Structural Violence, Disability and Education
A Case Study on Cambodia’s Invisible Children

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Abstract

Education is one of the main priorities for both past and present global development goals, and making sure access is granted to all children is vital. However, when looking at education for children with disabilities, access is not as easily provided as for their non-disabled peers. In Cambodia, children with disabilities have a strong legislative protection despite low enrolment rates. This thesis looks further into how, and why children with disabilities in Cambodia are not in school. The empirical results based on an ethnographic study suggest that structural violence, which is violence operating indirectly through institutions and structures in society, obstructs access to education through the mechanisms of social exclusion, oppression and lack of agency. The obstructing forces are deeply rooted in the structures of the Cambodian society and physical barriers are linked to attitudinal barriers where the presence of disability causes stigmatisation that breed discrimination and exclusion. This thesis adds violence as a variable of interest when it comes to looking at development from the perspective of disability studies.

Keywords

Cambodia, Children, Disability, Development, Education, Ethnography, Structural violence

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List of Abbreviations

AAR Japan. Association for Aid and Relief, Japan
CABDICO. Capacity Building for Disability Cooperation
CDMD. Cambodia Development Mission for Disability
CDPO. Cambodia Disabled People’s Organisation
DOE. District Office of Education
EMIS. Education Management Information System
MoEYS. Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports
NGO. Non-Governmental Organisation
POE. Provincial Office of Education
UNESCO. United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF. United Nations Children’s Fund
WHO. World Health Organization
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1. Introduction

Mondulkiri, Cambodia. April 1, 2015.

It is early morning; the sun has just risen in the north-eastern parts of Cambodia. As I prepare to leave the guesthouse and get into the field car I look around and think how different this part of the country looks compared to the hectic life in Phnom Penh. On this day, we are travelling to a remote village in Mondulkiri Province to attend a teacher training session managed by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports. As we pass villages I see children walking to school, wearing their uniforms with pride. When we reach the village where the training takes place we park the car and get out, but something distracts me from going into the training facility. On the side of the road, right where cars and motorbikes pass at high speed, sits a girl. She is covered in dust and snot and she is all-alone. We walk over to her to see what is going on. The girl looks to be around two years of age but she cannot walk, instead she drags herself in the dust to come closer to me. This girl suffers from a serious physical and mental disability. After spending some time with her the villagers come closer, clearly interested in what is happening with the barang¹. We ask some of the villagers about the girl and they say that she is in fact five years old, can barely talk, and that she cannot walk at all. Because of her disability, her parents leave her at home all day, every day, when they go to work. School or day care is no option either, as she is clearly not capable of learning or being integrated with ‘normal’ children. This little girl, who appears to be without identity as no one can give me her name, must have dragged herself all the way from the house up to the dangerous main road. The villagers promise that they will take her back safely but as they leave I cannot help but wonder, what kind of a life will this girl live? It seems she will never get the chance to go to school with the rest of the children from her village. How is it possible that she, because of her disability, is categorised in such a way that all her options and capabilities are so limited? (Author’s field notes)

The United Nations’ Millennium Development Goal of basic education for all children by 2015 failed to be accomplished (UNESCO, 2015; UNESCO & UNICEF, 2015; UNESCO, 2014). Because of this it is today more important than ever that more focus is put on equal access to education. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) have estimated that 250 million children worldwide cannot read or understand basic math; almost 130 million of them have reached at least grade four (UNESCO, 2014:31). This means that out of these 250 million children, over 120 million of them are not in school today. The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) highlight five main barriers for children in accessing education: conflict, child labour, and discrimination due to gender, ethnicity and disability (UNICEF, 2015:14-15). Because of these problems, UNICEF put specific emphasis on targeting these vulnerable children in their Post-2015 Child Development Goals (UNICEF, 2015).

Looking specifically at disability, the World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that 1 billion people in the world live with a disability today, 80 per cent of them live in developing

¹ Barang is a Khmer slang word used for foreigners.
countries. Without a specific reference to this vulnerable group, the Millennium Development Goals further failed to address their needs and capabilities (WHO, 2011; UNICEF, 2014).

To improve the situation for all children, Cambodia has taken on the global challenge of education and inclusion of marginalised children, by putting forward an Education for All Model. Additionally, and in comparison to other similar developing countries, Cambodia has made significant legislative improvements when it comes to including people with disabilities in educational settings (Kalyanpur, 2011). To support the needs of children with disabilities, the Royal Government is signatory to all international key legally binding documents regarding the rights of disabled people, including the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of People with Disabilities and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (MoEYS, 2008 & UNICEF, 2013). Further, the Cambodian Constitution guarantees all its citizens equal rights regardless of any physical or personal features. It protects the rights of children and claim that the state is responsible for protecting its citizens from violence, and from any act that can limit children’s educational opportunities (Royal Kingdom of Cambodia, 1993). Further, the Cambodian Education Law states that disabled learned have the same rights as able learners in addition to separate 'special' rights due to their disability. In addition, Cambodia has a specific Disability Law, as well as a Policy on Education for Children with Disabilities with an attached Master Plan.

According to the Government’s Education Strategic Plan, children with disabilities need to be better incorporated into the educational structures, and the Policy on Education for Children with Disabilities states that it “guarantees an education for children with disabilities that will enable them to be as successful, and contribute to their society, as non-disabled children in Cambodia” (MoEYS, 2014; MoEYS, 2008:3). However, despite these legislative and policy based improvements, the social structures in Cambodia are such that a majority of children with disabilities still lack education that can help improve their capabilities and, together with their adult equals, live on the outskirts of society in dire poverty (MoEYS & UNICEF, forthcoming; Bailey & Nguoon, 2014).

In the Cambodian case there is a clear paradox; the majority of disabled children are excluded from the educational system, despite being included in laws, policies and development projects. Based on material collected during a five month stay in Cambodia this thesis explores that paradox. The research question guiding this empirical study has been:

**How are children with disabilities in Cambodia structurally excluded from education?**
2. Background

Education is often laid forward as one of the most important components in children’s development, and it has strong intrinsic importance for many reasons. Education is a right in itself, as stated by laws and policies; being educated is an important capability; additionally, receiving education is a vital participatory process for children as this access includes them in different social spheres (Klasen, 2001:423). However, Professor Stephan Klasen points out that if this process fails, education can instead be a source of social exclusion that deprive children of equal opportunities, robbing them of the possibility to develop capabilities that can help improve their lives. Further more, educational policies that fail to assist disadvantaged children to be included in economic and social spheres can translate into continued exclusion in adult life (Ibid:423).

The relationship between education, social exclusion and poverty is evident. Including children with disabilities in the educational sector is therefore not only important from a human rights perspective, but the exclusion of these children is connected to higher costs for society as these children, when they become adults, are often poorer than others, limiting both their own but also societal development (WHO, 2011:205). The good news is that education has been proven to weaken the disability-poverty link. One additional year of schooling for a child with a disability is associated with a 2-5 per cent significant decrease in the probability of ending up in the poorest quintiles of society (Filmer, 2008:150). Further, research by UNESCO has highlighted the fact that a person’s potential income can actually increase by as much as 10 per cent with each additional year of education (UNESCO, 2010:11). However, in order for that to happen a person must first be allowed to enter the educational system and not be excluded, for reasons such as for example disability. Studies on the creation of human capital have found that the exclusion of children with disabilities in educational and work sectors actually lead to a major loss in a country’s GDP. For example, in Bangladesh this loss has been estimated to 1.2 billion USD annually (UNICEF, 2013b:23).

Unfortunately, the right to education is excessively denied to children with disabilities worldwide. Observing low and middle-income countries, a household survey from 13 countries found that children with disabilities are significantly more likely to be out of school, and to drop out, compared to other children. In several countries, children with disabilities are more than twice as likely to be out of school compared to other children (UNICEF, 2013a:27-28; GCE & Handicap International, 2013:4). Studies aiming to understand the experience for children with disabilities show that even at preschool level, a majority of disabled children are
overlooked because they are thought of as less interesting or able to learn and interact. In a study involving children with disabilities in the United Kingdom, it was found that 55 per cent of the children interviewed said they believed that they had been treated wrong in connection to accessing education and that the reason was their disability (UNICEF, 2013a:11, 42). Lack of understanding, due to social and structural contexts breed exclusion and push children into poverty. A United Nations study on inclusion and exclusion in Madagascar found that when it came to the perception of disability among parents, 48 per cent believed that it was contagious (Ibid:11). In a case study in Armenia, UNICEF found that the main reason children with disabilities were not attending school was because their parents did not deem them capable of learning (Ibid:42). Similarly, in Vietnam, the presence of disabled children when celebrating a national holiday is considered a bad omen (Ibid:11).

