A comparative study of education and development in Cambodia and Uganda from their civil wars to the present

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Citation for published version (APA):
Un, L. (2012). A comparative study of education and development in Cambodia and Uganda from their civil wars to the present.
CHAPTER VII
CONCLUSION: POLICY IMPLICATION AND LESSONS LEARNED

This comparative study seeks to explain the role the state has played in fostering economic development via deliberate provision of a skilled labour force through the education systems in post-conflict and aid-dependent countries, using Cambodia and Uganda as comparative case studies. This comparative case study approach involves two aspects of analysis. The first aspect is of the relationship between education and economic development, and the second aspect is of the role of the state in the educational policy process. Having presented the detailed empirical data, I now take stock of what this all adds up to, and tease out some policy implications and recommendations as well as spotlight areas for further research. This conclusion is organized into four sections. The first section will review the role of education in economic development in Cambodia and Uganda. The second section will review the role of the state in education policy processes, focusing on policy design and resource allocation and implementation in the education sector. The third section will provide policy lessons learned, and the final section offers recommendations for further research.

VII.1 Education and economic development

One theme cutting across the Ugandan and Cambodian histories of development undertaken by both governments with support from the international donor community, especially since the end of these countries' wars, is the importance of rebuilding their education systems as a means for rehabilitating, reconstructing, and developing their countries, especially in the field of economy. Despite some improvement in the education sector and economic performance, more than two decades after the end of the civil wars in Cambodia and Uganda, the levels of economic development are still low as manifested in high rates of poverty, widening inequality, and low GDP (per capita). Further, there is no significant change in their economic structure, as reflected in the high percentage of the labour force employed in agriculture and its share to the total GDP and higher percentage of unpaid family workers.
The weak links between education and economic development in Cambodia and Uganda do not disprove the important role of education in economic development as claimed by other researches and theories. For example, Benhabib and Spiegel (1994), López et al. (1998), and Easterly (2001) stressed the role of economic institutions (macro-economic stability, a well-defined system of property rights, and openness of the economy), business-friendly environments, such as incentives for investors and good governance, as the fundamental causes of differences in economic performances.

The basic argument developed in this study followed the experience of successful East Asian countries such as Singapore, South Korea, Malaysia, and to a lesser extent Indonesia and Vietnam, where education plays an important role in their economic development. However, this does not mean that educational development in general would contribute to economic development. For its rate of return to be positive and significant, investment in education must respond to the needs of the local labour market and the structure of the economy.

The policies that aim at linking education and training to the needs of the local labour market and economy in Cambodia and Uganda must address the dualistic nature of their economies. On the one hand, there is a rapidly growing urban economy, but still small — emerging low-tech industry and an expanding service sector. On the other hand, there is the underdeveloped rural economy, predominantly agriculture, which needs to be improved and modernized. This situation requires education that places emphasis on basic education and TVET over higher education. Within higher education, improvements in science, engineering, manufacturing, construction and technology would provide more positive returns to the economy compared to the social sciences, business, humanities, and arts. However, the overall performance of the educational provisions in Cambodia and Uganda in terms of the above three aspects is still low in absolute terms and in comparison to the world average and to successful countries in East and Southeast Asia, which partially contribute to their overall low level of economic development.
This is not a unique experience in Cambodia and Uganda. Many developing post-colonial countries have been facing difficulties in producing such a balance of human resources. For example, a recent study by the World Bank (2008) found that the inability to bring high economic growth, better income distribution, and less poverty in the Middle East and North Africa ‘are determined … [more] by educational investments than they are by engaging educated workers in jobs that capitalize on their skills’ (p. 47).

Cambodian economic performance, however, is slightly better than Uganda, especially since mid-2000s. Cambodia has a lower percentage of the rural population living below the poverty line compared to Uganda. When US$2 per day is used as the poverty line, Cambodia has a substantially lower percentage of the population living below this poverty line than Uganda. Cambodia also has a higher GDP per capita, which was almost two times higher than Uganda by 2010. Although it is still narrowly-based, the Cambodian economy is moving towards becoming more industry-based, as reflected in a higher percentage of the labour force employed in the industrial sector, mainly in garment factories and its higher percentage share in total exports as compared to that of Uganda.

