

**FINAL REPORT
BASELINE SURVEY OF
VOTER KNOWLEDGE AND AWARENESS**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This survey of voter knowledge and awareness was conducted for two reasons. One was to alert the voter education community to areas where, in light of our findings, education needs seemed to be greatest.

The second purpose of our study was to establish a baseline of voter knowledge against which the impact of the voter education campaign could be assessed, in order to improve and strengthen future voter education campaigns in Cambodia.

We reported the progress of our study and our preliminary findings to the fortnightly meetings of the Joint Voter Education Committee throughout the pre-election period. We reported the highpoints of the final results of our survey in a brief Khmer and English publication, which was distributed widely to voter educators through COMFREL, COFFEL and KID. In that publication we stressed the challenges implied for voter education efforts and included recommendations for action that might be taken. (The highpoints are reproduced in the annex to this report).

We envisage a follow-up impact survey that would attempt to draw the lessons from this campaign by considering the views of voters regarding their experience with the registration and voting process. The general aim would be to learn how successful the voter education campaign was in helping voters understand and exercise their voting rights effectively. At the same time, we would want to learn how successful specific educational contributions of the National Election Committee and the NGO's were in reaching and informing the electorate.

From the point of view of laying the basis for an eventual impact assessment of voter education effectiveness, the findings of this baseline survey can be summarized under two rubrics. The first is knowledge of the procedures for the elections and awareness of the election process. The second is the channels and means by which information on the election was obtained. The references in the summary below are to sections and subsections of the main report.

A. Procedures and Process of the Elections

1. Registration.

We found that the electorate was largely uninformed about any registration procedures (III.A.3.Q.50), which was understandable because our survey was conducted in March and April 1998, before the National Elections Committee was fully formed and functional. However, we found widespread understanding of the need to re-register for the 1998 elections (III.A.1.Q.49). Our survey showed that 92% of respondents expressed an intention to register (III.A.2.Q.52).

2. Specific voter knowledge.

Our survey showed that 93% of respondents expressed an intention to vote in the 1998 elections (IV.A.1.Q.69), and they seemed very well aware of the fact that elections were going to be held soon (IV.A.2.Q.53). But there was a massive ignorance about voting procedures (IV.B.1.Q.67, 68), with 91% of respondents saying they did not know the voting procedures and 96% saying they did not know where to vote.

3. General voter knowledge.

Voters also seemed quite uninformed about what the 1998 would be for—for persons, parties or offices (IV.B.4.Q.54), and when elections would be held (IV.B.5.Q.55). Of our respondents, 95% did not know the name of their Member of the National Assembly, suggesting a significant gap in understanding of how a vote translates into the election of a candidate who is accountable to a constituency (IV.B.6.Q.77).

4. *Feelings about pressure, intimidation, danger.*

Our respondents generally did not expect either pressure or force to be applied on them to affect their voting (V.B.1.Q.111, 112). We found 91% of respondents said they would not obey an order from a powerful person to vote for a particular party (V.B.2.Q.118), and 82% said their vote would not be influenced by a gift of money (V.B.3.Q.113).

Only 19% of our respondents expressed fearfulness about the upcoming elections compared to 62% who said they were not fearful (VI.B.1.Q.81). Only 15% thought elections were dangerous compared to 35% who held that they were not dangerous. But, on the other hand, 50% of our respondents took a wait-and-see attitude to this question and said they didn't know if elections would be dangerous (VI.B.2.Q.85).

5. *Attitudes about obligations to vote for a party.*

The electorate surveyed by CAS seemed deeply uncertain about the voting obligations entailed by a party membership commitment (like a thumbprint on a form), or a pledge in public to support a party. We found that 28% of respondents said party members must vote for that party, while 24% said no, party members need not vote for their party and 48% said they didn't know (V.B.4.Q.71). We found that 35% of respondents felt a person must vote in accord with his or her pledge, while 38% said no, a pledge was not binding, and 27% said they didn't know (V.B.5.Q.72).

6. *Attitudes about the secrecy of the ballot.*

The electorate we surveyed seemed fairly evenly divided between 47% who thought the ballot in the forthcoming elections would be secret and 52% who said they didn't know if the elections would be secret or not (VI.A.Q.116). This may be compared to 78% of our respondents who thought the UNTAC elections were secret versus 4% who thought they were not secret (II.D.1.Q114). This division on the question of ballot secrecy is echoed by 45% of our respondents who thought a winning party would not punish those who had voted for another party (assuming the winner somehow had learned who had voted against him), and the 46% of our respondents who said they didn't know if a winning party would punish those who voted for other parties (VI.B.4.Q.84).

7. *Knowledge and awareness of female voters.*

For questions involving knowledge of procedures or awareness of the political process in Cambodia, the percentage of female respondents who gave the "don't know" response was significantly higher than the percentage of male respondents who gave that reply.

In regard to voting procedures, 95% of our female respondents said they didn't know what they were, compared to 85% of male respondents (IV.B.1.67, 68). In regard to obligations entailed by party membership, 52% of our female respondents gave the "don't know" reply, compared to 42% of male respondents (V.B.4.Q.71).

In regard to expectations about the secrecy of the ballot, 57% of our female respondents replied "don't know," compared to 44% of male respondents (VI.A.Q.116). In regard to the expectation that a winning party might punish voters for other parties, 52.5% of female respondents answered "don't know," compared to 36% of the males (VI.B.4.Q.84).

In regard to an understanding of how a multiparty system works, 64.7% of our female respondents replied "don't know" to a question about whether a loser in one election could stand again in another election. Of our male respondents, 45.4% gave this "don't know" reply (VI.B.5.Q.73). See also VII.A.2.Q.122, 123 on perceptions of men's need to advise women on voting.

8. Awareness of the voting rights of vulnerable groups and minorities.

Our survey showed overwhelming affirmation of the voting rights of women (VII.A.1.Q.120, 121), the very poor (VII.B.Q.132, 133), the illiterate (VII.C.Q.130, 131) and the disabled (VII.D.Q.134, 135).

However in regard to minorities, the acknowledgement of their voting rights was diminished by some uncertainty among our respondents. Regarding *non-Buddhists* (like the Muslim Cham minority), 32% of our respondents gave the “don’t know” reply to a question about their right to vote (VII.E.1.Q.136). Regarding the *highland tribal minorities*, 37% of our respondents gave the “don’t know” reply to a question about the voting rights of these indigenous peoples (VII.E.2.Q.137). Regarding *immigrant Vietnamese*, 64% of our respondents gave the “don’t know” response to a question about the voting rights of this group (VII.E.3.Q.138). Regarding *overseas Cambodians* or “dual passport holders,” 58% of our respondents gave the “don’t know” reply to the question about the voting rights of these Cambodians (VII.E.4.Q.139).

B. Channels for information and effectiveness of voter education messages.

1. Registration.

Besides having been too young, the major reason our respondents gave for not having voted in the UNTAC elections was not having registered to vote (II.A.2.Q.27). A follow-up should ask why respondents did not vote in 1998. Our findings suggest that the impact assessment should consider how effectively reliable information about registration was provided to the electorate.

2. The elections.

Our survey included questions on how voters had learned about the UNTAC elections (II.B.Q.37). We learned of the importance of government officials, radio and friends and relatives as sources of information. Our survey also asked how voters had become aware of the forthcoming elections and by what sources respondents obtained information about the elections (IV.A.3.Q.56, IV.B.2.Q.148). We again noted the relative importance of electronic media, radio, television, and contact with friends, relatives and neighbors.

A follow-up should ask in detail what information activities of COMFREL, COFFEL, NEC, the political parties and government officials made the most memorable impression as far as providing useful guidance to voters in these elections.

FINAL REPORT

BASELINE SURVEY OF VOTER KNOWLEDGE AND AWARENESS

INTRODUCTION

This survey was designed with two aims in mind. First, to serve as a pre-test of the knowledge level of the Cambodian electorate regarding various aspects of registration and balloting. We hoped to highlight the topics about which the electorate was particularly uninformed, and to draw attention to sectors of the population with specific voter education needs. The second aim is to provide a baseline upon which a post-test of voter knowledge could be conducted after the voter education campaign. The post-test would assess the success of the voter education campaign and provide lessons for future voter education campaigns in Cambodia.

The first aim, to serve the needs of the voter education community in their pre-election activities, was served by a publication of a brief paper in Khmer and English. That paper, *Highpoints of the Baseline Survey of Voter Knowledge and Awareness*, CAS Occasional Paper No. 2, (May 1998) is included as an annex to this Final Report. We noted the highpoints of our findings that were particularly relevant to stress in voter education training so those gaps in voter knowledge revealed by our findings could be recognized and remedies found. We distributed 1000 copies of this paper widely in the voter education community, especially to COFFEL and COMFREL and KID, which had training programs at the province, district and commune level. We tried to assure that our findings would be in the hands of all voter education trainers down to the commune level, at a time when village-level volunteers were being trained.

The second aim, to establish a baseline against which an impact study of voter education effectiveness could be conducted is provided in this detailed report of our findings.

The survey instrument we used was devised in English in the course of meetings with voter education curriculum developers in Cambodian NGOs, in light of the materials they were developing and using. After a pre-test of the Khmer translation of the instrument, the instrument was streamlined and simplified.

METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Instrument Construction

The pre-test of the Khmer version of the questionnaire revealed an aspect of Khmer culture that may be useful to note for other survey-based studies. We discovered that the Khmer language of the pre-test instrument had been written in a high literary register. This reflected the academic and intellectual qualities of our researchers who translated the questions from English. As excellent translations, the Khmer questions had a hypercorrect, formal, literary character.

But the questions in Khmer were also formal for another reason, which was to assure proper courtesy to whatever reader might encounter the document. During the pre-test, I noticed that the interviewers first read the question, and then “translated” the question into colloquial Khmer of the oral register. This translation subtly took into consideration who the informant was, and how the informant reacted during the reading and then the translation of the questions.

We soon realized that each interviewer was going to add his or her own interpretations in their translations from the literary register to the oral register, depending on the researcher's assessment of the respondent's reaction to the questions.

In order to minimize this unwanted element of diversity introduced by the interviewers themselves, the questions had to be recast in an acceptable oral form, but in writing. This proved to be very awkward for my researchers. They worried that if a person of high status or power should see the written questions in such an oral form, that person might get angry with the researcher because the obligatory marks of formality (encoding deference) expected in a message addressed to him, were absent.

Our efforts to simplify what could be said in the Khmer question fed back to an adjustment of what the English question could ask. Questions that attempted to ask for scaled responses and to probe nuances in attitude that were part of the original questionnaire design gave way to more straight forward questions that could be asked and answered simply in Khmer. The English and Khmer versions of our instrument are reproduced in an annex to this report.

Sampling

Lacking a census, and within a limited budget and timeframe, we were unable to design a probability sample. The guidelines or quotas we used in selecting categories of informants reflected the aims of the research. We wanted to assess voter knowledge and awareness especially in remote rural locations. We wanted to be certain to include voter-aged women, disabled and minorities. These are the kinds of groups usually underrepresented in a non-probability sample.

Our aim was to replicate the general characteristics of the Cambodian population, at least as far as gender, rural/urban, Khmer/non-Khmer characteristics were concerned. Our guide here was the *Demographic Survey of Cambodia, 1996, General Report* (October 1996), published by the National Institute of Statistics. This work is cited as "*Demographic Survey*" below.

Our scope covered a considerable diversity of Cambodian provinces. The sixteen provinces (or municipalities) and forty-seven districts (or *sangkat*) we visited are listed in an annex. One criterion we considered was to survey different ecological zones, where the basis of livelihood might be a little different, for instance, flood plain villages near the lake and upland rain dependent rice areas. This was not carried out according to a systematic plan however. The main practical criterion of our selection of villages to survey was that they be accessible to a four-wheel drive vehicle during the dry months March and April. Mindful of our mission to highlight voter education needs, our team probably biased the selection in favor of communities far from surfaced roads, but on laterite roads, away from urban areas and into Cambodia's agricultural areas.

At the end of a series of weeklong surveys to Northwest, South, Southeast, and Central Cambodia, we tried to remedy the under-representation of the urban sector by carrying out another week of surveys in urban centers within a day's drive of Phnom Penh.

Survey Execution

Our team consisted of eight persons. There were two expatriates, an American academic who was project director, and a Dutch UNV who worked on the data with SPSS 7.5 for Windows. The Khmer interviewers consisted of a senior male academic who was the field coordinator, another male and female academic and a young man and two young women who were graduates. These interviewers would usually arrive in a village and each work singly to find men and women, old and young, at home or at work, who would agree to be interviewed. The team usually worked in at least two different locales each day, separated by a lunch break. The afternoon village visits were usually the

most productive because by 6:00 p.m. all family members had returned from their work outside the home. However, by nightfall our team generally preferred to leave the village and return to the nearest town for dinner and our local accommodations.

Our researchers found that they had to overcome a typical initial assumption by the interviewees that the questionnaire was being conducted on behalf of a political party. On these grounds a number of people we approached refused to participate in the survey. Many of our pre-test respondents had balked at questions which had originally been designed to be answered "yes" or "no." They forced us to include a "don't know" reply to many of these questions. As our survey proceeded, we were surprised at how large the "don't know" response was. We sensed that many of these responses reflected a genuine lack of knowledge. But we also sensed a degree of reluctance to commit to a "yes" or "no" to us, unknown strangers. Although we tried to assure respondents of the neutrality and non-political stance of the Center for Advanced Study, the reader should keep in mind the background of uncertainty about our motives that was probably never entirely dispelled.

A large proportion of those who did agree to complete the questionnaire was reluctant to reply to the open ended questions. We lacked the time needed to gain rapport and overcome the natural wariness of peasants toward urban investigators. This probably accounts for the rarity of responses to the open-ended questions, and the brevity of the responses we were given.

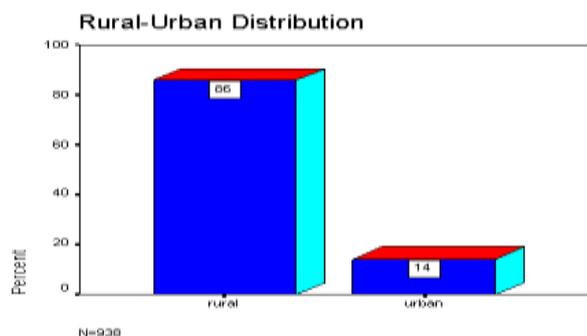
On the other hand, by the end of the interview, when we reached last question ("If someone came here to answer one question about the elections, what would you ask?"), the closure of the interview often gave rise to intense requests for more information about politics, voting and the elections. In general we sensed a great hunger for more specific information about the elections, which we were in no position to provide. Our impression overall was that a voter education campaign was eagerly awaited by the electorate in the villages we surveyed.

I. BACKGROUND DEMOGRAPHICS

The aim of these demographic descriptions of our respondents is to indicate that the diverse elements of the Cambodian population were taken into account and to show how the proportions in our sample replicate the demographics of Cambodia as a whole. It is hoped that the disproportions that remain will not unduly affect the findings on voter knowledge and awareness that we were trying to obtain.

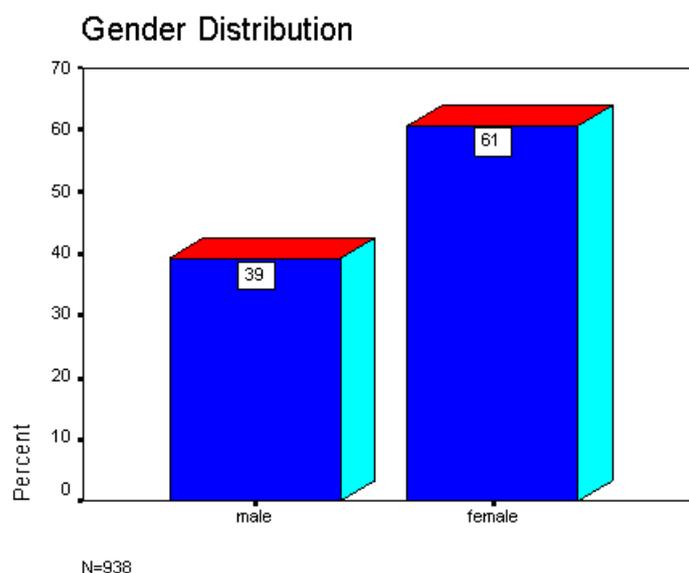
A. General Characteristics

1. Q. 8. Rural-Urban distribution



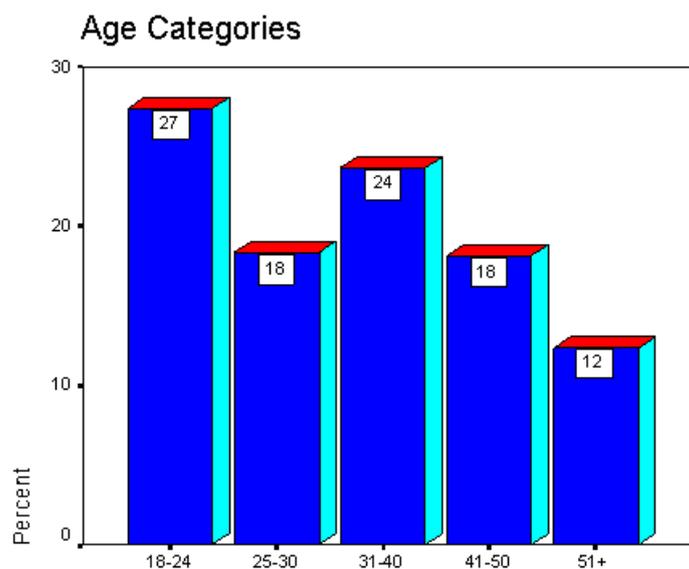
This dichotomy proved to be a thorny issue among our Khmer interviewers, as we discovered in our pre-test analysis. Long, inconclusive arguments about how the rural boundary should be defined as one left a town were finally settled in practice by driving far enough along dirt roads to communities that everyone agreed were “rural.” In the end, our distribution closely mirrors the findings of The *Demographic Survey*, which finds a 85.6% rural and 14.4% urban distribution, based on administrative jurisdictions and boundaries.

