m)</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>28,783,664.00 USD</td>
<td>L (2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction of the Prek Tamak Bridge(1060m)</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>43,503,619.00 USD</td>
<td>L (2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Rehabilitating the National Road No.8 from Ksach kandal to Vietnam Border (109 km)</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>71,512,717.00 USD</td>
<td>L (2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Rehabilitating the National Road No76 Junction of the NR No.7 at Snuol to Senmonoron Mondolpiri (127 km)</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>51,900,000.00 USD</td>
<td>L (2%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When it comes to distinguishing between Chinese aid and investment to Cambodia, Brautigam (2010b) says:

The Chinese practice is to sign a number of different official agreements concerning aid, export credits, and even investment together. Agreements are usually negotiated separately, and well beforehand, but then held off until a high-level Chinese official is visiting, so that they can be signed together in a big ceremony.

This practice of signing both aid and investment packages together may cause some ambiguity over what part of the package is actually aid, and what part is in fact investment. This is then made more complicated by the fact that China itself does not clearly define aid versus investment. For example, whilst not explicitly stated by China, it has been widely reported in the media and academic papers, that of the $600 million in aid pledged to Cambodia in 2006, $280 million went towards the Kamchay Dam in Kampot; $12.4 million was a loan for construction of Cambodia’s new Council of Ministers building (Fullbrook, 2006); and $200 million was for the construction of two bridges across the Mekong and Tonle Sap rivers (Coghlan, 2007). However, of these pledges, only the two bridges and the Council of Ministers building is listed on the Cambodian ODA database (albeit at a total cost of $100.2 million, rather than $212 million as stated by the media) (see Figure 6.3). The Kamchay Dam is not reported, suggesting that it is perhaps not aid but rather investment – yet this has not been expressly stated at any point by China, fuelling ambiguity over what is aid and what is investment.
There is evidence that the Cambodian government uses this ambiguity over what constitutes Chinese aid and what constitutes Chinese investment for its own political purposes. Most announcements of China’s aid packages as reported in the media come not from China itself, but rather from the Cambodian government. For instance Brautigam (2010b) in relation to the figure of $1.2 billion in aid to Cambodia in 2009 says: ‘In fact this news about Chinese commitments came from the Cambodians, not the Chinese, who rarely have press releases containing aid or loan figures.’ She goes on to state that it is ‘unlikely’ that the amount of Chinese aid would have been $1.2 billion based on the overall figures for Chinese aid.

The political nature of announcements by the Cambodian government regarding China’s aid can also be seen by the fact the Cambodian government is quick to praise China, often at the expense of western donors, suggesting that it has an agenda in reporting inflated aid figures and possibly playing China off against traditional donors. For example, Prime Minister Hun Sen praised China for its supposed $600 million aid package and famously said: ‘China talks less but does a lot’ and that China is ‘Cambodia’s most trustworthy friend’ (quoted in Storey, 2006). Cambodia’s Minister of Finance Keat Chhon also recently said: ‘China is more than just a good rich neighbour ... China knows what Cambodia needs’ (quoted in Baumüller, 2009). By contrast, western interests are often criticised by the Cambodian government. For example, Hun Sen has recently threatened to close the UN Rights Office in Phnom Penh, accusing the Head of the Rights Office of ‘acting as a spokesman for opposition groups’ (quoted in Cheang and Strangio 2010). The western media picks up on the inflated figures put forward by the Cambodian government regarding Chinese aid and publishes these figures as ‘fact’ thus fuelling the ‘China as threat’ discourse outlined in Chapter Three.

**Aid structure: Is China’s aid different?**

China’s aid is often portrayed by the western media, policy makers and researchers as being quite different to western aid – however this may not always be the case. This section explores this idea by looking at the structure of China’s aid (including bilateral/multilateral aid, grants/loans and project design and management) as compared to western aid, before moving on to look at a specific Chinese ‘aid’ project – that of the Kamchay dam in Kampot, Cambodia.

Most Chinese aid to Cambodia is bilateral, meaning it is disbursed from the Chinese government to the Cambodian government and generally not channelled through other agencies. However, like traditional donors, China does also give some multilateral aid to Cambodia. This multilateral aid comes through the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and, more recently, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). China has donated US$50 million to the ADB for projects in Asia since it joined the ADB in 1996 (*People’s Daily Online*, 2007). Of this, $20 million is targeted towards the current Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) PRC Regional Cooperation and
Poverty Reduction Fund of which one of the recipients is Cambodia. According to the ADB, this is the first such fund financed by China through an international institution (ADB 2005). China is both a donor and recipient of ADB funds, and is currently the second largest shareholder amongst regional members (ADB nd). China also pledges money through ASEAN. For example, at a meeting of ASEAN envoys in April 2009, China pledged $39.7 million in aid to Cambodia, Laos and Burma to meet ‘urgent needs’ arising in light of the global financial crisis (McCartan, 2009). Also pledged by China at this time was 300,000 tons of rice to the poorer ASEAN nations, and 2,200 scholarships to students from the region. China also gave $1.7 billion in loans with preferential terms for aid cooperation projects in ASEAN nations to assist with the economic crisis (China Daily 2009a).

Unlike the traditional donors, however, China does not usually pledge money through non-government organisations. In Cambodia non-government organisations are often the preferred channel for aid from western donors, concerned about corruption in the Cambodian government. Nonetheless, whilst official aid is not disbursed through NGOs, China does provide some humanitarian aid through the Chinese Red Cross Society. Whilst this is not government money (the Red Cross is funded through public and private donation), the Chinese Red Cross Society is endorsed by the Chinese Government. The Chinese Red Cross Society has existed for over 100 years, and is, according to Reeves (2008), ‘one of China’s most enduring social welfare institutions, outlasting diverse governments, changing conceptions of social welfare and dramatic policy swings on international involvement.’ The Chinese Red Cross Society aims to provide humanitarian social relief, including relief activities both inside and outside China. There have been at least four donations to Cambodia via the Red Cross Society of China in the last ten years. In 2000, $30,000 was disbursed to assist with flooding, in 2007 another $30,000 was disbursed to assist with a dengue fever outbreak, in 2009 a further $30,000 was disbursed to help with another flooding emergency caused by a typhoon (MOFCOM 2007; China Daily 2009b) and in 2010, $50,000 was disbursed to assist with the victims of the Water Festival stampede (Xinhua, 2010d).

In terms of the types of funding of China’s aid to Cambodia – there are many similarities with western aid. China’s aid comes in the form of both grants and concessional loans. Loans are provided for costly infrastructure projects such as bridges and roads whilst grants are provided for smaller projects such as the purchase of equipment; education, training and human resources projects; and project surveys. For example, according to Figure 6.3, China has provided loans to Cambodia for projects such as the rehabilitation of National Road no. 7, the construction of the Prek Kdam and Prek Tamak bridges, and the Kanghot irrigation project. Grants have been provided for malaria prevention and cure, a feasibility study on the missing section of the Trans-Asia railway in Cambodia and to buy police vehicles and fire trucks. Concessional loans are usually fixed, with interest repayments of around 2% and the length of the loan varies depending on the project (see Figure 6.3).
Like traditional aid, particularly in the past, many of the loans and grants China provides to Cambodia are tied, meaning that Chinese companies carry out the project. For example: ‘Interest free loans to reconstruct National Rd No. 7 linking Cambodia to Laos and eventually China brought an $80 million deal for China’s Shanghai Construction to undertake the construction work’ (Baumüller 2009). One problem with Chinese tied aid in Cambodia according to two Cambodian officials interviewed for this thesis, however, is that the quality of the aid project depends on the company to which the project has gone and can differ quite substantially from project to project. Whilst traditional aid has been moving towards untying aid, western aid to Cambodia still focuses strongly on technical cooperation (at least half of western aid is technical cooperation) which has similarities with tied aid (and thus China’s aid), in that much of the aid money actually ends up leaving the country.

In terms of sectoral targeting of aid, China does disburse more aid towards the infrastructure and transport sectors than the traditional donors. For example, according to Figure 6.3, up to 85 percent of China’s aid goes to infrastructure/transport related projects. Whilst most of this aid goes towards projects such as the construction of roads and bridges, some also goes towards the construction of buildings. Perhaps the most notable of this building aid is the aid pledged for the Council of Ministers building in Phnom Penh which serves as the administrative nerve centre of the Cambodian government and which was built with Chinese aid money and using Chinese architectural designs. This building was completed in 2010 and is arguably a project traditional aid would not fund due to the overt links to government and power in Cambodia. Nonetheless, this focus on infrastructure is similar to the practices of other Asian donors in Cambodia such as Japan and South Korea, with the majority of both Japan and Korea’s aid going to transport in 2008 according to the Cambodia Aid Effectiveness Report 2010. Data from the Cambodia Aid Effectiveness Report 2010 says that all of China’s aid either went to transport or government/administration in 2008.

One of the main differences, however, between Chinese and traditional aid in Cambodia, is the way in which aid projects are decided upon and the in-country management of these projects. China, unlike western donors, tends to fund aid projects on a request system. That is, the Cambodian government requests the types of projects it would like funded and negotiations then take place between China and Cambodia as to what China will fund. This ‘request system’ is particularly the case when it comes to large infrastructure projects such as dams or roads according to two Cambodian officials interviewed for this thesis. Smaller projects, on the other hand, may be suggested by China and agreed upon by Cambodia. For example, the Siem Reap National Botanical Gardens was an idea suggested to the Cambodian government by China as a project that they would fund if Cambodia was agreeable to the idea (Cambodian government official, 2009). Coghlan (2007) sums up the project decision process saying: China specifies the amount of aid available, the Chinese government and the Cambodian government then negotiate which projects will be funded. At this point, the
Chinese government begins a tendering process for Chinese contractors to undertake the job. Once the job has been awarded, China and the Cambodian government jointly monitor the project implementation. Thus China's aid to Cambodia differs from traditional aid in the way decisions are made about what projects to fund: the decision as to what projects to fund is not shaped by the Washington Consensus, but rather by the maxim of 'mutual benefit' (Brautigam, 2010a) whereby aid becomes a 'gift' similar to tribute in the days of the tributary system (see Chapter Three).

