

Small state diplomacy: Cambodia's foreign policy towards Vietnam

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ABSTRACT

Cambodia's foreign policy behavior towards Vietnam can be characterized as using a strategy of 'hedging', whose nature is different from the one suggested in the existing literature. Such a strategy can be discerned from Cambodia's omni-directional policy responses, ranging from economic pragmatism, limited bandwagoning, binding engagement and soft-balancing. Furthermore, the case of Cambodia's foreign policy towards Vietnam suggests that non-state actors, such as the opposition party and the population (voters) play a significant role in shaping the state's foreign policy, even though it is formed under the authoritarian ruling party. This study also suggests that the foreign policy decisions of an authoritarian state are not solely shaped by the personal attributes of their leader.

KEYWORDS Balancing; bandwagoning; hedging; alignment; economic pragmatism; binding engagement

1. Introduction

What should a small state do to maintain its state security when facing a threat from a larger power? This question has been extensively discussed among international relations scholars or theorists. Some argue that smaller powers should adopt either balancing or bandwagoning strategies in their relations with bigger powers in order to ensure their security. Others suggest that small states may adopt a 'hedging' strategy against the bigger power or the potential challenger. Although 'hedging' has been somewhat defined, its operational definition is still too broad and ambiguous. Thus, further case studies are required in order to capture how hedging has been actually used in states' foreign policy. This article will shed light on how hedging is manifest in contemporary Cambodia's foreign policy behavior towards its former occupier, Vietnam. The author argues that Cambodia's hedging strategy towards Vietnam is unique, given the differences in its manifestation in comparison to the hedging strategies suggested in the existing literature, Kuik's and Le's in particular. Cambodia's strategy is composed of economic pragmatism, limited bandwagoning, binding engagement and soft-balancing. Moreover, this study suggests that non-state actors within the Cambodian polity also have stakes in influencing the foreign policy outcome of the government, despite Cambodia still remaining as an authoritarian state.

2. Defining 'small states'

What constitutes 'smallness' of a state has been debated among international relations scholars for decades without consensus. The term has been variously defined to suit particular research purposes. In this article, the author explores important characteristics of 'small states' as a framework for the study of Cambodian foreign policy towards Vietnam.

James Rosenau attempts to define state size on the basis of resources and the level of state dependence on the international system (Rosenau 1966). He posits that the greater resources a country possesses, the lesser the country's dependence. Bigger countries, according to Rosenau, are less reliant on the international system given their larger endowment of resources, whereas the opposite holds for smaller ones.

Rosenau's approach to defining state size faces problems, however, if one closely examines his two criteria, namely 'resources' and the 'level of dependence'. As pointed out by Ralph Pettman, the term 'resources' is vague. Pettman questions whether the term refers to human or non-human resources, and how one could clearly determine the 'level of dependence' when a state is 'rich' in the former but 'poor' in the latter (Pettman 1976). In addition, as many dependency theorists postulate, many states have become more interdependent, irrespective of their size or resource base. Rosenau's attempt to link the level of dependence with state size is therefore questionable. Could one, for example, judge that Japan, which heavily relies on oil imports from Middle Eastern countries like Iraq and Kuwait, is smaller than Iraq and Kuwait?

A more comprehensive attempt to define state size was made by David Vital in his book titled *The Inequality of States*. He links state size to the following conditions: human and material resources, levels of economic and social development, and geographical status (Vital 1967). He argues that states with more human and physical resources have more voices beyond their border, more means to ward off external threats, more flexibility concerning the foreign policy maneuver and less vulnerability to domestic pressure. Small states, on the other hand, are prone to external pressure, and frequently face limited options to pursue their own goals. They lack the means to collect and interpret information, are economically dependent on foreign markets and outside sources of vital supply, and are unable to acquire state-of-the-art military technology. Small states, Vital argues, have no option but to succumb to pressures imposed by the international system.

Vital views that a state's power is determined by its ability to both influence others, and to resist pressures from others. Hence, his argument, as Pettman correctly points out, does not convincingly address the question of size due to the fact that the characteristics of state power as portrayed by Vital are equally shared by several big and small states (Pettman 1976).

Robert Keohane proposes four frameworks to classify state types. States in the first category are system-determining or play a 'critical role' in structuring world politics (e.g. the United States and the USSR). The second type contains system-influencing states which may not be able to individually dominate the system but 'importantly influence' its nature via unilateral and multilateral mechanisms (e.g. the United Kingdom, Japan, China and West Germany) (Keohane 1969). The third category is system-affecting states, which may not be able to affect the system via unilateral actions but may generate significant influence on it (Keohane 1969). The fourth type defined by Keohane is system-ineffectual. Such states have virtually no influence to rearrange the system; on

the contrary, they have to adapt their foreign policies to the world. These four proposed frameworks, Keohane suggests, enable distinctions between 'great', 'secondary', 'middle' and 'small' states.

In spite of Keohane's efforts to clearly define state size, his argument, as Pettman contends, fails to define the nature of a 'critical role' or an 'important influence' in the system (Pettman 1976). Pettman also argues that ambiguity remains in the relationship between the 'system-affecting' and 'system-influencing' states (Pettman 1976). For example, Australia and Brazil are 'system-affecting' states, but may also belong to the 'system-influencing' category considering their economic advantages in supplying the world market with much-needed and rare resources, particularly minerals.

Interestingly, Rosenau, Vital and Keohane all link the concept of a state's small size with its vulnerabilities. They define small states as weak ones which are prone to external pressure or shocks. Rosenau suggests that states which are less resource-rich (frequently the small ones) tend to be much more dependent on the international system, and thus more vulnerable to it. Vital, even more explicitly, stresses the relationship between a states' smallness and its vulnerability to external economic and military pressure. Similarly, Keohane's classification of state types implies a vulnerability of being 'small': small states are those residing in the system-ineffectual framework, which cannot have any influence and must accept arrangements made by other states.

Kassab challenges the notion that small states are always the vulnerable ones. Small states are not, as Kassab argues, necessarily weak, although weaknesses are inherent in several small states. Kassab elaborates the concept of 'weak states', arguing that such states are those which score highly on the economic vulnerability index (EVI) (Kassab 2015). The EVI index takes numerous variables into account including physical and population sizes (unit capability) and susceptibility to external shocks, such as those from economic and environmental factors. Despite convincingly conceptualizing weak states using an objective indicator, Kassab's argument appears to indirectly accept that there is a considerable difference between 'small' and 'weak' states. Therefore, Kassab's concept of 'weak states' is not totally helpful in defining 'small states'.

