

Interparty and Intraparty Factionalism in Cambodian Politics

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Abstract

Cambodia's hegemonic party system that emerged after the violent removal of First Prime Minister Norodom Ranariddh early in July 1997 has now given way to a one-party state, which still remains prone to tension and instability. The party system has become less factionalised and can be characterised as moving from high to medium factionalism. This development resulted from the growing domination of the Cambodian People's Party (CPP) and the weakening of the opposition parties, such as National United Front for an Independent, Neutral, Peaceful and Cooperative Cambodia, which splintered and become almost irrelevant in Cambodian politics. The Cambodian National Rescue Party (CNRP) emerged as the main opposition party after the 2013 election but was then banned from competing in the 2018 election. Although the CNRP remains united by its anti-CPP position, it is still fractured along political lines between two former opposition parties – the Sam Rainsy Party and the Human Rights Party. Historical institutionalism sheds some new light on the variation of political developments among political parties and within them, but does not supplant the fact that party leaders are rational to the extent that they select strategies in pursuit of their interests defined as power or security under specific institutional constraints or the lack thereof.

Keywords

Cambodia, interparty factionalism, intraparty factionalism, historical institutionalism, Cambodian People's Party, FUNCINPEC, Cambodian National Rescue Party, hegemonic-party system

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Introduction

Factionalism is a fact of political life in all countries, including those under regimes that adopted Marxism–Leninism as the unifying ideology and those under democratic regimes; however, the degrees of factionalism in some countries are greater than those in other countries. Factionalism also exists within political parties in the same country but varies from party to party; some parties are more or less factionalised than others. The question posed in this article is not only why interparty and intraparty factionalism persists, but also why the degrees of factionalism vary from party to party. Historical institutionalism as a theoretical perspective helps shed light on the persistence or continuity without sacrificing the role of rational actors (Hall and Taylor, 1996: 940). History matters to the extent that any institutional choices that emerged at some point in the past delimit institutional choices (King, 1995; Pierson, 1996) or institutional development thereafter. However, individual choices also matter: individuals can be assumed to act “rationally” in that they can still pursue their personal interests under institutional constraints or the lack thereof. In the world of politics, where formal state and party institutions do not exist or are extremely weak because of historical legacies, rational actors are still assumed to be able to develop their own strategies (based on traditional/ideational and material sources) that would help them pursue interests such as survival, security, and power. Their successes or failures also depend in large part on institutional legacies (not simply political culture) and power relations that enable or disable them.

Empirically, as will be shown, political factionalism has been a major source of political friction, institutional change, and continuity in Cambodia. On one hand, political factionalism was what gave rise to liberal democracy in the early 1990s, when four different warring factions signed a peace agreement that turned their battlefield into a ballot box under the administrative leadership of the United Nations (Doyle, 1995; Peou, 1997). On the other hand, political factionalism still persists today, but the country has not returned to the situation that prevailed in the 1970s and the 1980s, when it was at war and its population experienced extreme political violence (especially under the murderous Pol Pot regime). Still, the multi-party or democratic system that was introduced in the early 1990s has been facing an uphill battle, as factionalism continued to rear its ugly head. One of the four peace signatories, the Khmer Rouge, continued its armed rebellion until the late 1990s. The coalition government, which was formed after the 1993 election, fell apart after a violent coup in 1997. The Cambodian People’s Party (CPP), led by Second Prime Minister Hun Sen, quickly consolidated power by weakening or destroying its opponents, not only those who belonged to opposition parties but also those within his own party.

The fact that the CPP has become less factionalised over time can partly be explained in terms of institutional legacies that kept the party in the position with a greater advantage than all opposition parties. Shaped by a form of socialist legacy and its institutional structures built during the 1980s, the CPP has been able to consolidate power more effectively than opposition parties. However, historical legacies alone do not explain the persistence and variation of intraparty factionalism, otherwise the royalist party based on centuries-old ideas and values or tradition would have become less factionalised than the

CPP. The fact that the CPP has been more effective than National United Front for an Independent, Neutral, Peaceful and Cooperative Cambodia and other opposition parties when assessing in terms of weakening factionalism within the party requires more explanation. This article contends that party leaders also matter: their personalities as well as their ideas and ability to adopt strategies and adapt to circumstances in pursuit of their interests help explain why some parties are more factionalised than others.

This article is divided into three parts. The first part discusses the varying degrees of factionalism within each party since the early 1990s, making the case that the CPP has since become least factionalised when compared to other political parties in the opposition camp. The second part explains why the opposition parties have not been as successful as the CPP in terms of their ability to manage intraparty factionalism. The third part explains why the CPP has been more successful than the other political parties in terms of managing and mitigating intraparty factionalism.

Interparty and Intraparty Factionalism in Cambodian Politics

This article contends that there are two major levels of political factionalism: interparty and intraparty. Interparty factionalism refers to a political setting in which major political factions within the same system and in the same country compete with each other as rivals. They can be major armed groups or political parties fighting for political control. Intraparty factionalism refers to infighting with each political group or party. The extent to which groups or parties have become factionalised is difficult to assess because of complex historical developments that cannot be discussed in detail in this short article, but certain indicators show that some parties are more or less factionalised than others. One key indicator is the level of division within each party whose members rally behind different party leaders who also try to marginalise each other within the party. Another indicator is the level or number of party members leaving or joining other parties or forming their own parties. As parties become less factionalised, they look more coherent and stable. They are more likely to survive and become more capable of competing for power and winning or staying in power.

Throughout the 1970s and the 1980s, Cambodia was deeply factionalised, as evidenced by the fact that the country was at war and under repressive regimes, especially one led by the Khmer Rouge leadership (1975–1978). The civil war that broke out after the bloodless coup that ousted Prince Norodom Sihanouk in March 1970 was fought between the pro-US Lon Nol republican regime and the pro-China Khmer Rouge revolutionary or communist movement. The Khmer Rouge won the war but turned the country into “killing fields” and then engaged in border clashes with Vietnamese forces, which then invaded Cambodia late in December 1978. The Third Indochina War was not simply fought between Cambodia and Vietnam, but also between pro-China/West Cambodian factions and pro-Vietnam/Soviet Union Cambodian factions. On one side of the war was the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea (CGDK), made up of three major different factions: the National United Front for an Independent, Neutral, Peaceful, and Cooperative Cambodia (FUNCINPEC), the Khmer People’s National

Liberation Front (KPNLF), and the Khmer Rouge. On the other side was the People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK), established and backed by the Vietnamese occupying forces with the support of the Soviet Union. This was just another civil war that became internationalised (Conboy, 2013), but it did not fully end after the factions signed their peace agreements on 23 October 1991 and invited the United Nations to send in a peace-keeping mission known as United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC). The Khmer Rouge did not comply with the ceasefire, subsequently pulled out of the peace process just before the UNTAC-organised national election was held (Heder and Ledgerwood, 1996), and carried out its armed rebellion until its disintegration in the late 1990s (Peou, 2007).