The in-house management of aid is also different to the western or traditional donors. China, rather than funnelling money through the equivalent of, say, AusAID or DFID, channels aid money instead through the Chinese Embassy in Phnom Penh. China's aid pledges are then made directly between the Chinese Embassy and Ministries within the Royal Government of Cambodia (Brautigam, 2010b). There is no specific aid agency dedicated simply to aid. The result of this management practice is that aid becomes more opaque and political than traditional aid which is, at least in practice, separated out from the other functions of foreign relations such as investment, defence and humanitarian issues.

Case study: Kamchay Dam

Like much Chinese aid, it is difficult to determine whether the Kamchay Dam is in fact an aid project. It has variously been described as aid by both the media and the Cambodian government. It is being funded by Sinohydro, a Chinese state owned energy company (the same company responsible for the Three Gorges Dam), and backed by the China Export-Import Bank (EXIM) (through which most of China's development aid is channelled). Nonetheless, it is not included on the Cambodian ODA database. However, merely the ambiguity over whether this project is aid or investment makes it a typical Chinese 'aid' project in Cambodia and therefore a useful case study for this thesis.

Cambodia pays one of the highest prices for electricity in the world. Currently, only 20% of the population has access to reliable sources of electricity, mainly in urban areas, while domestic demand for electricity is estimated to be growing at around 20% per year (Nette, 2008). Thus there is a genuine need for greater electricity generation in Cambodia. However, it appears that not only does the Cambodian Government want to meet rising domestic demand for electricity, but, according to the Asia Times Online (Nette 2008), 'Cambodian Foreign Minister Hor Namhong told a donor's meeting last year that his government plans to make Cambodia into the "battery of Southeast Asia".' The Ministry of Industry, Mines and Energy (MIME), in its most recent Power Development Plan (1999 to 2016) has earmarked 14 potential sites in Cambodia for hydropower development by 2018 (Vong and Strangio, 2008). The building of hydropower dams in Cambodia is controversial. Local and international NGOs cite lack of transparency around the dam building agenda, and social and
environmental consequences as issues that need to be considered (e.g. Chanty, 2007; Middleton, 2008).

The site of the Kamchay dam (Figure 6.4) had been mooted as a potential hydropower location since the 1960s. In fact in the 1990s the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) looked into building a dam at the site and even enlisted Experco International to undertake a feasibility study. The feasibility study was completed in 2002, however, CIDA subsequently pulled out of the project, after pressure from local and international NGOs concerned about social and environmental impacts (Middleton, 2008b). Initial bidding for the Kamchay dam was held at the end of 2004, with at least 17 companies from Cambodia, Korea, China, and Japan bidding. The final contract was given to Sinohydro – a Chinese state-owned enterprise who were to work in conjunction with the Ministry of Industry, Mines and Energy (MIME). It was speculated by NGOs, however, that despite the supposedly open bidding process, the Cambodian Government had already agreed with the Chinese government to award this contract to Sinohydro (NGO Program Officer, 2009):

Figure 6.4: Map of Kamchay Dam, Cambodia

Cartography: Nathan Wales, 2010
In 2005, the Cambodian government awarded Sinohydro Corporation a contract to develop the Kamchay hydropower scheme. High-level Cambodian and Chinese government officials pushed forward the Kamchay dam in closed-door negotiations that largely left other stakeholders, including local authorities and the public, out of the process (Middleton, 2008b:58).

In 2006, the Cambodian government announced that China had pledged $600 million in aid money to Cambodia, of which $280 million was for a proposed hydropower dam at Kamchay in southeast Cambodia. At the time, this was to be the single biggest Chinese investment in Cambodia and Cambodia’s first major hydropower project. Both the fact that this project was a Chinese project and that it was the first major hydropower project in Cambodia caused a degree of controversy, particularly in the media (both local and regional) and amongst civil society. Headlines at the time included those such as ‘Chinese hydro concessions generate controversy in Cambodia’ (Ryder, 2008); and ‘Cambodia’s biggest hydropower dams serious threats to people’ (Khundee, 2008).

The Kamchay Dam site is located in Kampot province, south of Phnom Penh, in the Bokor National Park. Kampot province is home to around half a million people. The Bokor National Park was established in 1993 and covers approximately 140,000 ha. There are thirty-eight rare plant species and at least nine critically endangered animal species in the Park (Chanty, 2007). The exact site of the dam is the Mak Prang Commune which is 3km upstream from the Tek Chhu waterfall, a popular tourist attraction for both locals and foreign visitors. Sinohydro has built 70% of China’s hydropower capacity including the Three Gorges Project in China. The terms of the contract are a Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) scheme. This means that Sinohydro will manage the power plant for thirty years after completion of the project. The Cambodian government will compensate Sinohydro if the project underperforms during this time. The dam will be 110 metres high and produce 488 GWH of energy every year when it is finished. Work began in 2006 and the dam is expected to be finished in 2011 (Chanty, 2007).

Civil society and the western media have been critical of the project from the start. This would be the case with any new dam project in Southeast Asia, however the critiques appear to be even louder because China is behind the dam particularly as it is considered that China has a poor record of environmental and social standards when it comes to large infrastructure projects. Critiques of the proposed Kamchay hydropower dam put forward by local NGOs (e.g. NGO Forum, Culture and Environment Preservation Association [CEPA]) and international (e.g. International Rivers Network, Probe International), include the fact that the dam will flood 2000 hectares of Bokor National Park threatening endangered species and local livelihoods; that there has been a lack of consultation and transparency surrounding the dam with Cambodian and Chinese officials conducting negotiations ‘behind closed doors’; and that Sinohydro and Chinese aid projects in general have poor environmental and social standards therefore
posing a threat to local peoples and environments (Chanty, 2007). The English language press in Cambodia and the wider Southeast Asian region, along with NGOs, have also been fairly critical of the Kamchay dam project (e.g. Khundee, 2008), repeatedly publishing criticisms put forward by local and international NGOs, and pointing out China's controversial dam building record, particularly with reference to the Three Gorges project in China itself. (e.g. Ryder, 2009). Rarely, however, are links made with similarly controversial dams built by western interests in their home countries.

By contrast, traditional bilateral and multilateral donors have been (publicly) fairly quiet on the Kamchay Dam. The western donor community recognises the controversial impacts of large dam projects on local environments and livelihoods\(^\text{11}\), however these donors have chosen not to publically raise these criticisms in regard to the Kamchay Dam. It is worth noting that today traditional donors continue to support controversial hydropower projects across Asia despite the social and environmental impacts:

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Under the GMS Power Grid plan, numerous controversial hydropower projects in Burma, Yunnan, and Laos – where independent civil society participation and open debate are stifled – will provide power to the energy-hungry cities of Thailand and Vietnam. ADB dams in Laos, such as Theun-Hinboun, Nam Leuk and Nam Song, have negatively affected approximately 40,000 people, many of whom are still waiting for adequate compensation. And the ADB has neglected better renewable energy solutions and planning processes that would avoid this destructive path (International Rivers Network, nd)
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In January 2008 I visited Kampot in order to take a closer look at the dam and seek local information and opinions about the dam. Local villagers at Ou Touch and Tvi Khang Cheung villages were interviewed as were vendors at the Tek Chhu waterfall and a local labourer who worked at the dam site. I also talked to the provincial departments of Environment; and Water Resources Management and Meteorology. The overall picture gained from this visit pointed to the fact that a) there was little consultation or transparency about the project with either local people or local government; b) a complete environmental and social impact statement had not been completed; c) local livelihoods were not overly negatively affected at this stage by the dam and d) Sinohydro had made some attempts to create local jobs and employ local labourers.

In terms of consultation and transparency, most local people had little to no knowledge of the dam's construction or potential effects. Villagers were

\(^{11}\) In 1997, The World Bank and IUCN worked together to establish the World Commission on Dams to review the development effectiveness of large dams and to establish international criteria, standards and guidelines for dams in light of their inherent social and environmental impacts. The final report was released in 2000. It stated the importance of recognising equity, efficiency, participatory decision-making, sustainability and accountability in dam development (World Commission on Dams, 2000).
worried that the dam would collapse and flood their houses and farmlands. However they also hoped it would bring cheaper electricity. Villagers currently buy their electricity through middlemen who purchase electricity from neighbouring Vietnam and then on-sell it in Cambodia at exorbitant prices. Villagers who relied on the forest to collect non-timber forest products for their livelihoods had experienced short periods of time when they were stopped by roadblocks from going into the forest by the dam construction. These villagers collect rattan from the forest which they then weave into baskets and other products for sale. This is the only source of income for some villagers, and missing even one day’s collection may mean they have no income for food. The Commune Chief requested, and was granted, an interview with Sinohydro to discuss access to the forest being blocked during construction of the dam. He was told the road blockages would only be temporary, which to date they have been, and were in place as the construction was dangerous. Perhaps most indicative of the general lack of communication with the local people, however, is the sign at the entrance to the dam site, which states in English and Chinese the purpose, nature and statistics about the dam. There is no equivalent sign in Khmer (Figure 6.5).

