



# Exploring cultural and gender norms and sexual violence amongst Cambodian women

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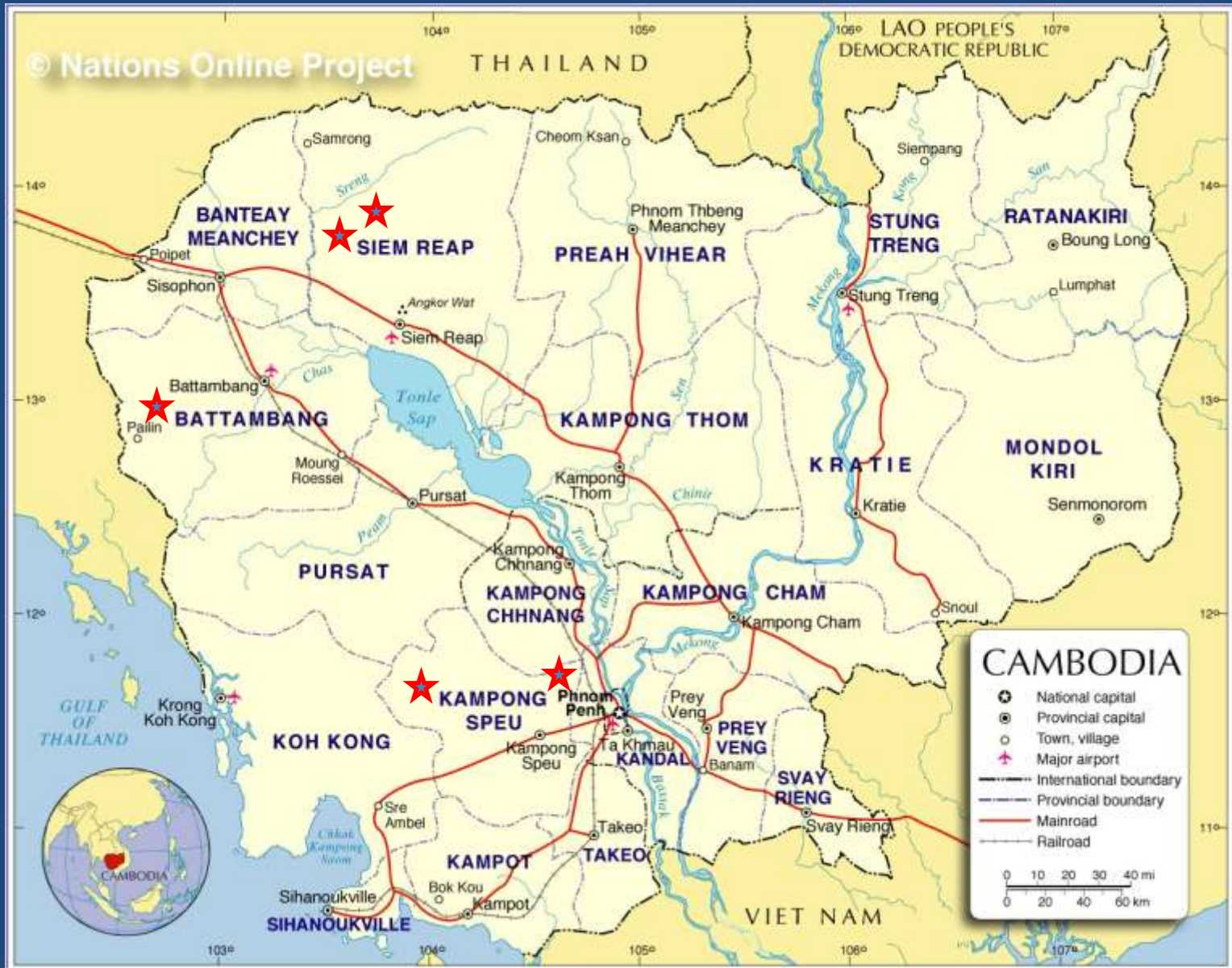
# Research objectives

- To document the level of agreement with traditional gender norms in a sample of Cambodian women and how advice from the Chbab Srey reinforces these norms
- To ascertain the prevalence of partner forced/unwanted sex
- To determine whether attitudes towards gender roles are linked to experiences of forced sex by intimate partners
- To examine the interrelationship between forced sex, the belief a wife is obliged to have sex with her husband and women's mental health outcomes