The experience from successful East Asian countries also indicates that a better mixed skilled labour force is key to explaining the different levels of economic development, not only within East Asian countries, but also between successful East Asian countries and other parts of the developing world, rather than the differences in the quality of governance indicators and business-friendly environments. Analysis of the Cambodian and Ugandan cases continues to confirm this important role of a better mixed skilled labour force in order to explain their different economic development trajectory. Since the end of their respective civil wars, Uganda has scored consistently higher in terms of a good governance indicator, a business-friendly environment, and the Ease to Do Business Index, as compared to Cambodia.

The slightly better economic performance in Cambodia than Uganda also disproves the credentialist theory that claims education serves as a ranking and screening in the job recruitment process, but has nothing to do with improving productivity (Bill,
1988; 2003; Weiss, 1995). As discussed in Chapter VI, Cambodian economic productivity is slightly better than Uganda's, which is associated with its slightly better educational provision in three aspects. First, Cambodia is not only able to provide a more and better distributed basic-educated population, but also able to improve the quality of its educational provision than Uganda. For example, student achievement in mathematics and literacy proficiency in Cambodia is higher than in Uganda. Second, Cambodia is able to provide wider coverage of TVET than Uganda, and, finally, Cambodia has higher student enrollments in science, engineering, manufacturing, construction, and technology compared to Uganda, as discussed in Chapters III, IV and V.

VII.2 The role of the state in the education policy processes

The experience of successful East Asian countries, as well as the analysis of the cases of Cambodia and Uganda, as discussed in the theoretical framework in Chapter I and Chapter VI, indicates that the role of these mixed skilled human resources in promoting economic development is indisputable; as Lewin (1993) argues, the problem is no longer to demonstrate the link between education and development, but how to make the education system effectively and efficiently produce this mix of skilled human resources. The economic miracle of East Asian countries, as discussed in the theoretical framework in Chapter I, is partly due to their effective and efficient states in the educational policy processes to produce the appropriately mixed skilled human resources needed by their local labour markets and economies. Being unable to do so leads to a waste of scarce resources and efforts without contributing to any significant economic development.

There are two levels of intervention whereby the state's effectiveness and efficiency can be assessed; one is on the level of policy design and resource allocation, and the second is on the level of policy and resource implementation. Therefore, the task of this comparative case study is to explain the causes that underlie why the states of Cambodia and Uganda are less effective and efficient in providing the appropriately mixed skilled human resource and why Cambodia's state is relatively more effective and efficient than Uganda's.
Policy design and resource allocation: The priority on basic education and TVET over higher education

The empirical analysis of the cases of Cambodia and Uganda reveals that policy priorities and availability of resources appear to have an influence on educational outcomes in both countries as far as pupil enrollment is concerned. In this sense, the better educational outcomes in basic education and TVET in Cambodia than in Uganda after the end of their civil wars have partially resulted from its sustained policy priorities and availability of resources, while the dropping of priorities and the decline of available resources for primary education and the lack of priority given to TVET in Uganda are associated with the decline of and low enrollment in these sub-sectors.

What drives the different policy designs and resource allocation in Cambodia and Uganda? Although the decision over policy design and resource allocation in the education sector in general and the priority given to each sub-sector of education in particular are influenced by several factors — donors', NGOs' and ministries of education's involvement — the analysis of the cases of Cambodia and Uganda indicates that policy design and resource allocation are much influenced by the political struggle to stay in power, and the different political playing fields to win elections and remain in power would lead to different policy designs and resource allocations.

Immediately after the end of their civil wars, Cambodia and Uganda had similar challenges to increase their public spending on education despite an outcry for education reform. The end of their civil wars did not bring sustained peace to Cambodia and Uganda as the Khmer Rouge and the Lord's Resistance Army, respectively, still carried out military attacks against the Cambodian and Ugandan governments. In Cambodia, the situation was intensified by coalition politics in which the two main political parties (CPP and FUNCINPEC) fought to control the state through every possible means, resulting in military fighting in Phnom Penh, the heart of Cambodia, in July 1997, followed by several political strikes and demonstrations. This situation forced both governments and their ruling elites to allocate a large
percentage of public expenditures to the military at the expense of social services such as education, not only to ensure security but also to maintain political power.