The role of education in giving children with disabilities the ability to live valuable lives is therefore great. Inequality in education will lead to inequality in other important processes of children’s development and must therefore be properly addressed. Taking a rights-based approach to development, this paper uses Amartya Sen’s definition that is linked to people receiving equal capabilities in life. Here, development “…requires the removal of major sources of unfreedom: poverty as well as tyranny, poor economic opportunities as well as systematic social deprivation, neglect of public facilities as well as intolerance or overactive repressive states” (Sen, 1999:3). Thus, a broader view on development is adapted, where it is seen as a process that expands people’s freedoms by providing all citizens equal opportunity to develop and use their capabilities on all levels of society. As proven by the research above, education is an important enabler for children to develop these capabilities and to access better opportunities later in life. It is therefore important that children are not excluded from education by the structures they live in. By living in a social structure that provides equal access to opportunities, development on equal terms can appear as the people within the structures will be given lives that they, as Sen puts it, “have reason to value” (Sen, 1999:18).

2.1 Purpose and the 'Policy Versus Practice' Paradox
Looking at Cambodia and the situation for the group of children who today are out of school, disabled children stand for a large part despite their strong legislative protection (MoEYS & UNICEF, forthcoming). This paper explores this ‘policy versus practice paradox’ by further examining how it is possible that a country that declares one of its main concerns for education to “give a high priority to equitable access for high quality basic education services” (MoEYS, 2014:preface) have failed to aid a large group of children who suffer from
capability deprivation by being excluded from school. It investigates why, despite laws and policies on inclusive education and disability rights, an educational budget of 1.342 Billion Riels (approximately 324 million USD; MoEYS, 2014:49) these children are not in school (MoEYS & UNICEF, forthcoming). The ability to access education, and later paid employment, is an important capability in order to acquire social inclusion and escape poverty; this is not happening for all children in Cambodia. This paper argues that the exclusion of disabled children stems from the fact that disabled people in Cambodia are subjected to violence. This violence is displayed through a social structure that creates oppression and thus limits the capabilities of disabled children (Farmer, 2004).

When one thinks of violence, the most obvious picture that comes to mind is that of direct, physical violence, though reality is far more complex than that. In the Cambodian case, a single actor responsible for why disabled children are not in school is hard to find; poverty and politics are usually used as sweeping explanations. This thesis pin-points the problem of violence by exploring how these social and political structures are taken for granted and, more specifically using the words of Professor Akhil Gupta, how violence like this is “…taken for granted in the routinised practices of state institutions such that it disappears from view and cannot be thematised as violence at all” (Gupta, 2012:5). What this statement implies is precisely what this paper argues; these children are subjects of structural violence, which is “…violence exerted systematically—that is, indirectly—by everyone who belongs to a certain social order” (Farmer, 2004:307). For structural violence a clear actor is therefore not needed, but instead violence is channelled through institutions and structures in a society, creating unequal opportunities and limiting people’s capabilities as an effect.

The purpose of this paper is to examine factors that explain lack of access to education for children with disabilities by exposing processes where structural violence operates in the Cambodian education system. The paper identifies key issues when it comes to disability and (lack of) education connected to structural violence by examining the practice, compared to the policies on inclusive education in Cambodia. It aims at understanding the reasons that children are made into a category (the disabled), a very political category that, as an effect, acts as an exclusionary force. To classify and create policies for people based on physical features is very socio-political; through this process, disabled people are categorised as different and in need of special assistance, such as their own policies for education. However, as Klasen points out, if these policies fail they instead act as an exclusionary force since disabled people are not part of mainstream society but dependent on their 'special' rights. To study children with disabilities without exploring the structures that have transformed them
from being 'children' to a category of being 'the disabled' would be to ignore the possibility to reveal how the inner workings of structural violence operates (Farmer, 2003:13).

2.2 The Inner Workings of Structural Violence

In the foreword to anthropologist Paul Farmer’s book *Pathologies of Power*, Amartya Sen states how the concepts 'structure' and 'violence' are not new, but that attempts on explaining them have many times been unclear. However, by giving examples of real life practices it becomes easier to show how institutional structures push people down the social ladders, causing suffering such as poverty. These inequalities of power can take many forms and stem from many different causes, such as gender, class, ethnicity or disability. The effects, social exclusion and marginalisation, are not direct physical violence, but yet, these people are still victims of structural violence (Sen, in Farmer, 2003:xiv-xvii). It is violent, because it causes people harm. It is structural, precisely because the suffering is structured by practices and forces (often rooted in historical, social and economic processes) that “conspire- whether through routine, ritual, or, as is more commonly the case, the hard surfaces of life- to constrain agency” (Farmer, 2003:40; Farmer et al., 2006:1686).

Two people who are abused in one way or another may very well suffer equally, even if one is able to voice that pain, while the other one suffers in silence. The substantial value however is often given to that which we can see and hear directly, the 'ethnographically visible' (Farmer, 2004). The little girl in Mondulkiri, together with many other disabled children and adults met during the time spent in Cambodia, could not voice the suffering associated with being constantly discriminated, stigmatised and excluded from society. But their silence is, as Farmer puts it, ”imposed from above” (Farmer, 2003:25). What Farmer means, and this paper argues, is that these people are subjected to structural forces, outside of their own control that restrict their options in life. What these people share is the everyday experience associated with occupying the bottom rung of the social ladder in an unequal society (Ibid:31). The ethnographically visible is therefore not only connected to one’s ability to physically speak, but also to how, and if, society listens. One voice might be valued as more important, while another is disregarded. The uneven structures may be considered normal, or even necessary for our social and political dynamics to function. Disabled individuals are categorised as different from 'normal abled' people and thus the different treatments of the groups are legitimised. This is where structural violence operates.

In Cambodia, Maya Kalyanpur examines the policies for inclusive education and argues that the social context in which these policies are to be implemented go against the values of
inclusive education, thus severely limiting the possibility for all children to access what is supposed to be free and equal education (Kalyanpur, 2011:1053-1054). The social and political context in Cambodia is strongly elitist, dividing people based on characteristics where disabled people are at the lowest level of the hierarchy. Despite this line of thinking, and unlike many developing countries, Cambodia has many decrees that include children with disabilities. However, Kalyanpur states, these policies are top-down responses to international pressure; education has always been an institution for the elite, not the 'others'. Thus, the reality of Cambodian children is very different from what is stated in laws and policies (Ibid:1058-1059).

UNICEF’s Post 2015 Agenda states that violence against children must stop, and that this violence is not always visible with a stated actor for it to obstruct development, indicating a need to analyse structural factors more (UNICEF, 2015). Further, UNICEF stress the fact that in order to combat poverty, more focus needs to be put on understanding capability issues such as lack of access to education, and the presence of discrimination, stigmatisation and lack of inclusion for those who are most likely to be excluded due to social and structural barriers. They conclude by stating that more research is needed in order to understand these issues affecting children (Ibid). As a huge proportion of information regarding disability and schooling, in a developing context, is unknown due to lack of data and in many cases, systematic neglect, this paper does not seek to fully fill that gap. However, in order for developing countries to move ahead and fight poverty, it is imperative that understandings of the social contexts that drive these relationships are available. The connection between disability and development consequently needs to be more fully understood and the issues related to it addressed. This thesis aims to take a step in the direction of understanding development from the perspective of disability studies by linking capability deprivation to structural violence. This capability deprivation is strongly connected to structural violence and its effects; many disabled people in Cambodia are among the very poorest in the country with no possibility for escape (Bailey & Nguon, 2014; Edmonds, 2005).

2.3 Why Violence Matters
Even though this thesis is focusing on structural violence within the education sector, the effects of this violence stretch far beyond the classroom. In his work on suffering and structural violence Farmer quotes WHO on poverty as the world’s vilest killer. “Poverty wields its destructive influence at every stage of human life, from the moment of conception to the grave. It conspires with the most deadly and painful diseases to bring a wretched
existence to all those who suffer from it” (WHO quoted by Farmer, 2009:25). Farmer further states that “the world's poor are the chief victims of structural violence - a violence which has thus far defied the analysis of many seeking to understand the nature and distribution of extreme suffering. Why might this be so? One answer is that the poor are not only more likely to suffer; they are also more likely to have their suffering silenced” (Farmer 2009:25).