Throughout the 1990s, the major political factions made efforts to form a coalition government after the 1993 election but failed to stay united. After the 1993 election, FUNCINPEC, KPNLF (whose party was named Buddhist Liberal Democratic Party, or BLDP), and the CPP (the party of the PRK, which was renamed State of Cambodia, or SOC, in 1989) agreed to share power. Prince Norodom Ranariddh of FUNCINPEC became first prime minister, whereas Hun Sen became second prime minister. This power-sharing arrangement did not mitigate factionalism to the benefit of democratisation. Interparty factionalism escalated into an armed conflict, as the struggle for power among the coalition government partners continued unabated, and worsened when Hun Sen violently removed Ranariddh from power in 1997 (Peou, 2018).

Upon closer examination, this political dynamic can be observed in relations not only between the factions within the party system, but also within each of them: namely, factions within factions, or intraparty factions. A comparative analysis, however, shows that the CPP has emerged as the least factionalised political party in the country. Factionalism within the CPP can be traced back to the early 1980s, when the People's Revolutionary Party of Kampuchea (PRPK) emerged after the PRK was established. The PRK's first prime minister was Pen Sovann who ran the new government from 22 June to 2 December 1981, when he was arrested for allegedly irritating the Vietnamese and imprisoned until his release in 1992 (Strangio, 2014: 33). At the time, Hun Sen was considered pro-Vietnam because of his opposition to Pen Sovann's nationalist stance. So it did not come as a surprise when Pen Sovann was removed from power and replaced by another party leader (Chan Si). Hun Sen became prime minister in 1985, after the death of Chan Si in Moscow in 1984, but intraparty factionalism continued. The party was divided into two major factions, one led by Hun Sen and the other by Chea Sim. During the first half of the 1980s, Chea had been referred to as the "strongman" of Cambodia because of his role as party president. Throughout the peace negotiation process that progressed during the second half of the 1980s, however, Hun Sen began to turn the tables when he emerged as the dominant player within the CPP.

While still working with Prince Ranariddh within their coalition government, Hun Sen took steps to weaken the Chea Sim faction. For instance, he ordered the arrest of General Sin Song (minister of public security) and General Sin Sen (national police chief), both of whom were loyal to Chea Sim. The two generals were forced to flee the country, but later returned to the country only to be arrested. Hun Sen also prevailed upon Chea Sim

when he appointed General Hok Lundy as the next national police chief. The Chea Sim faction lost further ground after Hun Sen staged a successful putsch against his co-prime minister in 1997. When he sought to remove Ranariddh from power, Hun Sen did not receive support from a number of high-ranking members loyal to the Chea Sim faction (made up of co-Minister of Interior Sar Kheng and the head of the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces General Ke Kim Yan, who were related through the marriage of their children).

After his successful removal of Ranariddh from power in 1997, Hun Sen emerged as the country's dominant leader, making it difficult for the Chea Sim faction to fight back. All Chea Sim and his protégés could do was quietly resist. After the 2003 national election, Chea Sim refused to approve Hun Sen's initiative to make amendments to the Constitution (which would have allowed the CPP and FUNCINPEC to form a coalition government but left out Chea Sim's allies); the latter had one of his closest allies, General Hok Lundy, escort Chea Sim (CPP president of the Senate and acting head of state in the king's absence) to the airport, where he was forced to depart for Thailand. In Chea's absence, Senate Vice-President Nhiek Bun Chhay of FUNCINPEC sided with Hun Sen and approved the amendments.

Hun Sen succeeded in further weakening the Chea Sim faction by removing more of the latter's loyalists from positions of power. In 2009, for instance, General Ke Kim Yan was replaced with General Pol Saroeun, who was loyal to Hun Sen, who also appointed seven of his loyalists as deputy commanders-in-chief. In 2011, Hun Sen ordered the arrest of officials loyal to Chea Sim, including the latter's chief bodyguard, General Chhoeun Chanthan, who was replaced by General Yim Leang, loyal to Hun Sen. Other Chea Sim's loyalists who were arrested included Chea's chief of protocol General Chan Kosal, General Polork Ho, and General Khieu Bora. Another development showing Hun Sen's successful efforts at weakening and marginalising members of the Chea Sim party had to do with Chea's poor and deteriorating health conditions, especially after a prolonged sickness caused by diabetes and a stroke in 2000. As president of the CPP, Chea Sim was older than Hun Sen. Chea was eighty-three when he died in 2015. With his appointment as new president of the CPP, Hun still could not eliminate factionalism within the party; however, his faction gained greater dominance within the party than ever before.

Hun Sen's successful consolidation of power within his own party also resulted from his effective strategy to weaken other major parties, such as the BLDP, FUNCINPEC, and the more recently established opposition party called the Cambodian National Rescue Party (CNRP), each of which badly suffered from intraparty factionalism. The BLDP was the first signatory of the Paris Peace Agreements to have fallen apart. The party had a long history of factional infighting. Launched in 1979 as a resistance movement, the KPNLF was established with a mission to fight the PRK regime, but intraparty factionalism soon engulfed its leadership, which was divided between its president (Son Sann, a former prime minister and a former governor of the National Bank under the Sihanouk regime) and the military branch led by generals under the Lon Nol regime (1970–1975): Generals Sak Sutsakhan and Dien Del. Late in December 1985, the two

generals began to challenge their president, Son. Although the infighting was resolved when they reconciled, factionalism finally resulted in Sak's decision to form a new political party called the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) after the signing of the Paris Peace Agreements. The Son Sann faction went on to form the BLDP but factionalism persisted, especially when the party was split after it joined the coalition government. Disagreement on major policy issues between two top BLDP leaders, Son Sann and Ieng Mouly, was resolved when they agreed to let Son remain as party president and let Ieng become minister of information, but this power-sharing arrangement did not last. Infighting persisted. The party was finally dissolved when Ieng became the leader of the LDP and the Son Sann faction formed a new party known as the Son Sann Party. Neither party won a seat in the 1998 election and they did not even compete in the subsequent elections, having ceased to exist.