As education was not a priority sector, the resource allocation to the sub-sectors of education was not derived from any technical analysis or planning process. However, it should be noted that historical developments have had impacts to different degrees on both countries. The historical pattern of resource allocation and progress in Uganda is different from that of Cambodia. In Uganda, despite the civil war and the implementation of cost-sharing policies, education progress was not severely interrupted. In fact, the enrollment at all levels increased, albeit slowly during political and social upheaval during the 1970s and 1980s. This situation did not inspire political elites and the donor community to envision radical education reform. Consequently, Uganda follows its historical pattern of resource allocation in which priority is given to secondary and especially to higher education over primary education and TVET.

In contrast, educational progress in Cambodia was not only interrupted but it also regressed because of the Khmer Rouge regime (1975-1979), which completely abolished formal education. Consequently, since 1979, basic education and short courses on TVET have been given priority to help rebuild the country from, what many scholars call, Year Zero. Also, there is the recognition that rehabilitation during the 1980s was far from complete and its educational orientation towards a socialist-communist ideology and planned economy is no longer considered suitable for the context of second-wave democratization and a market economy after the fall of communism. This situation urges political elites, with support from the donor community, who actively play a key role in this transformation process to continue to focus on basic education and TVET to rebuild the nation.

Since the late 1990s, when peace and security were achieved and regular elections were held, the legitimacy of the ruling elites no longer depended on maintenance security alone but on the overall improvement of the country. Consequently, we see an increase of budget allocation to the education sector and the renewal of the role of education in economic development. It is important to note that while Cambodia
consistently maintains the increase of budget allocation to the education sector and continues to focus on basic education and TVET in line with the experience of the successful East Asian countries (albeit with significantly lower quality and results), Uganda has failed to pursue these policies. In Uganda, the priority given to the education sector in general and to primary education in particular as far as the budget allocation is concerned, increased from the late 1990s to the mid-2000s, and then started to decline steadily, with increases towards secondary and higher education. It is important to note that in Uganda, despite the recognition of the important role of TVET in economic development, the share of TVET budget out of the total public spending on the education sector remains low compared to secondary and higher education. What causes such differences?

Again, it has been the local political context that influences such differences, but this time the political context that ruling elites in Cambodia and Uganda had to face in order to maintain themselves in power was rather different. Recently, Uganda has been seen as moving from rational inclusive growth policies to winning popular support in order to maintain power over exclusive and at times ethnic-based growth politics and win elections and control (as manifested by the proliferation of districts and the use of political violence in Kampala, the heart of Uganda, in 2009, by the central government against particular ethnic groups that did not support its policies). This situation negatively affects policy design and resource allocation to the public sector including education, as it no longer depends on real needs and situational analysis, but is influenced by political factors as politicians attempt to use public resources to maintain their power. Consequently, public expenditure for general public administration increased steadily, while the budget for social services like education experienced a steady decline.

In contrast to Uganda, Cambodia recently moved away from pure politics as a means to maintain power to long-term development policies (in which legitimacy is achieved through performance-based evaluations rather than enforced through political violence and intimidation). This situation encourages the withdrawal of political influence over policy design and resource allocation. In cases where politicians are going to influence the policy design and resource allocation, their actions are usually
in line with, rather than against, the local needs and serve to respond to the demands made by local communities represented by NGOs. This is also reflected in the steady increase of budget for social services such as education, while the budget for military experienced a steady decline.