The link between disability and a person’s economic status is multidirectional. Disability can cause poverty as it lowers both earning power and with it, accessibility to consume adequately based on one’s needs. Disability can also be a consequence of poverty as the risks associated with poverty can cause disabilities, such as for example inadequate infant and child care or exposure to unsafe environments (Filmer, 2008:149-150). Research further shows that having a disability in fact demands costs that often result in lower living standards (Ibid). In her research on disability and poverty, World Bank researcher Ann Elwan concludes that “It is a two-way relationship – disability adds the risk of poverty and conditions of poverty increase the risk of disability” (Elwan, 1999:i).

Looking at the evidence presented so far a vicious cycle of poverty and disability exists where the causal arrow goes both ways. Education has been found to reduce the probability of becoming poor, and thus being subjected to conditions that can further cause disability. Education can stop this cycle, and therefore inclusion of disabled children in the educational sector should be of absolute importance.

When studying structural violence, this thesis argues that it greatly hinders individual development by limiting capabilities, harming those affected. According to Sen, poverty
exhibits material as well as non-material dimensions, as established by his definition of development above. Because of the more tangible features of the material poverty view, this has gained more focus in previous research. The non-material dimension of poverty therefore needs to be more researched. The exclusion of individuals from participation in, and access to, structural systems and societal opportunities is a major non-material aspect that can serve as both a cause, and a consequence of poverty (Sen, 2000:v) Thus, poverty must be seen as more than just lack of economic resources. Taking ground in Sen’s view on development, it is valuable to further examine theories on social exclusion; the correlation it has with structural violence is direct. If we put the ideas of exclusion and lack of capabilities into the general perspective on violence, it becomes possible to show how interrelated these issues are in a wider perspective. By linking theories on structural violence and exclusion to disability studies it will give strength to its conceptual foundation and analytical importance (Sen, 2000:4-5). This thesis adds to the debate by stating that we need to view development issues through the lens of structural violence. Even though this paper examines only the case of Cambodia, it will hopefully contribute to, as stated in the UN Post-2015 Agenda, provide more research on issues affecting children’s development, in this case with a special focus on the most marginalised; the children with disabilities. While many developing agents increasingly raise awareness on the need to improve access to education for children with disabilities, not enough empirical data exist on the connection between disability and development and most of all, the reasons for these links in the developing world.

2.4 Structure of Thesis
This paper is systematised as follows; the following section contains the theoretical framework on disability and structural violence linked to the area of study, the educational sector. This section correspondingly connects to the case chosen for this thesis, Cambodia. The fourth section discusses the methodology chosen for the case study, laying the foundation for section five, the empirical analysis. This section examines the situation facing children with disabilities in the Cambodian education system based on material collected in the field. The paper summarises the findings and concludes the situation in section 6 before presenting reference material used and other important documents in the list of references and the appendix.
3. Theoretical Framework

3.1 What is Violence?

“Structural violence is silent, it does not show - it is essentially static, it is the tranquil waters.”

(Galtung, 1969:173)

Johan Galtung describes violence as the effect of the difference between what could happen, and what in fact does happen. Hence, violence is a factor that expands the distance between the potential and the actual events in society, or a person’s life. He gives the example of illness; if a person died from a severe illness such as tuberculosis 200 years ago we cannot claim this to be violence since it may have been unavoidable due to lack of developed health care. However, if a person dies from this disease in today’s modern society with the development of medicine and technology, we can in fact say that violence is present. The potential rescue of a life did not happen, instead the actual, death, did (Galtung, 1969:168).

Galtung has conceptualised violence and developed theoretically influential categories on the subject. Violence can, according to this conceptualisation, be divided into direct intended violence with a clear actor, or indirectly through a structure that causes people harm. Further, culture can work as a legitimising force for both direct and structural violence. Cultural violence, as he calls this legitimising force, makes direct and structural violence acceptable in society (Galtung in Galtung & Fischer, 2013:35-38).

The typical violent structure is centred on exploitation: some people, referred to by Galtung as 'top dogs', get their basic needs satisfied to a greater extent from the structure than the rest, 'the underdogs'. The underdogs may be so disadvantaged that as an effect of the unequal structures they die. If they survive, they do so under underprivileged circumstances, suffering from a permanent state of misery. Violence that operates through structures does not only leave physical marks in the form of death or illness. Other effects are those which exploit the underdogs mind and spirit by limiting their agency and thus strengthening the discriminating parts of the structure, all in the benefit of the top dogs. They work by obstructing the formation of consciousness, as well as the socialisation between the underdogs, further limiting their capacity to fully understand and escape the exploiting structures (Ibid).

Structural violence, compared to direct violence, is therefore something that affects a person’s everyday life in the form of exclusion, oppression and the removal of agency. Extreme poverty and social exclusion is abundant in many places where structural violence
operates and the degree to which agency is limited is inversely related with the ability to fight marginalisation and oppression (Farmer, 2004:307).

As Galtung’s theoretical concept of structural violence shows, an actor who directly harms another person within the structure is not necessary. The violence is here built into the structure and expresses itself in the form of uneven power distributions, and with it, unequal life opportunities and capabilities. The resources, such as access to education, healthcare services and income within the structure are distributed unevenly, and more importantly- the control over how these resources are distributed is uneven, often out of reach for the most marginalised people within the structure (Galtung, 1969:171). Further, structural violence is intensified if the people on the bottom of the social ladder lack education, suffer from an illness or health related disadvantage (such as for example a disability) or have no means to express their will, since these concerns are profoundly correlated due to the way the structure links them together (Ibid).

In their research on disability and corporal values, Claire Edwards and Rob Imrie state that “the systemic and structured inequalities of disability are (re)produced and reinforced by symbolic violence” (Edwards & Imrie, 2003:246). Symbolic violence, first phrased by Pierre Bourdieu, is described as, “violence, which is exercised upon a social agent with his or her complicity” (Bourdieu & Wacquant in Schepher-Hughes & Bourgois, 2004:272). What this means is that violence becomes invisible and hidden inside structures and practices. The disabled body is treated like an object instead of an individual subject and because of the structures, the oppressed become a part of their own system of oppression by agreeing that they hold less value.

Farmer calls for a broader, ethnographic view of structural violence (Farmer, 2004). In order for this to be possible there is a need to broaden the understanding of the concept of violence where Bourdieu’s symbolic violence needs to be incorporated.

Violence is a slippery concept that goes beyond physicality to include assaults on self-respect and personhood. The social and cultural dimensions of violence are what give it its force and meaning. Farmer’s model of structural violence is a vivid reminder that most violent act are not deviant. They are defined as moral in the services of conventional norms and material interests. As ethnographers we can best contribute by rendering visible these erased and unexpected linkages between violence, suffering and power.

(Schepher-Hughes & Bourgois, in Farmer, 2004:318)

As Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois state above, many acts of violence are legitimised through, what Galtung would call cultural violence, and what Bourdieu would call the Habitus (Bourdieu, 1990); norms and behaviour in society that become routinised and thus legitimised as the natural way to behave in relation to specific aspects, for example a disability. Structural
violence is not always visible, yet it is there. As argued above, this violence is most often beset on those least capable of managing its effects, leading to even greater inequalities and social exclusion. It is this author’s belief that in this social exclusion, the so often deemed 'invisible' violence can be analysed. To be further discussed in the methods chapter, exclusion, together with oppression and lack of agency can help uncover the processes of structural violence. Many of these effects will no longer be invisible once they are framed as violence, but in order for this to be possible, we first need to broaden our understanding of violence.

3.2 Exclusion, Oppression and Agency: the Mechanisms of Structural Violence

“Social exclusion often begins already at birth, and multidimensional poverty will then be transmitted from one generation to the next, leaving no room for escape.”