Figure 6.5: Kamchay hydropower dam – Entrance sign

Source: Author, 2009
Local officials in Kampot showed varying degrees of interest in talking to a foreigner about the dam. The Provincial Department of Environment told me that most negotiations around the dam were taking place between Sinohydro, the Royal Cambodian government and the Manager of Bokor National Park. Nonetheless, the provincial Department of Environment had some knowledge of the dam, and staff members from PDOE had been to visit the construction site. For example, there had been a problem with waste disposal at the dam. The PDOE had been called in to assess the problem. They had recommended some changes to waste management practices, which were subsequently implemented by Sinohydro. Nonetheless, the PDOE claimed that Sinohydro was talking almost exclusively with the Manager of the Bokor National Park where the dam is located. The Manager of the Bokor National Park refused to talk to me without written permission from the Department of Environment. Interestingly it was the Provincial Department of Environment who told me that there had only ever been an initial environmental impact statement (EIS) completed for the dam and that the final EIA was yet to be completed: yet the Provincial DOE believed that Sinohydro were ‘respecting the rules’ when it came to the dam construction.

The Provincial Department of Water Resources Management and Meteorology (PDOWRAM) professed to know very little about the dam, as all discussions were taking place at ‘the central level’. As far as PDOWRAM were concerned, the dam was a good idea but had nothing to do with their remit (i.e. ensuring water for agricultural purposes) as the dam was purely for hydroelectricity purposes. However, the blurb about the dam that is posted at the guarded entrance to the construction site clearly states that the dam will contribute towards irrigation in the area. The provincial department of Industry, Mines and Energy also seem to be closely involved with the construction of the Kamchay Dam. At the time of my visit, the Deputy Director of the PMIME was in fact in China on a study tour of dams, thus precluding an interview with him.

According to a local labourer who worked at the dam, working conditions were reasonable. He stated that there were 800-1000 Cambodian workers working on the dam and around 100 Chinese workers. He got paid around $140-$150 per month as a mechanic. He worked an eight hour day from 8am to 5pm, but was paid for 10 hour days as a result of ‘health and sanitation’ laws. The Cambodian workers at the dam came from all over Cambodia and most rented rooms in Kampot to live in during construction. The 100 or so Chinese workers at the dam lived in company housing on-site. According to local villagers, not so many local villagers had been hired to work on the dam as the dam paid workers monthly, and local villagers did not have enough money to pay for transport, food and accommodation whilst waiting to be paid.

In the case of the Kamchay dam, therefore, it appears that China is perhaps not behaving in a way that is completely different from the way a western donor, say the World Bank or Asian Development Bank, has acted (e.g.
Gunning-Stevenson, 2001; AMRC, 2006). Certainly transparency appears to be an issue, as does the completion of a proper environmental and social impact studies. However, this is often also the case with western funded hydropower projects, for example, the Theun Hinboun hydropower project in Laos which was funded by the ADB was critiqued internationally for the poor quality of the Environmental Impact Statement, lack of compensation to affected communities and poor pre-planning (AMRC, 2006). It might be apt to look at Peter Bosshard’s work on Chinese dams and his summation that:

Like any long-term investor, Chinese companies have an interest in avoiding human rights abuses and environmental destruction in their host countries. The Chinese government has issued guidelines for Chinese companies to protect the rights of workers, local communities and the environment. Chinese companies have started to adopt environmental standards, but have yet to effectively implement them (Bosshard 2008).

Bosshard (2008) points out that China has a long way to go to satisfy social and environmental concerns when it comes to dam building, but then so do traditional donors. It is in China’s interest to remain friendly with the country it is providing aid to and thus to ensure its aid projects provide some benefit to the country receiving them.

**China and the existing aid culture**

As explored in Chapter Four, the existing aid culture in Cambodia is one that is dominated by the traditional donors and their practices, institutions and policies. Whilst China is not part of this aid culture, it does take part in some of the structures that contribute to the traditional aid culture in Cambodia. For example, China was party to the Paris Peace Accords of 1991 and participated in the subsequent UNTAC period by sending police personnel. China was also participant to the first Ministerial Conference on the Rehabilitation and Reconstruction of Cambodia held in Tokyo in 1992.

Since the UNTAC period, China has shown further willingness to engage in traditional aid structures by cooperating with multilateral institutions and donors such as the IMF, ADB and ASEAN, as outlined in the sections above. Recently, China has also attended the last three Cambodian Development Cooperation Forums held in 2007, 2008 and 2010. At the last CDCF meeting in 2010, China sent four representatives including the Ambassador, and Economic and Commercial Counsellor. Whilst these meetings are chaired by the Royal Government of Cambodia, they are very much dominated by the traditional aid model (see Chapter Five). China does not actively participate in the meetings in terms of speaking to the agenda items, however China does attend and, like DAC donors, gives an indication of what its aid pledges to Cambodia for the next three years will be.
China also provides details about its aid program through the government-run Cambodia ODA database (see Figure 6.3). Whilst this is a RGC owned and managed database, the database was created in order to fulfil the aid effectiveness structures put in place by the western donors in accordance with the Paris Declaration. On this database, each aid project is listed by the donor and information provided as to what the project is for, whether it is a grant or loan, the length of the project, and whether the project fulfils certain criteria associated with the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. China, just like the western donors, keeps this database (somewhat) updated.

China also engages in a less formal manner with the traditional aid donors in Cambodia. For example, China occasionally attends informal monthly lunch meetings held between western bilateral and multilateral donors in Cambodia. These meetings are arranged by the World Bank and provide a less formal forum to discuss aid and development. The Country Manager of the World Bank in Cambodia is Mr Qimiao Fan, himself Chinese, although western-educated. At his request, China sometimes attends these meetings but to date has not actively participated in debate. According to the western donors interviewed for this thesis, it is Qimiao who takes the lead in engaging with China in the Cambodian aid context. This is discussed at greater length in Chapter Seven.

Nonetheless, despite these examples of engagement by China with some of the traditional aid structures in Cambodia, there are also many examples of when China does not engage with these structures. For example, China does not to date participate in the Technical Working Group structure, nor does China contribute to aid forums initiated by civil society such as NGO Forum's occasional aid effectiveness conferences. China is also often reluctant to meet with traditional donors on a one-to-one basis. Several traditional donors when interviewed for this thesis said they had approached China regarding a closer engagement on aid, but without success. Similarly China does not participate in aid projects run by traditional donors, preferring to run its own projects on its own terms.

Summary

This chapter has explored Chinese aid to Cambodia through the framework of geopolitics and representation. It highlighted the fact that China has been disbursing aid to Cambodia for much the same length of time as the West. Prior to the end of the Cold War, much of China's aid (like the West's) was pledged according to ideological or geopolitical reasoning. Since 1991, however, China's aid to Cambodia has been less about ideology and more about 'mutual benefit'. Since 1991, and particularly since the early 2000s, the Cambodian government and western media, academics and policy makers have often represented China's aid to Cambodia as being far larger than it is, and as being different to the West's own aid. However, this chapter has pointed out, that China's aid to Cambodia, whilst on the increase, is not any larger than other bilateral donor aid programs to Cambodia (e.g. Japan).
and that China's aid in practice is not radically different from that of the West's aid practice. China has even shown some willingness to engage with traditional aid structures.
Chapter Seven: Aid, Cambodia and the Cultural Encounter

The previous two chapters have analysed both western aid and Chinese aid to Cambodia to give us an understanding of how aid works in the context of Cambodia. This chapter goes on to look at the cultural encounter between western donors and China in Cambodia. The chapter is broken into two sections. The first section analyses the encounter between western donors and China in Cambodia, whilst the second section relates this encounter back to the literature, particularly the literature around development, aid, representation and encounter. Both sections address the research topic through an examination of the following questions: how do those with different cultural sets come together in certain contexts, namely aid; what cultural encounters do we see in this mix between traditional donors and new donors?; and how do discourses around ‘the other’ play into aid dialogues in Cambodia?

The Aid Encounter in Cambodia

What is the encounter?

As we have seen from the previous chapters, there are numerous aid actors in Cambodia from bilateral donors to multilateral donors to NGOs. According to one NGO official in Cambodia: ‘Aid is an industry in Cambodia: the whole gamut of aid actors exist in Cambodia, from bilaterals to multilaterals to INGO, to local NGOs’ (program manager, NGO, 2009). It has predominately been the western, or ‘traditional’ donors that have created and dominated the aid culture in Cambodia to date. The western donors have set the aid agendas and dominated the aid structures. However, recently, as has been explored in previous chapters, China has become one of the largest donors to Cambodia, which implicitly challenges the existing western-dominated aid culture in Cambodia. This section looks at how the traditional donors in Cambodia have encountered China as a ‘new’ donor and the impact this has had upon the existing aid culture.

There are three main types of aid actor in Cambodia: bilateral donors, multilateral donors and non-government organisations (of which there are both local and international NGOs). In the course of this thesis, analysis was made of these three types of traditional aid actors and their encounters with China. This analysis was undertaken by conducting interviews with aid
actors, attending meetings and conferences, and analysing policy papers and other written material such as media reports (as discussed in Chapter One). It was concluded that the three main types of aid actors in Cambodia have three types of broad encounter with China as an aid donor. These encounters are outlined below.

**Bilateral donors**

Many bilateral donors were interviewed for this thesis. These donors included AusAID, USAID, DFID, JICA and SIDA. It became apparent during the course of the interviews that the bilateral donors in Cambodia ‘encounter’ China in three main ways: concern/threat, disinterest, and/or engagement. Bilateral donors express concern at China’s lack of transparency and lack of interest in poverty reduction; a disinterest along the lines of ‘we don’t care what China is doing, we will simply continue with our own programs’; and an interest in cooperating with China and incorporating China into the existing aid structures in Cambodia. Bilateral donors do not outwardly criticise China’s aid program in the manner of the media or civil society, instead preferring to talk about ‘engagement’ or ‘cooperation’ with China and incorporating China into existing aid dialogues.