My finding here is similar to that of Meessen et al. (2006) in their study on policy and health finance reform in Uganda and Cambodia. Such commonality shows that policy reform in Uganda is a top-down approach by government and not initiated by donors and NGOs, although the latter played an important role in financing reform. This is also true in the case of priority given to the sub-sector of education. For example, the emphasis on primary education and the shift from primary education to post-primary education in Uganda followed Museveni's promise during the presidential election campaign, rather than based on the situational analysis. Policy reform in Cambodia is usually seen as initiated by donors and NGOs through their pilot projects with specialized ministries. These projects mostly reflected local needs. These projects also drew from the experience of East Asian countries and were facilitated by the donor community, especially by ADB in the education sector. However, this initiative can be adopted as national policy only when it coincides with political interests as they help to promote the government's legitimacy.

**Educational policy and resource implementation**

Although policy and resource availability appear to have an influence on enrollment, a more refined educational outcome — measured in terms of completion rates, adult literacy, and distribution of educational provisions among different social groups, as well as in comparison with other countries, are taken into account —, its role was reduced significantly and the outcomes depended on how effectively and efficiently the policies and resources were implemented. The case that policy and resource availability appear to have less impact on educational outcomes is even stronger, and even more so in the case of Uganda. This is evidenced by the inability to improve the quality of education and student enrollment at higher education institutes in the fields of science, engineering, manufacturing, construction, and technology.
In this sense, the different educational outcomes in Cambodia and Uganda are not only limited to policy priorities and availability of resources, but also lie within their different qualities of implementation. This section will be divided into two parts: the first part will examine the quality of the implementation process in Cambodia and Uganda that led to their overall poor educational outcomes, and the second part will compare the quality of implementation in both countries to detect their differences that led to their different educational outcomes.

Poor quality of implementation of policy and resources in Cambodia and Uganda

Although Cambodia is moving away from politics to policy in the sense that policy priorities and resource allocations have been formulated with regard to principles of modern government and institutional arrangement and also to more accurately reflected local needs, Ayres (1999) argues that their implementation has taken place in an environment that is still dominated by a (neo)traditional system of governance and administration based on culturally entrenched notions of hierarchy and power found in patron-client relations, a phenomenon called neopatrimonial politics. Uganda has experienced a similar political trajectory (Mwenda and Tangri 2005).

In a neopatrimonial state, recruitment processes are not based on merit but on tests of loyalty, nepotism, and corruption. This has several negative consequences affecting the implementation processes to achieve desirable design objectives. First, there is an unreasonably higher proportion of non-teaching staff compared to teaching staff due to attempts to build political clients by creating unnecessary offices and administrative units. This situation contributes to the shortage of teaching staff, which affects the quality of education. Moreover, these newly established offices and units usually have unclear and duplicated responsibilities, leading to a waste of both effort and resources. Second, recruitment based on loyalty and bribery hinders the ability of the state to establish a meritocratic bureaucracy.

The bureaucrats, especially at the lower levels, lack capability, as reflected in their low level of formal education, which significantly negatively impacts policy implementation and utilization of resources to improve the education sector. For example, despite the lack of necessary teaching and learning materials, which
negatively affects the quality of education in both countries, a significant proportion
of resources is misspent, such as on building huge fences and school gates and the
national policy on ICT, where such knowledge is inapplicable in daily economic
activity, especially in rural areas and where most of the schools do not even have the
electricity to utilize that equipment. In other cases, the lack of capacity among
bureaucrats led to piecemeal reforms in the education sector, which were unable to
produce significant changes. For example, while the new general curriculum attempts
to integrate technical and practical skills to prepare graduates for meaningful
participation in the labour market, the implementation of the curriculum was
constrained by the old national system of examinations in which these skills were not
assessed and, therefore, did not force or encourage schools and teachers to teach these
skills.

Finally, but most importantly, the neopatrimonial state is open to and tolerates
corruption and misbehavior such as absenteeism among teachers and school directors.
In fact, in a neopatrimonial state, the political clients, the state's bureaucrats, are
protected through a ceremonial inspection system. In this context, the bureaucrats
learn that corruption and misbehaviour go unpunished, and they act accordingly. This
is compounded by their low pay and requirements to contribute in cash to their
patrons for their political projects in order to attract votes, which then forces them to
be even more creative in practicing corruption. For instance, despite the fact that
access to education is supposed to be free, teachers and schools still continue to
demand substantial contributions, usually illegal, from pupils and parents. Such
practices have resulted in high rates of non-enrollment and school dropouts because of
an inability to pay. Despite the public outcry, both governments are unable to fully
punish those involved in such activities.