(UNICEF 2013:8)

Social exclusion refers to “the inability of an individual to participate in basic political, economic and social functionings of the society in which he or she lives” (Tsakloglou & Papadopoulos, 2001:2). The term thus includes a wide range of structural injustices and the excluded constitute all 'misfits', such as the mentally and physically handicapped, aged invalids, multi-problem households and all those living on the margins of society who are excluded from, for example, a secure livelihood, education, equality and participation, humanity, respect, fulfilment and understanding (Sen, 2000:1). As argued in the conceptualisation above, social exclusion ties closely to the non-materialist dimension of poverty. As does its link with inequality and structural violence, since it, compared to more relative poverty analysis’, refers to not only economic assets but also to the lack of voice, agency and power that comes with social deprivation in society. These features pin-point the intentional character of exclusion; a person is not excluded due to something they have actively done, but because of who they are, far beyond any personal agency or responsibility (Buvinic & Mazza in Dani & de Haan, 2008:123-124). Certainly, exclusion can come in different forms and features depending on the context, however there are certain sub-mechanisms of exclusion that are common, namely: invisibility, stigmatisation and discrimination, as well as an intergenerational dimension (Ibid:125). These connect directly to structural violence. Additionally, Farmer (2004) states that oppression and lack of agency are strongly linked to structural violence and are therefore added to the operationalisation-list of mechanisms.
Invisibility is often evident in research and data when we cannot find what we are looking for. This, precisely because the excluded are not there. Official data from developing countries on marginalised groups, such as for example the number of disabled people in a country, or the number of children with disabilities in schools, are often incomplete, unreliable, or fully lacking. If covered, measurement types often vary, leaving countless of individuals invisible in the statistics further reinforcing their exclusion (UNESCO & UNICEF, 2015; WHO, 2011). The Global Initiative on Out-of-School Children, driven by UNESCO and UNICEF, state that the barriers to education for children with disabilities are further reinforced by their invisibility and that a majority of countries under study show a chronic lack of data on the number of children with disabilities (UNESCO & UNICEF, 2015:80).

Stigmatisation is defined as the creation of a social structure that constructs negative attitudes and stereotypes around disability (Crocker & Major, 1989). For stigmatisation, unequal power relations are a core cause, and the presence of stigma strongly influences capabilities. The presence of stigmatisation often connects to the mechanism of discrimination, because of societal oppression. Stigmatisation can also create self-discrimination when the stigma becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy due to past discourages in life. This further adds to the risk of exclusion (Buvinic & Mazza in Dani & de Haan, 2008:125-127). In their research on social exclusion in Latin America and the Caribbean, Mayra Buvinic and Jacqueline Mazza found that the presence of two or more features that lead to exclusion (for example gender, ethnicity, physical restrains) put people at even greater disadvantage. In the case of education they found that for the groups studied, intergenerational transmission of low education severely limited future opportunities for these people (Ibid:127). Linking exclusion to disability, what the research above indicates is that these already marginalised people will, if excluded from education, be pushed even further down the social ladder.

When it comes to oppression Paulo Freire explains how the oppressed often “hear that they are good for nothing, know nothing and are incapable of learning anything—that they are sick, lazy, and unproductive—that in the end they become convinced of their own unfitness” (Freire, 2005:63). Freire’s analysis of oppression can be connected to what Buvinic and Mazza find in relation to stigmatisation as a self-fulfilling prophecy, as well as to Bourdieu and his theories on violence and social inequalities. Being treated inferior or like an object connects to what Bourdieu terms 'relations of domination', which are most powerful when they take physical form and can be judged through, for example, the way people look or how
their minds and thoughts are perceived (Bourdieu, 1998:35-37). The cultural encoding of disability is one of a body without subjectivity (Edwards & Imrie, 2003:252). In relation to Bourdieu, Edwards and Imrie explain how for the disabled, the denial of identity in combination with social stereotyping and preconceptions about capability is part of everyday life. Being reminded of what one can, or cannot do is entwined in the social encounters that confirm and intensify their already de-valued self-images (Ibid:250). As discussed by Buvinic and Mazza above, stigmatisation is based on unequal power relations, and can because of it create self-discrimination. This rhymes well with Bourdieu’s conceptualisation of symbolic violence, which naturalises the oppression, or as Bourdieu states, symbolic violence makes the dominated “…contribute to their own domination by tacitly accepting, outside of any rational decision or decree of the will, the limits assigned to them (Bourdieu, quoted in Edwards and Imrie, 2003:250).

The removal of agency is strongly related to oppression and the ability to fight marginalisation, and thus links well with Galtung’s typology of structural violence. When it comes to research looking to understand how structures are designed and what effects they have on individuals there is a need to further explore the everyday life of those who are not participating, those who have been socially excluded (Farmer, 2004:307-309). This is no easy task, as the people at the bottom rarely have a voice. In order to understand how the structure keeping the violence alive works, one needs to dig deeper than to simply observe current structures and the inequalities that it produces. Farmer makes this clear when he states that “[t]hose who look only to powerful present-day actors to explain misery will fail to see how inequality is structured and legitimated over time” (Farmer, 2004:309). In order to understand suffering, we need to connect individual suffering to a larger matrix where history, culture and political economy are entwined (Farmer, 2009:20).

In order to summarise the theoretical framework on structural violence and its effects, Galtung concludes, “violence is a pathology, to be treated as such” (Galtung in Galtung & Fischer, 2013:40). It is “the violence of everyday life” (Schepers-Hughes, quoted in Schepers-Hughes & Bourgois, 2004:303) and to fully be able to assess the current state of human rights, structural violence needs to be brought into the analysis (Farmer, 2003:50). Thus, if the silenced suffering of structural violence is to end, the forces promoting them have to be brought to light (Farmer, 2009:26).
3.3 Disability: Bourdieu and Bodies Bearing Value
Defining disability is not clear-cut. People may not refer to themselves as disabled just because society does and therefore any definition of disability should include both physical and social factors that can hinder a person’s equal participation in society.

When it comes to disability theory, the concept of the body, and the value it is given, links closely to that of social inequalities. Edwards and Imrie state that a broader understanding of the linkages between disabled people’s bodies, and wider socio-cultural values and practices are needed in disability studies. Theories related to post-structuralist views of the body and its social constructions need to be more extensively applied in disability studies, which tend to focus more on medical models, thus failing to recognise that there is a dynamic relationship between the person and society (Edwards & Imrie, 2003:240). This discussion is often laid forward by scholars belonging to the field of Critical Disability Theory, who mean that disability is not primarily a medical state, but a question of politics and power (powerlessness, power to and power over). Issues related to disability are not only about impairments but also social values, institutional will and political priorities, determining who is included and who is not (Devlin & Pothier, 2006:2-9). The categorisation of disability as something separate, in need of separate policies and systems, is thus very political and an understanding of disability that focuses on absolute inclusion, not only abstract rights in form of laws and policies are needed (Ibid).

In order to widen the way we view disability, Colin Barnes et al. stress that we need to explore further, the connection between structural conditions and the experiences of individuals when it comes to disabilities. They state that too little focus is being put on understanding and confronting the oppression and isolation experienced by disabled individuals (Barnes et al., 1999:211-213). In connection, Edwards and Imrie (2003) suggest that Pierre Bourdieu’s conception of the body as a bearer of value and power can add to the analysis. The body and social structures are interrelated, as the body serves as the main tool when it comes to attaining status. For Bourdieu, the body is to be understood through what he calls the 'habitus', which refers to the relationship between structures and practices (Bourdieu, 1990). What this means is that our bodies develop habits in how they relate to socio-political environments and interactions, and we link social structures to individual action based on our experience from living in that structure. Thus, the habitus focuses on understanding the system of interaction between individuals and the broader social structures that create inequalities (Bourdieu, 1990:52-55; Edwards & Imrie, 2003:241-242).
When looking at policy and practice, Bourdieu points to a clear distinction between the two. Laws and policies are created by institutions and not directly transferable to individual action. The actual practice instead takes its form through the habitus, which determines how people react and respond to the laws. This means that the habitus, and the practices it creates, are associated with social inequalities when they do not correspond to the laws. According to the Bourdieuan view, different values and social practices become connected to certain corporal features such as for example male/female, abled/disabled, and that the acquisition of capital (economic, cultural or social) is distributed based upon the corporal status. The ability for disabled people to, for example acquire cultural capital in the form of an education, or economic capital through an employment consequently becomes limited due to their corporal value, as societal views many times define disability as something different compared to the 'normal', non-disabled body. The consequence is a creation of a classification of the disabled body as different where the dominant body controls access to social services and capital (Edwards & Imrie, 2003:242-244). Edwards and Imrie agree; the world is dominated by able-bodied individuals and through our habitus we are taught how to react to disability, namely as an impairment of less value (Ibid:249). Thus, a clash between policy and practice, as in the Cambodian case, is to be expected when taking a Bourdieuan perspective. Laws are not equal to the structures they are meant to act within. Taking on this perspective, the problem lies not in the clash, but in how it is possible that this clash, and the effects of it, are routinised through the habitus in such a way that these inequalities continue. Structural violence becomes part of the habitus.