2. Q. 9. Gender



The gender distribution in our sample shows an overrepresentation of female respondents, if compared to the *Demographic Survey*, which finds 47.84% male and 52.16% female. Part of the explanation for this collection error was due to our special concern to include the voice of women in our survey, especially from remote rural areas. But another reason for the discrepancy is also that the people our interviewers were likely to meet during the day in a village were women.

3. Q. 12. Age



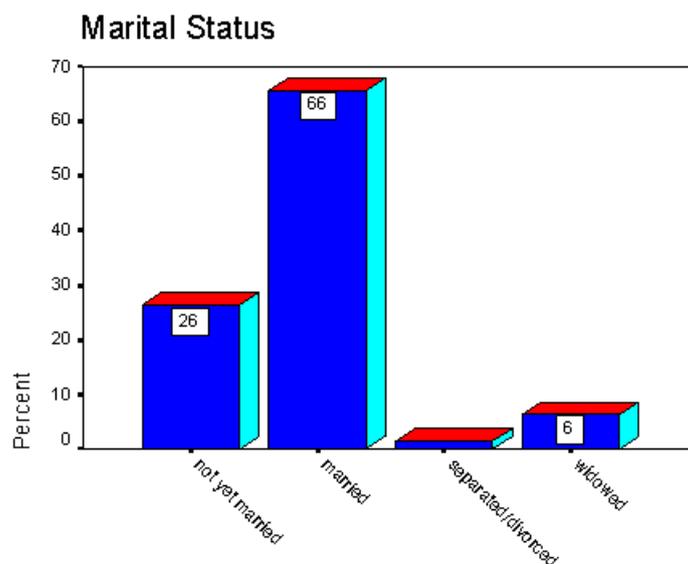
Our sampling quotas encouraged the interviewers to attempt to replicate the actual age distribution in the Cambodian population. A chief criterion for selection as a respondent to our survey was, obviously, that the candidate be a potential voter, 18 years old or older.

If the *Demographic Survey* findings on age distribution were recalculated to eliminate those under voting age, we would find that the 18-24 group would be 20.18% of the voter aged population; the 25-30 group would be 19.55%; the 31-40 group would be 24.34%; the 41-50 group would be 16.02%; and the 51+ group would be 19.97%. (An accumulation of rounding off errors affects the precision of these figures).

The age distribution of our respondents mirrors the general age distribution of voter aged persons, but slightly over-represents the younger voters, 18-24 years old, and under-represents the oldest voters, 51+ years old. This again is due to our field methods. In a village during the day young women householders with the time to answer a questionnaire are more likely to be encountered than other age groups. Very old people are also likely to be encountered in the village, but many of them declined to be interviewed. They often pleaded a lack of understanding or hardness of hearing. If they did agree to be interviewed, many of these potential older informants were distracted after answering a few questions and did not complete the questionnaire.

B. Family characteristics

1. Q. 15. Marital Status

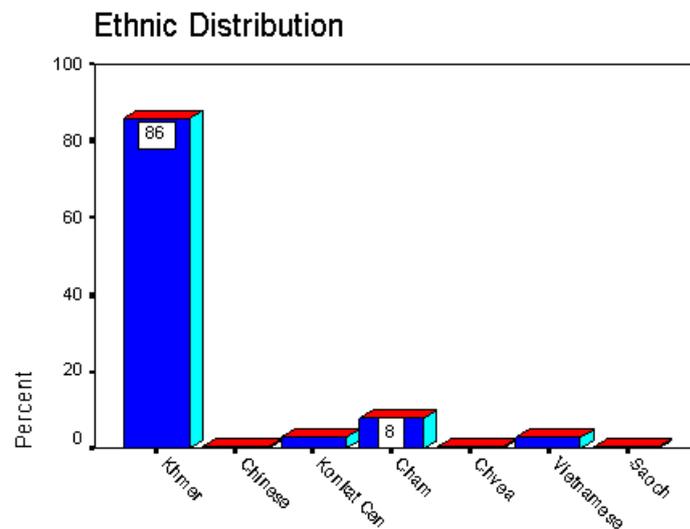
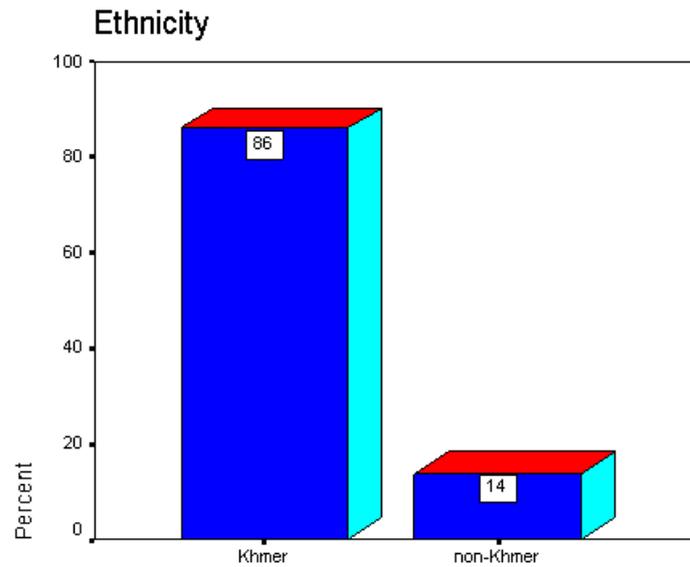


The marital status of our sample replicates the findings of the *Demographic Survey* fairly closely. The *Demographic Survey* finds not yet married 28.3%; married 60.9%; separated/divorced 1.4%; widowed 9.4%.

All the charts above suggest that a fairly representative sample of the Cambodian population was obtained, although we did not conduct the kind of probabilistic sampling that would enable us to estimate with some level of confidence the extent to which the findings in our survey were likely to differ from what we would have found by studying the whole population.

C. Social characteristics

1. Q. 11. Ethnicity of Respondents



N=938

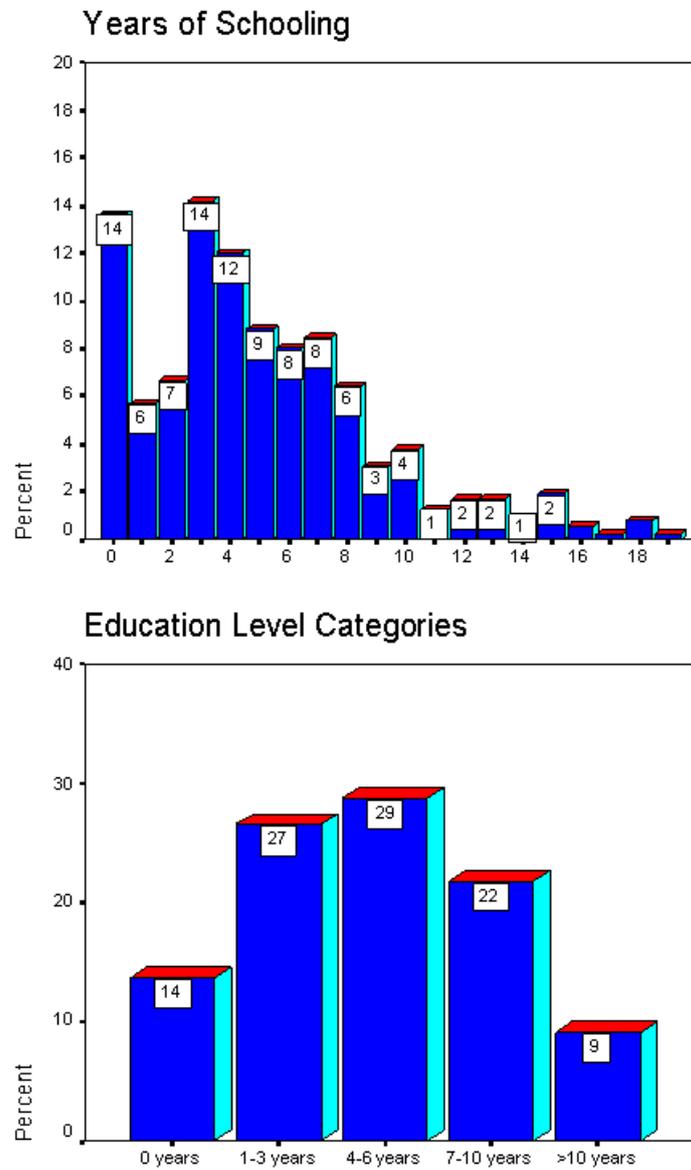
Non-probabilistic sampling is especially likely to under-represent minorities. Accordingly we made special efforts to set quotas for our sample that would include members of non-Khmer communities. Most of the CAS researchers on this baseline survey project had worked on an earlier CAS project to study the ethnic minorities of Cambodia. This experience facilitated access to these communities.

While voting age was stated explicitly as a criterion for participation in the survey, we did not raise the issue of whether the respondent was actually legally entitled to vote. This is an issue for voter registration officials to decide. We were interested in the level of knowledge and awareness of the elections in these communities and wanted to get enough respondents from minority peoples to determine if they had distinctive voter education needs. Our proportion of 86% Khmer to 14% minority may be slightly disproportionate in favor of minority groups.

There is much controversy about the statistics on minorities in Cambodia, especially for the Vietnamese, as is well known. Presumably the findings of the National Census (which was underway at the same time as our survey) and the Voter Registration results will clarify the

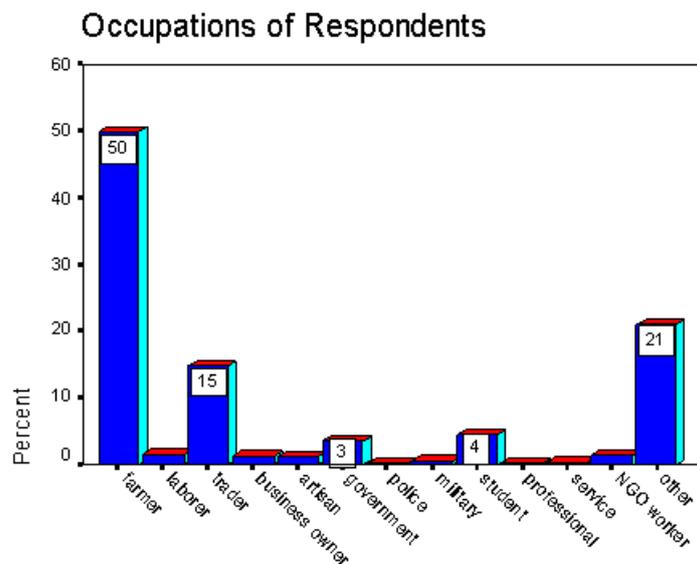
matter. Unfortunately we were not able to visit the northeastern provinces, so our findings are deficient in regard to the voter knowledge and awareness of Cambodia's hilltribes.

2. Q. 14. Years of Schooling



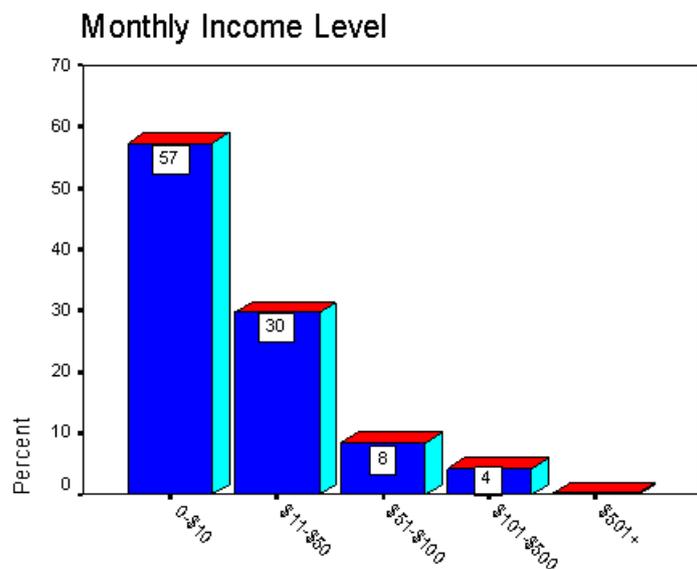
Educational level was included in the survey to enable us to see if there were any trends in the cross-tabulations of schooling with the knowledge, awareness and attitudes assessed in the survey. Those trends will be mentioned below. We included schooling in a Wat (or other religious school) as well as in a government school in this variable.

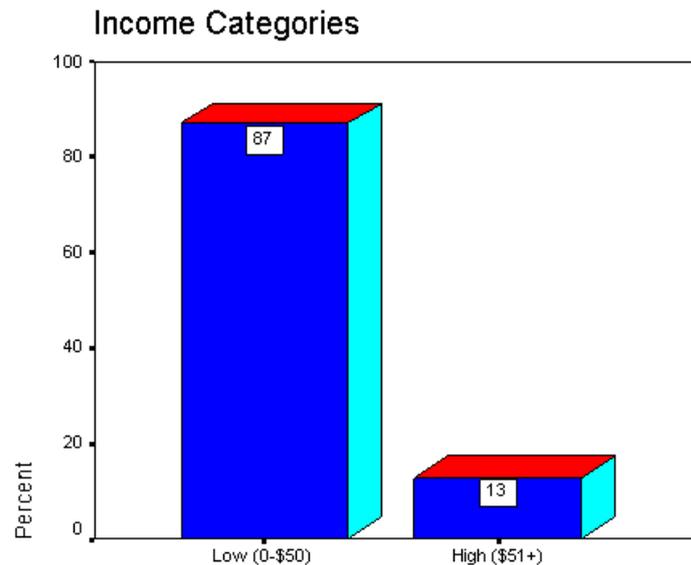
3. Q. 16. Occupation



No specific quotas for occupation or profession were set for the interviewing. This chart confirms the mainly rural focus of our research, but also indicates by the diversity of occupations represented that non-farming respondents were not neglected. The category “other” mainly includes people who marked two or more occupations on the questionnaire (like farmer and trader), but also includes people whose occupation was other than any of the categories listed on the questionnaire.

4. Q. 25. Income





We included questions on roof type, cooking fuel, possession of rice fields, oxen and some durable consumer goods, which enabled us to discern fine differentiation in socio-economic level in the rural, farming population. However, from the point of view of attempting to identify simple associations of socio-economic status and voter attitudes, the most useful variable was income. Our category “low” corresponds to a stated income of 0-50\$/month. “High” corresponds to \$51 and above/month.

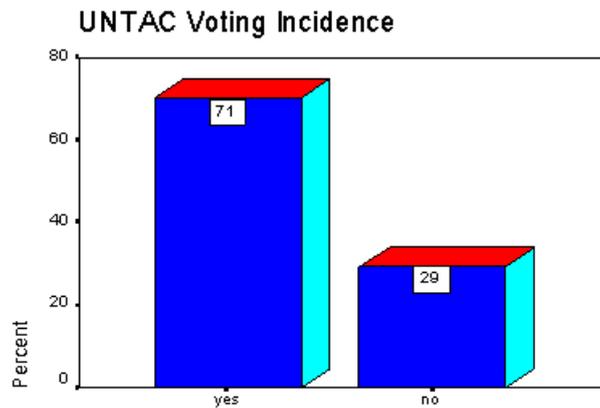
It must be noted that most farmers actually handle little cash over a year, giving rise to a response of very low income. What the income category chart probably really indicates is a division between those in a semi-subsistence economy and those in a cash economy.