Like the BLDP, FUNCINPEC was an armed resistance force and became a political party just before the 1993 election; however, the royalist party became far more factionalised than the CPP, to the point of becoming politically irrelevant. Established on 26 March 1981 by Prince Norodom Sihanouk (the former king and head of state who was overthrown in 1970 by his own defence minister, General Lon Nol) as a resistance force fighting for the liberation of Cambodia from the Vietnamese forces that invaded Cambodia in 1978, the party was subsequently led by one of Sihanouk's sons (Norodom Ranariddh), who won the 1993 election. As first prime minister sharing power with Hun Sen, the prince first appeared to enjoy a high degree of control over his party. But intra-party factionalism became increasingly evident soon after the 1993 election. FUNCINPEC reached a new low when Prince Ranariddh expelled his finance minister, Sam Rainsy, from the party in May 1995, then removed him from the National Assembly in June, and subsequently worked with Hun Sen to drop Sam as finance minister in October. Outspoken against government corruption, Sam upset both Ranariddh and Hun and moved on to form the Khmer Nation Party, subsequently renamed Sam Rainsy Party.

Factionalism within the royalist party grew deeper after Hun Sen had removed Ranariddh from power in 1997. The royalists ousted the prince from the party in 2006. More royalists left the party to join the Sam Rainsy Party or entered civil society. Kem Sokha, for instance, who had left the BLDP to join FUNCINPEC in 1999, left the royalist party to form the Cambodian Centre for Human Rights and formed his own party in 2007 – the Human Rights Party. Princess Norodom Arunrasmy (the youngest daughter of King Sihanouk) worked with Party Secretary-General Nhie Chhay to oust her brother Ranariddh from the party in 2006, and subsequently emerged as the party candidate for prime minister in the 2008 national election. After his ouster from the party, Ranariddh himself formed his Norodom Ranariddh Party (NRP). The FUNCINPEC leaders who engineered the prince's ouster, Princess Norodom Arunreasmey and Nhie Chhay, failed to prevent frictions within the party. In December 2008, some twenty senior FUNCINPEC officials reportedly defected to the CPP. In the following month, another thirty-five FUNCINPEC officials were allegedly planning to join the ruling party. General Serei Kosal (a former fierce critic of Hun Sen and one of the royalist military commanders who had fought against Hun Sen's armed forces after the coup in

1997) and Kassie Neou (a former secretary of state in the Ministry of Justice) were among them (Peou, 2014: 219).

Neither the moribund FUNCINPEC nor the new NRP did well in the 2008 and 2013 elections. The NRP won two seats in the 2008 election and not a single seat in the 2013 election. The FUNCINPEC also performed poorly in the two elections, having won only two seats in 2008 and no seat in 2013. Some FUNCINPEC members, such as Prince Sisowath Thomico, left the party. The poor election results may have motivated the two parties to reunite when Ranariddh rejoined the party in January 2015, but factionalism quickly re-emerged. Not all party members wholeheartedly welcomed his return. Prince Sirirath, the party's outspoken member, was sceptical about Ranariddh being party president again. In February, Second Vice-President Nhiek Bun Chhay also railed against Ranariddh "for making decisions without consultation since returning to lead the party[...]" (Khy, 2015). Nhiek left FUNCINPEC to form a new party, the Khmer National United Party, citing his dissatisfaction with the prince's dictatorial leadership style, and threatened to retake twenty-one of the twenty-five provincial offices that belonged to FUNCINPEC, aiming to weaken the prince (Khoun, 2016).

Factionalism also ran deep within the relatively newer CNRP, which was formed when two opposition parties (the Sam Rainsy Party and the Human Rights Party) agreed to merge in 2012 before the 2013 election. Although they shared one thing in common – namely the mission to topple the CPP – the two factions did not always work in unison. To begin with, they had a history of mutual hostility. According to one observer,

Prior to the merger, the SRP and the HRP were locked in a war of words, accusing each other of selling out to the ruling elites or having hidden agendas. They dug up any damaging stories they could find to destroy the legitimacy and credibility of their rivals. (Phoak, 2013)

Members of CNRP in Canada and the United States also remained divided after the 2012 merger, along former party lines: the pro-Sam Rainsy CNRP North America (CNRP-NA) led by Kimly Chea and the pro-Kem Sokha CNRP of the United States (CNRP-USA) led by Rithy Oung. Their rivalry continued. For instance, when CNRP-USA organised events during Sam Rainsy's visit to the Pacific Northwest on 21 and 22 May 2015, tensions rose. Members of the CNRP-USA felt threatened by the CNRP-NA. Titthana Tith, president of CNRP (Long Beach) and a long-time supporter of Kem Sokha, said the CNRP-NA first did not welcome the CNRP-USA but then tried to control the latter. According to Tith, "suddenly [CNRP] NA has a problem in the last year; they want to control us and take money from us [...] So we asked the CNRP to eliminate CNRP-NA, as they are [trying] to create a party within a party" (Ponniiah and Chhay, 2014a).

Although the two groups subsequently agreed to integrate themselves into a new group called CNRP-America (CNRP-A), frictions remain. Between 10 per cent and 15 per cent of the former CNRP-USA members, such as Kem Monovithya (the oldest daughter of Kem Sokha), were unsupportive of CNRP-A because they thought they would not be able to control it, and thus maintained their loyalty to CNRP-USA

(Interview 5 November 2019). Following Sam Rainsy's resignation from his position as president of the CNRP in 2017 after he left the country because of the CPP's legal actions against him, Kem Sokha took on the challenge of being the sole leader of the party. However, it is far from clear whether he was able to weaken the kind of factionalism that afflicted the party. Sam Rainsy questioned Kem's ability to lead the party while in jail. CNRP-A then agreed to let Sam Rainsy lead the movement. In December 2018, CNRP held its world conference in Atlanta (in which some 700 members attended) to appoint Sam Rainsy as acting president. Monovithya Kem was given a major role within the party but refused to accept it. Her father also "rejected the legitimacy of the Atlanta meeting," apparently accusing Sam Rainsy of taking unilateral action to seize power within the party (Willemyns, 2018).

In short, the CPP has now become Cambodia's strongest and least-factionalised party and none of the opposition parties now enjoy the same level of institutional or organisational development. The major parties opposing the CPP have either disappeared or hardly functioned, suffering from infighting and political repression by the CPP. What can be said about this political development is that the multi-party institutionalised after the Paris Peace Agreements has come to an end. The CPP has become the party in full control of the three branches of government, but this does not suggest that the ruling party is now free from factionalism either. As will be seen, the fact that Hun Sen has appointed his family members to top positions of leadership suggests his lack of confidence in the ability of other CPP leaders to stay loyal to him.