![Triad of policy, practice and habitus](image)

**Figure 2.** Triad of policy, practice and habitus
As mentioned in the Cambodian context, the existing legal framework guaranteeing access to all children is strong. Figure 3 provides a timeline of the main documents protecting the rights of children with disabilities. Following the methods section, the empirical analysis links this framework to the practices, looking further into if the Bourdeuian triad of laws, practice and habitus (through structural violence) can explain the lack of access to education for the majority of children with disabilities in Cambodia.

![Timeline of the main laws and policies protecting children with disabilities in Cambodia](image)

**Figure 3.** Timeline of the main laws and policies protecting children with disabilities in Cambodia

3.4 School as a Playground for Violence
As mentioned in the introduction of this paper, the majority of basic facts regarding disability and education in developing countries are under-researched. One of the few works examining the issue on macro level is that by World Bank researcher Deon Filmer. In an analysis based on 14 household surveys from 13 different developing countries, Filmer manages to show that regardless of country, people between the ages of 6-17 with disabilities are significantly less likely to attend school than other children. The exclusion from school based on disability was found to be greater than any exclusion based on for example gender or whether one lives in an urban or rural area (Filmer, 2008:141). Looking at indirect forms of violence, school accessibility is an important factor of consideration. Filmer states that when studying children who are excluded from school, one reason is that laws and policies have not been implemented to guarantee education for all (Ibid:155). For disabled children to gain accessibility, it is about more than just reaching school (which in many cases is hard enough).
Once in school, the environment needs to be further adjusted based on children’s needs, and teachers need to be properly trained.

A report on Disability in Cambodia from 2013 found that discrimination against disabled people is wide within the Cambodian society and that it negatively affects disabled people’s access to participation in community development and services that can increase their personal wellbeing (Royal Kingdom of Cambodia & UN, 2013). When examining risk factors for violence against disabled people, The Roeher Institute claims “it is not the disability itself that may put people with disabilities at risk, but the social conditions in which people with disabilities are likely to find themselves that makes it more likely” (Roeher Institute, 1994:26). Thus, if the educational system in itself is structured as such that disabled people are seen as inferior, the risk that this structural violence extends into direct violence increases. School, that should be a place of security for children, many times develop into a playground for both types of violence.

Back to Cambodia, an Out-of-School Children Survey from 2011 showed that 19 per cent of Cambodian children between the ages of five and seven had never, or were not currently able to, attend school: 30 per cent of them were disabled. Out of Cambodian children who suffer from a serious hearing disability, 90 per cent had never attended school, while the number for children with other severe disabilities was 58 per cent (MoEYS, 2011). However, as noted above, the numbers may very well be even higher. It is doubtful that any government- or NGO representative has added the Mondulkiri girl to their statistics.

Looking globally at education for children with disabilities access is denied. The numbers speak for themselves: 90 per cent of children who suffer from a disability in developing countries do not attend school (UNESCO, no date).

3.5 Making Violence Visible: Disability and (lack of) Education
In the previous chapters, the concepts of violence and disability have been discussed. The educational sector and its connection to this violence have also been mentioned. Critics of structural violence most likely analyse the connections between disability and social exclusion as one caused by culture, poverty or even politics. Pierre Bourdieu created the concept of the habitus and further describes it as a structured and structuring principle. Farmer uses this conceptualisation to link it with structural violence, which according to him, is much like the habitus, but as structured and stricturing, as it restricts agency for its victims. It creates a physical noose around their necks that determines the way they live their lives, and the possibilities they have (Farmer, 2004:306-315). By excusing this violence with culture
(what Galtung would call cultural violence) or politics, one is still blind to structural violence. Stigmatisation and exclusionary politics are structural violence, precisely because the structures they operate in cause harm. Many times, money and political will is part of the equation and the priority is that of the 'top dogs'. “An honest account of who wins, who loses, and especially, what weapons are used” (Farmer, 2004:308) is a way to understand why some people are victims of structural violence (Ibid:317).

As presented in this paper, research shows that disabled children are more likely than other children to be out of school, as well as have lower transition rates to higher levels of schooling. In connection to development and poverty, this relationship is most evident in underdeveloped countries. Together with the evidence that lack of early childhood education has a significant effect on poverty, it lays a solid ground for arguing that greater focus needs to be put on inclusive education for children with disabilities in a developing context (WHO, 2011:206-208). In concluding the discussion on disability and violence, poverty has been found to be one of the most prominent underlying causes of disability in Cambodia. Further, over 50 per cent of the conditions causing this poverty have been found to be preventable. However, due to the structures, they are not (Kalyanpur, 2011:1059). Galtung conceptualises violence as the difference between the potential and the actual. In other words, if a situation is preventable, but still, nothing is done about it, structural violence is present.
4. Methods

The results from the empirical analysis in this paper are based on an ethnographic method. An ethnographic method is a way to study societies, and the structures and culture that they are built around. It is a method attempting to understand and describe that society; its institutions, behaviour and beliefs, in order to comprehend certain processes within that society (Angrosino in Flick, 2007:14-15). Michael Angrosino explains ethnographic research in a simple and understandable manner, namely as a way to explain the routine, everyday life of the society under study (Ibid).

The data collection for this paper has been triangulated. Triangulation, as described by Britha Mikkelsen, means that different data collection methods are used to study the same problem (Mikkelsen, 2005:96). Initially, a review of theories related to violence and disability has been undertaken. In combination, a review of Cambodian laws and policies for education and disability has helped in understanding the policy framework meant to protect these children. Further, in order to examine the practices, a participatory observation has been performed during a five-month stay in Cambodia. During this time an insight of educational issues on local and national level has been given through different channels; by working with the Royal Government, development partners and international organisations on education in Cambodia. Included in this observational study have been several field visits to schools, as well as participation in meetings with relevant stakeholders. Additionally, and outside of the participatory method, interviews have been performed with key informants: representatives from some of the leading organisations working with disability rights in Cambodia. Information on the represented organisations can be found in the appendix. The purpose of the following chapter is to explain how the study was carried out and what challenges it was associated with.

4.1 Research Design

This ethnographic study is descriptive and explanatory in nature, based on a case study design. By using a case study approach, it has been possible to focus on one issue and study it in-depth over a longer time period. The use of a case study design is common in ethnographic work and thus suitable for answering the research question at hand. Angrosino argues that by designing a study in an ethnographic way, it becomes more inductive; it uses an accumulation of descriptions and details from real life experiences to reach a pattern of explanation (Angrosino in Flick, 2007:15). This study attempts to do just that. Further, ethnographic research is specifically suitable when one wishes to study a situation where social issues and
behaviours are not yet fully understood (Angrosino *in* Flick 2007:26). The paradox of policy and practice in Cambodia is one of those situations. By looking at the issue of structural violence through an ethnographic lens, a deeper understanding of the creation and continuation of the limiting structures can be found.

The approach of this case study is a qualitative one. An advantage of qualitative studies is that, due to the focus on just one case, which is studied in depth over a longer time period, a more comprehensive account of the phenomenon under study can be achieved (Burnham et al., 2008:63-66). Looking at structures in a society, and trying to explain behaviours, will consist of many processes and often shifting elements (Angrosino *in* Flick, 2007:24). By using a qualitative approach, patterns can be found and narratives can be used to explain the everyday life of this excluded group. The deeper focus of the qualitative study can explain the processes leading to exclusion and thus better help validate the reasons for how and why the situation for children with disabilities exists.

An important note is that the paper seeks not to determine *how much* structural violence is present, thus giving more or less weight to either of the chosen mechanisms at work, but rather *if* and *how* this violence is present. The independent variable is disability. The dependent variable is education (or lack thereof). The negative link between disability and access to education, as seen in Figure 4 below, is believed to exist due to the presence of structural violence, which affect both variables. It creates a view of disability as lack of ability and as an effect obstructs access to education for children with disabilities.

![Causal diagram](image)

*Figure 4. Causal diagram*
4.2 Selection of Case
As stated in the UN Post-2015 Agenda, more research is needed on issues affecting children in marginalised contexts. Due to an opportunity to travel to Cambodia for an internship at UNICEF’s Educational Section, an understanding of, and insights into, the Cambodian educational sector was provided for a five-moth period. Early on the question of education for children with disabilities came up. As stated in the introduction, the Cambodian case creates a paradox where children with disabilities are highly included in laws and policies, but on the other hand excluded when it comes to practice. Since it is rather rare to have so many policies aiming at supporting children with disabilities in an underdeveloped context like Cambodia (Kalyanpur, 2011), this was found to be an interesting starting point. With free education and laws meant to guarantee the access of that education for all, Cambodia possesses the prerequisites for a structure that should enables access. However, when looking at the evidence presented in the theory section on the link between disability and education in developing countries in general, and in Cambodia in particular, it becomes evident that policy does not guarantee practice. Because of the opportunity to study these practices in depth, by visiting schools and talking to teachers and school directors, as well as observing classes and talking to people from various communities, meeting with professionals working with disability rights, as well as meeting with representatives from The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MoEYS), Cambodia presented the prerequisites for an ethnographic study.