The notion that small states are weak ones has been contested in recent literature, including Hey, Chong, Braveboy-Wagner, and Graf and Lanz. Hey argues that Luxembourg, despite its smallness, economically outperforms some large states in the European Union (EU). Its diplomatic reputation is also well-established as home to many EU bodies including the European Court of Justice, the European Investment Bank and the European Parliament Secretariat. Moreover, Luxembourg plays an important role in hosting EU negotiating sessions (Hey 2002).

Similarly, Chong posits that Singapore, as a small city-state, possesses soft power originating from its superb economic performance and good governance (Chong 2010). The demonstration of such power is evidenced by the fact that many Asian countries praise and are striving to replicate the so-called Singapore Model of Development (SMD). Chong postulates that Singapore helps to develop human resources in countries enthusiastic about replicating the SMD as a means of promoting its soft power. Furthermore, Singapore has played an active role in promoting a number of Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) diplomatic activities such as the conflict resolution to the Cambodian crisis in the 1980s–1990s and ASEAN Free Trade Negotiations.

Braveboy-Wagner contends that even small states, like Trinidad and Tobago, could exercise influence within a limited sphere so long as they acquire certain capabilities and are ready to seize available opportunities (Braveboy-Wagner 2010). According to

Braveboy-Wagner, Trinidad and Tobago is successful in promoting its diplomatic leadership in the Caribbean, Latin America and an incipient outreach to Africa based on its endowment of energy resources.

Another literature which upholds the notion that small states are not exactly the weak ones is the one written by Andreas Graf and David Lanz on 'Conclusion: Switzerland as a Paradigmatic Case of Small-State Peace Policy?'. Graf and Lanz highlight Switzerland's proactive roles in peacemaking despite the country's location between larger belligerent states in Europe. Graf and Lanz contend that Switzerland has been able to maintain peace with its larger neighbors and be valued as an active world peacemaker owing to its genuine neutrality and its proactive efforts to support various peacemaking programs around the globe (Graf and Lanz 2013).

Attempts have also been made to conceptualize 'small states' using quantitative measurement. For example, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) suggests that population size can be the primary determinant of state size. UNITAR defines microstates as territories with 150,000 to 1 million inhabitants (Cambodia Daily 2008). Similarly, the Commonwealth Consultative Group, in their 1985 Vulnerability Report defined a small state as having a population of approximately 1 million or less (Commonwealth Advisory Group 1997).

One may question rationales behind attempts to quantify the population. Why should one million be regarded as the upper limit of the population of a microstate or small state? In reality, the cut-off figure is somewhat arbitrary and would need to be revised over time. The Commonwealth Consultative Group noted this issue, and raised the cut-off point for a small state to 1.5 million people (Commonwealth Advisory Group 1997). However, whether it is useful to define state size based on population size remains questionable.

Another problem is the confusion around defining 'small states' and 'microstates'. When defining state size based on population, these two terms are often used interchangeably. Do these terms carry the same meaning? Jeanne A. K. Hey attempted to differentiate the two terms, stating that academics have at least three communities in mind when talking about 'small states' (Hey 2003).

The first community, she asserts, is known as 'microstates' and have a population of below 1 million. These are located in the ex-British colonies of the Caribbean. The second community refers to small states in the developed world, particularly Austria, Belgium, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Switzerland. The third community encompasses small states in the Third-World – ex-colonies in Africa, Asia and Latin America, several of which are physically bigger than states in the first and second communities (Hey 2003). Although Hey's argument clearly distinguishes between so-called 'small states' and 'microstates', it does not help to differentiate them from 'large states' – a distinction which is central to the contemporary debate on small states.

Others have attempted to measure state size by combining different quantifiable variables: population and the gross national product (GNP) per capita or gross national income (GNI) per capita. Philip M. Burgess used these two indicators to classify states into four different types namely small-developed, small-developing, large-developed and large-developing states (Burgess 1970). He defined large countries as those with populations of over 23.7 million and developed countries as those with GNP per capita of more than US\$401 (East 1973). These definitions provide a clear categorization; however, given the rising world population and constant economic growth, the indicators proposed by Burgess are problematic.

East builds on the Burgess indicators by incorporating a third indicator: the 'Level of International Activity'. This addition is based on East's conclusion that small states participate less in foreign affairs than big states which are able to initiate more international activities. Despite this interesting conclusion, questions have been raised over what constitutes international activities. Does this only include activities initiated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs? Should international activities initiated by authorities at the grass-roots level be counted?

These attempts to use quantifiable indicators to determine state size have not contributed to any consensus in how to define 'small states'. Boyce and Herr express disappointment over this lack of consensus: '...the quest for a politically and academically satisfying definition is frustrated by the impossibility of weighing quantifiable criteria (population, GNP) against the non-quantifiable ones (e.g. quality of leadership, nationalism, and strategic geography, and so on)' (Boyce and Herr 1974). Wivel, Bailes and Archer also criticize attempts to use quantifiable indicators to define state size, emphasizing that doing so is of little use in spotting the real challenges and opportunities for small states (Archer et al. 2014).

Given the limitations encountered in defining 'small states' using either qualitative or quantitative methods, one can say that defining 'small states' is more perception-based. Erling Bjøl convincingly argues that, 'a state is small only when compared to a greater one' (Bjøl 1971). As Bjøl explains, Belgium can be regarded as 'small' compared to France, but Luxembourg is a small state in relation to Belgium, and France is small compared to the United States.

Based on the various indicators and definitions in the above literature review, Cambodia can be regarded as a small state *vis-à-vis* Vietnam. According to the World Bank, Cambodia's population size as of 2014 was roughly 15,328,000, whereas Vietnam's reached 90,728,000. Cambodia's GNI per capita is also lower, at approximately USD 1020 in 2014, while Vietnam's was roughly USD 1890 (World Bank 2014). Cambodia can also be considered the weaker state considering the vulnerability measurement proposed by Kassab. Cambodia's EVI in 2013 was 37.57 while Vietnam's stood at 30.76 in the same year (United Nations 2015).