II. VOTER PERCEPTIONS OF UNTAC ELECTIONS

We included questions on the UNTAC election to develop some sense of a comparison with attitudes toward the forthcoming elections. From the point of view of the implications for the voter education campaign that we wished to serve, we were especially interested in why respondents had not voted in the UNTAC elections. From the point of view of assessing voter education impact we were particularly interested in how the voters had obtained information about the election procedures.

A. Participation in UNTAC elections

1. Q. 26. Experience with voting in UNTAC elections

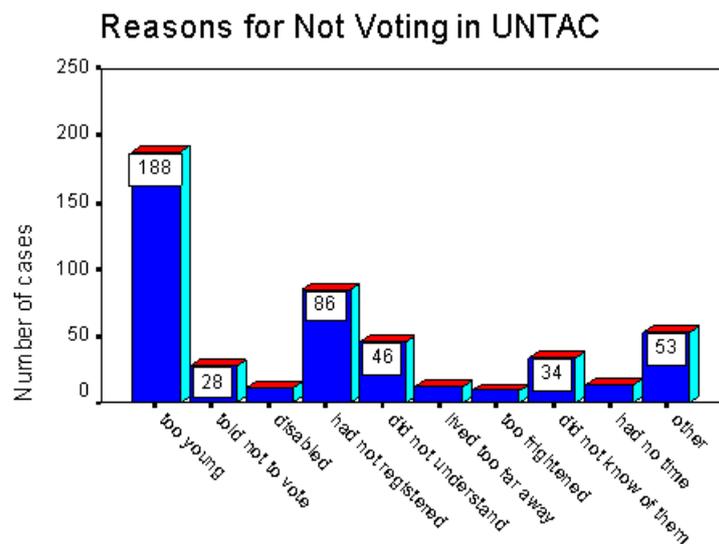


Q.26 'Did you vote in the UNTAC elections?'

N=929

If the respondents to our survey who were too young to have voted in the UNTAC elections are excluded, then the incidence of voting in the UNTAC elections among our respondents who were of voting age in 1993 is 89%. Compare the estimate of 89.5% of voting incidence given, for example, in Trevor Findlay, *Cambodia: the Legacy and Lessons of UNTAC*, SIPRI Research Report No. 9 (OUP 1995, 82).

2. Q. 27. Reasons for failure to participate in UNTAC elections

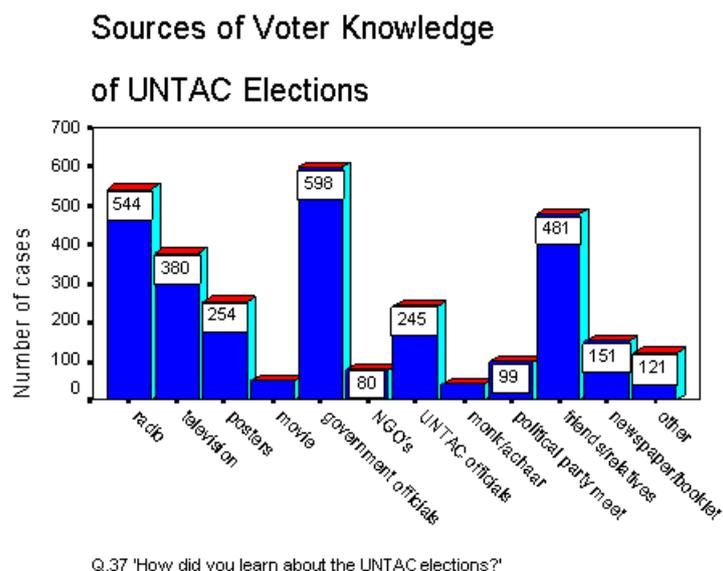


Q.27 'Why did you not vote in the UNTAC elections?'

The large number of cases responding that they were too young (under 18) in 1993, and who would now be between 18 and 23, is consistent with the age distribution in our sample.

The next most frequent reason given for not voting in UNTAC elections was not having registered. These findings, taken with the responses “not having understood what to do” and “did not know there was an election,” present a challenge to voter educators to attempt to reach this largely remote, rural electorate that missed the UNTAC election, with messages that explain the need to register and clarify what the elections are about.

B. Voter Knowledge of UNTAC Elections



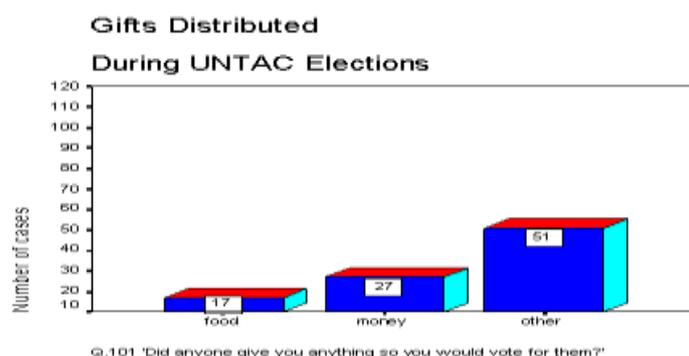
One of the main aims of an impact survey of the voter education campaign will be to identify the media and the messages that were most effective in reaching and informing the electorate.

This chart highlights the importance of local government officials, mainly of the SoC, in informing the voters about the UNTAC elections. Those local authorities are, by and large, still in their positions in the CPP dominated local government, so we would expect an impact survey to show a similar strong response for local government officials as a major source for election information.

The importance of friends and relatives as sources of information is consistent with the predominantly oral culture of Cambodian peasantry. Voter educators who would take advantage of the natural gossip networks of rural communities would construct their messages to assure that they could be transmitted effectively along these channels.

C. Influence on Voting

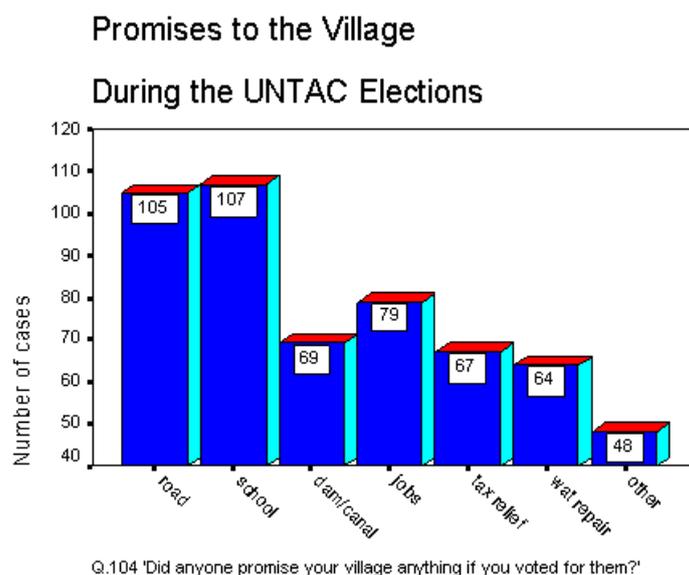
1. Q. 101. Using gifts to influence voters in UNTAC



Vote buying is such a highly developed art in neighboring countries in the region that we might expect the practice to appear in Cambodia. In fact our findings for the UNTAC election showed very few instances of gifts for votes. (Note that the chart shows number of cases, not percentages. N=938)

It will be interesting to follow-up this question in future surveys to see if a vote-buying trend emerges.

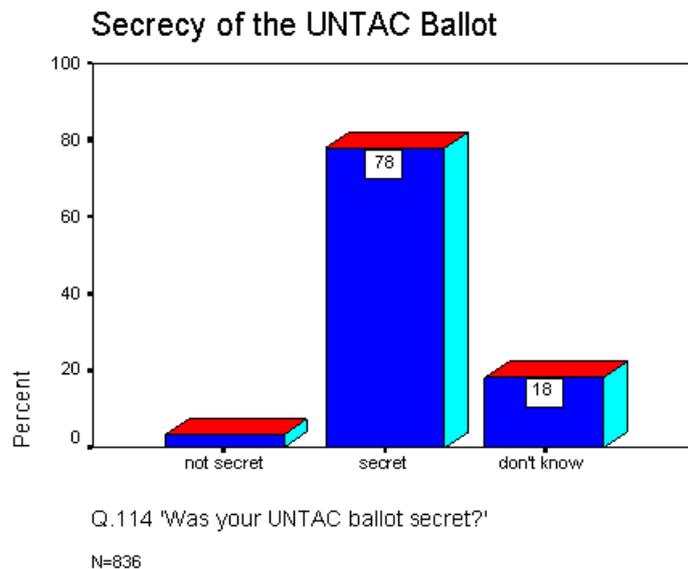
2. Q. 104. Using promises to influence voters in UNTAC



An election campaign is almost by definition characterized by promises to the electorate. The promises we listed in our questionnaire were developed during the pre-test with villagers and include only fairly concrete or visible promised benefits. Future surveys, reflecting more Cambodian experience with election campaigns, should probably include the incidence of promises of more abstract benefits, like security, peace, welfare and development.

D. UNTAC Election Milieu

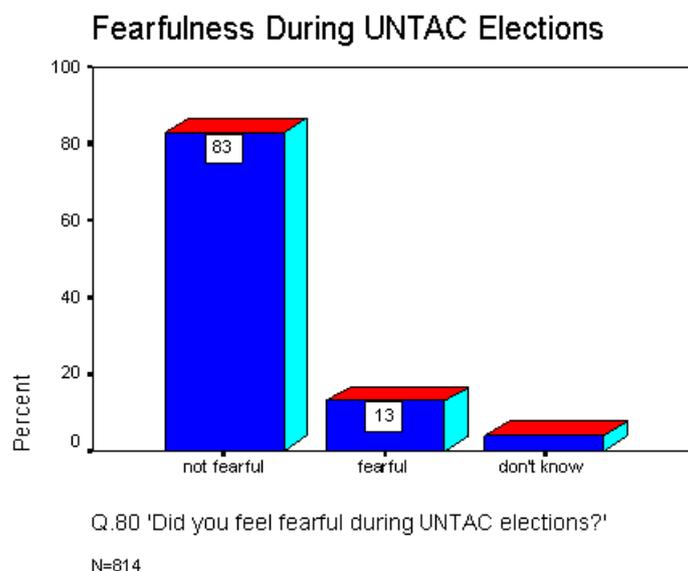
1. Q. 114. Perceptions of the preservation of secrecy



The electorate was extremely confident that the 1993 UNTAC balloting was secret. This can be compared with the prospects expected for a secret ballot by our respondents in the months preceding the 1998 elections. (See Section VI. A. Q.116 below).

Perceptions of the secrecy of the balloting should obviously be followed up in a post-election survey.

2. Q. 80. Feelings of fear during UNTAC elections



The question of fearfulness surrounding the 1993 elections may be usefully compared with the feelings of security and fearfulness expressed by our respondents regarding the 1998 elections. (See Section VI.B. below).

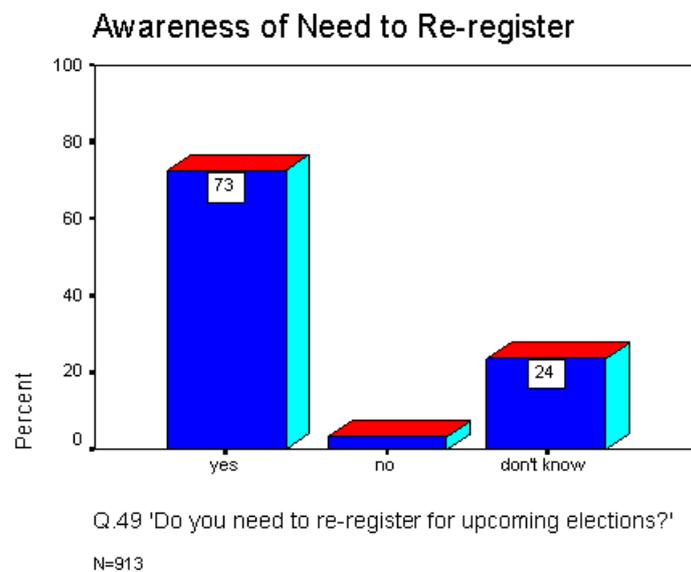
This again is a natural question to follow-up after the 1998 elections.

III. REGISTRATION

These questions were intended to gain information to aid the voter education campaign, in the months before the National Elections Committee got its voter registration drive underway with EU support.

A. Knowledge of Registration

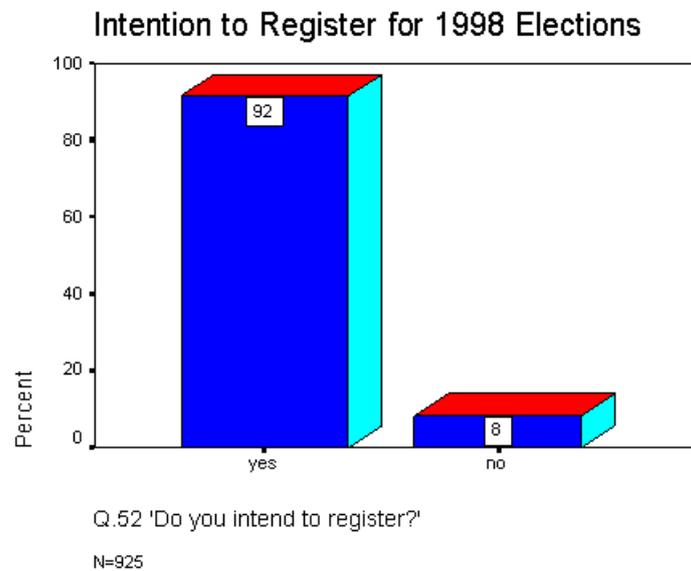
1. Q. 49. Need to re-register after UNTAC



At the time of our survey nearly a quarter of our respondents did not know if they had to re-register to vote in 1998. We could discern no trends in this group. The "don't know" response was not significantly associated with rural/urban differences or gender or income or years of schooling or income level.

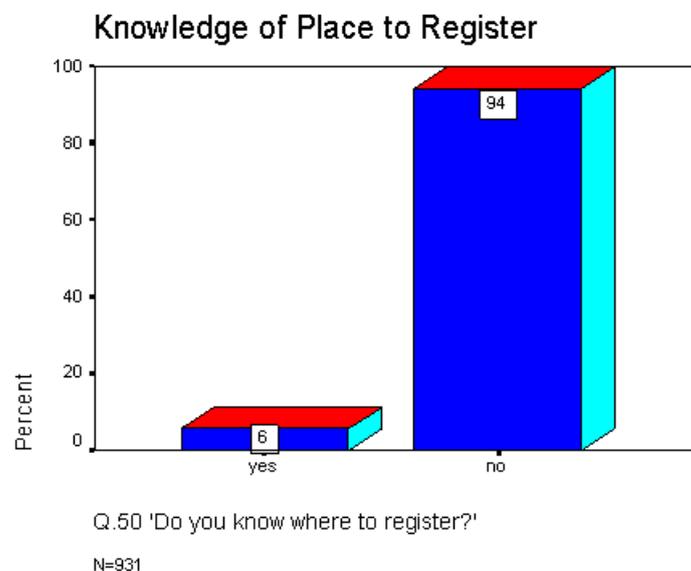
This chart probably reflects the general state of knowledge about registration and presents a clear challenge to the registration drive to inform the electorate of the need to register in order to be able to vote.

2. Q. 52. Intention to register



Apparently many of those who didn't know if they had to re-register would do so if required. The remarkable strength of response to this question (and a comparable response to a question about intention to vote, see Section IV.A.1. Q.69) should gratify the voter education community. The electorate seems extremely receptive to the idea of registration, but uninformed of the details.

3. Q. 50. Knowledge of registration location



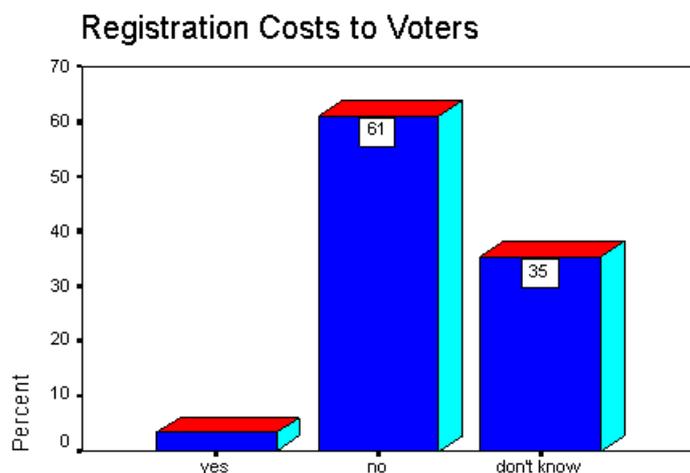
The challenge to the voter educators during the registration campaign will be to clarify the place where one can register, the times, the procedures, the identification papers needed for registration. At the time of our survey, very few respondents had any specific knowledge and what

they knew was probably not in complete conformity with the regulations for registration that were eventually decided upon by NEC.