In another case, while there is a lack of schools and classrooms and teachers, and
teachers are demoralized by low salaries, which affect the ability of the education
system to expand and improve the quality of educational provision, there is a
substantial portion of the budget that is paid to ghost teachers, non-teaching teachers
and non-performing school directors, ghost pupils, and even ghost schools. This is
because corruption and political interest to attract and retain loyalty provide no
incentive for the government to establish an effective management, supervision, and inspection system; doing so might shake the foundation of the elites’ power base and negatively affect mobilization for political support. This situation leaves much leeway in implementation in the hands of frontline service providers.

The lack of effective management, supervision, and an inspection system also led to lower enrollments in TVET and higher education in the fields of science, engineering, manufacturing, construction, and technology. Because of attempts to co-opt their political clients and corruption, states are unable to direct their public higher education institutes to provide only courses that supplement what the private sectors are unable to provide. Instead, the government allows their public higher education institutes to compete with the private sector for private self-sponsored students to enroll in their institutes only in the field of humanities, arts, social sciences, and business, and, therefore, to neglect to invest in other critical areas such as science, engineering, manufacturing, construction, and technology. Both countries have been unable to upgrade university entrance standards so as to channel students to enroll in TVET.

**Cambodia's quality of policy and resource implementation is slightly better than Uganda's**

During the last decades, decentralization reform was introduced in many parts of the world with an expectation to improve the efficiency of public service provision and bring services closer to people. It also seeks to promote popular participation, to empower local people to make their own decisions, and to enhance accountability. It is important to note that in Uganda basic services such as primary education are delivered within this changing context of governance, from centralization to high decentralization through a council system of local government with its district as the main unit of sub-national government. In Cambodia all social services delivered are still mainly in the hands of the central government delivered through its local administration, even after the recent introduction of a decentralization process.

A study by the World Bank (2004a) indicated that once neopatrimonial politics is embedded in a decentralized mode of service delivery, it has more negative
consequences than when it was embedded in a centralized mode. This is also true in the case of different educational outcomes in Cambodia and Uganda. The move from politics to policy and the centralization of service delivery in Cambodia enable the government to limit the growth of civil servants, thereby reducing the wage share of spending on education. This in turn allows Cambodia to have more resources for capital development such as schools and classrooms, teaching, and learning materials. In contrast, the move back from policy to politics and the decentralization of service delivery in Uganda led to an increase in civil servants and in the wage share of education spending because of the increased number of its administrative units — the district. This in turn decreased the budget for capital development.

That there is more availability of schools and classrooms in Cambodia than Uganda not only results from more availability of resources, but, most importantly, from its lower level of corruption. Although, Cambodia has been ranked consistently as more corrupt than Uganda, the volume of corruption in school and classroom construction is lower compared to Uganda. The centralized mode of governance in Cambodia limits the volume of corruption in the hands of fewer people than the decentralized mode of governance in Uganda that allows the volume of corruption to increase as it involves tender and people at many different levels of administration.

At the same time, this move from politics to a policy and performance base in order to win elections also gives more incentive to the CPP and Hun Sen to accelerate the development of the education sector, such as building more schools and classrooms as there is no political conflict over the legitimacy of the progress. On the contrary, the increase of civil servants in Uganda is meant to provide jobs for political support rather than to provide better services since the performance-based strategy that President Museveni adopted so far has not enhanced his legitimacy because of other factors such as ethnic divisions. This situation also does not provide any incentives for President Museveni and NRM's members to launch a school and classroom construction campaign, as was the case for the CPP and Prime Minister Hun Sen in Cambodia. Consequently, the shortage of schools and classrooms in Uganda remains unresolved, which hinders its ability to expand educational provision.
It is also important to note that the centralized mode of governance in Cambodia also allows Cambodian elites to easily collect corruption money and amass a large amount of funds for this political development project. While in Uganda, corruption is decentralized due to its decentralized mode of governance, a pattern that prevented Museveni from having access to large amounts of slash funds that could be used for such a political development project.