3. Defining key terms

Since the article mainly concentrates on Cambodia's adoption of hedging against Vietnam, it is imperative to clearly grasp the concept of hedging before proceeding to the main argument. Hedging, according to Goh, is a series of strategies that aims to avoid (or plan for contingencies in) a situation in which states cannot decide on more straightforward policy options like balancing, bandwagoning or neutrality. Instead, they nurture a middle position that prevents or avoids having to opt for one side (or for one straightforward policy position) at the expense of another (Goh 2006). Van Jackson, moreover, posits that hedging is a policy of adopting opposing or contradictory actions as a means of minimizing or mitigating downside risks in connection with one or the other action (Jackson 2014).

Neither Goh nor Jackson, however, clearly defines the exact boundaries of hedging in their definition. This makes it hard to determine what types of the state's activities or behavior fall within the purview of hedging. Kuik and Le attempt to fill this lacuna by trying to establish what are the criteria of hedging. Concretely, Kuik, by examining the cases of Malaysia's and Singapore's policy towards China, argues that hedging may

contain the following tools: limited bandwagoning, binding engagement, economic pragmatism, dominance denial and indirect balancing (Kuik 2008). Le, on other hand, introduces the more nuanced components of Vietnam's hedging strategy towards China. According to him, Vietnam's China hedging policy instruments contain four main elements; namely, economic pragmatism, direct engagement, hard balancing and soft balancing (Le 2013).

Hedging strategy is manifested differently from one country to another. In the case of Cambodia's strategy towards Vietnam, its hedging instruments are not completely the same as the ones proposed by Kuik and Le. Specifically, Cambodia's hedging policy tools entail economic pragmatism, limited bandwagoning, binding engagement and soft-balancing.

4. Cambodia's foreign policy strategies towards Vietnam in retrospect

Cambodia entered into a formal relationship with Vietnam in the 1620s through a personal marriage between Cambodian King Chey Chesda II or Chey Chetha (1618–1622) and one of the daughters of Vietnamese Lord Nguyen Hy Tong (Nguyen-vo 1990). Indeed, Chey Chetha's marriage was aimed at establishing an alliance with Vietnam (then known as An Nam) in order to counter the threat from Thailand (then known as Siam). To merit such an alliance, the king granted Vietnamese migrants permission to settle in the kingdom's southern region. He also allowed Vietnam to set up customs posts in the Cambodian territory of Prey Nokor (present day Sai Gon) (Chandler 1993). Ever since, Cambodia's foreign policy strategies towards Vietnam have mainly revolved around balancing or bandwagoning. However, adoption of these strategies has apparently jeopardized Cambodian security, leading to territorial loss, diminishing independence and external invasions and subversion by its larger neighbor.

The fact that King Chey Chetha allowed the Vietnamese to set up custom posts and to live in Cambodia's southern region paved the way for Vietnam to gradually annex Cambodian territories (lower Cambodia or Kampuchea Krom) and to turn Cambodia into a Vietnamese tributary state. Furthermore, Cambodia gradually ceded its territories to its neighbor. For example, under Ou Tay's reign, the country ceded two provinces (Treang and Tra Vinh) to Vietnam (Leclère 1914). Vietnam, taking the opportunity of Ou Tay's subservient behavior, set up military posts in other Cambodian territories known as Kulavyang Islands (or Teng Islands) and Moat Chruk (Chau Doc) (Leclère 1914). Meanwhile, Cambodia's independence started to diminish as Ou Tay allowed a Vietnamese official to live with him in his palace.

Similarly, Cambodia's alignment with Vietnam led to the latter's direct occupation of Cambodia from 1835 to 1840, during which Cambodia virtually became another part of Vietnam. Daily administrative affairs such as personnel postings, salaries and military matters were handled by Vietnam. Its cultures were even assimilated by Vietnam (Chandler 1993). Vietnamese emperor Gia Long described the challenge for Cambodia to retain independence in relations with Vietnam and Thailand: 'Cambodia was an independent country which was the slave of TWO' (Chandler 1993).

Following Cambodia's independence from France in 1953, balancing became the predominant policy behavior which Cambodia adopted in relations with Vietnam. Sihanouk who ruled the kingdom from the 1950s till the 1960s chose to side with a great power – China – to counter the threat from South Vietnam. This culminated in border

incursions from the Republic of Vietnam in 1958, and a coup against him in 1959 (Nguyen-vo 1990).

After Sihanouk was overthrown by Lon Nol in 1970, the new regime (the Khmer Republic) chose to balance against the Democratic Republic of Vietnam by siding with Thailand, South Vietnam and the United State. This encouraged the Vietnamese communists to intervene in Cambodia's internal affairs by backing Cambodian communist forces – the Khmer Rouge – which finally came to power in 1975. After assuming power, the Khmer Rouge also adopted a balancing policy towards Vietnam, which became unified in the same year, by totally bandwagoning with communist China. This stance irritated Vietnam, ultimately encouraging the Vietnamese to launch a full-scale invasion of Cambodia in 1978. As a consequence, Cambodia fell under Vietnamese occupation until 1989.

Through Cambodian history, balancing and bandwagoning strategies towards Vietnam were apparently not relevant to its security. This raises the question as to how Cambodia has maintained its security in relations with its former occupier in the contemporary period. I argue that Cambodia has pursued a hedging strategy against Vietnam as evidenced by its adoption of omni-directional diplomatic approaches: economic pragmatism, limited bandwagoning, binding engagement and soft-balancing.

5. Cambodia's hedging against Vietnam

5.1. Determinants of Cambodia's hedging policy against Vietnam

Before proceeding to the main argument, this study will shed the light on rationales behind the current adoption of Cambodia's hedging against Vietnam.

5.1.1. External factors

The Vietnamese withdrawal from Cambodia in 1989, the normalization of relations between Vietnam and China in late 1991, and Vietnam's membership of the ASEAN in 1995 created an environment conducive for Cambodia to diversify its relations with countries other than its former occupier, Vietnam. One can say that bandwagoning with Hanoi was no longer the sole foreign policy option for Phnom Penh. Cambodia has felt the need to diversify its relations with other partners, such as China, Japan, the United States and ASEAN countries in order to maximize the country's economic benefits and to gain political legitimacy in international arena.

In recent years, China has increased its economic aid to Cambodia. This has substantially affected Cambodia's foreign policy behavior towards Vietnam. Some political analysts (such as Ciorciari, Storey and Thayer) contend that, due to increases in Chinese aid, Cambodia has become beholden to a wide range of China's policy preferences (Storey 2006; Ciorciari 2013; Thayer 2013). Thus, Beijing's growing economic influence has steadily altered Cambodia's position from one of total alignment with its former patron. This can be seen in the 2012 ASEAN summit in Phnom Penh. Cambodia rejected its ASEAN fellows' requests to include provisions that expressed their increasing concern about China's assertiveness in the ASEAN joint communiqué at that time. It is noteworthy that there were, as Thayer contends, at least 18 amendments to the draft joint communiqué, but Cambodia shot down all of those amendments (Thayer 2012a).