To draw lessons for the future, it will be very important to follow up our survey with questions regarding the timeliness and effectiveness of the voter education process relating to registration. This segment of the voter education responsibility was primarily in the hands of the NEC, so the impact assessment in this area will, in effect, contribute to an evaluation of the effectiveness of the EU supported NEC voter education training and implementation effort.

An approach that might yield useful information for future voter education campaigns would be design an impact survey to ask what specific messages and what media the electorate found most appealing in inviting them to register and most useful in instructing them of the procedures. For instance, small scanned photographs of the posters that were circulated could be included in the questionnaire for the respondents to identify and to rank as useful or not.

Difficulties experienced in the registration process



Q.51 'Do you have to make any payment to register to vote?'

N=930

The 35% of our respondents who gave the "don't know" response present a very clear challenge to voter educators, whether from NGO's or NEC, to explain that, under the law, no payments are necessary to register.

An assessment of the electorate's experience of obstacles to registration should be an important part of a follow-up impact survey. Questions should be asked about the adequacy of information about the process, media that were most effective and reliable in informing the electorate. Questions should also be asked about the implementation of the registration process (timing, locations) and treatment by registration officials. Questions should seek perceptions of the fairness of the evaluation of proofs of citizenship and age. The impact survey should also attempt to elicit perceived irregularities and the efficacy of complaint procedures.

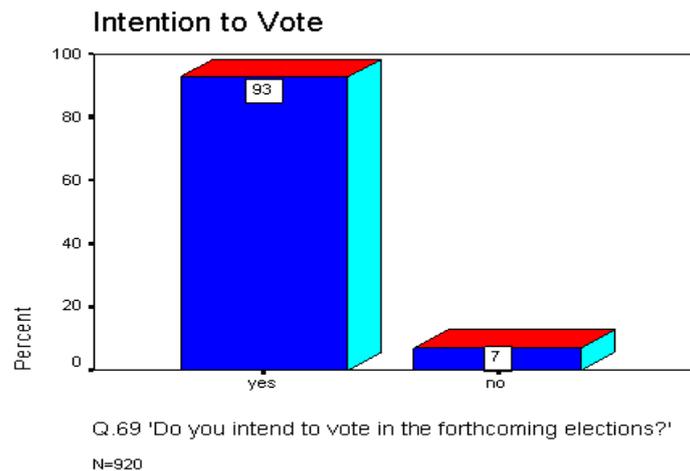
Another line of follow-up in this area would be to ask respondents their perceptions regarding the likelihood that non-Cambodians in their vicinity might have obtained registration cards and thereby obtained proof of Cambodian citizenship.

IV VOTER KNOWLEDGE

If the demographics of our respondents can justify a generalization to the general Cambodian population, if even in a suggestive way, the overwhelming intention to vote, as shown in the chart below, indicates that the turnout for the election in 1998 can be expected to be very high. If the turnout is actually low, an impact survey after the election should include questions asking why voters did not follow-up on their pre-election intentions.

A. General Knowledge and Awareness

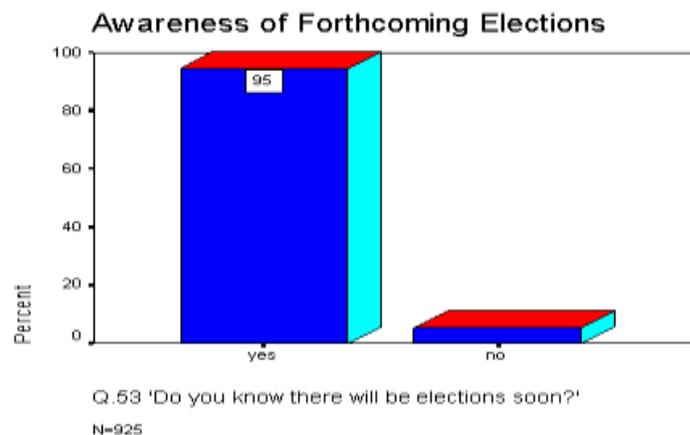
1. Q. 69. Intention to vote in the forthcoming elections of 1998



Although those respondents answering that they did not intend to vote in the 1998 elections were few, we tried to learn from the data who they were. Our findings indicate that 8.1% of our female respondents answered no intention to vote, in contrast to 5.5% of our male respondents. Ten percent of the young voter group (18-24 years old) answered that they had no intention to vote, compared with 7.1% of all age groups combined. There was no difference between rural and urban respondents.

The reasons given for not intending to vote were most often because of illness, no time, too busy with young children and too far from the polling place. Other reasons included disinterest and ignorance about the elections and voting. A very few respondents answered the open question with comments to the effect that none of the political parties would be able to improve the situation of the country.

2. Q. 53. Awareness that national elections were to be held soon

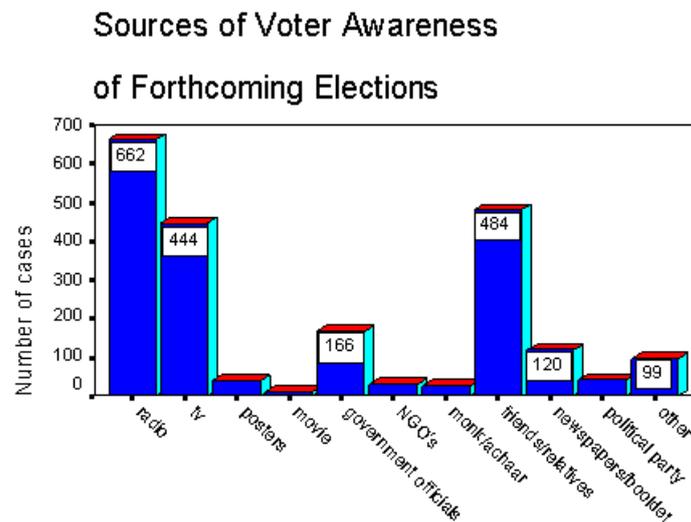


The respondents who answered “no,” they did not know about forthcoming elections, consisted of 5.8% of our rural informants, compared with 2.3% of our urban respondents. Female respondents were less aware of upcoming elections than men. The “no” replies consisted of 6% of our female respondents and 4.2% of the males among our respondents. The age categories 25-30 and 51+ were somewhat less aware of upcoming elections than other age categories. The group 41-50 was most aware. Of those with more than 10 years of schooling, 100% answered “yes” to this question.

We found that 16% of our Vietnamese respondents gave the “no” response in contrast to 5.3% of our Khmer respondents and 0.0% of our Chinese informants. As noted above (I.C.1.), we did not ask the sensitive question whether the Vietnamese respondents thought that they were legal voters. The relatively high percentage of our Vietnamese respondents who gave the "no" response indicates a low awareness of Cambodian national politics. The reason for this could be that they are isolated from sources of information that others use (see next chart). Our respondents may also have included uninterested non-Cambodians.

Once the registration procedure is complete, which in effect will answer the question of nationality and right to vote, it will be important to assess the impact of voter education efforts to reach Cambodia’s ethnic minorities effectively.

3. Q. 56. Sources of information regarding the approaching elections

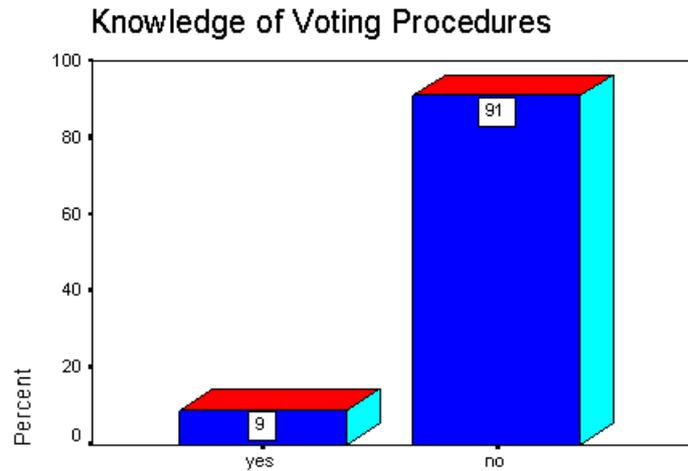


Q.56 'How did you learn about the forthcoming elections?'

This question asked how the respondents came to know that there would be elections in the near future. Radio and TV scored very high, reflecting the strong effort in the largely government controlled media to promote listener and viewer awareness of forthcoming elections. Friends and relatives are an important informal channel of communication. On the basis of a similar question concerning the UNTAC elections (Section II.B. Q.37ff.), we would expect government officials to grow in importance as a source of information as the election nears. But this can be determined in a follow-up survey.

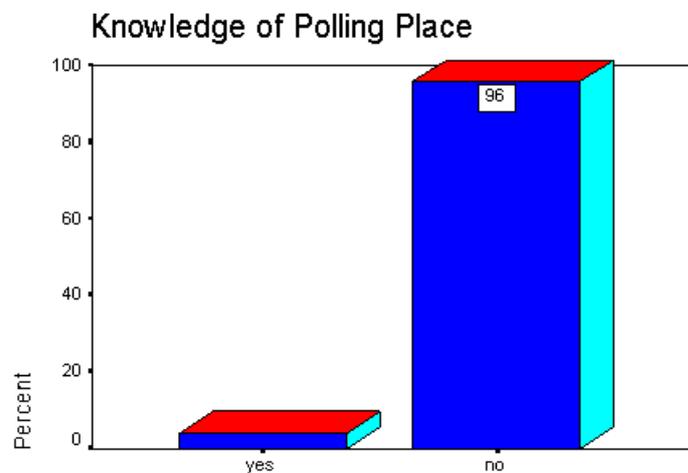
B. Specific Voter Knowledge

1. Q. 67, 68. Knowledge of procedures



Q.67 'Do you know the procedures for voting?'

N=933



Q.68 'Do you know where to vote?'

N=934

Knowledge of voting procedures was quite limited at the time of our survey, as might be expected. Female and rural respondents were especially likely to answer "no" that they did not know the procedures. We found that 94.9% of our female respondents answered that they did not know the procedures, compared with 84.7% of the male respondents. Similarly, we found that 92.3% of our rural respondents versus 82.6% of our urban respondents answered that they did not know the procedures.

This question asks for knowledge of procedures which, at the time of our survey, had not been fully decided upon by national authorities. Accordingly, the "yes" answers to these questions may actually suggest a kind of sophistication or confidence in coping with the procedures, whatever they turn out to be. Rural respondents and females are either more candid about their lack of knowledge or are likely to be less confident about their understanding of election procedures, or both. Those respondents with more than seven years of schooling tended to give more "yes" responses than those of less education. High-income respondents tended to give more "yes" responses than low-income respondents.

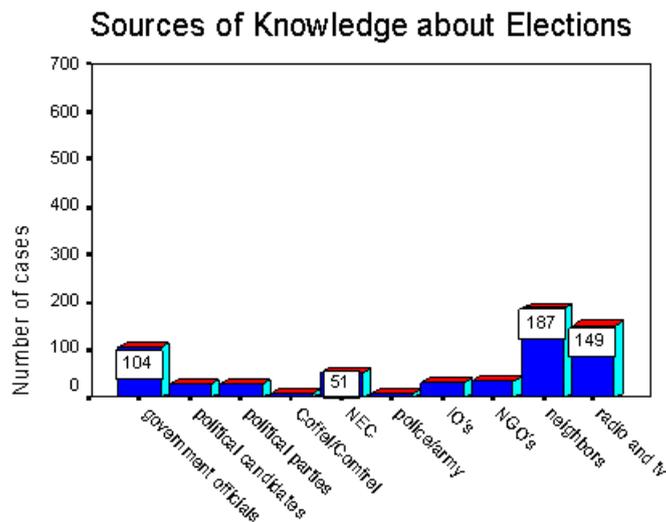
At the end of our questionnaire we asked what question respondents would ask of voter educators who might come to their village. Respondents most often asked about what the procedures would be: Would the ballots look like the UNTAC ballots? What pictures would be on the ballots? Where would the polling place be? Would they have to dip their finger in ink? Etc.

Voter educators should bear in mind that many villagers are not accustomed to dealing with paper, printed information and writing. Anecdotes from the UNTAC elections acknowledge this unfamiliarity with literate procedures when they tell of marks made on the back of the ballot by voters who had held the paper up to the light to see the party logo on which they wished to make a mark. These voters were apparently reluctant to deface the printed side by marking on it.

Another anecdote may suggest the devices rural illiterate voters have to invent in order to cope with interpreting printed symbols on paper. A village informant asked us if the party of his preference would be located on the same place on the ballot paper as it was on the UNTAC ballot. He explained that he had located the place to vote in the UNTAC elections by folding the ballot in half each way and marking the logo where the folds crossed.

The kind of mark on the ballot that will constitute a valid vote for the party of the voter's choice must be made clear to voters in the voter education campaign. The difficulties voters encountered in dealing with the balloting procedures should also figure in a post-election impact assessment of the effectiveness of voter education.

2 Q. 148. Sources of information about election procedures



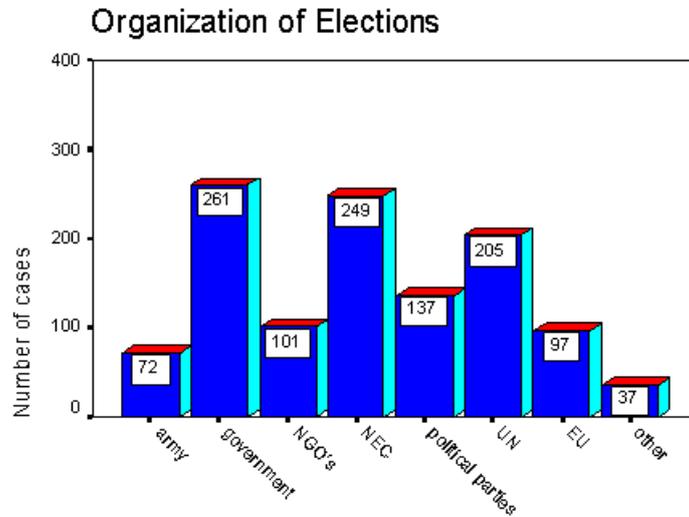
Q.148 'By whom have you been informed about the upcoming elections

This question was intended to elicit the channels for detailed information on election procedures with which the respondents were familiar, to compare with post-election results. Respondents could mark any number of responses. The informal channel of neighbors, radio and TV, and government officials are means we would expect from the replies to A.3.Q. 56 above.

An impact survey should reveal what other channels, especially the voter education activities of COFFEL and COMFREL and NEC, were recognized by the electorate as important sources of information about the elections.

It would also be interesting to ask respondents about the specific voter education items that they found most memorable and informative, jingles, songs, media spots, posters, booklets, face-to-face meetings with educators etc.

3. Q. 140. Recognition of responsible organizations



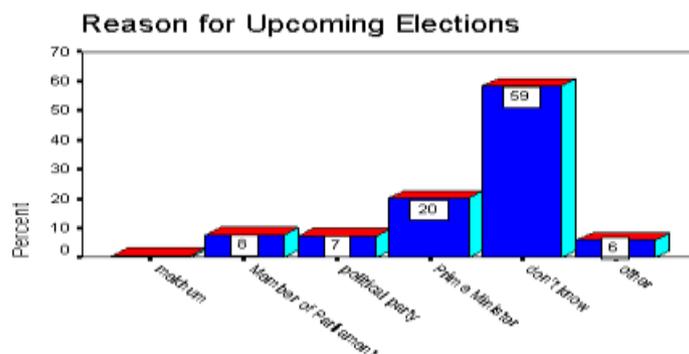
Q.140 'Who will organize the upcoming elections?'

The electorate is as yet quite uninformed about who has the responsibility for organizing the elections. It remains to be seen in a follow-up survey to determine if NEC (and the provincial and district election committees) gain any recognition for their predominant role in organizing elections, and if these election committees are perceived to be distinct from the government in the eyes of the electorate.

The fairly high count for the UN as organizer of the forthcoming elections in July 1998 indicates an important lack of understanding among our respondents that Cambodians themselves are running these elections.

By far the largest response to this question was “don’t know,” which over sixty percent of our respondents marked.