One of the first points many bilateral donors raise when questioned about China and its role as a donor in Cambodia, is a lack of knowledge regarding China as a donor; and the apparent lack of transparency surrounding China’s aid program: ‘I have never seen reliable data from China and/or I can’t say much about the Chinese program other than what’s in the papers. You should check the local news agency [Xinhua] for more information’ (senior official, bilateral donor, 2009). Nonetheless, many of these same donors then point to the publically accessible Cambodia ODA Database and/or Cambodia Aid Effectiveness Report citing these sources as repositories of China’s aid figures. Several donors also point to the fact that China does in fact attend the Cambodia Development Cooperation Forum, although ‘they [China] don’t say anything’ (senior official, bilateral donor, 2009); and that China participates in informal monthly donor lunches. However, this did not stop China being described as ‘the invisible donor’ (senior official, bilateral donor, 2009) by at least one of the traditional bilateral donors. This appears to highlight the fact that there is not, in fact, a complete lack of transparency around China as a donor but that this is the narrative that bilateral donors are interested in putting forward in Cambodia, as is discussed further later in this chapter.

The lack of focus of Chinese aid on poverty reduction was another aspect of Chinese aid which western bilateral donors were quick to use to differentiate China from themselves as donors. In terms of poverty reduction, most donors pointed to the fact that China is involved with infrastructure development: ‘bilateral aid from China is in the form of soft loans for roads, dams etc; China appears to give very large loans at fairly decent rates for large infrastructure projects implemented by Chinese companies. Some small grants are provided for superficial projects’ (senior
official, multilateral donor, 2009). However, China is ‘not so concerned with poverty reduction’ (senior official, bilateral donor, 2009). It is interesting to note that several bilateral donors felt that they could comment with accuracy on this aspect of Chinese aid, but at the same time claimed not to know much about China’s aid. This narrative of portraying China’s aid as somehow less ethical than traditional aid as it is seemingly about investment not poverty reduction, is a common discourse amongst the West when discussing China’s aid, whether it be in reference to Africa, Asia or South America:

By setting the standards, monitoring, evaluating, and ranking the aid programmes of member states, the DAC has assumed the new role of ‘moral bookkeeper’, authenticating and encouraging foreign aid as a virtuous practice’ (Hattori, 2003:244)

This notion is discussed further later in this chapter.

Another frequent response from the bilateral donors in Cambodia towards China’s aid was along the lines of ‘they can do what they want, that does not change our program.’ Donors pointed out that their programs had not changed despite China’s increasing prominence in the aid landscape in Cambodia, and that they (the traditional donors) were still entirely focused on the Millennium Development Goals, aid effectiveness, climate change and the other main tenets of the western aid discourse. This lack of apparent interest in alternative development paths is borne out by annual reports and strategy papers from western donors which rarely if ever mention China or an alternative development path to that which is already in place (e.g. AusAID’s strategic plan for Cambodia 2010-2015 (AusAID, 2010); Cambodian-European Community Strategy Paper 2007-2013 (EC, 2007]).

When it was mentioned that traditional aid to Cambodia had increased considerably since China’s reported $600 million in 2006, several donors claimed that any increases in aid have merely been a result of overall trends in aid and/or donor country priorities and that any increases which have occurred in have been quite apart from China and what China was doing in Cambodia: ‘China being present in Cambodia has no influences on us [bilateral donors]’ (senior official, bilateral donor, 2009). This narrative appears to concur with that being espoused at the global level by the western donors. For example, the DAC Development Cooperation Report 2010 (OECD-DAC, 2010) makes no explicit mention of China or other ‘new ’ donors, instead it says that DAC should be ‘much more inclusive and proactive in working with others, for example by expanding DAC membership’ but at the same time ‘must maintain a clear and consistent focus on the principles of effective aid set out in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the Accra Agenda for Action.’

However, the most common response of bilateral donors when questioned about China’s role in Cambodia, was that there needed to be enhanced cooperation between China and the other donors: ‘all development partners want China to be part of the aid structure in Cambodia. They would like to
draw China into existing structures around aid’ (senior official, bilateral donor, 2009). Several of the larger bilateral donors pointed out the work they were already doing in the region with China to try and engage China and draw it into existing aid dialogues. For example, in 2009, the USAID office in Bangkok had a representative in China for the first time ever. One of the objectives of this position was to open a dialogue and coordinate with China, not to just give aid per se: ‘we want to get China much more involved. China will cooperate when they’re good and ready’ (senior official, bilateral donor, 2009). This again is in line with the views of the OECD-DAC donors at a global scale. For example, Bernard Petit, Deputy Director-General at the European Commission in 2008 when speaking of China’s role in Africa said: ‘Our position is that confrontation with China is not the answer. We hope that if Japan has the same way of thinking . . . we can convince China to be in the framework of the rest of the international community ... and respect the agenda of aid effectiveness’ (Inagaki, 2008). A House of Commons report (2009:49) stated in regard to DFID’s engagement with China that:

Working from Beijing would help to provide DFID with accurate and up-to-date information about China’s engagement with African and other countries, and ensure that it better understands China’s approaches. This can only assist the process of moving from dialogue to practical collaboration in third countries. It is also likely to help DFID promote greater Chinese participation in multilateral development frameworks.

Certainly in terms of the material encounter, it appears that the bilateral donors are encouraging engagement with China in Cambodia – this is borne out by the fact that China is invited to informal donor monthly lunch meetings.

The one possible exception to these broad bilateral narratives around encounters with China, is the Japanese Agency for International Development (JICA). JICA was much more open to talking about China to me than the other bilateral agencies, and suggested that it is important that ‘culture’ be considered when it comes to the encounter between China and the traditional donors. In particular, that western culture is different to Asian culture and therefore Japan is better placed to understand and engage with China than the other western donors. For example, according to JICA, lack of dialogue on China’s behalf is simply the ‘Asian way’ and something that western donors need to understand. JICA also expressed the view that western discourses around aid are not narratives that Asian donors automatically feel comfortable with: ‘Grass roots level democracy is totally opposite to the “the Asian way”. Most Asian countries are autocratic. Japan is sceptical about ‘governance’ [for example] but Washington doesn’t listen’ (senior official, bilateral donor 2009). However, despite this attempt by JICA to try and draw a line between Asian and non-Asian donors in Cambodia, JICA still expressed the same views as other donors when it came to engagement with China (’we would like to make friends with China’), and the notion that its own aid program would not be influenced or changed by
A publication from 2006 sponsored by the Japanese government supports the notion that Japan as an aid donor is more interested in conforming with the traditional aid discourse than diverging from it, despite the apparent ‘cultural differences’:

Interestingly, this historical divergence between Japanese ODA and the rest of the world has begun to diminish in recent years. We are now starting to witness in contemporary thinking about aid and development a global convergence of philosophies and practices (RIAP, 2006:xix)

**Multilateral donors**

It appears that the encounter between multilateral donors and China is similar to that of bilateral donors, with a focus on cooperation, yet also an outward narrative that existing aid programs will not change as a result of China’s growing role in the aid landscape in Cambodia. However, the international financial institutions, such as the World Bank and Asian Development Bank, were far less inclined to discuss the encounter with China than the other multilateral or bilateral donors. The Asian Development Bank refused outright to be interviewed for this thesis and the World Bank in Cambodia originally agreed and then pulled out. This indicates that the encounter between China and the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) in Cambodia is a sensitive issue – and one that neither party is willing to speak about openly. This could be a result of China being a large investor both to Cambodia, and increasingly within the ADB and World Bank. The material encounter is based on investment and profit and is not something that either side is willing to jeopardise.

Nonetheless, the World Bank in Cambodia appears to take the lead for both the bilateral and multilateral donors when it comes to engaging China in aid dialogues:

*The World Bank (through Qimiao) are attempting to involve China in this dialogue, Qimiao is reaching out to China. The World Bank takes the lead on donor coordination with Qimiao hosting informal monthly donor meeting which Chinese representatives are sometimes present at (senior official, bilateral donor 2009).*

The Country Manager of the World Bank in Cambodia, Mr Qimiao Fan, has previously worked as a senior executive in the private sector in China and is also teaching China research at the World Bank Institute (WBI) in Washington. The WBI is the Bank’s learning centre where seminars and training are provided for those in the South on key Bank issues and topics. According to one donor (senior official, bilateral donor, 2009), the World Bank is trying to motivate the Chinese Ambassador to participate in the existing aid structures in Cambodia. This increased dialogue with and about China from the World Bank seems consistent with the World Bank’s global moves towards China. For example, in early 2010, China became the third
largest shareholder in the World Bank at the global level, after its voting power was increased from three percent to four percent by the World Bank Development Committee. This makes China the third biggest World Bank member after the United States and Japan (Ickes, 2010). The ADB also reinforces at a global level the need to engage China, with the Director General of the ADB saying in 2008

*China is playing a very important role as an emerging donor. It is ... important that we bring them into the donor community, as it were, because then you get some principles of various safeguards to be applied, be it on social safeguards, be it on the environment* (AFP, 2008).