4.3 Selection of Method
This paper follows Farmer’s framework of looking at structural violence through ethnography (see Farmer, 2004). In order to understand the social, economical and historical structures that a society operates through, an ethnographic approach seems most fitting as it requires a holistic methodology that focuses on processes, relationships and inter-dependence between the individuals within the structure studied (Mikkelsen, 2005:125).

Ethnography is an explanation of a culture based on an outsider’s perspective. Therefore it is centred around first hand personal experiences, and at the same time works as a base for comparisons and understanding, both within and across societies (Van Maanen, 1988:ix). Ethnography is therefore a good method for understanding the whole picture when it comes to disability and education in the Cambodian context as the results presented in the analysis section are not just stories that have been told to the researcher; these are things that have been observed and heard first hand.

The ethnographic approach was proven to be an advantage when comparing the material collected for the research. Through the interviews with key informants a lot of valuable
information was given. What was interesting was that through day-to-day interactions with people the information given in the more formal interviews were exemplified and observed through practices in the field. Because of this, the validity of ethnographic research can be strengthened. Further, in the initial stage of the research, real life experiences from the field helped uncover themes that could be brought up in interviews with key informants. Hence, the ethnographic approach has strong advantages when it comes to understanding and developing the research at hand. It helps the researcher put the questions into context and the possibility to study behaviour first hand, which can explain causes in a way that a quantitative method cannot.

The empirical material for this paper has been collected in the course of a five-month period, during which the researcher of this thesis travelled to Cambodia. Because of the unique opportunity to join UNICEF on site, a great quantity of material has been accessible, both on paper and through workshops and meetings. This, in combination with several field trips to schools meetings with teachers, observing classes, as well as interacting with representatives from the Cambodian Government, has provided a good setting for data collection. Even though some observations have been undertaken with the help of UNICEF, the researcher has not been employed by the agency, and many times only participated as an inactive observer. When active in discussions the intentions of the visits have always been clearly voiced. The interviews with key informants have been undertaken without the assistance of UNICEF, although two representatives working at UNICEF with inclusive education have been interviewed for the paper. A more comprehensive account for the data collection will follow below.

4.3.1 Participatory Observation
The method of participatory observation refers to a process where the researcher is part of a social situation with the purpose of understanding the behaviour of the people, and the processes affecting that setting. The involvement of the researcher can vary in intensity but usually lasts over a longer time period. An advantage of this method is that the researcher can observe and note evidence connected to the research problem without having to ask direct questions to the people in the social setting, thus being able to better understand structures and behaviours connected to the research problem. By gaining access to a context where observation is possible, information, which is otherwise hard to obtain, can more easily be collected (Burnham et al., 2008:265-267).
Peter Esiasson et al. point to the advantage of observations when one wishes to study processes or structures that can be difficult to describe; for those part of a structure it can be difficult to see that structure (Esiasson et al., 2012:303). By having the possibility to participate in the Cambodian educational sector as an outsider, meeting with policy makers, as well as travelling to the field, the setting for participation observation has been appropriate. The specific method used for this research is an adapted version of the observer-as-participant role, where the researcher is known by the subjects under study and has conducted observations for brief periods in various settings, for example schools, in order to set the context for the rest of the research needed (Angrosino in Flick, 2007:54).

During the five-month period spent in Cambodia, several contexts where participation took place were provided. Due to the everyday experiences that came up in discussions and meetings it is difficult to quantify the number of observations taking place, however some instances can be deemed more significant than others. The main instances in which observation have been performed has been through six fieldtrips, three full day workshops, several meetings with development partners as well as the three day Cambodian Professional Education Congress. Taking an ethnographic point of view to the study, there is much to learn from participatory observation. By observing a situation from the outside a lot can be learned about the research questions asked. By listening to people sharing experiences and discussing processes connected to disability certain patterns can be found. By not asking direct questions, but listening in and looking around, it also becomes easier for the researcher to analyse what is being said and prioritised (or sometimes not being said or prioritised) in connection to the subject. As a researcher you are part of the on-going activities of the society for the purpose of your research and thus any meeting can be an unintended source of information or understanding. Listening to how people talk about disability and what wording is used can help uncover attitudes that may otherwise not as easily come up by for example asking a direct question.

4.3.2 Interviews
In addition to the participatory method, empirical data has been gathered through in-depth interviews with key informants. Since the interviews have not been used to understand the frequency of a phenomenon, but to unveil invisible features, this method is appropriate in answering the research question at hand. Interviews work best as a method when the goal is to understand an underexplored phenomenon, and when the results aim to tell us something about how, and why, people act a certain way (Esiasson et al., 2012:252).
The purpose of choosing key informants has been to obtain specific information based on their knowledge of the educational sector and the situation for people with disabilities in Cambodia. When choosing informants the principle of centrality has been adapted. This means that the informants have been chosen based on their knowledge and experience of the question under study (Esiasson et al., 2012:258). The key informants come from various backgrounds; some are Cambodian people with disabilities themselves and have therefore been able to give more personal narratives of the context and their experiences, others represent international organisations, while others are nationals who have been raised in, and currently work, in the context under study. What they all share is that they have experiences and information on the context of disability in the educational sector in Cambodia. The various experiences of the key informants can strengthen the analysis as it helps validate the information provided. For example, 'outsiders' who have an understanding from the 'inside' can provide valuable information on knowledge, attitudes and practices (Mikkelsen, 2005:172). If the same information can be found by talking to people who directly experience the effects of the structure, in combination with observations, the validity of the results are strengthened.

The interviews have been semi-structured in character, using a baseline of questions as guidance. However, many times when themes come up or narratives are told, old questions have been removed and new questions have been added. This is an advantage of the semi-structured character as it allows the interviewer to add or change questions for further understanding as the interview goes on. By using a set questionnaire there is a risk that information or examples that can be important when making a point are lost (Esiasson et al., 2012:251).

All the interviews with key informants have been performed in English, except when meeting with representatives from MoEYS. During these interviews a translator\(^2\) has been present. Throughout the interviews, answers were written down as well as recorded with the permission of the informants, and later transcribed for the analysis. They key informant interviews have been kept separated from any interactions in the field, which count as participatory observation, although quotes from the field are used in the analysis. In total, 12 in depth interviews with key informants have been performed.

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\(^2\) The translator brought to meet representatives from MoEYS has been Khmer, working in the educational sector at UNICEF and thus with knowledge and understanding of the context. By working with UNICEF, receiving access to MoEYS has been an opportunity which otherwise would have been much harder. UNICEF is a non-political, UN mandated fund and therefore the risk of bias has been deemed minimal.
4.4 Operationalisation: Identifying Structural Violence
Due to the nature of structural violence, researchers have not agreed on a single measurement of the concept. This is understandable; measuring suffering is not easy, as individuals are different. As the previous research on exclusion stated, no matter the reasons for excluding a person or group, certain instruments are common. Additionally, Galtung’s conceptualisation of violence, developed by Farmer, adds oppression and lack of agency as important components. Further, to show how these mechanisms operate on different levels within the structure, certain sub-mechanisms, as explained in the theory section, have been added. Connecting the themes of structural violence, the mechanisms (and sub-mechanisms) examined are: social exclusion (invisibility, stigmatisation and discrimination), oppression and lack of agency. These are presented in Figure 5 below. Being excluded, oppressed and robbed of agency can eventually cause self-discrimination and therefore connects to Bourdieu’s symbolic violence, which, as stated earlier, should be incorporated in the discussion on structural violence as it connects to all mechanisms. Through interviews and observational studies, these mechanisms have been traced and themes have been sorted out. The mechanisms have not been given separate weight when examined since this paper does not aim at isolating one of the variables from the other; rather, it is the accumulated effect of these variables that is used when arguing for the presence of structural violence.