The centralized and planned system of teacher recruitment and placement in Cambodia also allows it to solve teacher accommodation problems as it posts teachers in or near their hometowns, which leads to lower teacher absenteeism and guarantees teacher qualifications, which leads to a better quality of teaching. In contrast, the decentralized and unplanned system of teacher recruitment in Uganda leads to higher teacher absenteeism as government is unable to provide sufficient accommodations for teachers who are recruited from every part of the country and lack qualifications due to corruption in the recruitment process, which significantly negatively impacts the quality of teaching.

The centralized system of textbook distribution in Cambodia also leads to more availability of textbooks at the school level compared to the decentralized system of budget allocation to schools to purchase textbooks of their own. Due to corruption and other factors, textbooks are not purchased by schools, which negatively impacts the quality of learning. In Uganda, because of an attempt by the ruling elites to gain political support from local politicians (a product of decentralization), there is a lack of political will to implement mechanisms for effective accountability.

There are, however, other factors that contribute to the varying quality of implementation in both countries, which leads to different outcomes ranging from donors' and NGOs' involvement, the different natures of institutional arrangements, and teachers' personal motivation and commitment to educate.

Currently in Cambodia and Uganda, because of the scope of their involvement, the international donor community remains essential to the functioning of the Cambodian and Ugandan education systems. However, it is only with appropriate conditionality
that aid can work. For example, the different degrees of corruption in Cambodia and Uganda are also facilitated by different models of donor support in both countries. While donors in Uganda prefer to use general budget support, most donors in Cambodia continue to use this program and project support. In Uganda, the general budget support model led to a withdrawal of donors from directly monitoring the utilization of funds, which creates opportunities for corruption by government officers. In Cambodia, donors have managed their own direct monitoring through their programs and project support by using their own procedures that limit the opportunity for corruption.

In another case, within the same resource envelope, with support from NGOs and donors, Cambodia adopted strategic interventions such as double-shifting and multi-grade teaching to expand the supply-side capacity and provide school breakfasts and scholarship programs to reduce the cost burden (direct and opportunity) on the demand side, and, therefore, to facilitate school-aged children to enroll and remain in school, especially at the basic level. Such direct involvement of donor and NGOs in Uganda is less evident.

Concerning the institutional process, Uganda has better policies and resources to train highly skilled workforces in science-related fields compared to Cambodia. However, its traditional higher education institutions (one university consists of a variety of schools and faculties) led to more duplicated programs in the fields of social science, business, humanities, and arts, which in turn led to lower enrollments in science-related fields compared to the more specialized higher education institutions in Cambodia (for example, the Cambodia Institute of Technology, the Royal University of Agriculture, the University of Medical Science, and the National Polytechnic Institute). This is compounded by the fact that there is a lack of economic incentives as Ugandan white-collar jobs are paid substantially higher, especially within the government sector when compared to Cambodia.

On a personnel level, the rate of absenteeism among Cambodian teachers is lower than that of Uganda, despite the fact that Cambodian teachers’ salaries are lower in absolute terms, and the gap between salaries and living costs is larger than Uganda’s.
This may be the result of their different motivations and job aspirations. While the majority of Cambodian teachers considered an education profession as their top choice and put the achievement of pupils as their main motivation to teach, the majority of Ugandan teachers entered teaching positions as a last resort and, therefore, pupil achievement is not their main motivation. This is also reflected in the lower turnover rate among Cambodian teachers compared to Ugandan.