4. Q. 54. Awareness of what the ballot is aimed to determine.



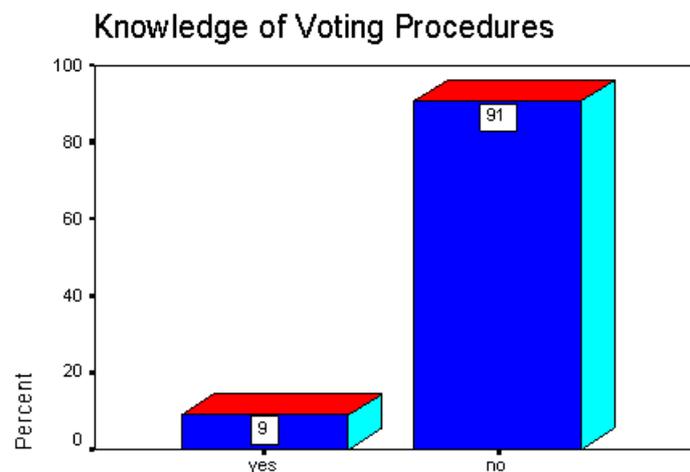
Q.54 'Who are the elections for?'

N=902

This question attempted to probe voter awareness of the nature of the proportional system to be used to determine National Assembly seats in a constituency, based on the strength of party success in the balloting in that constituency. An expectably large percentage of voters (59%) answered that they did not know what they would be asked to vote for in the elections.

A follow-up question in an impact survey should attempt to determine how successful the voter education campaign was in clarifying the formula by which the raw vote is transformed into the selection of candidates to take seats in the National Assembly, and how the Prime Minister is selected.

5. Q. 55. Awareness of specifics of the planned election



Q.67 'Do you know the procedures for voting?'

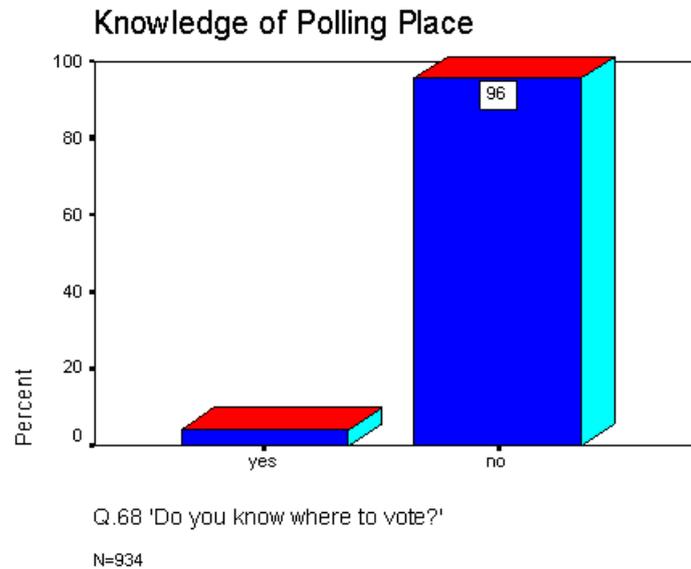
N=933

At this point in the pre-election process, a very large percentage of the electorate was still not sure in what month the elections would be held.

Many of our rural informants, whose lives are probably more influenced by the agricultural cycle and the Buddhist ritual calendar than the twelve-month “international” calendar, explained that they would know when the elections were happening when the local authorities summoned them to participate. The local authorities, Commune heads or Village heads, serve as a broker between the state and the peasantry in Cambodia. Our respondents seemed enthusiastic about the prospect of participating in elections, but also seemed dependent on their local authorities to facilitate that participation.

The real challenge to NGOs that are involved in voter education is to give the peasantry alternative sources of reliable information to check and balance the undue and often non-neutral influence of the local authorities on the knowledge and awareness of the rural electorate.

6. Q. 77. Understanding of accountability of Members of the National Assembly



Members of, and candidates for, the National Assembly voice the understanding that they stand for election in a particular provincial constituency. But, according to our findings, the constituents in the provinces are largely unaware of who “their” MP is. Over 90% of our respondents did not know what an MP did for his/her constituency once elected.

The voter education campaign faces the challenge of promoting the democratic ideal of accountability to a constituency of voters. In the Cambodian context such a concept is not very familiar, at least as far as Members of Parliament are concerned.

Some respondents thought an MP should be like a local informal leader or benefactor and help the people in villages by building schools, roads and pagodas. Others mentioned that the MPs are persons of high social rank who are only concerned with advancing their own wealth and power.

A lady in Phnom Penh expressed this sentiment about what an MP should do:

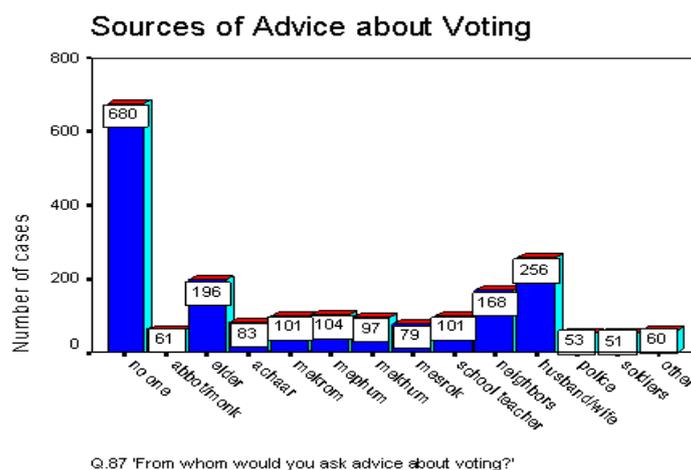
He should know about the well being and worries of the people. He is assigned to help rebuild the country and should not take what belongs to the government and to the country and sell it to foreigners.

V. INFLUENCES ON VOTING BEHAVIOR

We asked several questions to try to gauge the village political climate in the months preceding the 1998 elections. Some of these questions were perceived to be sensitive, but once they were broached in the questionnaire, often opened a floodgate of anecdote regarding the conduct of some local authorities. Our research team was among the first to bring to light the practice of collecting thumbprints to verify allegiance to CPP in villages. We also learned of the reestablishment of the *krom* or hamlet cell system of PRK days as a CPP device to mobilize grassroots support for the party.

It will be most interesting to follow-up these questions about voter expectations in the months before the elections with a post-election survey of what influences the electorate actually experienced.

A. Seeking advice.



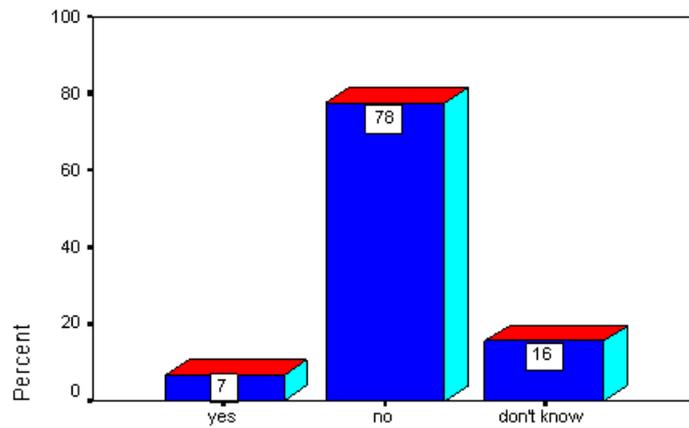
This chart shows a remarkable preference among our respondents for asking no one for advice about voting. The question was asked in a way that would allow the respondent to mark “yes” or “no” for any or several of the categories of potential advice givers. Among our respondents, 70% (680/920) replied that they would ask no one’s advice. In fact, many of these respondents also marked husband/wife or elder as they thought over their initial reply.

The strength of this response, taken with the enthusiastic intention to vote (see Section IV.A.1.Q.69), may indicate a resistance in the electorate to attempts to influence their vote. This might well presage a stubborn backlash to any systematic efforts at intimidation, however subtle, that might occur during the pre-election period.

B. Perceptions of influence upon voters

1. Q. 111, Q112. Awareness of an intimidating atmosphere

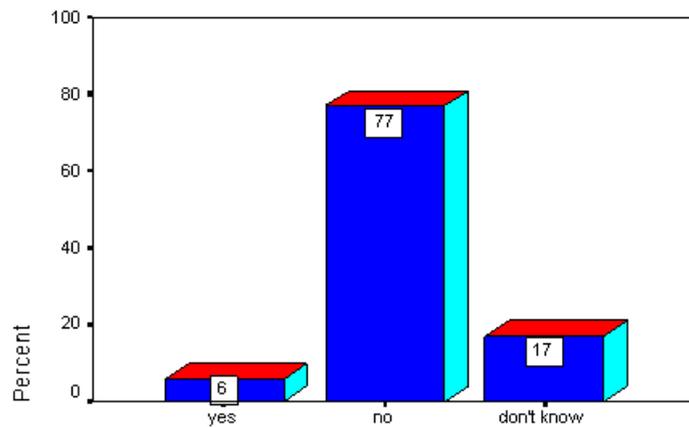
Expectations of Pressure



Q.111 'Do you expect pressure on you to vote for any party?'

N=934

Expectations of Force



Q.112 'Do you expect force on you to vote for any party?'

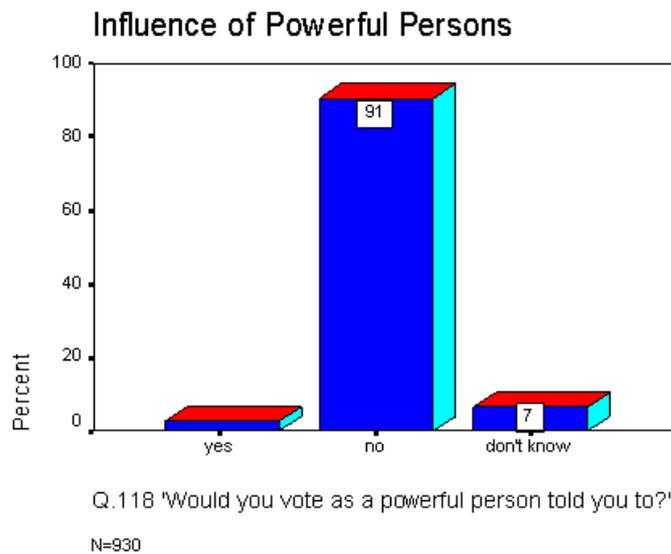
N=935

The two charts above reflect responses to questions that attempted to detect a difference in expectation of external influence on a respondent's vote between a mild Khmer term for "push or nudge" and a harsher word for "force or compel."

Of the age group 51+, 8.6% expected force to be used, compared with 5.9% of all age groups combined. Of our urban respondents, 11.3% expected force to be used, compared to 5% of our rural respondents. Of our male respondents, 7.9% expected force to be applied, compared to 4.6% of our female respondents. The more education respondents had, the more they tended to give a "yes" response to the question about force, and the less they tended to give a "don't know" response.

These findings suggest a parallel to the pattern of responses to questions on specific voter knowledge of balloting procedures (IV.B. Q.67, 68). The older voters, males, the urban and more educated respondents seem relatively more sophisticated in their knowledge of the procedures of voting and, at the same time, seem more likely to expect external influences of an intimidating sort.

2. Q. 118. Response to specific personal pressure to vote for a party



The response to this question is consistent with the resistant attitude of the Cambodian electorate expressed toward external influences, which we detected in the replies to V.A. Q. 87 above. The category of respondents with zero years of schooling tended to give more “yes” responses to this question than those with some schooling.

A 36-year-old Khmer male business owner in Battambang said:

I would vote for a party if a powerful person told me to because I am afraid of people with power. But if there were protection for my life, I would not vote for such a person.

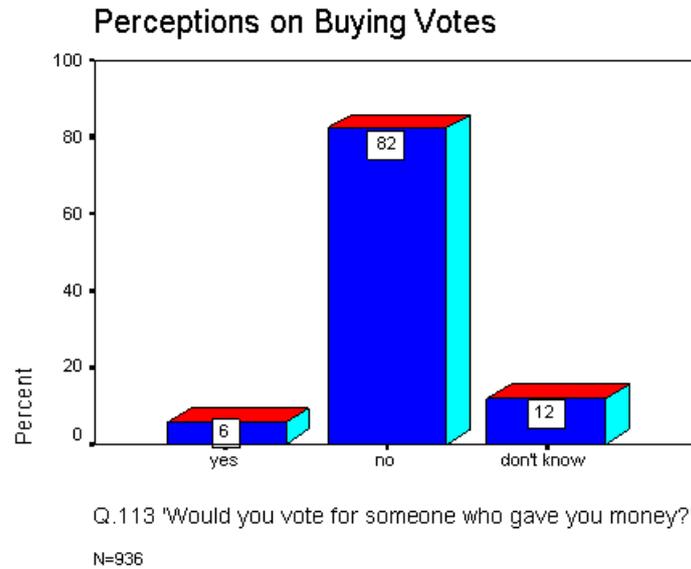
A 51-year-old Khmer farmer woman from Kampot said:

I would vote for a party if a powerful person told me to because I am afraid of them. We are not clever; we cannot read and write.

A 41-year-old Khmer farmer woman from Kandal said:

I would vote for a party if a powerful person told me to. We just want happiness, and we are afraid that we will be punished.

3. Q. 113. Vote buying as a form of influence

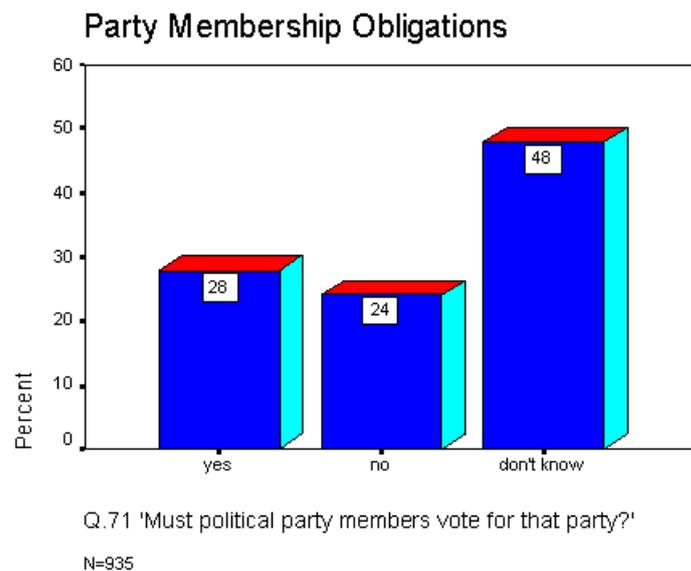


This strong response to resist vote buying is consistent with the trend of resistance to external influence on voting behavior discernable in all the findings of this section, so far.

However is also possible that our respondents gave the response that they guessed we wished to hear. Many respondents noted that they would accept any money or gift that a candidate or party might offer, but that they would still vote the way they wanted to.

A follow-up survey should try to detect the form, extent and effectiveness of vote buying as a possible feature of an emerging Cambodian electoral process.

4. Q. 71. Influence in the form of entailing obligations by party membership



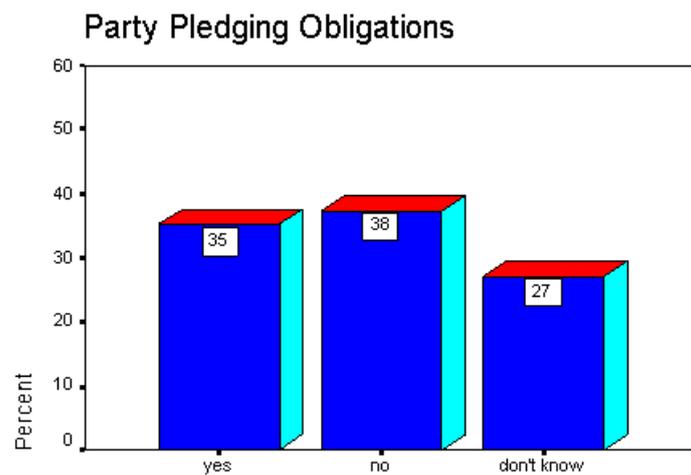
The responses to this question show a departure from the resistant attitude our respondents generally showed toward external pressures on their voting. Here, the action of enrolling in a party seems to moderate that resistance. This finding may explain why political parties might move aggressively toward establishing their lists of party members. Cambodian parties understand that the electorate, especially in rural areas, seems to link party membership with a degree of obligation to vote for that party, even under conditions of a secret ballot. Of our rural respondents, 29.3% thought a member of a political party had to vote for that party, while only 19.5% of urban respondents thought so.

As for the “don’t know” reply to this question, 52% of women respondents said “don’t know” compared with 41.6% of our male respondents. Of the age group 51+, 66.4% replied “don’t know” compared with 48% of all age groups combined. The higher the education level, the less our informants gave the “don’t know” response.