The multilateral donors in Cambodia, also emphasised along with the bilateral donors, that China’s presence has not affected traditional aid: ‘flows are on an upward trajectory anyway due to the Monterrey Consensus; there is more potential impact from the economic crisis in terms of aid flows to Cambodia [than from China]’ (senior officer, multilateral donor, 2009). This is emphasised again by looking at the annual reports and websites of major multilateral donors in Cambodia such as the UNDP. On the UNDP Cambodia website there is reference to continuing to work towards supporting the Cambodian Development Millennium Goals ‘in close collaboration with the Government, other UN agencies and development stakeholders. Partnerships with the United Kingdom, Sweden, Australia, the European Union, Japan, and Canada are vital for achieving results’ (UNDP-Cambodia, 2010). There is no mention of alternative development paths, or of ‘new’ donors such as China. This signals the outward intention on the part of multilateral donors to continue on the same development path that they are currently on with no room for alternative discussions around development.

**Non-government organisations**

The encounter between civil society and China in Cambodia, in contrast to the bilateral and multilateral donors, is largely one of critique. This is illuminated though the many research reports in the public domain written by NGOs critiquing Chinese aid and investment in Cambodia. These reports include: *China's poverty footprint in Cambodia* (Coghlan, 2007); *In Search of Aluminium: China's role in the Mekong* (Lazarus, 2009); *Rethinking Investments in Natural Resources: China's Emerging Role in the Mekong Region* (Rutherford et al, 2008) and *Cambodia's hydropower development and China's involvement* (Middleton, 2008a) which in particular criticise China’s environmental record and focus on investment over poverty reduction. Nonetheless, according to at least one multilateral donor, civil society critique of Chinese aid in Cambodia has not been particularly strong compared to that found in Africa or elsewhere where Chinese aid has a presence:

*Reactions to Chinese aid in Africa have been negative. African people see Chinese aid as neo-colonialism. In Cambodia it is different, however.*
The population is not engaged with the debate on foreign aid. Just a few NGOs in Phnom Penh pay any attention. This is different to Africa where civil society is very involved (senior officer, multilateral donor, 2009)

One of the major critiques by NGOs of China in Cambodia is that Chinese aid will undermine environmental and social standards, particularly when it comes to infrastructure development:

There has been increasing Chinese investment in hydropower in Cambodia, however the process is not participatory. The projects are discussed and agreed at the top level and then pushed through at the ground level. There are no social impact assessments (Deputy-Director, NGO, 2009).

Civil society claims that dams in particular will create social and environmental impacts which will be exacerbated by the fact that China does not employ the traditional safeguards used by western donors when building large infrastructure projects: ‘China appears to be a potential catalyst for environmental destruction. They do not care about social and environmental issues’ (program manager, NGO, 2009). These issues are expanded upon in the International Rivers Network (IRN) 2008 report Cambodia’s hydropower development and China’s involvement.

NGOs also critique China for not advocating poverty reduction through its aid programs:

The main focus of China’s aid policy is not poverty reduction, for example the Kamchay Dam is being supported through a loan from China’s EXIM bank. The purpose of this loan is not to support development (in terms of poverty reduction), but rather to boost Chinese imports/exports and to promote investment (program manager, NGO, 2009).

NGOs point out the difference between China and traditional donors both in terms of environmental and social standards, and poverty reduction:

The difference between Chinese and traditional aid, is that most Chinese companies do not actively pursue safeguards. This is particularly the case in Cambodia, as the RGC neither requests it, nor enforces it. China is also not monitoring its own external players. China could force its aid providers to abide by its own domestic laws, or that of the third country, but it doesn’t (program manager, NGO, 2009).

Another critique by NGOs in regard to China is that China is less responsive to civil society than the traditional donors: ‘at least with western companies such as BHP, there are channels for advocacy’ (program manager, NGO, 2009). For example, ‘the World Bank was allowing forest concessions in Cambodia but civil society had concerns about this, and so they complained.'
The World Bank investigated and decided to stop granting forest concessions’ (program manager, NGO, 2009). However, China does not engage with civil society in the same way the western donors do. This is exemplified through the material encounter between NGOs and China in Cambodia. The Chinese Embassy is invited to aid dialogues organised by civil society (e.g. NGO Forum’s Aid Dialogue on Aid Effectiveness), but they rarely respond to the request, let alone participate. This has led to a diminished sense of influence on the part of NGOs: ‘there has not been a reduction of space for civil society in Cambodia as a result of China’s influence, but there has been a reduction in influence’ (program manager, NGO, 2009). China is also blamed by civil society for ‘destroying’ some of the previous cooperation between donors, government and civil society: 

In the last decade when China was not dominant in Cambodia, there was good cooperation and little conflict between NGOs, government, and donors. There was good governance. People talked to each other. However, now the situation is becoming worse. New ideology from China is the problem (program manager, NGO, 2009)

Why this encounter?

Many of the reasons behind the encounters between western donors and China in Cambodia relate to the global encounter between the traditional donors and China. Bilateral and multilateral donors are keen not be seen to be outwardly criticising China; to incorporate China into the existing aid structures; and to make sure that their existing aid programs are not threatened or challenged by China. NGOs in Cambodia also follow international discourses on China, speaking out on China’s environmental and social record and questioning the space that civil society will have in development if China begins to dominate development circles.

However, the particular aid encounter in Cambodia is not just related to global discourses but also to the local context. Traditional donors have had a long history of involvement in Cambodia. The Cambodian government, despite nearly twenty years of traditional aid, is still dependent on donors with nearly half of all GDP coming from aid. The public sector is also aid dependent:

Cambodia had been isolated for a long time, and suddenly there was a lot of aid coming in ... It created a public sector dependent on aid. Ministries were formed based on donor priorities and this still exists. Donors provide salary supplements which is the norm in Cambodia (although it is the exception elsewhere) (senior official, multilateral donor, 2009).

Cambodia could therefore be seen, as a ‘site of knowledge’ for traditional aid. Hughes (2009:5) writes in regard to Cambodia as a site of knowledge for the neoliberal economics of western donors that:
Timor and Cambodia were merely extreme examples of a phenomenon that was widespread in the 1990s – the international pursuit of projects of “state-building” and “good governance” as a means to facilitate the spread of neoliberal economics across the globe in the aftermath of the Cold War.

Certainly the traditional donors have had a disproportionate influence on government policy in Cambodia, as discussed in Chapter Five. This could explain why donors in Cambodia seem particularly keen to incorporate China into the existing aid structures. They do not want to see their ‘site of knowledge’ challenged or disrupted.

Since colonial times, the West has also occupied a position of ‘trustee’ in Cambodia which confers a sense of moral obligation as to what is ‘right’ for Cambodia. As Li (2007:4) says in regards to parties sharing in the ‘the will to improve’ (2007:4): ‘They occupy the position of trustees, a position defined by the claim to know how others should live, to know what is best for them, to know what they need.’ Rowlands (2008:5) goes on to explain the western sense of moral obligation towards the South:

> Despite the consistent evidence that aid allocation tends to be dominated by ... political and strategic interests in many DAC members, there remains within the development community as a whole a sense that the true objective and motivation of development assistance is the moral one of assisting the less fortunate (Rowlands, 2008:5)

In Cambodia, the western donors do not want this position of ‘trustee’ to be usurped by China. There is also evidence that the western donors simply enjoy Cambodia as a site in which to ‘do good’ and do not want this to change:

> Lives of expatriates in Cambodia are not just pleasant but typically delightful, with a little discount for some inevitable inconveniences of living in a poor country. Not only can resident foreigners have lavish lifestyles with all the consumption goods that are now international, but they live in a country where labour is cheap and generally obedient. Unlike in some other recipient countries, aid givers and other foreign do gooders are treated with great respect, hospitality and generosity, and are easily allowed to persuade themselves of their usefulness and importance. It is little wonder that very few people leave this paradise (Ghosh, 2003b)

Another reason for traditional donors encountering China the way they do in Cambodia, is because the western donors are concerned about losing their political leverage in Cambodia to China. Cambodia and China have a long history of foreign relations going back to the earliest days of ancient Funan, as outlined in Chapter Three. This relationship has historically been based on a client-patron relationship – a relationship which is common
throughout Asia but which is not always synonymous with western ideas around aid and development. China and Cambodia also have a long history of social relations. The Chinese form one of the largest ethnic groups in Cambodia and many Cambodians claim Chinese heritage. In recent years, the Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen has openly praised China and Chinese aid and investment to Cambodia. Hun Sen has also allowed the opening up of Chinese schools, newspapers and community groups in Cambodia. All this could be seen as a tightening of the historically close relationship between Cambodia and China. Yet the West considers Cambodia as 'theirs' as explained in Chapter Four. They do not want to lose the political leverage they have enjoyed since the UNTAC period, nor are they keen to see Cambodia descend into a 'failed state' after all the traditional aid that has flowed into it, one in which democracy is not adhered to such as Burma. Thus the western donors are keen to incorporate China into existing aid discourses to ensure that these are not threatened and that the Cambodian government does not continue to favour China at the expense of the traditional donors.

Finally, it could be said that the traditional donors do not want their own failings shown up by new donors coming into the country. Despite the large amounts of aid that have come into Cambodia from the traditional donors since 1991; and the immense effort of the UNTAC period and the push towards democracy, Cambodia is still one of the poorest countries in the world. Corruption abounds as does inequality and issues around sustainability and governance. Whilst poverty has been relieved somewhat and, on paper at least, Cambodia is a democracy, the overall objectives of the traditional aid discourse have not been met to date in Cambodia. The western donors espouse the benefits of development such as poverty alleviation, good governance, sustainable development and community engagement, however, it is questionable whether in practice these objectives have been met. Traditional donors do not necessarily have a good record in Cambodia, as seen by the World Bank and its forestry record\textsuperscript{12}. In this sense, there may be no difference between traditional donors and China, other than the fact China is less subtle in its discourse than the traditional donors: 'We [traditional donors] are better at hiding it' (program manager, NGO, 2009). It is also possible that donors in Cambodia deliberately use China as an excuse for their own behaviour and/or lack of achievement in Cambodia. For example, citing the lack of conditionalities around China's aid as the reason that the western donors cannot implement governance reforms. Therefore it could be said that the traditional donors in Cambodia are trying to subsume China within their own discourse in order to hide any failings within the existing discourse, however, at the same time are issuing veiled critiques against China as a means to hide their own aid shortcomings.

