

Chapter 7

MIGRATION AND URBANIZATION

7.1 Introduction

The 2008 Census enumerated a total of 13,395,682 persons, of whom 3,552,173 (26.5 percent) were recorded as migrants in the sense they reported having had a previous place of residence other than their place of enumeration (NIS 2009a: 97-98).³⁶ This chapter focuses on these migrants. The total number of migrants has decreased since the 1998 Census (when 3,597,769 were recorded); many of those who were displaced during the civil war have now died and a new generation has been born since those unsettled times.

The 3,552,173 migrants are split evenly by sex: 1,792,519 males (50.5 percent) and 1,759,654 females (49.5 females). Of the total migrants (both sexes) the previous residence was reported as within the province of enumeration for 51.3 percent of the cases, in another province for 46.0 of the migrants, and outside Cambodia for 2.7 percent of cases. There are no significant differences in these proportions when broken down by sex (NIS 2009a: Table 6.2). Compared to 1998, the percent in-province migration has declined (from 58.8 percent), inter-province migration has increased (from 35.3 percent), and migration from outside Cambodia has declined (from 5.9 percent).

There are significant gender differences regarding reasons given for migration. Table 7.1 shows that female migrants are more likely to migrate than males because the family moved, and less likely than males because of transfer of work place, in search of employment, education, or marriage.

Table 7.1 Reasons for migration, Cambodia 1998 and 2008

Reason for migration	1998		2008	
	M	F	M	F
Transfer of work place	12.9	3.3	13.8	4.5
In search of employment	17.8	11.4	24.2	18.8
Education	3.1	1.3	3.5	1.9
Marriage	17.0	9.4	18.6	10.6
Family moved	26.3	47.5	27.3	48.7
Return after displacement	12.7	15.2	1.3	1.1
Other	10.2	11.9	11.3	14.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: NIS (2009a: Table 6.3).

7.2 Internal Migration

The vast majority of migrants recorded in the 2008 Census (97.3 percent) are internal migrants. Table 7.2 shows current residence (in 2008) by previous residence for all internal migrants. The table shows, for example, that of the 1,474,387 migrants enumerated in urban areas, 951,838 (64.6 percent) reported a previous rural residence and 522,549 (35.4 percent) reported a previous urban residence. Total rural-to-rural migration (1,758,837) is far larger than rural-to-urban migration (951,838), but urban-to-urban migration (522,549) is similarly much larger than urban-to-rural migration (224,004).

³⁶ Correspondingly, 9,843,337 (73.5 percent) were recorded as persons who had always lived in their 2008 place of enumeration (i.e. in the same village). That leaves 172 cases for whom the reported information is insufficient for a clear classification.

Table 7.2 Internal migrants (number and percent) by place of enumeration, previous residence, and sex, Cambodia 2008

Previous residence	Rural + urban			Rural			Urban		
	BS	M	F	BS	M	F	BS	M	F
Rural	2,710,675 78.4	1,374,617 78.8	1,336,058 78.0	1,758,837 88.7	928,805 88.7	830,032 88.7	951,838 64.6	445,812 64.0	506,026 65.1
Urban	746,553 21.6	369,427 21.2	377,126 22.0	224,004 11.3	118,418 11.3	105,586 11.3	522,549 35.4	251,009 36.0	271,540 34.9
Total	3,457,228 100.0	1,744,044 100.0	1,713,184 100.0	1,982,841 100.0	1,047,223 100.0	935,618 100.0	1,474,387 100.0	696,821 100.0	777,566 100.0

Source: NIS (2009a: Table 6.4).

When we compare the column percent distributions there is little difference by sex. However it is noticeable that while there are more male migrants than female enumerated in rural areas in 2008, it is the reverse in urban areas (777,566 female migrants compared to 696,821 male).

7.3 Characteristics of Migrants

Table 7.3 shows three quarters of all migrants 10 years and over are employed (74.4 percent in 2008, up from 69.7 percent in 1998). The percent employed is about 13 points higher for males than females, however, while females are about 13 points higher in the economically inactive category; unemployment is recorded as below 2 percent for both sexes. Migrants appear to have relatively high rates of being economically inactive (if, for example, we compare the rates presented in Table 7.3 with those in Table 6.2), and the inactivity rate of females is considerably higher than for males. This needs to be examined in far more detail than is possible here before firm conclusions can be drawn.

Table 7.3 Economic activity status of migrants 10 years and over (number and percent) by sex, Cambodia 1998 and 2008

Economic activity status	1998			2008		
	BS	M	F	BS	M	F
Employed	2,296,724 69.7	1,270,312 77.8	1,026,412 61.8	2,499,913 74.4	1,373,453 81.1	1,126,460 67.6
Unemployed	132,811 4.0	56,439 3.5	76,372 4.6	53,935 1.6	22,378 1.3	32,315 1.9
Not economically active	863,389 26.2	305,187 18.7	558,202 33.6	804,505 24.0	296,819 17.5	507,686 30.5
Total	3,292,924 99.9	1,631,938 100.0	1,660,986 100.0	3,358,353 100.0	1,692,650 99.9	1,666,461 100.0

Source: NIS (2009a: Table 6.8).

Table 7.4 presents the data on the employed migrants regarding their literacy status, and for those who are literate their educational attainment. The proportion illiterate has declined from 28.1 percent in 1998 to 19.5 percent in 2008. Literacy has improved for both males and females but the rate of illiteracy among females is still a little over twice the level for males. Among literate migrants the proportion of those who have completed at least primary or lower secondary school has increased significantly. Given the extremely low levels of educational attainment it will, understandably, take longer to see marked increases in the proportion of those who have completed secondary and higher levels of education. In 2008 the large majority of migrants are literate and employed, but by international standards their level of educational attainment is still very low, and although it is closing there is still a significant gender gap in the formal education of the migrant labour force.

Table 7.4 Percent distribution of employed migrants 10 years and older by literacy/ highest educational level attained and by sex, Cambodia 1998 and 2008

Educational level	1998			2008		
	BS	M	F	BS	M	F
Illiterate	28.1	18.0	40.7	19.5	12.5	27.2
No schooling or some primary	37.7	37.9	37.4	33.9	31.5	36.7
Primary	19.6	24.9	13.2	23.5	26.0	20.4
Lower secondary	9.7	12.6	6.1	18.3	22.8	12.8
Secondary	4.1	5.6	2.2	2.5	3.3	1.6
Beyond secondary	0.8	1.1	0.4	2.4	4.0	1.3
Total	100.0 (2,296,724)	100.1 (1,270,312)	100.0 (1,026,412)	100.1 (2,499,913)	100.1 (1,373,453)	100.0 (1,126,460)

Source: Based on data from NIS (2009a: Table 6.8).