In a village, a thumbprint on a paper is associated with a “contract.” Such instruments are connected with the world of legal mechanisms and the threat of state-sponsored sanctions. Our sense is that the don’t know response to this question does not so much indicate a lack of information or knowledge in the electorate, as a widespread uncertainty about the real significance and consequences of membership formalities.

The challenge presented to voter educators is to inform the electorate of the meaning of multi-party democracy envisaged by the Cambodian Constitution, and to stress the safeguards that are in place to assure secrecy of the ballot.

5. Q. 72. Influence in the form of entailing obligations by pledges and promises



Q.72 'Must a person vote according to his/her pledge?'
N=937

During our research we heard a number of anecdotes about how local authorities would obtain pledges to vote for CPP by having villagers swear over a glass of water that had been suffused with a magic charm, or that had a bullet in it. We also learned that villagers were heard announcing their pledge over a loudspeaker from the pagoda.

The attempt to invoke traditional supernatural sanctions associated with a person’s word or oath or promise probably accounts for the increase in affirmative and negative responses and a decrease in don’t know responses compared to the question above (Q. 71), which related to the more rational-legal consequences of party membership.

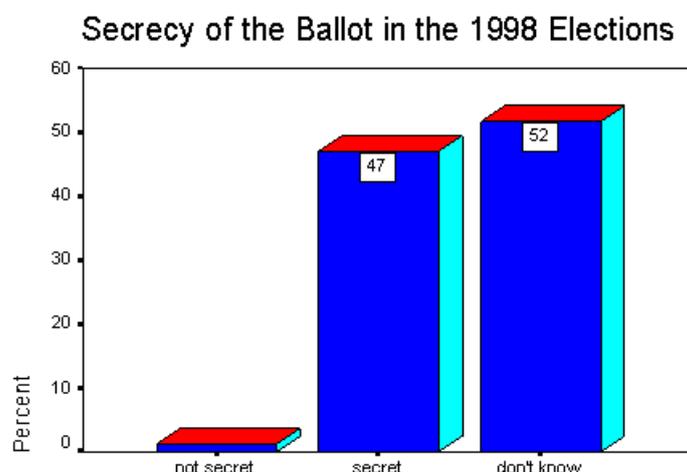
According to our findings, 36.2% of rural respondents agreed that a pledge entailed an obligation while only 29.3% of urban respondents thought so. The respondents of Kampong Thom, Koh Kong and Pailin were more likely than respondents from other provinces to answer “don’t know” to this question. While the respondents from Phnom Penh and Prey Veng were much more likely to answer “no” to the question. Respondents with greater than 10 years of schooling tended to give a higher “no” response to this question compared to those of less education. High-income respondents tended to give a higher “don’t know” reply compared to those of low income.

These findings probably reflect differences in sophistication between people in the city and the countryside in assessing the pertinence of connecting magic and religion to politics.

VI. PERCEPTIONS OF THE CLIMATE SURROUNDING ELECTIONS

The aim of these questions was to gauge voter expectations regarding the conditions of secrecy, safety and security during the elections.

A. Perceptions of Ballot Secrecy



Q.116 'Will your ballot in the upcoming elections be secret?'

N=929

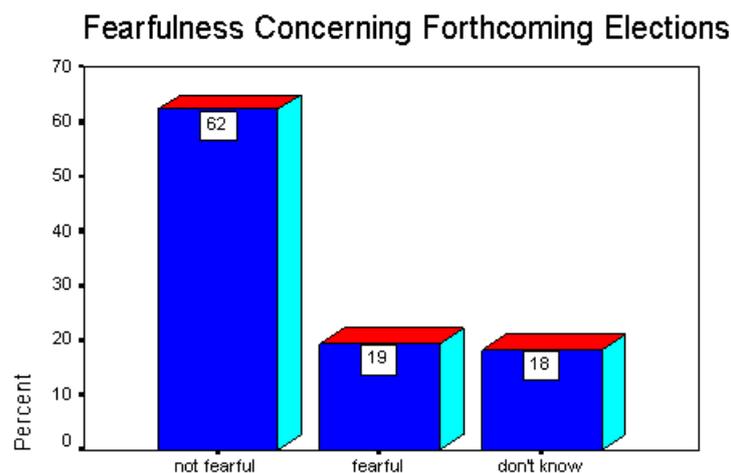
Men tended to believe the ballot would be secret more than women (53.8% of male respondents versus 42.7% of female respondents). Women were more likely to give a "don't know" reply (56.6% of female respondents versus 44.2% of male respondents).

The responses to this question can be compared to a similar question posed for the UNTAC elections in Section II.D.1.Q.114. It will be very important for a follow-up survey after the election to assess the electorate’s view of whether the secrecy of the ballot was maintained.

Those who thought the ballot would not be secret cited several main concerns. One was the absence of UN or International monitors. Another was the expectation that the votes would be counted in the polling place (a recent NEC decision has, in fact, called for vote counting at some level higher than the village). Another concern expressed was lack of trust in the officials working at the polling stations, especially if there were any delays in vote counting.

B. Perceptions of Voter Security

1. Q. 81. Awareness of fear



Q.81 'Do you feel fearful about the upcoming elections?'

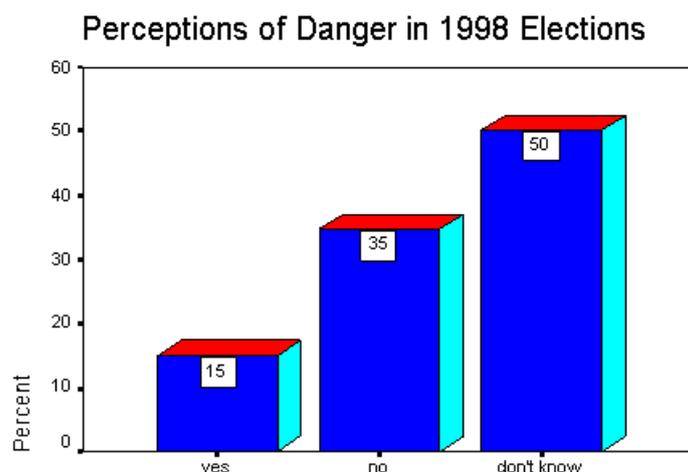
N=936

There was little difference between male and female respondents to this question. However, of our urban respondents, especially in Phnom Penh, 28.8% expressed fearfulness, while only 17.9 % of rural respondents expressed that they were fearful about the upcoming elections. This is probably due to the fresh memory of the violent events of July 1997, which were concentrated mainly in Phnom Penh.

The youngest age group, 18-24, registered the highest level of fearfulness of all age groups. This is probably the natural trepidation felt by young adults entering political maturity in Cambodia. The group with most education, greater than 10 years, registered the highest level of fearfulness of all education levels. This could be interpreted as the hypersensitivity of the educated elite to the possibility of outbreaks of political killings and other dangers during the election period.

Among ethnic groups, 66.7% of our Chinese respondents expressed fearfulness. They were primarily urban respondents and were probably worried about unsettled and insecure conditions in the city. Of Vietnamese respondents, 24% expressed fearfulness, probably because this group is often singled out for violent treatment in unsettled conditions.

2. Q. 85. Awareness of danger



Q.85 'Do you think elections in Cambodia are dangerous?'

N=937

Half our respondents expressed uncertainty about whether elections would bring events full of danger, accidents and casualties. Of our female respondents, 54.7% said they didn't know if elections would be dangerous, compared with 43.5% of male respondents. This difference is probably not a matter of a gender disparity in knowledge or information, nor does it reflect differences in fearfulness (see Q. 81 above). The difference in "don't know" replies between Cambodian men and women probably indicates a gender difference regarding the level of public discord that is perceived to constitute a dangerous condition.

Of urban respondents, 26.3% answered that elections were dangerous, compared with 13.1 % of rural respondents. Our respondents with more education tended to give more "yes" responses than respondents with less education. This is consistent with the responses to fearfulness in Q. 81 above.

The older the respondents, the less often they answered "yes" to this question. This again may reflect the life experience of danger that the older adults endured through the DK period, compared with conditions now.

Of the 15% of our respondents, who did think elections were a dangerous time in Cambodia, and who noted why they thought so, the major source of danger seemed to be the outbreak of fighting between parties. These respondents also feared that the losing party would not accept the results. Another prevailing theme in the replies to this question related to a dangerous general social breakdown around the time of the elections.

A 20-year-old male student in Battambang said:

The time is dangerous because before the elections there are no rules. There will be panic, banditry while the leaders think only of their party's interest.

A 33-year-old Khmer female trader from Prey Veng said:

It is dangerous because they hate it when we vote for a party that they don't like.

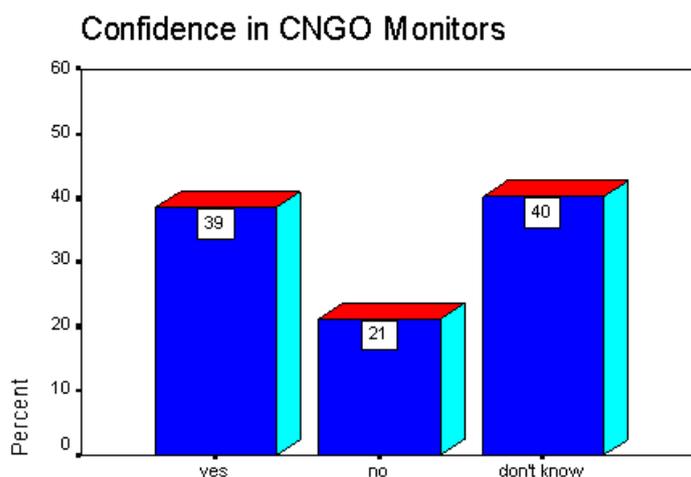
A 28-year-old Khmer male laborer in Kandal said:

In Cambodia there are a lot of parties. These parties have good methods of cheating people who are not thinking, by [the promise of] making someone a commune chief or military officer. All the parties have the same story and all these things [promises] cause panic and danger everywhere in society.

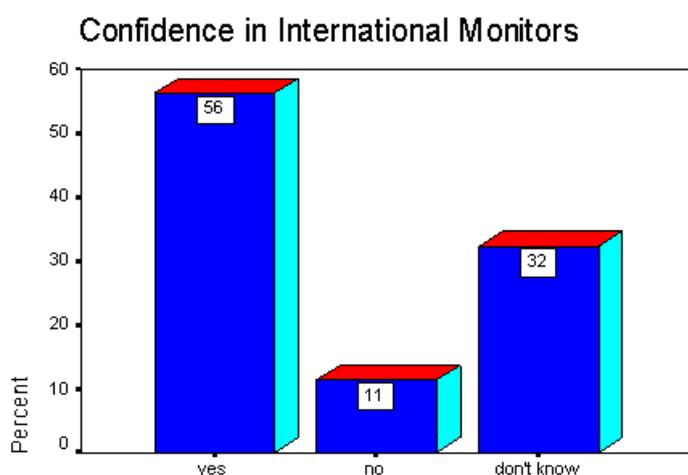
A 27 year old Konkak Cen NGO worker in Banteay Meanchey said:

The party or the actual government that loses will not want to give up any power to the winner and they will create autonomous zones, stage a coup or do other actions that make elections dangerous in Cambodia.

3. Q. 82, 83. Perceptions of decrease in danger with the presence of monitors



Q.82 'Would your confidence increase with CNGO monitors?'
N=934



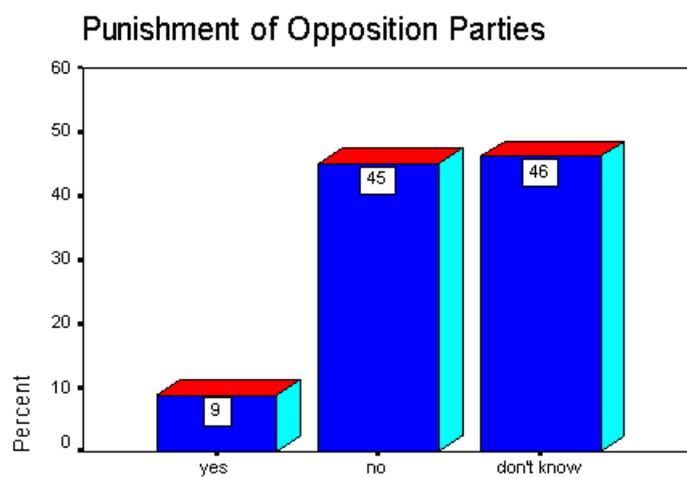
Q.83 'Would your confidence increase with int'l monitors?'
N=937

The purpose of the two questions charted above was to identify any difference in confidence of the electorate in regard to the presence of Cambodian NGO monitors at the polling places, versus confidence in International monitors.

The large-scale mobilization of international monitors on the model of UNTAC is certainly out of the question. So the challenge presented to the Cambodian NGOs is to build-up their confidence rating in the eyes of the electorate as an effective monitoring presence. One of the best ways to do this is by serving as an effective vehicle for voter education at the village level.

An impact survey should reveal the evolving public assessment of Cambodian NGOs as an effective force in civil society for educating the electorate and for monitoring and evaluating election related activities.

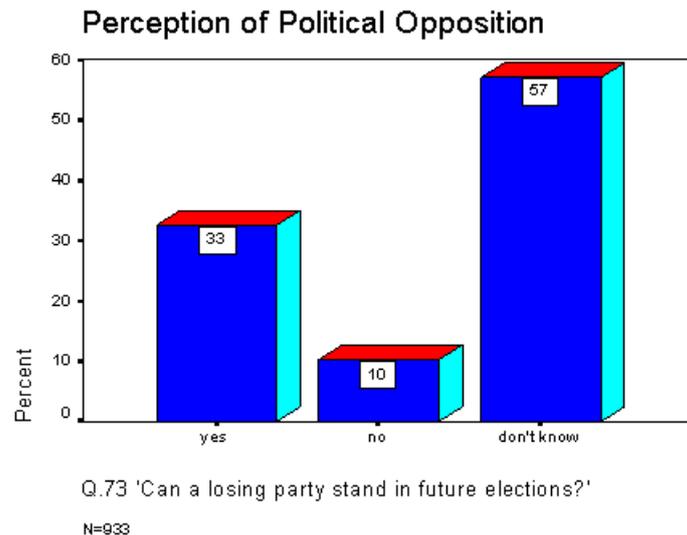
4. Q. 84. Perception of likelihood of post election retribution



Q.84 'Will a winning party punish voters for other parties?'
N=922

This question grew out of our pre-test in which a number of respondents explained that they feared the dangerous aftermath of elections if the ballot turned out not to be secret. In fact, only a small minority of respondents expects retribution by the winning party on voters for other parties. This could be an indirect confirmation of the findings above (Q.116) regarding voter confidence that the ballots will remain secret.

The higher the educational level of our respondents the fewer “don’t know” responses they gave. The lower income level tended to expect punishment more than the high-income group. Of our female respondents, 52.5% answered “don’t know” to this question compared to 36% of our male respondents. The reason for this gender difference is probably like that mentioned above for Q. 85. Men and women may have different thresholds for assessing security and danger.



5. Q. 73. Perception of the function of an opposition in a multiparty democracy

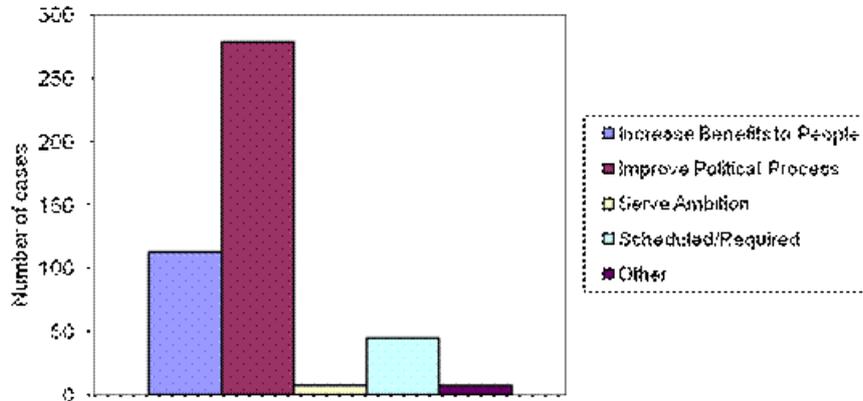
This question aimed to probe the understanding of the electorate on the nature of multi-party democracy and the function of an opposition, by asking if a losing party could stand again in future elections. The very large “don’t know” response seems to reflect genuine lack of knowledge about the nature of parties in a system of recurrent elections. It remains to be seen in future surveys whether voter education can be linked to changes in voter attitudes towards the function of an opposition between elections and during elections.