Despite the fact that Hanoi's influence in Cambodia has gradually diminished, its strategic significance has not yet faded away. Concretely, while the situation in the vicinity

of Preah Vihear temple remains fragile and has potential to escalate into an armed conflict with Thailand, being deferential towards Hanoi is necessary for Cambodia. Vietnam could provide hidden political support for Phnom Penh in the event of future military clashes with Thailand over the Preah Vihear issue. At least, Phnom Penh could neutralize Vietnam while confronting Thailand, thus avoiding being simultaneously sandwiched between two belligerent forces.

Furthermore, Vietnam also plays an important role in promoting Cambodia's national interests in international arenas. For instance, Vietnam supported Cambodia's candidature as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council for the term 2013–2014. Moreover, since both countries are ASEAN members, Cambodia cannot completely ignore Vietnamese interests. Should the friction between the two countries exacerbate, ASEAN will become weaker and lose its relevance to the member states. Eventually, the voice of a small economy like Cambodia will be likely to be ignored by great powers, and other larger international trade blocs such as the EU, World Trade Organization and North American Free Trade Agreement.

In short, the stable environment due to the end of the Cold War, coupled with the growing Chinese influence over Cambodia in the recent years has created favorable conditions for Cambodia to be not solely dependent on its former occupier – Vietnam. In other words, Cambodia has been able to diversify its ties and integrate its economy with countries other than Vietnam. This weakens Cambodia's perceived prior necessity to align with Vietnam as it used to do in the past. Nevertheless, since strengthening ties with Vietnam is crucial in protecting Cambodia's interests vis-à-vis Thailand, and in promoting Cambodian national interests on international stage, Cambodia is concurrently required to adopt a policy of accommodation towards Vietnam. These reasons explain why Phnom Penh adopts a hedging strategy towards Hanoi.

5.1.2. Domestic factors

In considering internal causes, it may be said that Cambodia's hedging strategy has been shaped by: its historical experiences in handling bilateral ties with Vietnam, rising democratization inside the country, and Vietnam's economic and security relevance for Cambodia.

As for its historical experiences, Cambodian history of the seventeenth and twentieth centuries (and even of the 1970s) suggests it will not directly confront its eastern neighbor, since doing so may incite internal instability caused by Vietnamese manipulation of Cambodian factions, or at worst, may lead to direct invasion by the Vietnamese (for example, during King Chan's reign of Cambodia (1806–1834), Vietnamese Emperor Gia Long sent expeditionary forces to invade Cambodia after he learnt that Chan's coronation had been hosted by the Thai – a move perceived by the Vietnamese as demonstrating the total loss of its influence over Cambodia (Leclère 1914)).

Furthermore, the history of Cambodia in the 1970s shows that, with the substantial support of the Vietnamese communists in the early years, the Khmer Rouge gained strength in fighting off the Khmer Republic government led by Lon Nol (Chandler 1991). More interestingly, with the strong Vietnamese backing, the Heng Samrin faction successfully ousted the Khmer Rouge from power in 1979. Although a Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia is unlikely to occur in the current context, the potential for Vietnamese interference in Cambodia's internal politics cannot be completely ruled out. Concretely, Vietnamese intervention may have made it hard for Hun Sen to consolidate his grip

over his own party – the Cambodian Peoples’ Party (CPP) – because of possible Vietnamese manipulation of the factions within it.

In spite of fear of Vietnamese interference, Cambodia’s pre-colonial history concurrently suggests that the country’s policy of total alignment with Vietnam culminated in the loss of its territory and independence in relations with its occupier. For instance, King Ou Tay, who reigned from 1758 to 1775, adopted an alignment stance with Vietnam; rewarding Vietnam with the Cambodian territories of Day Tamponglong (current Vietnam’s An Giang province), and Chan Don and Sui Lap (parts of Vinh Long province today) in exchange for Vietnamese military assistance against his domestic adversary and Siamese aggression (Leclère 1914). He even acknowledged Cambodia’s vassal status vis-à-vis Vietnam. The adoption of similar policy behavior can be witnessed under the reigns of King Chan (1806–1834), and Queen Mey (1834–1841), during which Cambodia experienced a similar fate; that is, the loss of territory and independence to its larger neighbor.

As such, while Cambodia’s history demonstrates that the country should not provoke Vietnam, it simultaneously suggests Cambodia should avoid succumbing to the Vietnamese preponderance. Having learned these historical lessons, the Cambodian government has pursued a betwixt-and-between policy towards its larger neighbor in order to maintain its security.

Another important factor that has influenced Cambodian government’s hedging policy is related to Cambodia’s calculation of the implications of two issues; namely, the development of democratization in Cambodia; and Vietnam’s economic and security relevance. The ruling party (CPP) has been increasingly under domestic pressure to take a hardline position towards Vietnam after losing a significant number of parliamentary seats to the opposition party, the Cambodian National Rescue Party (CNRP) in the 2013 national election. During the 2008 national election, Hun Sen won 90 out of 123 seats in the parliament. The number, however, declined to 68 seats in the 2013 national election, whereas the opposition’s went up to 55. Notably, although Cambodia has adopted the multi-party system since 1993, the election results have continuously been in favor of the CPP except in 1993. Such a predominant ruling, as dubbed by Cambodian American political scientist Kheang Un, renders Cambodia a dominant party authoritarian state (Un 2011)

The Cambodian opposition party has well understood the strong anti-Vietnamese sentiment in the Cambodian population. Consequently, it highlighted Cambodia’s problems with Vietnam (such as the loss of Cambodian territory to Vietnam and the issue of illegal Vietnamese immigrants in Cambodia) in order to win political support at home. Stressing such issues contributed to the opposition party’s increase in popularity among the voters vis-à-vis the ruling party as mentioned above (Chheang 2015). As discussed in Section 5.2.2., the CPP-led government has begun taking a more rigid line towards Vietnam (as described below) so as to win back the popularity it lost to its domestic rival, the CNRP.