Explaining Interparty and Intraparty Factionalism

What explains the interparty and intraparty factional dynamics in Cambodian politics? Much of what has been written about Cambodia tends to focus on political culture characterised by traditional authoritarianism or neo-authoritarianism. Political culture does help explain why civil–military authoritarianism persists in Cambodian politics, especially if we look closely at how party leaders' decisions tend to be made unilaterally or how inability keeps their parties united and institutionalised, but political culture is also a by-product of history and ideas or ideology and cannot explain change and variation within the party system. Cambodian politics has created a historically entrenched path dependence of civil–military relations (Chambers, 2015). Throughout Cambodian history the culture of self-fulfilment or personalism has not only been incompatible with commitment to the public good (Lichterman, 1995), but it also appears to be a major source of political factionalism. If there is one cultural characteristic that still persists today, it is the one of mutual distrust. One Cambodian proverb sums it up well: "When the water rises, the fish eat the ants; when the water recedes the ants eat the fish." This culture, however, does not fully explain the persistence of factionalism and why some political parties are more factionalised than others or why some leaders are more politically effective and successful than others.

While the culture of personalism appears to persist in Cambodia, personal politics needs to be put in the historical context of state development over a long period of time.

As will be discussed, historical events such as foreign invasions, colonial rule, civil wars, and political violence under authoritarian regimes (especially under the Khmer Rouge regime) have made it extremely difficult, if not impossible, for the state to become institutionally strong enough to mitigate the violence-prone dynamics of interparty and intraparty factionalism.

The persistence of severe factional politics in Cambodia is the manifestation of a structurally weak state, despite efforts by leaders to build national unity and promote national solidarity. Within this structural context, one thing is certain: neither religion nor ideology seems to have tamed political factionalism and they have in fact exacerbated this political dynamic. As the main religion in Cambodia from at least the fifth century, for instance, Buddhism on its own has done little to pacify religious and political rivalries. Although Cambodians regard themselves as sharing the same identity based on Buddhism (“to be Khmer is to be Buddhist”), this religious identity has failed to bring about national unity. After gaining for his country freedom from French colonial rule (1863–1953), the successful effort that made him known as “father of independence,” Norodom Sihanouk promoted a type of “Buddhist socialism,” but failed to bring about national unity as factional politics grew deep to the point where his own defence minister staged a successful coup against him. Buddhism itself has become a source of political factionalism. Although Buddhism has been treated as state religion (with the exception of its abolition under the Khmer Rouge regime), Harris (2001) identifies five major Buddhist groupings in Cambodia: Mohanikay modernists, Thommayut, young monks, Mohanikay hierarchy, and unreformed Mohanikay.

Modern ideologies such as liberalism and communism did not bring an end to factionalism either. Liberal democracy was introduced after World War II but was drowned by Prince Sihanouk’s repressive crackdowns on his political opponents. Factionalism flourished under his rule, as rivalry among ideological elites grew (Smith, 1968). Liberal democracy was reintroduced in 1970 but lasted less than five years when the revolutionary Khmer Rouge defeated the pro-US government. The Khmer Rouge leadership embraced communism in the form of Marxism–Maoism, but it then fell apart. Instead of building peace and achieving national solidarity, the communist regime turned the country into “killing fields.” Socialist nationalism may have been the regime’s ideological force to build a just society, but the reality was different: the regime committed mass atrocities against former enemies and innocent civilians; it then self-destructed and plunged the country into another war (Hinton, 1998; Peou, 2013).

The failure of building national unity because of extreme political factionalism cannot be fully understood without taking into account the historical fact that the Cambodian state had suffered from structural fragilities for centuries. Cambodian “history is filled with rebellions and civil wars” (Chandler, 1993: 25). In the pre-Angkorian period, “Cambodia was not an integrated despotic state. Instead, it was a collection and a sequence of principalities sharing a despotic language of politics and control[...] they were rivals of each other and thus independent” (25–26). Although the country became “more politically coherent” in the eighth century and subsequently its bureaucracy

became “highly developed” (26, 63), the development of state institutions did not continue:

By the end of the eighteenth century, Cambodia has been devastated by civil wars and invasions from both sides [Thailand and Vietnam]; it was even without a monarch for fifteen years. The early 1800s [...] formed perhaps the darkest portion of the dark ages. (4)

Cambodia had been historically subjected to interference and control by both neighbouring countries (Thailand and Vietnam), which “began to undermine Cambodian authority in the east” from the seventeenth century on (Leifer, 1961–1962: 361). Cambodia lost its independence to France in the 1860s, which further weakened the monarchy as the main state institution. The country did not emerge as an independent state until the early 1950s, but French colonial rule had given rise to both nationalism and factionalism. The 1863 Treaty of Friendship, Commerce and French Protection allowed France to assume control over Cambodia’s foreign and defence policy matters and significantly restricted the political role of King Norodom (1834–1904). The French also preferred Norodom’s half-brother Sisowath and did what they could to undermine the king. Nationalism grew under French colonial rule but then gave way to factionalism after independence. Although King Sihanouk helped fight for independence and became head of state after his abdication, Cambodia’s political stability did not last. Political factions formed political parties to compete in elections, but did not have enough time and opportunity to become institutionalised. Leifer (1968) argues that the process of institutionalisation failed. Parties were subjected to political repression carried out by Prince Sihanouk, who sought to preserve his party, *Sangkum Reastr Niyum*, as the country’s dominant party. Armed rebellions began after the mid-1960s and the country fell into the state of war, after Sihanouk was overthrown by his defence minister. New parties emerged but had no time to grow institutionally. They died when the Khmer Rouge came to power in 1975.

The Khmer Rouge regime destroyed all existing state and social institutions, leaving the country with only the revolutionary movement in power, but this destruction did not stop the regime from succumbing to factionalism. Once in power, the new regime experienced intense struggles for power (Peou, 2000). In fact, the purges carried out by the Pol Pot leadership against those accused of treason were also symptomatic of severe factionalism within the new regime. The communist party was the dominant state institution led by top communist leaders who left the country with no institutional structures after they were driven out of power after the Vietnamese invasion late in 1978. The new pro-Vietnam regime, the PRK, was quickly built from scratch, but the war it waged against the CGDK prevented institution building (Peou, 2000). The CGDK posed a threat to the PRK’s efforts at nation and administration rebuilding (Slocomb, 2001). By the end of the 1980s, the Cambodian state remained weakened by the war. The PRK turned SOC was one of the four warring factions, which could not eliminate each other by force, and was under international pressure to sign a peace agreement in 1991. As noted earlier, interparty factionalism did not die down after that; however, intraparty factionalism became increasingly evident.