\textsuperscript{12} In the early 2000s, the World Bank continued to provide structural adjustment loans to Cambodia for forestry reform despite the fact that Cambodia was clearly flouting the conditions imposed by these loans (e.g. illegal logging concessions); of which the Bank was well aware yet it did nothing to fix the problem until pressure was brought to bear by civil society (Global Witness, 2007).
Theoretical insights - Development, Aid, Representation and Encounter

The above section has highlighted the encounter between western donors and China in Cambodia and contextual reasons for this encounter. This section goes on to look at how this encounter relates to the theory. It explores the aid encounter in Cambodia between traditional donors and China in regards to development and aid, and representation and encounter (drawing on critical geopolitics and cultural geography).

Development

As noted earlier in this thesis, 'development' in the context of international assistance is a western construct that arose at the end of World War Two. The discourse of development is dominated by western narratives around issues such as good governance, sustainability and aid effectiveness. The delivery of development has been institutionalised through multilateral organisations such as the World Bank and bilateral donors such as USAID, AusAID and DFID. Traditionally within this discourse there is little room for alternative paths towards development. Whilst different bilateral donors may focus on different aspects of development e.g. Japan on infrastructure, Sweden on poverty alleviation and the United States on anti-corruption and good governance, the overall discourse is still the same:

Much of this tradition is embedded within the official coordinating bodies and institutional arrangements of the traditional donors: Although these agencies are far from absolute in their power to direct donor activity, and are not necessarily homogeneous in their views on development, they are instrumental in defining terms and concepts in development assistance, identifying best practices, and providing a framework within which bilateral donors can interact with a higher degree of synergy than if they had been left to their own devices (Rowlands, 2008:4)

Challenges to this development discourse have arisen over time both in practice - most notably during the Cold War with the Soviet Union and China (Hurrell, 2007), and theoretically – for example the dependency theorists. However the dominance of the western development discourse with its focus on economic development and democracy has never truly been challenged. That is until today, as 'new' donors such as China, India and Brazil come to the fore with increasingly large amounts of money targeted towards the South and 'development'. This implicit challenge to existing development discourses has caused disquiet in western media, policy and academic circles; this has been particularly the case in regard to China which is not just potentially challenging the existing development discourse but indeed the whole global order with its rapid economic growth and population might.

Much of the debate in western research and policy circles regarding China and its outward development path, centres around whether China is
promoting 'development' as the West avowedly does, or merely serving its own interests in terms of resources, security and sourcing potential economic markets. However very little actual research has been undertaken on China's development discourses either from the West, or by China's own academics in a western context. This means that many perspectives coming from the West regarding China are based less on rigorous study and more on hearsay or representation. This thesis argues, according to the information that can be gleaned regarding China's development discourse, that China's development discourse is analogous with its foreign policy narratives, encapsulated by policies such as a Harmonious World and the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence. Nordtveit (2008:257) claims that 'the China-proposed development and education models are very similar to the western growth-based development paradigm, although the discourse is different', thereby implying that China's current modernist approach to aid is, in fact, very similar to earlier western approaches.

China's growing role in development on a global scale, however, could potentially provide a catalyst for discussion and engagement around approaches to development, much as the post-development theorists would argue has been necessary for some time. The existing western discourse around development has indeed been critiqued for many years by many different actors - for being Eurocentric; for functioning primarily to maintain existing power structures rather than poverty reduction and economic growth pre se; and for not listening to voices from the South regarding their own aims and aspirations regarding development (as outlined in Chapter Two). Certainly those from the South appear welcoming of a potential new development paradigm: 'African leaders have welcomed what they see as a new approach to development and increased potential for meaningful South-South cooperation' (Samy, 2010:75). Moyo (2009) in her book Dead Aid which argues for the end of traditional aid, also sees a place for Chinese 'aid' as a business-oriented engagement model.

However, this thesis argues that rather than opening up a space for discussion around development, the West is trying its best to maintain the status quo around development. This is seen through the fact that China's overseas development approach is critiqued by those in the West as being somehow less ethical than that which the West espouses. For example, in regard to Africa: 'The more extreme criticism of Chinese aid projects in Africa could be seen as an attempt to advance the 'West' as a model of 'moral and correct' practices, in particular in the fields of global development policies, global humanitarianism and aid procedures (Tan-Mullins et al, 2010:874). This can also be seen occurring in Cambodia where Chinese aid is critiqued for being more about investment than poverty reduction. The implication is that western aid is noble as it is about assisting those less fortunate, whereas investment couched in the language of aid (i.e China's aid) is less self-interested and therefore 'less good'. This maintenance of the status quo is also reflected through attempts by the West to subsume China into existing development discourses, rather than allow for any alternative paths which may challenge the existing development discourse. This thesis
argues that the West’s position regarding development and China’s implicit challenge to this discourse is in line with Said’s (1995:7) notion that the West will do whatever it can to retain its position of power in relation to the Orient: ‘In a quite constant way, Orientalism depends for its strategy on this flexible positional superiority, which puts the Westerner in a whole series of possible relationships with the Orient without ever losing him the relative upper hand.’

Aid

Aid in the western sense is the means by which ‘development’ is achieved. Western countries give money to those in the South for poverty alleviation and economic development. However, it is not just those in the West who have a monopoly on aid – many countries including China, India and Brazil also give aid, albeit outside the framework of the DAC. China, for example, has, and does, give aid to countries all over the world, including those in Asia, Africa and the Pacific. However, it is only recently that the West has begun to take notice of China as an aid donor, as China’s role on the global stage increases and, in unison, its aid program increases both in size and geographical spread. In fact, Mawdsley (2010:362) argues that emerging donors other than China are almost ignored by the traditional donors, despite the rhetoric at the OECD-DAC level about engaging all ‘emerging’ donors. It appears that China is the only emerging donor that the West is concerned with:

given perceptions of its [China’s] potential challenge to the status quo, the vast weight of interest and analysis, whether in terms of its ‘development’ activities or the closely related arena of trade, investment and diplomatic relations, is directed towards China.

This is certainly the case in Cambodia, where donors such as Thailand or Korea are given very little outward attention by western media, policy makers or donors, this attention instead being reserved for China.

China is not a member of the OECD-DAC which since the 1950s has been the ‘club’ to which most of the traditional donors belong. With the exception of Japan, and most recently South Korea, all the donors are western. It is DAC, based in Paris, who determine the standards and norms around traditional aid:

Current standards and norms of donor behavior and activity are generally derived from traditional donors. These standards and norms include the quantity, distribution, and type of aid, levels of collaboration and cooperation, and guidelines to improve efficiency (Rowlands, 2008:2).

This thesis argues that it is China’s operation outside this western-led aid structure that implicitly challenges the West. By being outside ‘the club’, China is not embedded within the current standards and norms that emerge
from the western aid tradition and therefore not under any obligation to follow these standards and norms. Whilst China ostensibly has principles upon which its aid is based (i.e. *Eight Principles for China's Aid to Third World Countries*), its overall aid policies, aid figures and aid structures are not transparent. This lack of transparency regarding China's aid program, and the fact China does not belong to DAC, and therefore is not bound by its codes, challenges the West in terms of potentially undermining the West's own aid programs, and by extension its position of power in the South: 'Some US policy makers and others have expressed frustration that because of China's policy of providing foreign assistance without conditions, they are losing the ability to influence the behavior of aid recipients regarding human rights and economic reforms' (Lum et al, 2009: 1).

The 'solution' for the West appears to be to try and incorporate China into the existing aid dialogue, rather than to allow it to take its own path or to sit outside this dialogue. Once embedded within the existing discourse the West can much more easily 'keep tabs' on China and stymie potential challenges from China to this discourse. Much as with the overall development discourse, the West appears unwilling to either look critically at its aid program, or to consider alternative approaches to aid. This is despite the fact that traditional aid has had a long history of critique as to whether it 'works' or not (see Chapter Two). For example, in Cambodia western donors have continued on the same path since the UNTAC period, despite evidence that western aid is not necessarily achieving its stated goals. As Mawdsley (2008:525) points out: 'cooperation and dialogue between China, African and Western nations, is more likely to arise and have positive outcomes, if the West were to take a more critical look at its own record, and cast a more careful eye over some of China's foreign policy positions.'

This encounter of attempting to incorporate China can be seen to be similar to the approach taken by the West towards Japan when it began its aid program back in the 1960s. At this time, Japan was seen as somewhat of a 'rogue' donor, much as China is today (Katada, 2005). Japan had a rapidly expanding aid program which went hand-in-hand with its rapid global economic expansion. Japanese aid was criticised for being 'different' to traditional aid in that most of Japan's aid was tied; Japan had a 'non-interference' policy in foreign countries, therefore gave aid to 'dubious' nations; Japan used a 'request based' system whereby officials from other countries requested aid, rather than Japan suggesting aid program; and the focus of Japanese aid was on infrastructure and economic development rather than poverty reduction (Katada, 2005). Kondo (2007:17), the Japanese Ambassador to UNESCO, sums up how the West reacted to Japan as a donor at this time:

> It is clear that the international community, under the leadership of the Western powers tried to have an 'engagement policy' to make sure that Japan would not be heading in the direction that they did not want. This was evidenced by the invitation of Japan to the OECD in 1964 and to the G7 Summit as an original member in 1975. But still concerns
about Japan's possible hidden agenda were repeatedly expressed in the Western media throughout the 80's.