Despite the rising domestic pressure for the adoption of the rigid line towards Vietnam, Cambodia cannot afford to completely upset Vietnam. Cambodia still needs Vietnam in both economic and security aspects. In terms of economics, Vietnam has become one the top economic partner of the country in the recent years. Vietnam has been the country’s second largest trading partner after Thailand with its total trading volume worth up to USD 3.29 billion in 2014 (VINANET 2015). Vietnam is also one of the top five investors in the country. As for security, Phnom Penh still needs Hanoi’s strong

cooperation to tackle the former's pressing issues such as the illegal Vietnamese immigrants and illegal logging. These problems cannot be effectively resolved without Vietnamese cooperation. The failure to tackle the issues may, at worst, lead to the weakening of the popularity of the ruling party among the populace.

In short, Phnom Penh's historical experiences in handling bilateral relations with Hanoi, the growing democratic forces inside the country and Hanoi's economic and security importance to Cambodia induce Phnom Penh to embrace a two-pronged strategy which, on one hand, demonstrates an attitude of accommodation, while on the other hand, reveals its defiant attitude towards Hanoi.

5.1.3. The leadership factor

Taking the leadership factor into account, Cambodian leader Hun Sen's pragmatic personality is perhaps an important variable which contributes to the formulation of Cambodia's policy of hedging against Vietnam. Unlike his predecessors – such as Pol Pot and former premier Pen Sovann, who made foreign policy decisions based on ideational factors – Hun Sen's foreign policy-making style is more pragmatic.¹ A CPP official, cited by Sebastian Strangio, portrayed Hun Sen as a profit-oriented person who does not believe in any ideology and can adapt himself to any situation so long as he can get rewards (Strangio 2014). Kong Korm, who served as the foreign minister from 1986 to 1987, similarly depicted Hun Sen as a young man who opportunistically adapted to each situation for his own benefit. Due to his pragmatic personality, Hun Sen has been unwilling to ally with Hanoi ideologically but rather, to make the most of his personal relationship with the latter's leadership, who installed him as Prime Minister in 1985. Thus, his pragmatic trait perhaps easily allows Hun Sen to adopt a strategy of hedging.

5.2. Operationalization of Cambodia's hedging strategy against Vietnam

As mentioned earlier, hedging policy instruments are diverse. In the case of Cambodia's strategy towards Vietnam, the hedging strategy contains four main instruments economic pragmatism, limited bandwagoning, binding engagement and soft-balancing.

5.2.1. Economic pragmatism

As a small state like Cambodia, economic development has, as noted by Kassab, become an essential element of the country's survival (Kassab 2015). In reality, this point has been repeatedly articulated in Cambodia's main policy documents such as the government's Rectangular Strategy Phase III and the National Policy on Population 2016–2030 (Royal Government of Cambodia 2013). Economic pragmatism is not only vital for Cambodian economy, but also for its security. As Le postulates, the efforts made by a smaller state to establish favorable economic ties with a larger one – no matter for what reasons – tend to make the latter to perceive that the former is a non-threatening force (Le 2013). As a result, its security may be guaranteed by the bigger state. Cambodia's pursuit of economic pragmatism in relations with Vietnam is not an exception. By forging closer economic ties with Hanoi, Phnom Penh may be perceived by Hanoi as a non-threatening force. Thus, Cambodian security may not be harmed by Vietnam.

Cambodia's pursuit of economic pragmatism in relations with Vietnam is manifest in its endeavors to boost economic cooperation with the latter at both bilateral and multilateral levels. At the bilateral level, in June 2010, Hun Sen paid an important visit to Ho

Chi Minh City, where he obtained a commitment from Vietnamese Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung to building the Chrey Thom bridge and Road 78. More importantly, in December 2013, Hun Sen paid another official visit to Vietnam where he successfully concluded ten comprehensive agreements with his Vietnamese counterpart. At the greater Mekong sub-regional level, Phnom Penh successfully reached in June 2009 a 'single window inspection arrangement' aimed at easing the free flow of goods and services by harmonizing customs clearance and transit documents with Hanoi.

Hun Sen's efforts to deepen economic ties with Vietnam positively contribute to Cambodian economic development as can be seen in the continuous increase in Vietnamese foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows into Cambodia. From 1994 to 2011, total FDI inflows from Vietnam into Cambodia stood only at US\$812 million, and Vietnam was ranked as the seventh largest investor in Cambodia (The Council of Development of Cambodia 2011). FDI inflows from Vietnam remarkably surged to US\$2.5 billion in 2012 (with 124 projects), and US\$3 billion in 2013 (with 127 projects). As of August 2014, the figure had gone up to US\$3.1 billion (with 129 projects), a 3.5 times increase compared to 2009. This recent figure makes Vietnam the fifth largest investor in Cambodia, after China and South Korea (Vietnamese Embassy to Cambodia 2014).

5.2.2. Limited bandwagoning

Limited bandwagoning refers to a smaller power's act of coordinating policies, and/or of paying deference to the larger power on selective issues (but not all) (Kuik 2008). The CPP-led government has made certain concessions to Vietnam over the border issue, and the contentious history of Kampuchea Krom between the two countries. However, Phnom Penh has not apparently aligned its policy with Hanoi over other issues such as the handling of the anti-Vietnamese demonstration and the ethnic Vietnamese in Cambodia.

Hun Sen's sacrifice of certain national interests in exchange for a peaceful neighborliness can be first seen in his handling of a supplementary border treaty with Vietnam. In 2005, Hun Sen strongly pushed for the parliament's and King Sihamoni's approval of the controversial supplementary treaty allegedly to legalize the loss of Cambodian territory to Vietnam (Vong 2015). This move sparked strong opposition from the CPP's opposition party members in the parliament, civil society groups and even (the former) King Norodom Sihanouk (Willemyns and Kuch 2015).

Regardless of the strong opposition to the supplementary bill by several political actors, especially the royal family, Hun Sen fought to get the bill approved by the parliament and the King. More noticeably, he threatened to change Cambodia's political system from a constitutional monarchy to a republic should the treaty not be approved by the king (Sok 2005). This serves as a clear proof of Phnom Penh's concession to Hanoi in exchange for peaceful neighborliness.