What explains intraparty factionalism? Historically, political parties were subjected to infighting, but this phenomenon may have something to do with more than the fact that Cambodia has been a weak state. Intraparty factionalism appears to be the manifestation of personalism (loosely defined as a tendency to personalise power or institutions such as parties). Throughout Cambodian history, personal rivalry among royal family members continued unabated. After World War II, members of the royal family competed with each other for power. For instance, Prince Sisovath Yuthevonng led the Democratic Party and Prince Norodom Norindeth led the Liberal party. More recently, even King Sihanouk's sons did not work together to strengthen the party their father had built. While Ranariddh led FUNCINPEC, his half-brother Chakrapong joined the CPP, then protested against the 1993 election results, and even declared the seven eastern provinces as "*Samdech Euv* Autonomous Zone." In 1994, the government led by Ranariddh arrested Chakrapong for allegedly having plotted a coup. When Ranariddh fired Sam Rainsy in 1994, Prince Norodom Sirivudh (Ranariddh's half-brother and minister of foreign affairs at the time) sided with the former finance minister and resigned in protest against the prince's decision. This type of family rivalry continued, as noted earlier.

My interviews with officials within royalist circles over the years reveal that they had little respect for Ranariddh as party leader because of his personal behaviour. He was accused of failing to provide leadership or being unable to unify the party. According to close observers, he also "did not read, nor write, nor did he work hard. He had no sense of nationalism, no administrative experience, and was obsessed with women and money" (Interview, 21 October 2016). He did not get along with other party leaders who disagreed with him. When he joined the armed resistance in 1983, he took steps unpopular among some top royalists. Resistance against his leadership began as early as 1985. His relationship with his minister of finance, Sam Rainsy, deteriorated soon after the coalition government had been formed because the latter challenged his authority by saying publicly that the government was corrupt. Nhiek Bun Chhay alleged that Ranariddh made decisions for the party without consultation with its members. For instance, the prince appointed twenty-four of his loyalists to the party's general secretariat, instead of selecting candidates from the membership base (Interview, 21 October 2016). The prince's personality may also have much to do with the fact that he relied more on his status as a member of the royal family and less on performance legitimacy. He expected party members to stay loyal and obedient to him regardless of what he did or said. After all, he is the son of King Sihanouk, who formed the party, and saw his personal status as the major source of legitimacy.

But personalisation of decision-making is not only inherent within the royal family and their parties, since leaders of other parties also tend to make unilateral decisions. Personalism exists within the BLDP and CNRP, whose members were not royal family members. Sam Rainsy emerged as an internationally popular political figure, but his party's organisational structures were minimal and terribly weak. Sam Rainsy devoted little of his attention to building party structures and he was seen as still operating his party more or less as a "rescue mission" in the context of "guerrilla warfare" (Interview:

11 November 2016). While highly critical of Hun Sen, Sam Rainsy did not tolerate critics within his party and would marginalise anyone accused of disloyalty. The problem with the CNRP that Sam Rainsy led was that it still looked more like a loose network of individuals who wanted to see Hun Sen removed from power rather than building a political party that would be highly institutionalised. According to Ou Virak, an observer of Cambodian politics, “The CNRP has no real platform, no real structure in place to take power and no real policies.” He added, “There are promises, but there are no people who have focused on policies and become experts. So there’s no possible minister of health, education, transport, energy, et cetera. That has long been a problem” (cited in Hutt, 2016a, 2016b). Because of the charges against him by the CPP government, Sam went into exile in late 2017, leaving Kem Sokha to run party affairs on a daily basis, but the latter did not devote much of his time to the building of his party’s organisational structures. He relied more and more on his daughter Kem Monovithyato keep his faction going, but she is also like Sam Rainsy: both have “strong personality” (Yap, 2019) and are known to not work well with others.

A history of distrust and fear of betrayal tends to leave party leaders and members unable to take effective collective action that would mitigate factionalism. One of the great difficulties that political parties in Cambodia have experienced is that they have a sense of insecurity deepened by the lack of trust rather than by their bad intentions. No regime in Cambodia has done more to destroy trust than when the Khmer Rouge was in power, but the regime itself also experienced extreme insecurity (Peou, 2018). Mutual trust among Cambodians has since developed only to a limited degree. A few examples should shed some light on this point. Son Sann, as noted earlier, formed his Son Sann Party after the BLDP had succumbed to factional infighting. Sam Rainsy first formed Khmer Nation’s Party but later renamed it as Sam Rainsy Party. By doing so, Son Sann and Sam Rainsy may have been convinced that others inside the party or outside (especially CPP leaders such as Hun Sen and the courts under their control) would be able to break up their parties (Van, 2019). More can be said about NRP, formed after the prince had been ousted from FUNCINPEC. Hun Sen does not appear to trust anyone either. As a former Khmer Rouge commander, he has a history of facing violent purges by the Pol Pot leadership in 1977–1978. He escaped to Vietnam and relied on foreign powers (first Vietnam and later China) to help him tilt the balance of power against his opponents. As someone accused of having violated human rights and with a case against him taken to the International Criminal Court, he could not place his trust in anyone who could turn against him. Another reason he has shown little cooperation toward the Khmer Rouge tribunal has much to do with the fact it may press ahead with the idea of seeking to prosecute his loyalists. What matter most in Cambodian politics are political perceptions shaped by personal experiences.