Thus appears that in regards to China's aid, the West is following long established patterns with regard to 'new' donors: that is to attempt to incorporate 'new' donors into existing aid dialogues and structures. By behaving as such, the West prevents any alternative aid dialogues to its own and it preserves its own position of power.

**Representation**

This thesis argues that crucial to the aid encounter between traditional donors and China are not just development and aid discourses, but also representations of these discourses. At the start of this thesis the link was made between cultural geography, critical geopolitics and representation. Cultural geography highlights the fact that representations occur and how they are created; critical geopolitics show us how these representations are used to create imaginations about the world in terms of place and power.

Said (1995:4) highlights, in regards to the Orient, how places (or discourses) are created:

> the Orient is not an inert fact of nature. It is not merely *there*, just as the Occident itself is not just *there* either ... as both geographical and cultural entities - to say nothing of historical entities - such locales, regions, geographical sectors as 'Orient' and 'Occident' are man-made. Therefore as much as the West itself, the Orient is an idea that has a history and a tradition of thought, imagery and vocabulary that have given it reality and presence in and for the West. The two geographical entities thus support and to an extent reflect each other. [emphasis is original]

China is often represented by the West as 'the other'. An entity that is somehow the opposite of 'the West', yet in its construction reflects the realities of the West. Mawdsley (2008:523) highlights this dichotomy in a study of the way China is represented in UK broadsheets:

> although most UK broadsheet newspaper reports set out a range of potential problems and benefits, representations of Chinese investment and interactions ... are problematically partial. They tend towards a rather simplistic binary between the sometimes mistaken or frustrated but essentially well-intentioned West (Dr Livingstone), and the amoral, greedy and coldly indifferent Chinese (Fu Manchu) battling over a corrupt and/or helpless Africa (the Dark Continent).

This media representation of China as amoral and the West as well-intentioned is also seen in the Cambodian context, for example, in an article entitled 'China's billions reap rewards in Cambodia' in *The Washington Post* (2010). This article maligns China's aid and investment to Cambodia, talking
of China ‘barging’ into Cambodia and quoting a reporter from a Chinese language Cambodian newspaper as saying ‘the takeover [by China] is inevitable’ (Pomfret, 2010). At the same time, however, the article implies that American support is both benign and welcomed.

Mawdsley (2008) goes on to say that media images and representations play an important role in shaping public understandings, debates and political pressures. These representations of China then play out in the way China’s changing global role is portrayed and thus power assigned or denied it by the West:

The West tends to see emerging power as a potential threat, and tries to decide if it is a friend or foe. This dichotomous approach often lets western people pick up bits and pieces of information as examples that represent the whole and decide if they are black or white, thereby overlooking the real issue (Kondo, 2007:17).

This thesis argues that China, due to its increasing role as an aid donor, is seen by the West to be threatening existing development discourses. The West wants to ensure that it maintains its existing dominance in this world order and that it does not ‘lose out’ to China, hence the west represents China as ‘the other’. For example Tan-Mullins et al (2010:864) in regards to Chinese aid to Africa say: ‘we would like to point out that rather than being motivated by any deep concern about the rights of Africans, “China bashing” serves to bolster Western interests.’

Another narrative used by the West to represent China as ‘the other’, is that which positions the West’s development discourse as morally superior to that provided by those outside of DAC:

Normative liberal discourse criticizes the Chinese for disbursing ‘rogue aid’ and undermining good governance in the African continent. These criticisms not only ignore the longer-term motivations and modalities of Chinese aid and the historical diversity of Chinese relations with Africa, but also uncritically assume ‘Western’ aid to be morally ‘superior’ and ‘more effective’ in terms of development outcomes (Tan-Mullins et al, 2010).

This becomes perhaps even clearer when we look at representations from a critical geopolitics viewpoint. Since the end of World War Two, the United States and her allies have dominated the world order. This has been especially the case since the end of the Cold War:

One of the most important characteristics of the international system in the second half of the twentieth century was the emergence of a US-led order built around the institutional and multilateral structures created in the wake of the Second World War (the UN, GATT, the international financial institutions) and the extraordinarily
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dense set of transatlantic and trans-Pacific relations and alliance systems (Hurrell, 2007:11).

However today, it could be said that a new world order is emerging, one in which the BRIC nations (China, India, Brazil and Russia) play a much larger role. Nonetheless, as Kondo (2007:11) suggests:

> what we are discussing here is not a new issue. This is déjà-vu. The questions, such as “for what purpose will China and India use their economic might?” or “what kind of world order are they going to shape with their new power?” are exactly the questions many Western countries asked about Japan during the 1970s and 80s when Japan was ascending as a new economic power.

And it could be argued that the response from the West towards a supposed new world order is also the same. Western donors do not want to lose their leading position in this ‘new’ world order, therefore make use of representation to ensure that their discourse and position of power remain dominant. For example, in Cambodia the traditional donors do not want to lose their dominance to China, so represent China’s aid as being far larger and much different to western aid than it actually is.

**Encounter**

Finally we come to the crux of this thesis – the cultural encounter. As outlined in Chapter Two, the encounter in this case, is the way in which the West and China come together in a third locale in the context of aid. Often the encounter in terms of development is theorised as that of one between coloniser and colonised. Indeed there is a whole body of research that looks at this postcolonial encounter in these terms. This thesis, however, takes the coloniser to be the West (as would be the case in any standard postcolonial paradigm), but rather than exploring the colonised as Cambodia, it takes China as ‘the other’ and Cambodia itself as the context for which this encounter takes place.

When it comes to the aid encounter between western donors and China, it appears that the local context is less important, at least in the case of the western donors, than the global discourse: ‘The wider debate on aid effectiveness and conditionalities is to a large extent the result of confrontations between global players seeking to delegitimize the other whilst at the same time asserting the (moral) superiority of their approach’ (Tan-Mullins et al, 2010:874). Thus the local context, and indeed the aid and development outcomes, appear to be of less significance than the power struggle between the West and China. For example, in Cambodia ‘at the moment, there seems to be a race to see who can give the most money, than a real consideration of poverty reduction and so on’ (Program Manager, NGO, 2009). Baumüller (2009) elaborates on this point by saying:
Indeed, one could be forgiven for thinking that the economic crisis was just a myth when looking at aid pledges to Cambodia at the annual CDCF in December 2008, at a time when the impacts of the economic crisis were already spreading around the world. The Cambodian government had asked for around $600 million in support and received a staggering $950 million in pledges.

Cambodia, caught in the midst of this aid encounter, appears to be doing its best to play off the donors against each other in order to receive the most mileage out of an encounter originating outside the local context: ‘Hun Sen continues to run circles around the donors, making the same empty promises every year and laughing all the way to the bank’ (Brad Adam, Human Rights Watch Director, cited in Cock, 2010:262). This puts Cambodia in much the same position it has historically been in, for example during the Vietnam War when it asserted its independence in the face of increasing conflict between the democratic versus communist forces seeking to use Cambodia as a battleground; or in the colonial period when Cambodia turned to France to protect it from its more powerful neighbours of Thailand and Vietnam and France in turn used Cambodia as a buffer against the British. Today, the (relatively weak) civil society in Cambodia follows the line of the western discourse, criticising China; by contrast, the Cambodian government praises China and the aid and investment it brings to the country. The local Cambodian actors therefore, far from being powerless, are using the global aid encounter between the western donors and China which is playing out on their doorstep, to their advantage.

Thus is would appear that in Cambodia there is an encounter of conquest, or even colonisation, but it is not an encounter with Cambodia, but rather an encounter between China and the West. And that this is an encounter not only occurring in Cambodia, but is playing out throughout the world. In this encounter both representation and discourse are used to make the western aid narrative appear ‘better’ than China’s. This can be contextualised within the postcolonial framework of Orientalism:

Orientalism can be discussed and analysed as the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient – dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it: in short, Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring and having authority over the Orient (Said, 1995:3).

Taking this framework, the aid encounter between the West and China in Cambodia becomes one of the West trying to ‘colonise’ China, through representation and incorporation. The West in a bid to retain its power, represents China as ‘the other’ in order to ‘dominate, restructure and have authority’ over it (Said, 1995).
Summary

This chapter has outlined the aid encounter between western donors and China in Cambodia. It has highlighted how different actors – bilateral, multilateral and non-government organisations – ‘encounter’ Chinese aid in Cambodia. It has then linked this encounter to the local context, to analyse the degree to which it is based in the local context or indeed resonates from global discourses. Finally this chapter has undertaken an analysis of the aid encounter in Cambodia in terms of theory relating to development, aid, representation and encounter. It concludes that the current aid encounter in Cambodia reflects global discourses on aid, development and China. The West in an attempt to hold onto its traditional power when it comes to aid and development, represents China as ‘the other’, yet rather than allowing for any alternative discourses when it comes to aid, the West is attempting to subsume China within its own aid discourse in an attempt to retain its own position of power.
Chapter Eight: Conclusion

This chapter provides a summary of the thesis. It begins by presenting an overview of the main findings of the thesis before moving on to the overall conclusions of the thesis. It then looks at some of the theoretical implications before assessing the limitations of the study and possibilities for further research.