Another illustration of Hun Sen government's attempt to bandwagon with Vietnam can be seen in his efforts in de-escalating tensions that could ruin bilateral ties between the two countries. Such effort is apparent in his government's response to Vietnam's building of infrastructure (especially roads) in Cambodian-claimed territory. The roads were built at the Dak Dam checkpoint in the Ou Reang district of Monduliri province, bordering the Dak Lak province of Vietnam. Mao Monivann, a Cambodian lawmaker from the Cambodian opposition party, the CNRP, inspected the site in September 2014 and discovered that Vietnam had violated the 2005 supplementary treaty between the two countries (So 2014). He called on Prime Minister Hun Sen (via Cambodian

parliamentary president Heng Samrin) to explain the case to the parliament, but the latter has so far remained silent.

Instead of directly addressing parliament on this issue, as requested by the lawmakers, Hun Sen had Var Kim Hong, the senior minister in charge of border affairs, explain the case in a written letter to Heng Samrin on October 28 2014. The content of the letter reflects Phnom Penh's act of bandwagoning with Hanoi over this contested border area,

Cambodian government guarantees the protection of Cambodia's territorial sovereignty as stipulated in the Cambodian Constitution. The [Cambodian] Joint Border Committee and the Royal Government of Cambodia [referring to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation] have lodged official complaints including a diplomatic note protesting the Vietnam's road construction and demanding this unilateral activity be ceased...However, this construction does not affect the livelihood of people in that area as well as the process of border negotiation given that Vietnam has to return that area to Cambodia [if the Joint Border Committees of the two countries will come to an agreement that this area belongs to the latter]... (So 2014)

The immediate arrest of Cambodian senator Hong Sok Hour, on a charge of treason, is another illustration of Hun Sen's move to bandwagon with Hanoi. Amid the recent tension between Cambodia and Vietnam over the border issue, this CNRP senator posted the 1979 Cambodia–Vietnam border treaty, whose content has been claimed by Hun Sen to be falsified, on his own Facebook page.² Such a red-handed arrest was blasted by Cambodia's civil society organizations, for it had been made before the senator's immunity to prosecution had not been removed (as it later was through a two-thirds majority vote in the Senate) (Cheang 2015; Taing 2015).³

Furthermore, the way that the Cambodian government has handled Kampuchia Krom problem with Vietnam is another telling indicator of Phnom Penh's bandwagoning with Vietnam. Although many Cambodians still regard Kampuchia Krom as a patch of land which should have belonged to the Khmer kingdom (i.e. Cambodia), based on the country's historical evidence, Hun Sen has at times expressed his unwillingness to claim it back from Vietnam. He has even criticized Cambodia's opposition parties and individuals who have attempted to claim this territory from Hanoi.⁴ By contrast, he has recognized it as legitimate Vietnamese territory and even suppressed anti-Vietnamese demonstrations.⁵

Despite its efforts to accommodate Hanoi, Phnom Penh has concurrently upset the latter by its handling of anti-Vietnamese demonstrations in front of the Vietnamese embassy in Phnom Penh, its handling of Vietnamese immigrants in Cambodia, and by its diplomatic protests against Vietnam's alleged incursions over Cambodia's border areas.

The way Cambodia handled the anti-Vietnamese demonstrations over Kampuchea Krom in front of the Vietnamese embassy in Phnom Penh serves as evidence of Phnom Penh's gestures of defiance towards Hanoi. While anti-Vietnamese demonstrations escalated in August 2014, Heng Samrin, the president of the national assembly and also the honorary president of the CPP, was invited by the chairman of the Vietnamese national assembly, Nguyen Sinh Hung, to pay an official visit to Vietnam in the same month. The Vietnamese media reported Heng Samrin's pledge to crack down on the anti-Vietnamese demonstrators launched by Khmer Krom residents and Cambodian students (Vietnamnet 2014). However, after Heng Samrin's return to Cambodia on August 20 2014, Chheang Vun, his subordinate and the head of the foreign affairs committee of the Cambodian National assembly, reported that what Heng Samrin had

told Vietnamese Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung after the Prime Minister had urged Cambodia to take a tough action on the anti-Vietnamese demonstrators (who had burnt the Vietnamese flag and currency in front of the Vietnamese Embassy), as follows:

Samdech [Heng Samrin] regrets for what has happened, but Cambodia cannot ban people from launching protests given the country's adherence to the principle of democracy, pluralism, and the rule of law... Cambodian people will not stage a demonstration without legitimate reasons. This problem occurs due to the wrong interpretation of Cambodian history [by Vietnamese diplomat Tran Van Thong]. This is a concern of all Cambodians (Rattanak 2014).

The current Cambodian government's eviction of illegal Vietnamese immigrants living in Cambodia is another contentious issue that currently roils Cambodia–Vietnam relations. Many Cambodian people generally view Vietnamese immigrants as a big threat to their territorial sovereignty, and have named the latter group, 'Yvon'.⁶ They have had a strong animosity towards the ethnic Vietnamese who have illegally migrated and settled on their territory, but the Cambodian government had never taken any tough actions towards those immigrants until recently.

After the Ministry of Interior started deporting illegal immigrants, from July to November 2014, Cambodia had evicted 960 Vietnamese immigrants back to Vietnam – the toughest action Hun Sen government has ever taken towards illegal Vietnamese immigrants (Ly 2014). This treatment has prompted a brief visit by Vietnamese state president Truong Tan Sang to Cambodia in December 2014, during which Cambodia was likely to have been requested to properly look after Vietnamese settlers in Cambodia (Tien Phong 2014). The CPP-led government has remained rigid with its deportation of illegal Vietnamese immigrants from the country.

Another example of Phnom Penh's limited bandwagoning with Hanoi is seen in its recent issuing of multiple diplomatic protests against the latter's alleged incursions into Cambodia's border provinces of Kandal, Rattanakiri and Svay Rieng. From 2013 to 2015, Cambodia sent at least a dozen of diplomatic notes protesting Vietnam's alleged incursions into the border provinces; notes which had not been publicized until recently. Prior to 2015, Phnom Penh tended to protest the incursions through confidential diplomatic means, for a fear of damaging the overall bilateral ties between the countries. Given the increasing pressure from the general public and the opposition party, the Hun Sen government has, nonetheless, revealed to the public these official protests against Hanoi's alleged incursions regardless of the latter's reactions.⁷

5.2.3. Binding engagement

As a smaller state, Cambodia has concurrently adopted the strategy of so-called binding engagement with Vietnam, utilizing different levels of interaction between the two countries. Phnom Penh's strategy is that the increase in interactions and communication will eventually contribute to binding its larger neighbor's behavior in bilateral agreements, in order to resolve differences or conflicts of interests in a peaceful manner. To achieve this end, Cambodia has actively engaged with its larger neighbor through its frequent exchanges of visits with Vietnamese top leaders, the creation of the joint border committee and the promotion of cooperation between Cambodia's border provinces and Vietnam's. According to prominent political scientist Carlyle A. Thayer, there were approximately 18 times of exchange of high-level visits between the two countries from 2005 to 2011 (Thayer 2012b).