In summary, factionalism in Cambodian politics has been driven on one level by the culture of personalism that remains pervasive today. A collective identity or nationalism only exists faintly in the imagination of Cambodian people and their leaders. Neither political culture rooted in Buddhism nor political ideologies (adopted at different times to promote national unity and solidarity) have mitigated interparty and intraparty

factionalism, which can be reduced almost to the personal level. The extreme fragility of the Cambodian state is the main culprit and can be traced back to before the rise of the Khmer Empire and after its fall when it was weakened by foreign invasions and occupations, as well as political violence and civil wars. The fractured state has since left Cambodians involved in politics struggling for personal power and security, instead of working together to build and strengthen institutions (such as the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government as well as political parties). The culture of personalism, however, should not be understood to mean that only Cambodians engage in such factional politics. After all, factionalism exists in all societies (as the special issue of this journal also shows). This culture is not uniquely Cambodian either, since it is structurally and historically rooted. British philosopher Thomas Hobbes famously hypothesised a world without a strong sovereign (the *Leviathan*) by stating that it is a world where the “war of every man against every man” is waged (Schochet, 1967). The Khmer Empire emerged as a strong state governed by a powerful monarch (Chandler, 1993: 49), the traditional *Leviathan*, but did not last. Due to a series of historical tragedies, the Khmer state disintegrated and never had a real chance to recover or develop strong institutions. This helps explain why personalism in this country has trumped collectivism or prevailed upon any sense of solidarity, but this tendency should not be treated to mean that Cambodians are worse than other peoples. They are just a people who have inherited a historical legacy that still perpetuates factionalism. In short, the kind of personalism that has plagued Cambodian politics appears to be deeply rooted in the structural fragility of the Cambodian state and political parties, if not in Hobbes’ hypothetical state of nature.

Intraparty Factionalism: Why the CPP Has Become Least Factionalised

Although it argues that factionalism exists in all societies and that intraparty factionalism in Cambodia remains pervasive, this article still seeks to answer two other theoretical questions: Why has the CPP become comparatively least factionalised? Is this development conducive to the process of mitigating political factionalism in the future? As will be shown, the CPP has been more successful than other parties in minimising intraparty factionalism because of the Hun Sen faction’s ability to weaken not only opposition parties but also its rival CPP faction led by Chea Sim. Historical institutionalism (not political culture in a broad sense as often assumed by Cambodia scholars who tend to place much emphasis on traditional sources of political legitimacy) sheds some light on this development to the extent that the ruling party has inherited the strongest party structure developed in the 1980s, when compared to the opposition parties’ structures, and that the Hun Sen faction has been more effective than the Chea Sim faction because Hun Sen was more capable of consolidating his political power.

Compared to other opposition parties, the PRPK/CPP emerged as a far more institutionalised party in the 1980s. Unlike FUNCINPEC and BLDP, which formed as part of the armed resistance or liberation movement against the PRK/SOC regime, the CPP has its beginning as a political party that was far more structured and organised. In the 1980s,

the party had a central committee with sixty-four members whose work was carried out by a Politburo, which included the heads of the army, the police, the Supreme Court, and the National Bank. Few things have changed since the Paris Peace Agreements were signed in 1991. The CPP's institutional or organisational continuity reveals a number of things. First, CPP leaders (most notably Hun Sen) have relied on traditional sources of legitimacy enhancement, such as making themselves seen by people as descendants of popular ancient kings through religious and superstitious rituals (Norén-Nilsson, 2016). This traditional means alone, however, should not be seen as the institutional tool effectively used by CPP leaders to consolidate power. For instance, it is far from clear whether Cambodians genuinely regard Hun Sen as today's descendant of the ancient king named *Kân*. As noted in this article, nationalist appeals have not migrated factionalism.

Second, the legacy rooted in the PRK's ideology officially adopted to build its institutions matters more. Unlike the opposition parties, which had no coherent ideology (except their anti-communist and anti-CPP positions), the CPP relied on a more coherent ideology, known as Marxism–Leninism. The Revolutionary Party was regarded as “the leading force” of the state and society and the “core force of the great national solidarity and unity of all political forces,” but its membership remained extremely limited (Ananbi, 1990). The CPP's organisational structure, while no longer based on a coherent ideology, remains intact.

Third, and more importantly, the CPP's political structure remained intact because of its leadership's ability to maintain it during the intervention of the UNTAC. Unlike FUNCINPEC and BLDP, which left border areas or war zones to enter the cities, the CPP had the advantage of maintaining its control over the political structure in much of the country. One of UNTAC's components, Civil Administration, failed to take control of the CPP government's key ministries: information, finance, foreign affairs, defence, and public security. According to Mats Berdal and Michael Leifer, “UNTAC's attempts to control the [CPP's] administration were in any effect wholly unsuccessful [...] because SOC ministries and deliberately officials obstructed UNTAC” and “the SOC secret police operated as much as it had before” (Berdal and Leifer, 1996: 44). In fact, “UNTAC never attempted to exert effective direct control over the five key areas[...].” (Thayer, 1998). The CPP “tightly controlled the administration, police, and army and never allowed the United Nations to take over the five principal ministries of the [SOC] government” (Jeldres, 2012: 86).

Fourth, the CPP's ideology, its relatively developed organisational structure, and its ability to maintain its political structures by resisting UNTAC alone did not keep the party from becoming factionalised to the extent that the other opposition parties experienced. Hun Sen also played the most important role in successfully weakening factionalism within his party. During the peace negotiation process in the late 1980s, Hun Sen worked against the Chea Sim faction by appointing six of his loyalists to the Supreme National Council, headed by Prince Sihanouk, as part of the peace agreements signed in 1991. Throughout the 1990s and the decade that followed, he took steps to eliminate challengers within his party, such as General Sin Song and General Sin Sen regarded as the architecture of the “A-Team attack squad during the UN mission.”

Challenges to Hun Sen's leadership within the party have weakened further in recent years. Before the 2003 election, only six members of the twenty-one CPP Standing Committee members supported him, while ten rejected his candidacy and five remained undecided.¹ But whenever Chea Sim and his men took steps not in line with those of Hun Sen, the latter made efforts to stop them. The political balance of power between the two CPP camps shifted more decisively in favour of Hun Sen after the 2003 election. Apparently Chea Sim was under pressure from Hun Sen to retire from the party, as the latter worked to promote his loyalists. At an extraordinary meeting of the CPP Standing Committee on 2 July 2004, for instance, he took over the chairmanship in the absence of Chea Sim and Sar Kheng and declared in front of the sixteen members present that he was "the boss who decide[d] on the composition of the to-be-formed government" (cited in Peou, 2007). Hun Sen slowly pushed out Chea Sim's supporters from key government posts, such as General Ke Kim Yan in 2009 and Chea Sim's bodyguard chief in 2011, before taking over the role as CPP president when Chea Sim died in 2015.