![Figure 5](image-url)
4.5 Analysing the Material
Any evidence presented based on an ethnographic method is expressed not only by the actions and words in the field, but has been interpreted once back from the field. A culture and its structures, as John Van Maanen rightly explain, is not obvious in itself, but made visible through its descriptions. It cannot be expressed only by what is said and seen, but must be interpreted and analysed; ethnography is also the result of the fieldwork (Van Maanen, 1988:3). As mentioned above, when analysing the material collected all interviews have been recorded and transcribed in order to help make the analysis easier. When visiting the field or observing other settings, notes have been taken by hand and some have been more thoroughly transcribed once back home. When going through the material collected a division has been made based on the mechanisms presented in Figure 5 above, and reoccurring patterns have been outlined based on their respective fit under these mechanisms. In order to fully understand meanings and contexts, evidence that have initially exposed patterns that relate to the respective concepts have been divided under each sub-heading before looking at the material once again with a more specific focus on each mechanism. Evidence found that does not relate to any of the chosen mechanisms but which has still been deemed important due to its connection to a more general lack of implementation of inclusive education have been added to a broader classification that will be presented in the analysis section below.

4.6 Methodological Strengths and Challenges
When conducting research based on field studies it is important to consider methodological factors that can strengthen, or complicate, the research process and analysis. To improve the quality of the research and its conclusions, this paper has carefully considered the following points of qualitative research, developed by Matthew Miles and Michael Huberman: objectivity, reliability, and validity (Miles & Huberman, 1994:277-280). A more detailed discussion in relation to methodological considerations will follow below.

Objectivity refers to what can also be called researcher bias, that is, whether the conclusions of the research is drawn from an objective review of the material collected and not from any possible bias of the researcher. By always trying to be transparent about the research method, in combination with a proper review and presentation of the material found, the hope is that the objectivity of the research is strengthened. Being aware of your role as a researcher, and the values put into the work is important as it ultimately affects the analysis, and thus, the reliability and validity of the research (see below). Another risk associated with bias in this specific case is that which can come from the information obtained from key informants. Certainly, people working with disability rights are fighting for advocacy and
may therefore be more likely to push for the issues that they see. In order to avoid this bias somewhat, the key informants have come from different places, ranging from local NGOs, the UN, MoEYS, as well as other international development partners.

The questions of validity and reliability are important when performing research. For quantitative research, both terms can more easily be addressed through statistics, even though numbers cannot completely guarantee accuracy. On the other hand, when it comes to qualitative methods the question becomes somewhat more complicated. When one observes and participates in a social setting, we tend to perceive reality through our own lenses, which can be based on both theories related to our research, but also to who we are as people and the preconceptions that come with our own social and cultural contexts. It is important to be aware of the risks associated with this kind of ethnocentrism and even though we may not always be able to put these thoughts aside, attentiveness and caution is vital. The method of observation without participation therefore poses a risk of misinterpretations connected to validity (Esiasson et al., 2012:307). In contexts where plain observation has taken place, intentions and meaning cannot always be understood. Using a mixed methodology where interviews have served as a compliment has been an attempt to limit the risk of validity concerns. Further, by giving detailed examples and narratives based on the observations taken place, the researcher hopes to provide authentic evidence to support the hypothesis on which the paper is based.

Looking at reliability, reality is always conditional. Much of what is achieved through methods of observation and interviewing is not directly replicable. Another researcher, who looks at the same issue at a different time, may not come to the exact same conclusion as societies, and the people and structures within that society, are dynamic. However, there are still some means in which both interview- and observation based research can approach the criteria of reliability. By trying to adapt an objective position to the subject, in combination with transparency regarding both methods and intention of the research at all times, a more reliable analysis can be undertaken (Angrosino in Flick, 2007:38, 58-59). Of course the risk of bias is never fully taken away from any research project, whether qualitative or quantitative.

External validity refers to what is more commonly known as generalisation; to draw wider conclusions of a broader population based on a case. Since this case study looks to understand a specific phenomenon (structural violence and disability) in a particular context (education in Cambodia), it cannot be said to be completely representative of other settings. However, case studies do have wider importance than simply being detailed accounts of one situation. Due to
the theoretical dimensions upon which the methodology is based, the findings do call for further applicability (Burnham et al., 2008:64-65). By showing how the mechanisms of structural violence operate, new theories can be developed where violence is part of the analysis and given a broader definition. It can give importance for understanding structural barriers for people with disabilities in a developing context. No case study denies the importance of the specific case under study, nor does it reject completely the possibility to draw wider conclusions. It is all a matter of degrees. As John Gerring explain, the particularity of the case versus the generalisability should be understood as a continuum, not a dichotomy. Case studies belong to both sides as they study something particular, but also something more general (Gerring, 2007:76). As a researcher the goal is always to control circumstances that achieve validity and reliability, but in reality, results are always connected to various degrees of interpretation.

Moving beyond the framework developed by Miles and Huberman, other important aspects in connection to the study have been found and will be discussed below.

For interviews done in a foreign language there is always a risk that things get lost in translation, meanings and tones can be missed. By using a translator well involved in the educational sector this risk has been minimised since a shared understanding of the context has been present. Whenever something was unclear or a certain meaning was understood from an interview, this has been double checked for verification.

Another challenge when it comes to observation is the risk that people may alter their behaviour due to having an 'outsider' present. Since this research is not based on an experiment where people need to behave a certain way, but on the everyday life of people and policy processes this risk is somewhat eliminated. Together with having the observations crosschecked with the information from interviews and desk material, the process of triangulation further limits the risk of this specific bias (Miles & Huberman, 1994:61).

When travelling to the field, it is important to be honest about who you are and your intentions. Even if the researcher of this paper have travelled with UNICEF to several field visits, a clear presentation as someone coming from the outside, a researcher from Uppsala University looking at barriers to education for children with disabilities, have been made. UNICEF has served as a gatekeeper, enabling access to many forums otherwise difficult to obtain. When using empirical evidence collected in broader forums and public spaces (for example workshops, meetings or classrooms) individuals have not been targeted or mentioned by name, rather it has been narratives written down by the researcher, as experienced in these settings that have been used for the empirical analysis that will now follow.
5. Empirical Analysis

During the data collection for this paper certain patterns linking to the mechanisms of structural violence were uncovered and will be presented below. Due to the connection between the mechanisms, some situations and narratives may present multiple mechanisms where structural violence operates. For example, in some cases stigmatisation leads to discrimination or lack of agency allows oppressive structures to stay invisible. As ethnography is also the results of the interpretations from the field, the analysis is based on conclusions drawn by the researcher. In order to keep the analysis structured, patterns found linking more to specific mechanisms have been divided into subsections based on the operationalisation of structural violence in order to keep the analysis structured.

The overall issues that have been observed, and voiced by informants, when it comes to providing education for children with disabilities are ones deeply rooted in the structures of the Cambodian society. Physical barriers such as limited budgeting for inclusive education, lack of a public transport system and accessible educational facilities are linked to attitudinal barriers from schools, teachers, parents, communities as well as government officials. Further, the presence of disability in the Cambodian society is many times viewed through a cultural lens where stigmatisation breeds discrimination, and to provide services for disabled individuals is often seen as an act of charity rather than a human right. When asking informants about the implementation of laws and policies its fulfilment was met with scepticism. As one informant shared:

_We have a lot of laws, but there is no enforcement. It is very, very poor._

(Representative, CABDIC)

In connection to the Bourdeuian triad, the implementation of laws and policies guaranteeing children with disabilities equal rights to education as their non-disabled peers is moving very slowly. During field visits and in discussions with individuals met, the lack of capacity and investment in inclusive education was apparent. The general attitude construed is that money and political will is missing, and further more, the human resources are missing on all levels of society, starting at the very top and spiralling down. What has been found is that many times, individuals within MoEYS are not educated enough in what disability means and how to make access possible; school directors are not trained in screening children in order to understand the assistance needed; teachers are not trained well enough in inclusive education and communities and parents do not know why and what it means to have a child with a
disability. The structures creating this inaccessible environment works on all levels in society and is a combination of lack of capacity and awareness, attitudes and cultural perceptions, political will and economic resources. Simply put, the informants clearly showed that they see the issue of disability as being linked to higher structural problems that complicate the straight relation between policymaking and the schooling system assumed by the Cambodian legal framework. When listening to the informants interviewed, the observations from the field and the interpretation of the situation made by the researcher is further confirmed:

For the actual implementation, I still feel it is very low...When we talk to the ministry they say they will implement the law, but no action is taken. Money and priority are the problems...It is policy and politics. (Representative, CDPO)

It has been a very slow process. We now have the law, but we still have no implementation of that law. The ministry claims they do not have the resources to implement the law. They keep asking NGOs to take more responsibility. They have the resources. They have the budget. But they do not have the commitment. Once again, it all comes down to attitudinal barriers. (Representative, Komar Pikar Foundation)

It is all great if we look at the policies, but if schools are not going to take in those children you cannot have inclusive education because the teachers do not know what that means or how to do it. From our experience inclusive education in practice means you have child with a disability, in a school uniform, sitting in a classroom. That is it, they are included. And that is pretty much as far as it goes...It is a massive problem. Children have no support. (Representative, Epic Arts)

From the NGO sector there seems to be an agreement that expanding programmes for children with disabilities is many times seen as work for NGOs and referred to as charity rather than a human right, and hence not primarily the responsibility of the government. This line of thinking further reinforces the excluding mechanisms; if mainstream schools do not accept children with disabilities, but they instead have to rely on support from special schools created by NGOs, inclusive education has failed and these children will never have equal access.