Summary of findings

This thesis has looked at three main aspects of the aid culture in Cambodia – that of traditional aid to Cambodia, Chinese aid to Cambodia and the encounter between western and Chinese aid in Cambodia. This investigation of aid as a ‘culture’ is an innovative approach that has not, to date, previously been undertaken in the context of Cambodia.

Western aid to Cambodia has dominated the aid culture in Cambodia since the UNTAC period, when Cambodia stepped out of 15 years of international isolation. From the UNTAC period western aid actors have flowed into Cambodia bringing with them western notions of development centred around ideas such as democracy, good governance and sustainability. These philosophies are encapsulated in development policies such as the Cambodian Millennium Development Goals and the Royal Government of Cambodia’s Rectangular Strategy. This thesis has argued that this monopoly of western aid donors in Cambodia has created a particular aid culture, one which is entrenched in the policies, institutions and structures of aid in Cambodia such as the Cambodia Development Cooperation Forum and/or the Technical Working Groups. This aid culture traditionally leaves little room for alternative development paths, or for donors who sit outside the DAC ‘donors club’.

However, recently this aid culture has faced a challenge in the form of ‘new’ donor China. China is not a member of the OECD Development Assistance Committee yet it pledges considerable amounts of aid to Cambodia, this being particularly the case since 2006. China’s aid to Cambodia is often represented by various actors (including the western media, non-government organisations and the Cambodian government) in ways that serve to further their own interests rather than represent the ‘reality’ of China’s aid. For example, the total amount of China’s aid to Cambodia is usually represented by the western media as being far larger than it actually is; China’s aid to Cambodia is also represented as being quite different to
western aid in both theory and practice. However, this thesis has highlighted that China's aid to Cambodia, whilst on the increase, is not any larger than other bilateral donor aid programs to Cambodia (e.g. Japan) and that China's aid in practice is not radically different to that of the West's aid practice with indications that China is becoming more willing to engage with the West and with western notions of aid and development.

When it comes to the encounter between the traditional donors and China in Cambodia, this thesis concludes that the current aid encounter in Cambodia reflects global discourses on aid, development and China. The West in an attempt to hold onto its traditional power when it comes to aid and development, represents China as 'the other', yet rather than allowing for any alternative discourses when it comes to aid, the West is attempting to subsume China within its own aid discourse in an attempt to retain its own position of power. The West takes the upper hand in what Said claims is a constant power play between the West and the Orient: one in which the West will represent itself and that of the other in whatever way reflects and maintains its own position of superiority. In the context of Cambodia, however it is important to remember that this is not just an encounter between the traditional donors and China, but that the local context also plays a role. The Cambodian government is not a passive player in the encounter - rather it also represents the West and China in certain ways in order to play them off against each other and subsequently fulfil its own goals.

**Theoretical implications: China, representation and 'the other'**

This thesis has highlighted several theoretical implications, in particular the need to consider the critical geopolitics of aid, including encounter and representation in aid; and the need to consider 'the other' or non-western viewpoints in aid and development.

Many academics have used geopolitics and international relations to understand the relationship between China and the West when it comes to aid. This work tends to look at the theory and practice of Chinese aid (e.g. Brautigam, 2009) and/or how China 'threatens' the West (e.g. Kurlantzick, 2007). However the question of critical geopolitics and cultural geography has been largely ignored when it comes to China as a new donor – particularly the idea of representation and power. This thesis argues that China is represented in a certain manner in order to maintain the West's existing global position of power. However this theoretical basis for analysis is missing from most literature on Chinese aid (with a few notable exceptions, namely Mawdsley, 2008; Mohan & Power, 2010). Further research on China's aid and development could benefit from taking a more critical position based on representation rather than approaching China's aid simply from an economic or foreign relations point of view.

Another theoretical implication highlighted by this work, is the need to de-centre the West in studies of China as an aid donor. Most of the literature
around China and aid/development starts from the viewpoint of 'development' in the western sense of the word. The western notion of development tends to be one of poverty reduction and altruism as opposed to, say, profit however this is a western notion of development and not necessarily one that others subscribe to. Development is not necessarily a concept that is in use outside of western discourses and can therefore be problematic when imposed. As Mohan and Power (2010:462) say:

Chinese practice is uncomfortable and unfamiliar with the notion of 'development' as an independent policy field of the kind that emerged among Western nations in the course of the 1950s ... meta-narratives about aid, or references to the establishment of Xiaokang societies elsewhere in the world, do not appear to exist.

Following on from the need to look at China's aid from different perspectives, the idea of 'de-centering' the West in studies of China and its aid also needs to be taken into account. As Mohan and Power (2010:468) state in relation to China in Africa:

There are other ways of approaching the development/international politics nexus and that China-Africa relations offer the opportunity for de-centering the West from accounts of global politics and looking more closely at the 'entwining' of knowledges (as many post-colonial theorists have urged).

Winter (2009: 21) in his work on tourism studies and the place of Asian tourists in tourism studies (including extensive work on Asian tourists at Angkor Wat in Cambodia) also highlights the need to re-focus away from the West in order to understand Asia:

In both its focus and conception, much of the research on tourism remains Anglo-Western centric ... Our understandings of 'the tourist', 'the modern tourism industry' and the conceptual paraphernalia, which surrounds these two, are all firmly rooted in the empirical histories of Western Europe and North America. English language scholarship on tourism rarely rips up these 'Western' roots to interpret 'Non-Western' practices and industries.

This de-centering of the West needs to apply not only to studies of China as an aid donor, but also in looking at the role of the aid-receiving country. Many studies assume that the host country is a passive player when it comes to aid. However this is often not the case. For example, in the case of Chinese aid to Cambodia the Cambodian government is playing off the western donors against the Chinese donors in a deliberate move to gain power and funding. By taking a postcolonial stance such as that espoused above, a more rounded picture of Chinese aid may be gained.
Limitations: Chinese voice, timeframe and gender

There were some limitations within this thesis which must be acknowledged.

Firstly, I did not speak to the Chinese Embassy in Phnom Penh. I made several approaches but no request for an interview was granted. This means that any supposition regarding Chinese aid and development discourse comes from the existing literature (including academic texts, media and Cambodian sources), rather than from the Chinese themselves. This is a limitation in that it denies China a voice in this thesis, instead necessitating the construction of such a voice through secondary sources.

Secondly, this thesis was limited by the timeframe of a Masters degree. This meant the fieldwork was restricted to a total of around three months. This short timeframe did not allow for any in-depth study of Chinese aid projects (beyond the Kamchay Dam study) nor a comparative study between a traditional donor aid project in Cambodia and a similar Chinese aid project. By not undertaking such fieldwork, the opportunity to comment on differences between Chinese aid and traditional aid in practice is limited.

Thirdly, all interviewees with the exception of one were men. This was not by design, but men occupied most of the positions interviewed. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to look into why this was the case, but it may have caused some discrepancies within the information obtained. Gender is an important factor to consider when looking at the role of the researcher in data collection:

Gender is important because we often ascribe characteristics to people on the basis of gender. Furthermore, personal interactions vary with the gender of participants; we tend to react differently to men and women. Therefore gender is a factor that can influence data collection (Dowling, 2005: 26).

Further research

There is certainly scope for further research on what is a rapidly growing and changing field.

This thesis only looked at one ‘new’ donor in relation to Cambodia – that of China - however an area of further research could be to look at South Korea as another new donor to Cambodia. Korea is one of the largest investors in Cambodia and is considered an ‘emerging’ donor with its aid increasing rapidly over the last few years from a small baseline. Korea now gives more aid to Cambodia than Australia, the UK or France (Cambodian Rehabilitation and Development Board, 2010). It is an Asian donor which, like China, has also been an aid recipient. Like China, Korea’s aid tends towards concessional loans rather than grants, and it favours tied aid: ‘The Korean development model prioritises economic growth over social welfare ... and
is based on the "selection and concentration" principle, with a centralised decision making process to ensure efficiency' (Chun et al, 2010:799). However Korea’s aid to Cambodia, unlike China’s aid, rarely makes a news headline or is explored in academic papers. Further research could look at why Korean aid, which is on the surface apparently similar to Chinese aid, appears, by contrast, to be little discussed in the context of Cambodia; and the relationship this may or may not have to Korea’s entry to the OECD-DAC in late 2009.

Another avenue of further research might be to expand the context of this study to include other Southeast nations, particularly Laos. Since the mid-2000s Chinese aid to Laos has increased considerably, although, as is the case for Cambodia, the figures are rather vague. For example, Cain (2008b) reports that in 2006, Chinese aid to Laos was $45 million compared to the 4.5 million in aid disbursed by the US between 2005 and 2007. Jansen (2007) by contrast reports that Chinese aid to Laos ‘now amounts to more than 280 million dollars’ but does not give a time frame over which this aid has been given. China, as is the case in Cambodia, is also one of the biggest investors and traders with Laos. There is particular concern amongst English-language media and policy papers regarding Chinese built dams in Laos (e.g. see Rutherford et al, 2008), the influx of Chinese workers to Laos (e.g. McCarten, 2008) and natural resource degradation (e.g. Allen, 2009). Further research could investigate the encounter between traditional donors and China in Laos and compare this with the encounter in Cambodia.

Finally, further research could ‘reverse’ this thesis and investigate the aid encounter between China and the West from the perspective of a Chinese researcher, rather than a western researcher. This approach would add to the theoretical body of (post)development and cultural geography by providing insights into how ‘the other’ constructs and represents both aid and development. For example, an investigation could be undertaken of China’s ‘development’ discourses; how China views and represents its aid and for whom; and how China constructs the West and its aid and how this influences the encounter between Chinese and western aid, as a counterpoint to the research of this thesis.
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