Still, institutional constraints within the party made it difficult for Hun Sen to eliminate the Chea Sim faction quickly, but at the same time allowed him to consolidate power through institutional channels, rather than through abolishing institutional structures. Institutional rules and procedures allowed Hun Sen as the CPP's vice-president to become president only after Chea died, but Hun Sen could not eliminate the Chea Sim faction completely because the CPP congress members voted to elect the CPP's Secretary-General Say Chhum and Interior Minister Sar Kheng (a leader in the Chea Sim faction) as co-vice-presidents. The Central Committee has also placed some constraints on Hun Sen's personal ambitions, but he still made an effort to consolidate his power within the party. He consolidated power by taking incremental steps to strengthen his powerbase within the party without making any real institutional reform. The party's organisational structure remains unchanged, except for the fact that its Central Committee and the Politburo have expanded to include more of Hun Sen's loyalists. In 2005, the Central Committee added 121 new members, most of whom were loyal to Hun Sen. Early in 2015, the number of committee members expanded to 545, having added 306 new members. As it expanded, the Central Committee allowed Hun Sen to take steps to consolidate his grip on power within the party by adding his supporters to the membership. For instance, the new members added to the Committee in 2015 included senior military and police officers, such as Chhuon Sovan, deputy commander of the armed forces, Hun Sen's bodyguard chief Hing Bun Heang, and Phnom Penh Military Police Commander Rath Sreang.

Fifth, if not finally, Hun Sen would not have been as successful as he has been had he not relied on his powerful bodyguard unit, whose number is now as high as 6,000 and the support of his family members, especially his children. The bodyguards have become the country's elite force: welltrained, wellequipped, and no doubt better paid than other regular military personnel (Interview, 21 October 2016; Strangio, 2014: 73). He has also been successful in consolidating personal power by getting his family members, including his children, to support him. When a helicopter crash killed the feared police chief, General Hok Lundy, in 2008 (also one of Hun Sen's loyalists and in-laws), he appointed

his nephew-in-law, the deputy police chief at the time, to the top post. Hun Sen also elevated his sons to senior military and government positions. His eldest son, Hun Manet, who graduated from the US Military Academy at West Point but had no military experience, was appointed to three top positions within the armed forces- Vice-Chairman of the RCAF Joint General Staff, Deputy Commander of the Army and Commander of the 911 Airborne Brigade's Counter-Terrorism Unit as well as Deputy Commander of Hun Sen's Bodyguard Unit. Hun Manith, Hun Sen's second son, was appointed Deputy Head of the Military Intelligence Unit within the ministry of national defence. His third son, Hun Many, is a CPP lawmaker and leader of the CPP-Aligned Union of Youth Federations of Cambodia. Together his sons helped Hun Sen consolidate his power.

In addition to his appointment of loyalists to powerful positions, Hun Sen has made it difficult for CPP members to leave the party. He made sure to collect intelligence that could be used against his CPP opponents if and when they challenged his leadership. He has built up a network of spies who kept a close eye on anyone who is not loyal to him. A senior government official, for instance, was cited as saying that "Hun Sen is a person who follows up every bit of information, and all the information is in hands [...] he has many intelligence agents in nightclubs, restaurants and hotels in Phnom Penh" (Ponniah and Vong, 2014b). The prime minister is reported to have used corruption cases against CPP members who showed no or little loyalty to him or threatened his power. For instance, the removal of General Ke Kim Yan from his post was also based on the allegation that he had been involved in land deals allowing him to make a profit (Strangio and Thet, 2009). Most of Hun Sen's CPP opponents did not want to rock the boat, fearing the negative consequences of their rebellion against him or defection to other parties. A government official was quoted as saying that "No one dares to leave the CPP, because all their documents are in the hands of the Anti-Corruption Unit. So if you leave the CPP, all those documents will go to the court" (Ponniah and Vong, 2014b). Hun Sen has been successful in preventing party members from defecting to other parties by also rewarding their compliance. He has hardly taken any action against top members of the armed forces and the judiciary despite the fact that they were corrupt. Corruption charges were usually laid against those who appeared to threaten him. Corruption has become a political weapon that Hun Sen has used to enrich CPP members who support him and weaken his political opponents.

Moreover, Hun Sen's overall political success can be attributed to the fact that post-Cold War global politics have worked in his favour. Unlike previous Cambodian leaders who were caught in the Cold War between world powers, he has been fortunate in terms of his ability to exploit external powers. Powerful states such as the United States and those in Europe have put pressure on the CPP to respect democratic rule and human rights, but none have done anything serious to undermine Hun Sen's power. He would not have risen to power as fast as he did if Vietnam had not given him the support he needed throughout the 1980s. As noted, Hanoi sought to create a Cambodian government that would be aligned with the Vietnamese policy agenda and found Hun Sen to be more trustworthy than Pen Sovann and Chea Sim. Hanoi's removal of Pen Sovann and its appointment of Hun Sen as prime minister in 1985 made it possible for

Hun Sen to gain and expand political dominance in the country over the next thirty years.

The CPP leadership under Hun Sen's command has not in recent years been as close to Vietnam as it used to be, because of the shift in policy toward China. A government source put it bluntly:

2012 should be celebrated as the second independence for Cambodia (the first being independence from France in 1953). The country made a U-turn by moving away from Vietnam and closer to China. Cambodia has now become the best ally of China in Southeast Asia.

“Even Singapore accused us of being a Chinese puppet and wanted to kick us out of ASEAN,” he continued, “but we don't really care. Singapore itself is a US puppet,” he contended. He added,

Since 2012, Cambodian and Vietnamese delegations at important meetings hardly talked to each other. They only said hello to each other when they met in a hallway, but never went for a drink together. Leaders of the two countries did the same. (Interview, 28 September 2016)

Hun Sen became suspicious of Vietnamese intentions, and this was one reason why apparently he moved closer to China (Vietnam's historical arch-rival), which the CPP leadership viewed as countering the Vietnamese threat to Cambodia (Chong, 2017) but also capable of protecting the party under the king's command. Beijing allegedly provided Hun Sen with a “private plane” marked “Kingdom of Cambodia,” equipped with sophisticated devices and ready to come to Cambodia in an emergency situation. China did not trust pro-Western Sam Rainsy and saw Hun Sen (who worried about what Vietnam might do to him) as most capable of protecting China's interests and helped develop Khmer-Rouge areas along the Thai–Cambodian border.

Overall, the CPP has become less factionalised than any other parties largely because of the fact that Hun Sen has proved himself to be effective in weakening not only the opposition parties but also the Chea Sim faction; however, his overall success was the result of a thirty-year effort because of existing institutional constraints within the party. The CPP has become not only dominant, but also a party within which Hun Sen has become the dominant leader. This development can only be understood if we look at how the party emerged in the late 1980s, how its structures were built, and how the pro-Vietnam faction managed to consolidate its power by operating within the existing party structures initially set up by Vietnam. Thus, historical institutionalism helps make sense of the CPP's relative institutional strength and constraints on its members and its tendency to keep them at bay both from within the party and without, but this theoretical approach also needs to take into account individual political leaders' interests in pursuing power and their strategies within specific historical contexts.