Of our rural respondents, 60.8% gave the “don’t know” response to this question, in contrast to 34.4% of urban respondents. Of female respondents, 64.7% gave the “don’t know” response, in contrast to 45.4% of male respondents. Of the age group 51+, 75% gave the “don’t know” response compared to 57.2% of all age categories combined. Of those with more than 10 years of schooling, 80% answered “yes” to this question, and gave a very low rate of “don’t know” responses. Education and relative sophistication of general knowledge of the dynamics of multi-party politics are revealed in these differences, and parallel the findings in other questions, e.g. specific knowledge of the elections (IV.B.Q.67, 68), perceptions of the likelihood of pressure on the voters (V.B.1.Q111, 112) and feelings of fearfulness (VI.B.1.Q.81).

The trend for elderly, rural and female respondents to show high “don’t know” responses to questions that involve knowledge of elections suggests that these sectors should receive special attention from voter educators. We strongly recommend that women in the rural areas should be a special target for appropriate messages designed to raise their knowledge of elections and the political process. Such a campaign would enable this important sector of Cambodian society to gain an effective voice in the electorate.

C. Open Questions on Democracy

1. Q. 74. Awareness of the meaning of elections in a democracy



Perceptions of Reasons for Elections

Q.74 'Why do you think we have elections?'

We asked several open questions with the hope of gathering impressions from our respondents and possibly to classify the responses in a way that would summarize the sentiments expressed. One question was “Why do you think we have elections?” The main categories of responses we can discern relate to an increase in benefits that elections may bring and an improvement of the political process that elections represent. Respondents associated elections with hoped-for benefits such as the possibility of peace, increased welfare, happiness and prosperity. And respondents associated elections with the possibility of choice of leader or the possibility of change in the political situation for the development of the country.

A few comments our respondents made may convey some of the flavor of their sentiments:

A 30-year-old Khmer male laborer from Phnom Penh said:

I think the elections will bring us democracy, which means that there will be no pressure from any party or person.

A 28-year-old Khmer male laborer from Kandal province said:

We have elections to choose one leader, and not “co-“ as before, who has the high devotion to our mother country and is good for all, not racist.

A 48-year-old male Khmer farmer from Prey Veng said:

We have elections in order to choose a government representative who can defend our village.

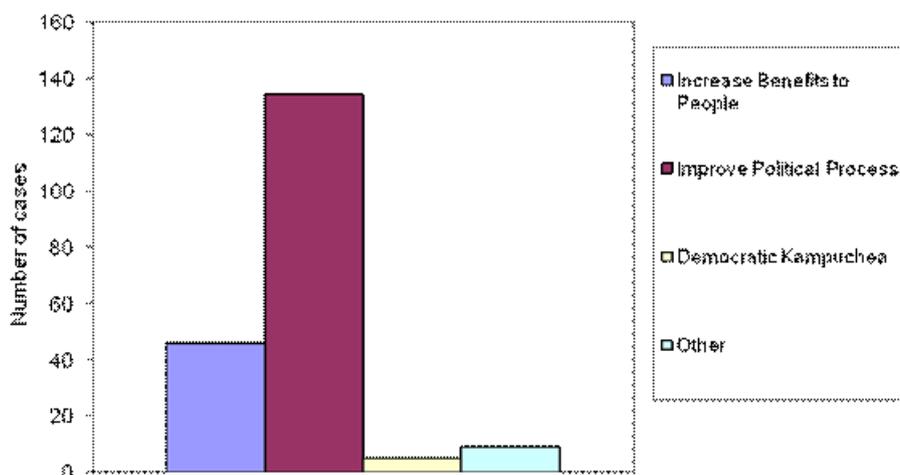
A 63-year-old Khmer village woman from Battambang said:

I don't know why we have elections. I go to vote because some one calls me to vote.

A 29-year-old female Khmer farmer from Kep said:

We have elections because we don't have a true/real King.

2. Q. 75. Perceptions of the meaning of democracy



Perceptions of "Democracy"

Q. 75. 'What do you think democracy is?'

We asked our respondents to give their definition of "democracy." Again we could distinguish responses that emphasized the benefits that a democratic regime was supposed to bring and responses that emphasized the improvements in political process that democracy represented.

On one hand, respondents associated democracy with a regime that brought such benefits as freedom, rights, welfare, well being, and justice without corruption. On the other hand, respondents associated democracy with a political process that expresses the interests or the voice of the people, that allows all people to vote and to elect officials, and that creates a non-dictatorial or non-communist regime.

Some of the responses are as follows.

A 39-year-old Cham man working for an NGO in Phnom Penh said:

Democracy means equal rights for men and women, young and old, for all ethnic groups and religions.

A 28-year-old Khmer male laborer in Kandal said:

Democracy is a doctrine that puts public opinion first. However the last time [the last elections] this word was only used as a curtain.

A 20-year-old Khmer female student in Phnom Penh said:

Democracy means to use elections as the way [to chose leaders], not to use weapons.

A 28-year-old Cham man from Phnom Penh said:

They take the people as the boss, and decide by opinion of the majority.

A 22-year-old Khmer male student from Battambang said:

The people take decisions on everything. The people chose their representatives and use their power through their representatives.

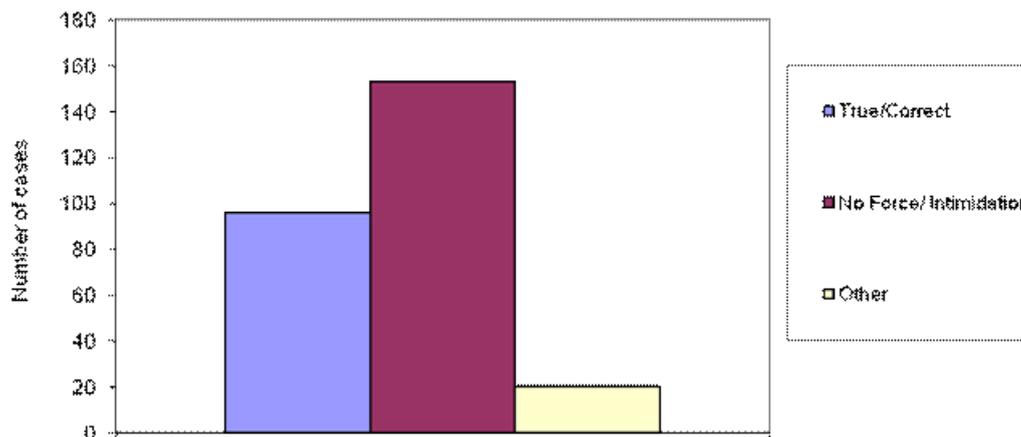
There was also a sprinkling of respondents who confused “democracy in Cambodia” with “Democratic Kampuchea.” For example, a 52-year-old Khmer male farmer from Prey Veng said:

It is the Pol Pot regime.

The existence of this possible outlandish misunderstanding of political terminology in Cambodia suggests the extremes of the challenge faced by a voter education campaign.

3. Q. 76. Understanding of the concepts "free" and "fair"

Perceptions of "Free and Fair" Elections



Q.76 'What do you think it means for elections to be free and fair?'

The responses to this open question fell into two main categories. One group emphasized that the elections should be fair, true, honest, according to the law, secret, correct, and correctly counted. The other group emphasized that the elections should be free, without force, violence or intimidation, giving people freedom, rights and happiness.

The 28-year-old Khmer male laborer in Kandal, some of whose comments were noted above, had this enigmatic observation to contribute:

Free and fair is the wish of the intellectual but also the thorn in the eye of the ignorant people.

A 25-year-old Khmer male government official in Battambang said:

Free and fair is an election that is controlled and observed by the EU and UN, without pressure, intimidation and cheating of the ballot papers. The winner will govern the country and the loser goes out of power.

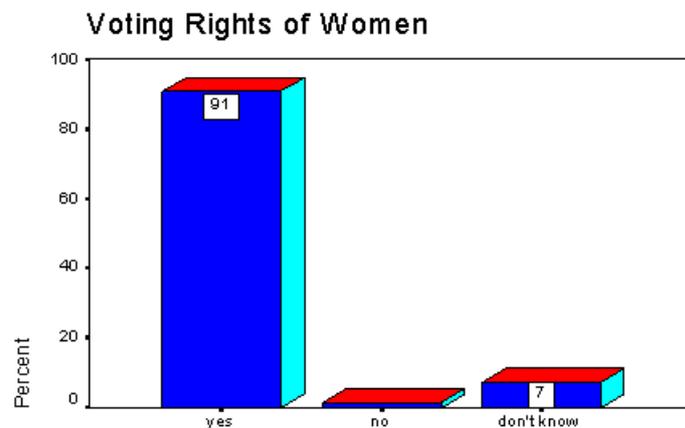
A 30-year-old Khmer male farmer from Kampong Speu said:

Free and fair is the neutrality of authorities. If they lose the elections, they don't claim power.

VII. KNOWLEDGE OF VOTING RIGHTS OF VULNERABLE GROUPS

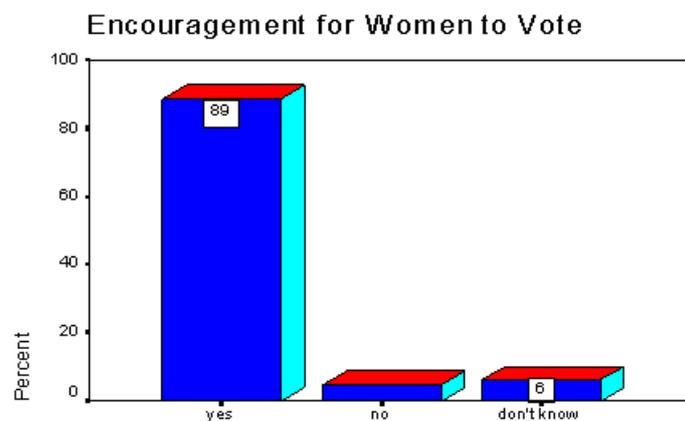
A. Rights of Women

1. Q. 120, 121. Perceptions of participation of women in voting



Q.120 'Are women allowed to vote?'

N=937

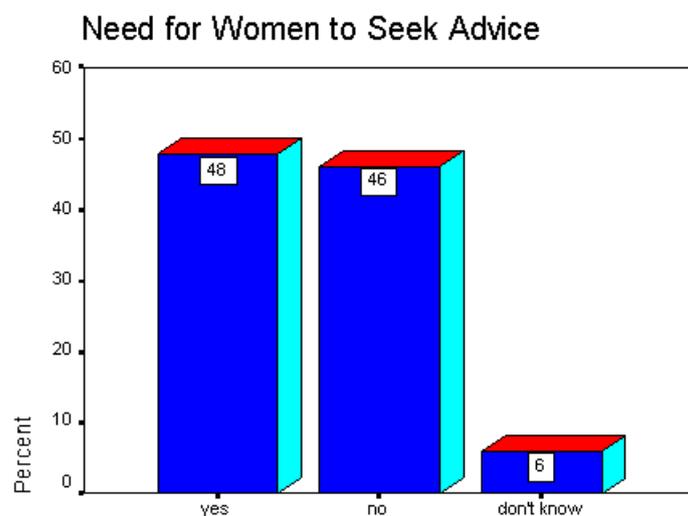


Q.121 'Should women be encouraged to vote?'

N=933

The electorate we surveyed showed an overwhelming response in favor of the rights of women to vote and in favor of positive encouragement for women to vote.

2. Q. 122. Perceptions of the need for men to guide women in voting



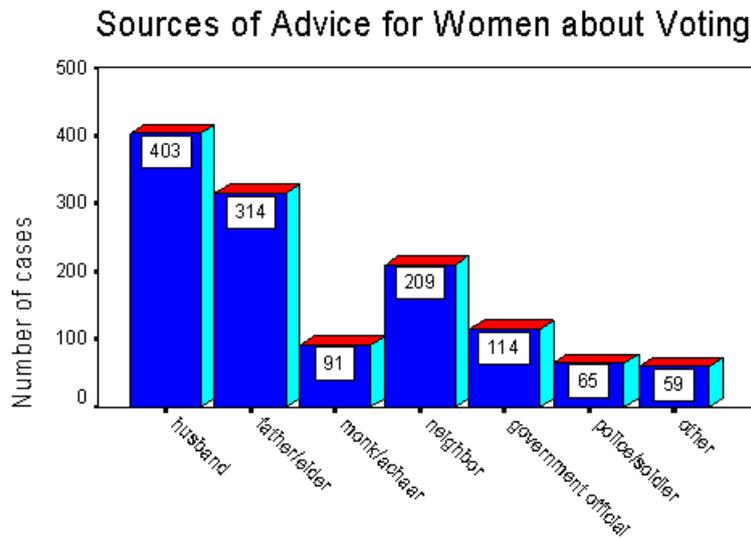
Q.122 'Should women seek advice about voting from men?'

Of the male respondents to our survey, 53.6% answered "yes," women should seek advice from men, while only 44.1% of our female respondents answered "yes" to this question. Conversely, 50.2% of our female respondents answered "no" to the question should women seek men's advice on voting, while of our male respondents, only 39.9% answered "no" to this question. The "don't know" response was quite low, indicating that people had clear opinions on this matter.

The near equality of yes and no responses could be interpreted in several ways. On one hand, there is a familiar tendency in public affairs in Cambodia for men to predominate. Viewing elections as a public matter we might think them to be a man's domain, hence a high frequency of "yes" responses to this question. On the other hand, in private matters like the household and its economy, Cambodian women are accustomed to a predominate role in decision making. In so far as voting is seen as secret or as a private matter, we might expect a strong "no" response to the question, especially by women.

As noted above (I.A.2.Q.9), our sample has a preponderance of female respondents out of proportion to the actual Cambodian gender distribution. Accordingly, the comparisons of global percentages of "yes" versus "no" responses can only be suggestive.

3. Q. 123. Perceptions of male sources of women's advice on voting

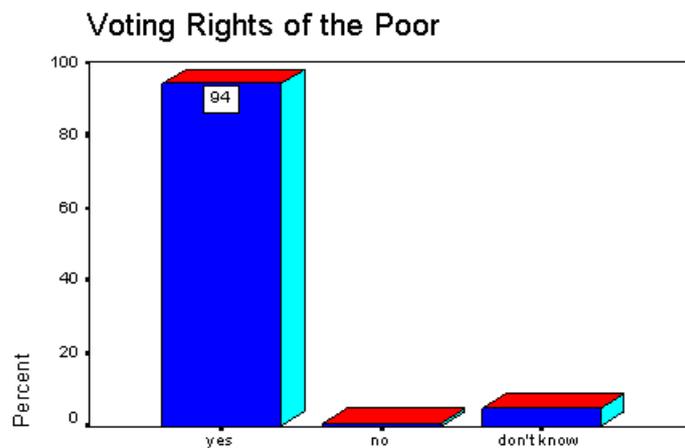


Q.123 'From whom should women seek advice about voting?'

N=440

We asked respondents who answered “yes” to the question above (Q.122) to indicate any of the categories of men from whom women should seek advice. The chart shows a total of 1255 responses from 440 respondents, meaning an average of 2.9 categories ticked by each respondent. Expectably, husband and father/elder had the high scores. Of those who answered this question, 90% marked husband, 70% marked father/elder, 47% marked neighbor and 25% marked government official.

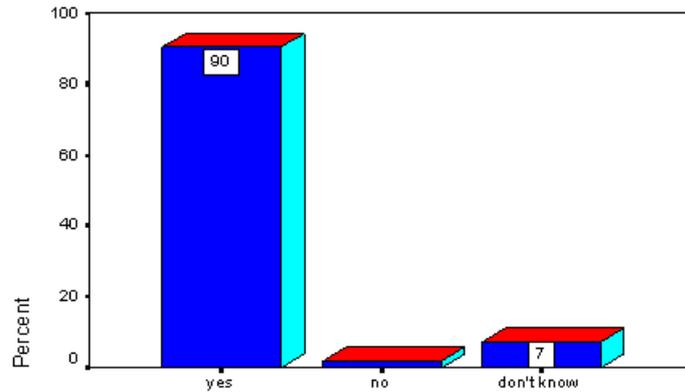
B. Voting Rights of the Poor



Q.132 'Are very poor people allowed to vote?'