One should not underestimate such an engagement approach, since it has helped to bind Cambodia's larger neighbor to multiple agreements which have ultimately contributed to peaceful settlement of disputes and the protection of Cambodian territorial sovereignty. For instance, during Vietnamese Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung's visit to Cambodia in April 2011, the two sides concluded a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on the modification of some remaining areas of the land boundaries between the governments of Cambodia and Vietnam. The conclusion of this MoU is crucial for Cambodia's security, since it legally obtains its larger neighbor's commitment to resolving the border problems in a peaceful manner. Particularly, the conclusion of this historic document helps ease Cambodia's traditional concern about Vietnam's gradual absorption of its land.⁸

More evidence of Cambodia's effort to restrain its larger neighbor's behavior in a binding agreement can be seen in its efforts to engage Vietnam in the border talks dated July 7–9 2015 in Phnom Penh. From 2013 to July 10 2015, Cambodian ministry of foreign affairs and international cooperation, as mentioned earlier, had issued multiple diplomatic notes protesting Vietnam's encroachment on different areas along the border. After the border talks in July 2015, Hanoi made certain concessions to Phnom Penh by halting its unilateral construction of a military post near Kandal province's Koh Thom district, and road construction in Svay Rieng province's Chan Trea district (Chhay 2015). Vietnam also pledged to fill in three out of eight ponds it had dug in the O'yadav district of Rattanakiri province (Cambodian MoFA 2015). Moreover, both Cambodia and Vietnam also agreed to educate people along the border not to incite any border incidents. Educating people in the border areas not to encroach upon each other's land is crucial, for such residents have occasionally resorted to violence (as was seen in the border incident of June 2015).

5.2.4. Soft-balancing, not indirect-balancing

Besides limited bandwagoning, economic pragmatism and binding engagement, Phnom Penh has simultaneously pursued a soft-balancing policy towards Hanoi. Indirect-balancing, an instrument of hedging strategy suggested by Kuik, appears not to be a tool that sums up Cambodia's current balancing act against Vietnam. Indirect-balancing is a strategy, whereby a state makes efforts to deal with uncertainties by enhancing defense cooperation and by bolstering its defense capability (Kuik 2008). Such military efforts are, however, not aimed directly at any particular state. Cambodia's balancing act falls in the category of soft-balancing suggested by Le since this small state has made its efforts to bolster defense cooperation with Vietnam's rival, China. There is little evidence of its attempt to enhance its internal military capability to match that of Vietnam.

To give an example, Cambodia's soft-balancing act was displayed in its defense minister Tea Banh's visit to Beijing in early July 2015, during which time border tensions between Cambodia and Vietnam flared. During his meeting with the vice chairman of the central military commission Xu Qiliang, Tea Banh received an offer of support for Cambodia's sovereignty from his Chinese counterpart. Cambodia, in return, pledged to support China on the same issue (Yeang 2015; Xinhua 2015). Although the term 'sovereignty' is vaguely defined, it can be logically concluded that Cambodia is bandwagoning with China in order to countervail Vietnam. The argument is that this is the first time a high-level Cambodian has officially stated support for China's sovereignty without reservation. Since 2012, Phnom Penh has aligned its policy on the South China Sea with Beijing. However, Cambodia was reluctant to do so until it experienced rising border

tensions with Vietnam in June 2015. Cambodia's initial hesitation to clearly express its stance over the issue is attributable to its concern about damaging the overall bilateral relations with Hanoi.

As seen, Cambodia's balancing act could not be depicted as the indirect-balancing as posited by Kuik, for it lacks a component of upgrading the state military capability to match that of Vietnam's. It is more appropriate to regard Phnom Penh's balancing act as the soft-balancing one as suggested by Le, for it is likely to seek informal military alliance with Beijing to counter Hanoi. Such a balancing move allows Phnom Penh to raise its bargaining power in relations with Vietnam over border negotiations as well as other issues of Phnom Penh's concerns. Nonetheless, this small state may not attempt to upgrade its defense capability to match the Vietnamese military power, for the act is too costly.

6. Conclusion

Bandwagoning and balancing may not be the sole foreign policy options of small states in relations with their rival powers. There is another strategic alternative, called hedging which enables a small power to switch back and forth between bandwagoning and balancing. This strategy helps to diffuse uncertainties which may jeopardize its security due to the adoption of a clear position: either balancing or alignment. In considering the case of Cambodia's foreign policy strategy towards Vietnam, the construction of such a strategy is largely based upon three factors: external development, internal causes, and the decision-maker's personal attributes.

In terms of exogenous factors, the end of the Cold War, the growing Chinese economic influence over Cambodia, the Preah Vihear dispute with Thailand, and the need for Vietnamese support in international arenas all contribute to shaping Cambodia's hedging strategy against Vietnam. As for domestic reasons, Cambodia's historical experiences in handling its ties with Vietnam, the rising democratization inside the country, and the economic and security roles of Vietnam in Cambodia have notably influenced the Cambodia hedging decision. Lastly, the pragmatic personality of Cambodian leaders, especially Hun Sen, is also another prominent contributor to the development of the country's hedging strategy against Vietnam.

In the meantime, hedging per se may be revealed in different forms from one country to another. Hedging in the case of Cambodia's strategy towards Vietnam is slightly different from the one suggested in the existing literature, in Kuik's and Le's views in particular. The stark difference between Cambodia's hedging and their definitions concerns the balancing element of hedging. Cambodia's balancing act against Vietnam neither contains the indirect-balancing component suggested in Kuik's hedging, nor hard-balancing (or upgrading a state's internal defense capability) in Le's hedging. Cambodia's hedging is, hence, not necessarily the same as those suggested by Kuik and Le, entailing economic pragmatism, limited bandwagoning, binding engagement, and soft-balancing (rather than indirect-balancing).