Although it has become less factionalised than the opposition parties, the CPP is far from permanently unified. Hun Sen has emerged as the leader who holds the balance of

power within the party, but his grip on power through the use of brutal force remains brittle. Factionalism within the party is subdued by force but has the potential to grow back the moment he faces new challenges. By concentrating much of his power in the hands of a smaller number of trusted family members and loyalists, he runs the risk of alienating other CPP members unless he is prepared to maintain their loyalty through various incentives such as offering material benefits (i.e. nominal government positions and corruption).² What this also suggests is that his regime is unlikely to enhance his political legitimacy now still based largely on economic growth, which remains unsustainable because of threats of economic sanctions from Western democracies, which have been increasingly alarmed by the CPP's aggressive monopolisation of power (Peou, 2019b). But economic sanctions are unlikely to stop CPP leaders' determination to stay in power because of authoritarian elites' ability to "outsmart" sanctions-sender actors, even if it means that staying in power would cause much suffering to their own ordinary citizens (Peou, 2019a).

In short, the CPP's overall success in weakening interparty factionalism and minimising factionalism within the party has brought about temporary stability, but this development remains unsustainable in the long run, especially in institutionally weak or fragile states. Personal politics in institutionally weak state and party structures has a way of quickly rejuvenating dormant factionalism when dominant leaders die or are driven out of power or when there are no prospects for change of top leadership and external threats to their survival are weak. No leader in this institutional or structural context could hold on to power indefinitely, since at some point something is bound to go wrong, but this is not something dominant leaders who worry about their immediate or long-term survival or security (like those in Cambodia) tend to care about too much until it is too late. Dictators may not know when to stop, but this study also shows that they cannot afford to stop because in their minds losing power could spell the end of their survival and possibly the survival of their families and supporters. Perhaps it is helpful to repeat the Cambodian proverb one more time: "When the water rises, the fish eat the ants; when the water recedes eat the fish." This helps explain why losing power is not an option for leaders like Hun Sen.

Conclusion

Cambodia has gone through a centuries-old history of factionalism, but this case study also suggests that the political parties in this country are not factionalised to the same extent. The CPP has become less factionalised than any other parties that exist today. The balance of power between the major factions – one led by Chea Sim and the other by Hun Sen – shifted in favour of the latter, who still operated under the party's institutional constraints. In spite of the fact that he has been known as Cambodia's strongman, Hun Sen did not get his way as much or as fast as he would have liked; he pursued his interests by relying on the existing institutional structures to weaken opposition parties and his CPP opponents over time. He took incremental steps to consolidate his political power by destroying opposition parties and by not abolishing his party's established

procedures, rules, and decision-making processes that could also constrain other party members seen as threatening his power base. As the CPP becomes internally less factionalised because of his growing dominance, Hun Sen is likely to maintain his power within the party and will make sure that his political opponents will be unable to tip the balance of power in their favour because the politics of survival remains intense.

In contrast, the opposition parties have become far more factionalised than the CPP, if assessed in terms of the degrees of intraparty frictions and breakups or disintegration. The BLDP did not even survive long after the 1993 election and the FUNCINPEC has weakened to the point of becoming politically irrelevant. Part of the problem was that these parties were governed by leaders without party structures similar to those of the CPP. The BLDP and FUNCINPEC were established as resistance forces fighting against the PRK/SOC and Vietnamese occupation forces. They were transformed into political parties after the signing of the Paris Agreements and were run by top leaders such as Son Sann and Prince Ranariddh, who had the tendency to make unilateral decisions because of weak party structures, thus creating resentment, resistance, and rebellions among party members. These party leaders also did not develop effective mechanisms to discipline or reward party members, thus encouraging or allowing them to break ranks, form new parties, or defect to other parties. Why they were unable to institutionalize their parties requires more explanation, but evidence appears to suggest that they were partly naive in thinking that their good intentions alone were sufficient.

What opposition leaders or their supporters do not realize is that running a country requires more than having good intentions and viewing the repressive ruling party as bad or having bad intentions. Although it is too early to predict the future of the CNRP, it is clear the party remains factionalised at various levels along at least two major political lines, the former Sam Rainsy Party and the former Human Rights Party. The CNRP became a political party because the Sam Rainsy Party and Human Rights Party members shared an interest in defeating the CPP, but it is far from clear that they could even run the country effectively, if and when elected. Because their primary aim is to defeat the CPP without at the same time strengthening their party's procedures, rules, and decision-making processes that can reward and discipline their members effectively, the CNRP is not expected to become less factionalised or institutionally stronger and more effective.

In short, the Cambodia case helps shed some light on the persistence and different degrees of factionalism within the party system and within each political party. How political parties institutionally evolve depends much on how they get formed, are institutionally developed and the different ways leaders take action to pursue their interests. Seen in this context, historical institutionalism offers some explanatory power, but scholars should also take into account the fact that political actors pursue their interests in different ways and structural contexts and are not equally free to pursue them as they wish. Institutional constraints and the lack thereof matter, but their personalities and strategies help shed additional light on why some parties become more factionalised than others. The way forward for Cambodian party leaders and their supporters, if they wish to build national unity and solidarity, is to realise first and foremost that the

structural fragilities of the state and their parties are the main culprit. Only then can they learn to build mutual trust that would help them turn their imagined collective identity into collective action for building national unity. But doing this is no easy task.

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Notes

- [1] Hun Sen's supporters were Sok An, Hok Lundy, Tea Banh, Pol Saroeun, and Nguon Nhel; Chea Sim's supporters were Heng Samrin, Sar Kheng, Say Chhum, Ker Kim Yan, Chea Soth, Mat Ly, Bou Thang, Ney Pena, and Sim Ka; the undecided were Men Sam Orn, Im Chhun Lim, Kong Sam Ol, Dith Munty, and Say Phou Thang.
- [2] Corruption in Cambodia and no doubt elsewhere in countries where state institutions are weak or fragile is not simply a cultural problem or even a matter of human greed; it is a question of regime maintenance or political leaders' personal survival. This is why corruption in institutionally fragile states is extremely difficult to combat, largely because leaders do not have the incentive or political will to control or eliminate it.

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