# Methods

- Sample
- Drawn to reflect distribution of population in Cambodia
- A quarter from urban (Phnom Penh and urban Siem Reap) and  $\frac{3}{4}$  from rural areas (rural Siem Reap, Battambang and Kampong Speu)
- Face to face interview using modified version of WHO multi country questionnaire- additional questions on disability (Washington five)

# ★ Location of Cambodian Survey Field Sites



# 1. Sociodemographic profile of sample (n= 354)

Age range	18-45 years
Mean (sd)	31.76 (sd=8.36)
Ever attended school?	
Yes	76.5% (270/353)
No	23.5% (83/353)
Primary school only	68.8% (182/269)
Ever married/partnered	61.6% (218/354)
Ever given birth	63.5% (202/318)
Mean n of children	2.6 (sd=1.61)

# Employment

Do you earn money 76.0% (269/354)

## Most common types of work

1. Seasonal 48.5% (131/270)

2. 'Other' 32.0% (86/269)

3. Job 17.4% (47/270)

4. Selling things, trading 14.4% (39/270)

## 2. Agreement with gender norms

	% agree
Obeys him even if she disagrees	66.1%
Keeps family problems in family	88.1%
It's important a man shows wife he's boss	71.8%
She should be able to choose her own friends	51.4%
Wife's obligation to have sex	46.9%
If she's mistreated others should intervene	88.1%

# A man's 'good reasons' to hit his wife

	% agree
Housework not done to his satisfaction	35.6%
She disobeys him	44.6%
She refuses to have sex with him	16.9%
She asks if he has other girlfriends	6.8%
He suspects she is unfaithful	9.6%
He finds out she has been unfaithful	78.0%



# When a woman can refuse to have sex with her husband

When:	% agree
She doesn't want to	72.9%
He is drunk	76.3%
She is sick	97.2%
He mistreats her	88.7%

### 3. Prevalence of partner sexual violence

	%
Has he or any other partner ever physically forced you to have sex?	13.6% (24/177)
Did you ever have sex because you were afraid of what he might do?	14.7% (26/177)
Total (either )	18.0% 32/177
(both)	10.1% 18/177

## 4.1 Differences between ever vs never forced to have sex with partner

'A good wife obeys her husband even if she disagrees with him'

Group	% agree	n
Ever forced	81.3%	(26/32)
Never forced	62.8%	(91/145)

$\chi^2 = 4.0$  with 1 df,  $p=0.05$

## 4.2 Ever vs never forced to have sex with partner

‘In your opinion does a man have a good reason to hit his wife if she refuses to have sexual relations with him?’

Group	% agree	n
Ever	28.1%	(9/32)
Never	14.5%	(21/145)

$\chi^2 = 3.46$  with 1 df,  $p = 0.06$

## 4.3 Ever vs never forced on SRQ items

	% Agree		p=
	Ever	Never	
Often have headaches	87.5%	69.0%	0.03
Easily frightened	93.8%	73.8%	0.01
Nervous, tense, worried	90.6%	73.8%	0.04
Trouble thinking clearly	93.8%	75.2%	0.02
Difficult enjoy activities	84.4%	65.5%	0.03
Lost interest in things	68.8%	47.6%	0.03
Thought of ending life	46.9%	20.8%	0.002
Tired all the time	84.4%	57.2%	0.004
Uncomfortable feelings stomach	81.3%	60.7%	0.03
Easily tired	90.6%	71.0%	0.02

Significant difference between groups in mean SRQ scores (p=0.001)

# 4.5 A wife's obligation to have sex by symptoms on SRQ

	%Agree	Disagree
Feels nervous, tense, worried	80%	20%
Trouble thinking clearly	82%	18%
Feels unhappy	88%	12%
Enjoys daily activities	76%	24%
Find it difficult to make decisions	75%	25%
Daily work is suffering	72%	28%
Have lost interest in things	58%	42%
Feels like a worthless person	75%	25%
Tired all the time	69%	31%

# Summary and implications

- Chbab Srey's continuing influence is reflected in high levels of agreement with gender norms
- Social marketing campaigns are needed to challenge those ideas that obstruct gender equality
- Acceptance of gender norms does not confer a psychological benefit
- On the contrary, women who agree they have an obligation to have sex with their husbands have much worse mental health than those who disagree- this idea is highly toxic psychologically
- Programs are needed to promote sexual rights and challenge this idea – massive improvements to women's psychological health may result