Another important conclusion one can make from examining Cambodia's foreign policy strategy towards Vietnam is that a hedging strategy is apparently relevant to small states' security, given its nature of omni-directional approaches. More specifically, the omni-directional approaches taken by Cambodia have created a dilemma for Vietnam. On one hand, Hanoi may make efforts to eliminate the irritants in bilateral relations, one of which is the acceleration of the border demarcation process between

the two countries as soon as possible. On the other hand, Vietnam may feel the need to put pressure on its smaller neighbor in order to strengthen the legitimacy of Communist Party of Vietnam through the proper handling of the border problem with Cambodia, and to avoid being simultaneously encircled by both China and Cambodia as was the case in the 1970s.

This dilemma has culminated, to a certain degree, in a status quo which is conducive to Cambodia's security. The relevance of the status quo is that Hanoi is still committed to the settlement of its territorial disputes with Cambodia in a peaceful manner. Furthermore, Hanoi might have been bound to make certain concessions to Phnom Penh regarding negotiations of land territory. This relevance could be manifest in the recent agreement made between the two countries. Vietnam has agreed to swap certain border areas (via a one-hectare-to-one-hectare formula) with Cambodia peacefully and equally (VTV News 2015). Furthermore, Vietnam has, as mentioned above, positively responded to Cambodian territorial concerns by agreeing to fill in the three ponds it had dug into the Cambodian territory and to inform its people not to encroach upon its smaller neighbor's territory.

The above relevance of Cambodia's hedging strategy against Vietnam suggests that a small power may have a sound policy option to ensure its security in relations with the larger power. This study contributes to the new body of knowledge about the relevance of the hedging diplomatic strategy adopted by a small state in relations with its threatening power. None of the existing literature has ever attempted to make such an assessment of this strategy.

Another interesting point one can make from investigating Cambodia's foreign policy towards Vietnam is that non-state actors within an authoritarian system may play an important (if not a decisive) role in the making of their foreign policy.⁹ Constituents and opposition parties have been, in the case of Cambodia, significant stakeholders in influencing the foreign policy-making of this authoritarian state. People in countries which have experienced a long period of foreign colonization and occupation tend to have strong nationalistic sentiments against the occupiers or invaders. Such sentiments are likely to be manipulated by different political factions within those states who have sought to change the status quo.

Hence, the foreign policy strategies in authoritarian countries may not be shaped only by one person. They are born from interactions between the top decision-makers and other domestic political forces, including, but not limited to, their own opponents, and the populace within the state. Authoritarian leaders need legitimacy for their rule from their constituents, and this paves the way for other political forces to be involved in the foreign policy decisions of those states.

In the future, hedging will continue to be Cambodia's prominent strategy in its relations with Vietnam. Once Phnom Penh is under pressure from Vietnam on sensitive problems such as the border and Vietnamese immigrants, it is likely to pursue an alignment policy with China on an ad hoc basis. Such an alignment policy may be seen in the limitation of Cambodian engagement with ASEAN, and other Chinese rivals such as Japan and the US, and may be evidenced by Phnom Penh's support of Beijing's initiatives in multilateral forums.

Lastly, the future of Cambodia-Vietnam relations is likely to be influenced by the democratization of Cambodia. Once Cambodia becomes more democratic, the element of accommodating its neighbor may become less discernible in its foreign policy. In other words, the tension between the two neighbors could be heightened if Cambodian

foreign policy-makers become more prone to listening to the voices of Cambodian citizens. The most effective way to deal with this challenge is that Cambodian political parties should constrain the use of sensitive issues (as mentioned above) as a political propaganda tool in order to boost their respective party popularity at home. Vietnam, for its part, has a responsibility to create an environment conducive to peace and stability in Cambodia by demonstrating its genuine willingness to resolve problems with Cambodia in a peaceful and fair manner.

Notes

1. Pol Pot launched the war against Vietnam in the late 1970s in an attempt to retrieve the maritime and land boundaries lost to Vietnam in the pre-colonial period, although Cambodian troops were far inferior to the Vietnamese. During the Vietnamese occupation of Cambodia in the 1980s, Pen Sovan still insisted on obtaining Cambodia's independence from Vietnam by planning to impose restrictions on the flow of Vietnamese immigration in Cambodia, taxing Vietnamese airplanes and establishing bilateral ties with Moscow without Hanoi's acknowledgement. Pen Sovan was jailed for 10 years in Vietnam in 1981.
2. Article 4 of the treaty reads that 'They [both Cambodia and Vietnam] shall negotiate to sign an agreement on the DELIMITATION of the national frontier between the two countries on the basis of the present border line...'. However, the senator translated the term 'delimitation' into 'dissolving', causing a controversial interpretation of the meaning of the treaty on his Facebook account. Hun Sen immediately accused him of committing a red-handed crime.
3. One can say that the arrest of this senator breaches article 104 of the Cambodian Constitution.
4. According to the Khmer history, Kampuchia Krom/Khmer Krom belonged to the Khmer Kingdom but it was steadily absorbed by An Nam/Vietnam in the seventeenth century. It fell under Vietnamese de facto control due to the subsequent Vietnamese military invasions of Cambodia. However, the Khmer Kingdom never recognized the legitimacy of the Vietnamese occupation of Kampuchia Krom. In 1949, the whole Kampuchia Krom region was officially granted to Vietnam by the French colonizers – a move that has strongly inflamed the anti-Vietnamese sentiment among Cambodians up to the present.
5. Tim Sakhorn was accused by Cambodian authorities of 'harming good friendship' between Cambodia and Vietnam. He was helping Khmer Krom people who had fled from Vietnam and sought settlement in Cambodia, and promoted the rights of those Khmer Krom people from persecution by Vietnamese authorities. He should have been sent to the UNHCR in Phnom Penh, but Cambodian government chose to repatriate him back to Vietnam instead.
6. The term 'Yuon' might have originated from a Vietnamese word 'giun' which means an earthworm. This analogy was perhaps made based on the perception that the Annamese/Vietnamese have gradually swallowed Cambodian/Khmer land throughout Khmer history.
7. The diplomatic notes protesting the Vietnamese incursions over the border areas were posted on the minister of foreign affairs' Facebook page and publicly shared on this social media network.
8. According to this MoU, the two parties agree that the land border areas are exchangeable based on a 1:1 formula. This means that if one hectare of Cambodia's land is, in reality, occupied by Vietnamese villagers, the latter has the responsibility to return 1 hectare of its land to the former (this land does not need to be in the same area).
9. For reason why Cambodia has been classified as an authoritarian country, see Un, Kheang 2011. 'Cambodia: a moving away from democracy', *International Political Science Review* 546–62.

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