N=936

Encouragement for Poor to Vote



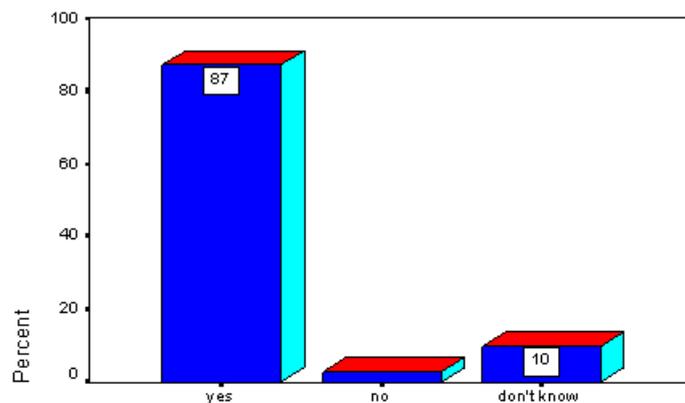
Q.133 'Should very poor people be encouraged to vote?'

N=936

Poverty and landlessness are clearly not considered bars to voting by our respondents. This could be interpreted as a positive legacy of the UNTAC sponsored elections of 1993, in which great efforts were made to extend the vote as widely as possible. It may also reflect a general Cambodian view of the rights of citizenship regardless of social status or wealth.

C. Voting Rights of the Illiterate.

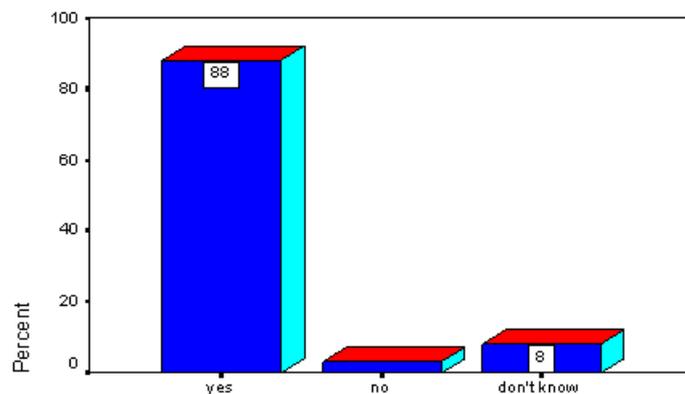
Voting Rights of Illiterate



Q.130 'Are illiterate people allowed to vote?'

N=936

Encouragement for Illiterate to Vote

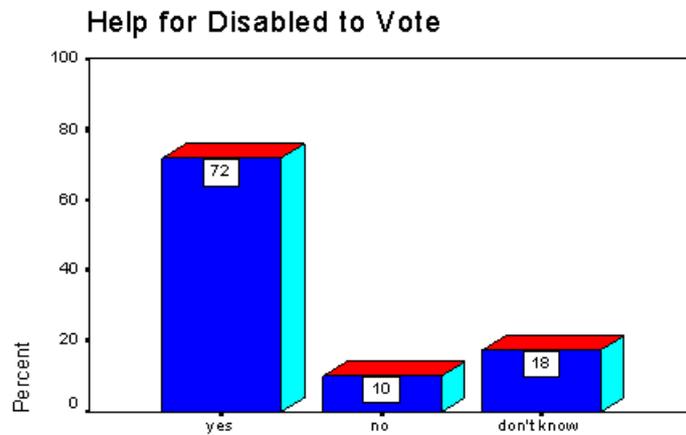


Q.131 'Should illiterate people be encouraged to vote?'

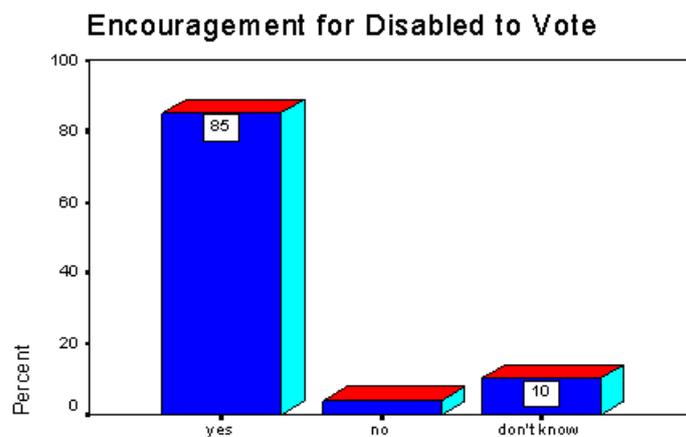
N=936

Compared with the findings on the rights of the poor, there is a slight increase in uncertainty among our respondents about whether illiteracy could be a bar to voting. Voter education messages are recommended that can be understood by the non- and semi-literate and that assure them of their voting rights.

D. Voting Rights of the Disabled



Q.134 'Should a disabled person receive help to get to vote?'
N=936



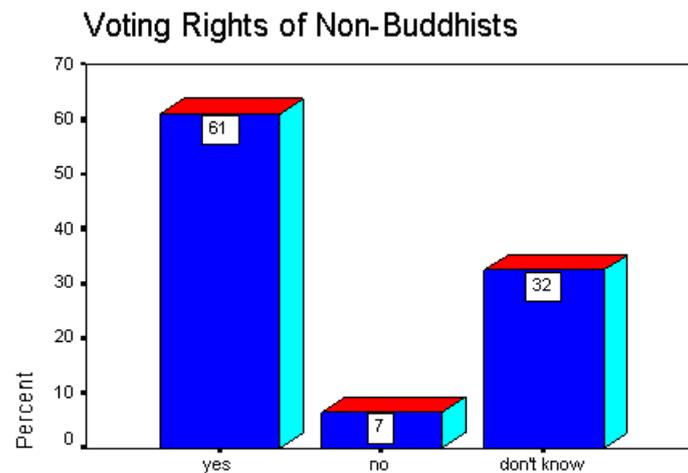
Q.135 'Should disabled persons be encouraged to vote?'
N=936

Compared with the findings on the rights of the poor and illiterates, there is again a slight increase in uncertainty among our respondents about whether disability could be a bar to voting. The specific provision in the law for the help that should be extended to the disabled should figure in voter education messages.

E. Voting Rights of Minorities

Overall, our findings on perceptions of voting rights of vulnerable groups shows consistently high affirmation of these rights and approval for active encouragement of their participation in the voting. This general atmosphere of tolerance, goodwill and inclusiveness among our respondents provides a contrasting background for the responses to questions we asked about voting rights of Cambodia's minorities.

1. Q. 136. Voting rights of non-Buddhists



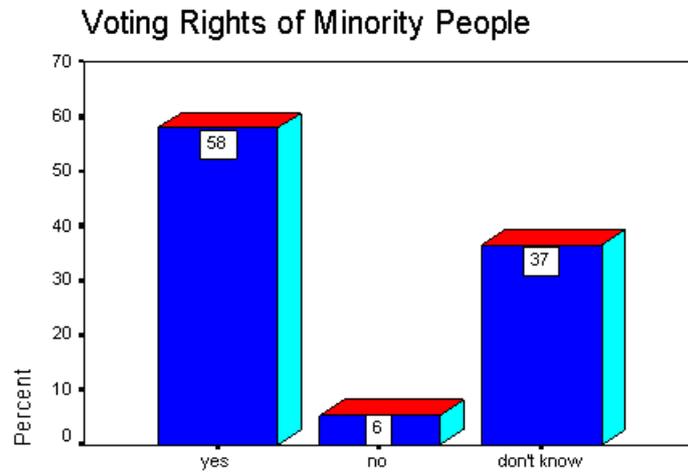
Q.136 'Are non-Buddhist allowed to vote?'

N=937

The category "non-Buddhist" in Cambodia refers primarily to the significant Cham Muslim minority that has lived in Cambodia for over five hundred years. The sharp increase in “don’t know” responses is noteworthy, compared with the earlier responses on rights of women, poor, illiterate and disabled, who, lacking further specification, would have been assumed to be Khmer. The underlying significance of this “don’t know” response to a question about voting rights is a doubt about the nationality or citizenship of non-Khmer minorities in Cambodia.

Of our respondents from the rural sector, 34.8% said “don’t know” to this question, compared with 18.2% of our urban respondents. Of our female respondents, 39.2% answered “don’t know” to this question, compared with 22.0% of our male respondents. While rural people and women seem less likely to know what the voting rights of the non-Khmer Islamic minority are, a strong majority of our respondents, 61%, affirmed that the non-Buddhists do indeed have voting rights as other citizens do.

2. Q. 137. Voting Rights of Minority People



Q.137 'Are minority people allowed to vote?'

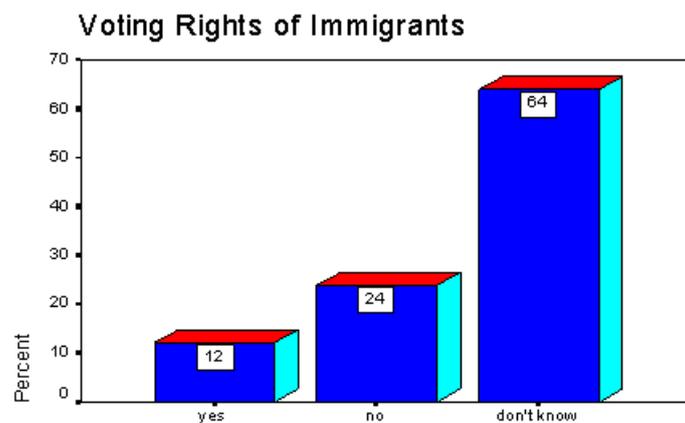
N=938

"Minority people" is the code word for tribal highlanders and forest dwellers mainly found in Cambodia's northeast provinces. Again, a large proportion of our surveyed electorate did not know the voting rights, and implicitly, the citizenship of these indigenous peoples.

An even more marked trend than we noticed in the earlier question on the Muslim minority appears in the rural/urban and male/female differences in response to this question. We find that 40.1% of our rural respondents give a "don't know" response to this question on hill tribe voting rights, compared with 15% of our urban respondents. We find that 44.7% of our female respondents gave a "don't know" response, compared with 23.9% of our male respondents.

Rural and female respondents are likely to be ignorant of the voting rights of Cambodia's indigenous peoples. But, again, a strong majority of our respondents, 58%, affirmed that the hill tribe people did indeed have voting rights.

3. Q. 138. Voting rights of immigrants



Q.138 'Are immigrants allowed to vote?'

N=937

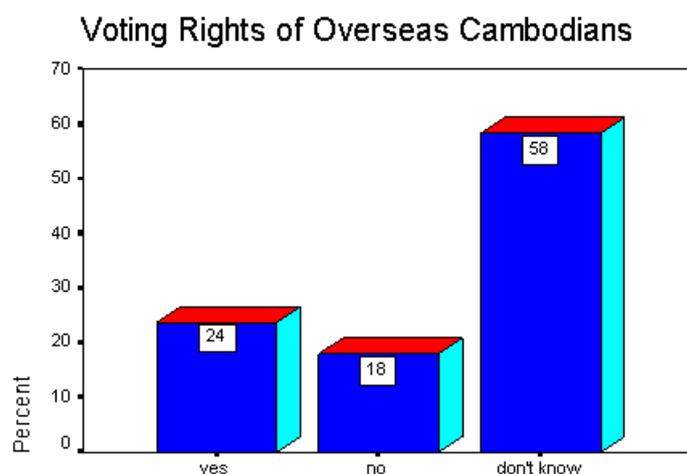
"Immigrants" is a code word for Vietnamese who have percolating into the Mekong delta and riverine region for the last three hundred years. The tension between Khmer and Vietnamese is proverbial and is traced to the unmistakable demographic changes in the delta region from before and during the colonial period and continuing to the present day. Khmers typically view the transformation of the delta as a steady loss of Cambodian territory to the aggressive and much more numerous Vietnamese farming and fishing immigrants. A theme that unites Khmer political parties that are otherwise intensely opposed to one another is a common fear/hatred of Vietnamese.

This context helps clarify the responses to this question of voting rights—and thus citizenship—for the Vietnamese. The “yes” responses presumably reflect the awareness that many Vietnamese have indeed lived in Cambodia for many generations and are as integrated with their Khmer neighbors as, say, the Cham are. The sharp increase in the “no” response, compared to the findings for non-Buddhists and hill tribe minorities probably reflects a degree of anti-Vietnamese sentiment in the electorate.

The “don’t know” response follows the trends of our earlier findings. Of our female respondents, 72.8% answered “don’t know” to this question, compared with 50.3% of our male respondents. Of our rural respondents, 66.3% answered “don’t know” to this question, compared with 49.2% of urban respondents.

The extent of uncertainty about the voting rights of the non-Khmer minorities in Cambodia suggests that a voter education campaign needs to make a special effort to clarify the nationality law to all Cambodian citizens so that this multicultural society can preserve tolerance between the communal groups.

4. Q. 139. Voting rights of overseas Cambodians



Q.139 'Are overseas Cambodians allowed to vote?'

N=936

Overseas Cambodian is the code word for Cambodians who left Cambodia during previous regimes, (Lon Nol’s Republic, Democratic Kampuchea, Peoples Republic of Kampuchea, State of Cambodia) and who have returned since UNTAC to live and work in Cambodia. These returning persons from overseas, usually from western countries, often possess the advanced skills that have enabled them to take up prominent positions in Cambodia in the post-1993 period. However, as is well known, there is an abiding tension between these returning “dual passport” Khmers and the Khmers who remained in Cambodia, or who went to the Eastern Bloc countries or to Vietnam for their studies.

This aspect of tension within the Khmer community probably accounts for the high level of uncertainty among our respondents over the voting rights of overseas Cambodians. Of our rural

respondents, 60.2% answered “don’t know” to this question compared to 46.2% of our urban respondents. Of our female respondents, 65.8% registered a “don’t know” response, compared to 46.4% of our male respondents.

The trend is confirmed again that the rural and female sectors of the electorate are likely to express the “don’t know” view. As in the case of perceptions of the voting rights of non-Khmers, there is probably a mixture here of anti-overseas Khmer sentiment, that has been exacerbated by political rhetoric over the last few years, and plain lack of information about the law regarding who is a citizen. A voter education campaign may not make much progress against ingrained antipathies between groups. But voter educators should certainly face the challenge of combating misinformation and should make special efforts to remedy the lack of knowledge about the voting rights of all minority groups.

ANNEX

ABBREVIATIONS

CAS	Center for Advanced Study, Phnom Penh
CNGO	Cambodian Non-Government Organization
COFFEL	Coalition for Free and Fair Elections
COMFREL	Committee for Free and Fair Elections
CPP	Cambodian Peoples Party
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
DK	Democratic Kampuchea
EU	European Union
KID	Khmer Institute of Democracy
MP	Member of Parliament, Member of National Assembly
NEC	National Election Commission
PRK	Peoples Republic of Kampuchea
SoC	State of Cambodia
UNTAC	United Nations Transitional Authority for Cambodia
UNV	United Nations Volunteer

List of Provinces and Districts Surveyed

A. Provinces

1. Phnom Penh
2. Kandal
3. Kampong Cham
4. Prey Veng
5. Takeo
6. Kampong Thom
7. Banteay Meanchey
8. Battambang
9. Pursat
10. Kampong Chhnang
11. Sihanoukville
12. Kampot
13. Koh Kong
14. Kampong Speu
15. Pailin
16. Kep

B. Districts

1. Phnom Penh
 - a. Chamkarmon
 - b. Don Pehn
 - c. Prampil Makara
 - d. Tuol Kork
 - e. Dangkor
 - f. Meanchey
 - g. Russey Keo

2. Kandal
 - a. Kandal Stung
 - b. Kean Svay
 - c. Ponhea Leu
 - d. Saang

3. Kampong Cham
 - a. Banteay
 - b. Kang Meas
 - c. O Reang Ov
 - d. Prey Chhor

4. Prey Veng
 - a. Prey Veng Town
 - b. Ba Phnom Penh
 - c. Mesang
 - d. Preah Sdech
 - e. Prey Veng DC
 - f. Sithor Kandal
5. Takeo
 - a. Bati
 - b. Samrong
 - c. Treang

6. Kampong Thom
 - a. Kampong Svay
 - b. Santuk

7. Banteay Meanchey
 - a. Serey Sophom

8. Battambang
 - a. Battambang Town
 - b. Banan
 - c. Battambang DC
 - d. Ek Phnom
 - e. Mong Russey
 - f. Sangke

9. Pursat
 - a. Krakor

10. Kampong Chhnang
 - a. Kampong Chhnang Town
 - b. Chul Kiri
 - c. Kampong Tralach
 - d. Rotear Phiear

11. Sihanoukville
 - a. Mittapheap
 - b. Prey Nuo
 - c. Stung Hay

12. Kampot
 - a. Kampot Town
 - b. Banteay Meas
 - c. Kampong Trach

13. Koh Kong
 - a. Srey Ambel

14. Kampong Speu
 - a. Kong Pisey
 - b. Samrong Thong

15. Pailin

16. Kep

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CAS Voter Education Baseline Survey Questionnaire (Khmer Version)