VII.3 Policy lessons learned

Educational reform is always defined as an attempt to contribute to building a nation, especially in terms of economic development. However, it is not guaranteed that all investments in education contribute to economic development. The challenge for the educational analyst is to identify what characteristics education can contribute to economic development and to formulate effective measures, including public policy, which can begin to promote such characteristics. Empirical cross-countries analysis, experience from successful countries in East Asia, as well as a comparative analysis of the cases of Cambodia and Uganda indicate that only when education is responsive to the needs of the local labour market and economy can investment provide a positive and substantial return. In developing countries such as Cambodia and Uganda where agriculture still plays a critical role in the economy, the development of industry is still in its infancy, and the rate of illiteracy is high. The strategy of coupling the education system and the labour market and economy is to provide a greater and better distributed and qualified basic-educated population, a more skilled workforce in TVET, and a more highly skilled workforce in science, engineering, manufacturing, construction, and technology.

To achieve a balance and mix of skilled human resources, the state plays an important role. The analysis in Cambodia and Uganda indicates that in countries with clear and long-standing policies and resource commitments, the outcomes are much stronger than in countries whose policies and resource allocations constantly shift. Therefore, drafting the right policy design and allocating resources accordingly are the first priorities, although the actual outcomes still depend on how they are implemented. Ideally, it is only through a meritocratic bureaucracy that policy design and resource allocation can be rightly established within a country's technical and professional
capacities, and desirable design outcomes can be achieved through training and by using professional bureaucrats.

The comparative case study between Cambodia and Uganda, however, reveals that, though to a different degree, the predominance of neopatrimonial politics hinders the ability for a country to establish a meritocratic bureaucracy, which significantly negatively impacts policy design and resource allocation and their implementation. This study also reveals that in a context where winning elections depends on performance-based evaluations of the ruling party, the right policy priorities can be designed and resources can be allocated accordingly, and implementation can be carried out by the ruling elites. For example, Cambodian elites adopted practical policies, such as double-shifting and multi-grade teaching in order reach a wider population. Therefore, assuming that all reforms that are influenced by political interests are working against the needs of local people and the labour markets is misleading.

The ruling elites under neopatrimonial politics, however, are receptive to and tolerate corruption by their political clients, which significantly impacts the quality of implementation; therefore, they are unable to deliver the intended outcomes. In this sense, in the long run, to professionalize the bureaucracy is a necessary step to achieving the intended outcomes. However, this dissertation also finds that when the Cambodian state was weak, as measured in terms of malfunction of the bureaucracy and political interference in technical issues, the donor community played an important role in pressuring the recipient Cambodian government to design and allocate resources to the education sub-sector, which reflected the needs of the local labour market and economy. Further, they can also promote educational development when they carry out their interventions through direct programs and projects independent of the state bureaucracy, compared to the laissez-faire attitudes of the donor community in Uganda.

95 Although relatively successful in the short term, there is a negative impact in the long run. The negative impact of this type of intervention, as noted by many critics, is that it does not contribute to building the capacity of the state’s institutions or help to reform the institutional capacity across the board. First, if the project is implemented within the Ministry, donors pay supplemented salaries for
VII.4 Further research

There are three areas for further research that emerge from this comparative case study. First, as indicated in this study, the lack of a meritocratic bureaucracy hinders the government's ability to design right policy priorities, allocate resources accordingly, and implement them correctly. Therefore, an intensive case study should be carried out regarding the circumstances in which a meritocratic bureaucracy can be established. Second, under a similar neopatrimonial state, Cambodian elites are able to align their policies with the interests of poor people, compared to Ugandan elites. Therefore, such a case study should focus on what circumstances political elites can align with, rather than against, the interests of poor people. Finally, as briefly noted in the study, individual schools and teachers respond to given policies and resources in different ways, which leads to different outcomes, both within the country and across the countries. Therefore, it is important to conduct an intensive case study of successful schools and teachers to identify their characteristics in order to provide the lessons learned by each country, as well as by schools and teachers and to help policy makers adopt policies that promote such characteristics.

government officials who work on their projects, which distorts the whole public administration reform. Second, if it is implemented outside the Ministry, it attracts qualified state bureaucrats to work for their projects because of higher pay. Further, there is also the likelihood of fragmentation and duplication of projects if donors are not well coordinated. Therefore, the donor community should review their previous programs and project support to make them consistent with the long term professionalization of the recipient countries’ bureaucrats.