When meeting with representatives from MoEYS at the Provincial Office of Education (POE), a similar attitude was voiced, however in this case critique was directed upwards. According to the POE, implementation is limited due to lack of support and understanding from higher levels of government. Even if the provincial or district offices do want to make a change, the resources and skills are not easily provided to them and information and understanding of the requirements put in the law is not reaching out to those in charge of its implementation.

We still have limited support for children with disabilities. We cannot meet the requirements put on us. When we voice these concerns, we have not seen any response from the higher levels. (POE, Prey Veng Province)
When travelling to the field to visit a school, a representative from the District Office of Education (DOE) happened to be present and during a conversation explained that the information given to them from the ministry was to be aware that classes do not take in too many children with disabilities per class, as it takes focus away from 'normal' children. That type of situation shows both the attitude towards disabled individuals, but also how limited schools and districts of education actually are when it comes to providing the right environment for children with disabilities.

The ministry does not prioritise implementation. The law exists because of the donors, not the government. They did not create it and therefore they do not believe it. When it comes to implementation and resources they just refer to the donors and do not budget for it. Even though they have resources, if they do not 'buy it' then it is hard for them to respond to the needs.

(Representative 3, UNICEF Cambodia)

The following sections will present the results found for the mechanisms used to operationalise structural violence; social exclusion, oppression and agency.

5.1 Social Exclusion
The first mechanism of structural violence to be discussed in depth is that of social exclusion. Social exclusion, as defined by Tsakloglou and Papadopoulos (2001), refers to individuals being systematically hindered from equal participation in society. Buvinic and Mazza’s (2008) discussion on exclusion was brought up in the theoretical section of this thesis and their considerations were found applicable in the analysis of the Cambodian case. What was stated is that when it comes to exclusion, people are not excluded due to actions they have undertaken, but rather because of who they are or how they look. In Cambodia this becomes visible in many ways when looking at the right to education, as disabled individuals are judged, and as an effect, excluded because of their embodiment. As noted in the observations, in no public school visited were there ramps put in to make sure children with physical disabilities could access the classroom. In one instance the classmates of a child with a disability actually carried the wheelchair down a flight of stairs, as this was the only way in and out of the classroom. The exclusion begins affecting disabled individuals already a birth and stretch on for their whole lives, creating unequal opportunities wherever they go. Not only are children excluded from schools, but in discussion with villagers and informants it became evident that many times children with disabilities are also hidden away from society due to stigmatisation and lack of belief in their capabilities. Examples were shared of children being locked in their houses in order to keep them from being seen. When reaching a higher
age, this exclusion continues with unequal employment opportunities and the constant lack of attention connected to cultural perceptions on disability.

In school, teachers say that they will accept if children come and that all their schools are open for children regardless of disability. But then they say that the problem is that the children do not come to the school. But why is that? Teachers do not understand the barriers and the structure they work in. Children do not have the possibility to go to school even though they want to...Parents do not understand, and there is a general idea among people that children with disabilities cannot learn or have a successful life. Therefore there is no point in providing education for them.

(Representative, AAR Japan)

When exploring exclusion as a mechanism of structural violence, it has further been divided into the sub-mechanisms of invisibility, stigmatisation and discrimination. The division is necessary in order to illustrate the different causes of exclusion and to show how it becomes rooted in society, giving both cause and legitimacy to the treatment of disabled individuals in Cambodia.

5.1.1 Invisibility

The mechanism of invisibility works as an eraser in the Cambodian context. What this means is that the term invisibility stands for a lack of representation and visibility in society as demonstrated in the theoretical framework. It stretches from being erased, that is not included, from data on the number of individuals in and out of school, to being erased from participation in important social sectors. Disabled individuals are not only erased in the sense that they are left out, but what makes this invisibility harder to detect is that in some instances, even if they are expressed to be included- they are in fact not. For example, even if disabled individuals are represented in laws, they are not physically being granted the same access to the labour market, voting opportunities or, as investigated in this case, education.

The invisibility of disabled children is not only evident when searching for data on children with disabilities in and out of school in Cambodia. When talking to informants, a shared understanding is that the very reason the data is missing in the first place stems from a lack of commitment and priority. The effect is that these already marginalised children become further hidden away from society. As one teacher expressed when observing an inclusive education class, the school and community had not been instructed on how to collect data on children with disabilities, making it very difficult to respond to the needs of the disabled children both in, and out of school. Looking at the collection of data in the Education Management Information System (EMIS) that MoEYS are responsible for compiling each year, the Policy on Education for Children with Disabilities clearly state that children with...
disabilities should be a part of EMIS data. However, the data could not be found and when asking around, it became obvious that the capacity to collect the data is insufficient.

MoEYS cannot publish any data on children with disabilities. Most schools just leave that information blank. Teachers and school directors do not have the capacity or knowledge to identify children with disabilities. If 100, or 500 out of 6000 schools fill in that information, which anyway is wrong, how do we use it? We cannot. (Representative 1, UNICEF Cambodia)

There are a lot of problems; we do not have reliable data. The screening is wrong. I heard that in the first screening in a district the teachers found 500 children with disabilities. When the control was done there were less than 50. The knowledge is not there. (Representative 2, UNICEF Cambodia)

Looking at the different levels in society needed in order to provide equitable access for all children, a lack of synchronisation and cooperation exist; focus is not directed on the issue of disabled children, as it is not the main educational priority. From observations and interviews it seems that the reason children with disabilities become invisible in society many times have to do with lack of monetary resources allocated to inclusive education, as well as lack of understanding and competence within the government. Mainstream education receives the bulk of support as it is both cheaper and produces results by showing high enrolment rates. When talking to key informants a concern was raised that the priority of the government is to be more in line with other successful Asian countries. Focus is not inclusion, but economic growth. As one informant expressed:

Cambodia is told to sign the international conventions because that country has, and that country has. But they do not necessarily believe in it and they do not think it is an important thing for the economy to grow. (Representative, Epic Arts)

The finding that the attitude towards disabled individuals is affected by a belief that they cannot participate to the economic growth of the country is problematic. As the evidence in the introduction of the paper presented (see UNICEF 2013b; Filmer, 2008), the situation is in fact the reversed and the exclusion of this group leads to a bigger loss of GDP than what including them would. Once again, lack of knowledge and attitudinal barriers block opportunities for participation. From observations and interviews, the same results are found applicable for the family level; poverty, together with cultural perceptions, is a major driving force for why parents do not invest in children with disabilities. When travelling from Phnom Penh to a neighbouring province to visit a school working with inclusive education, a meeting with parents of children with disabilities was set up for the purpose of this paper. However, upon arrival the teacher explained that only one parent had shown; it was simply too expensive to skip a day of work in order to participate in an interview about their child. The
teacher continued and explained that for many parents, spending time on their disabled child is seen as a waste since the child cannot participate in bringing in money for the household. School was thus for some parents only seen as a place for children to have fun and spend time, rather than a first step into the labour market. Nonetheless, if these children are able to receive an education that can lead to a paid employment, once again that negative spiral of poverty can end. Unfortunately for these children, changing attitudes do not happen overnight.

5.1.2 Stigmatisation
Stigmatisation is based on the definition given in the theoretical framework by Crocker and Major (1989), and refers to a social structure that creates negative attitudes and stereotypes around disability that feed exclusion. Taking an ethnographic starting point in looking at the treatment of disabled individuals, the cultural context matters greatly for the creation of a social stigma. Because of these cultural and social perceptions of disability, stigma is resilient in Cambodia and when talking to informants, as well as visiting the field, this is a pattern that reappears. The majority of people living in Cambodia are Buddhist and the presence of karma is strong. From observation and discussions, a problematic attitude towards people with disabilities can be understood and according to the informants, a religious belief exist that if a person is disabled they are punished because of a wrong doing from a past life; basically people are getting what they deserve. This line of thinking regarding disability does however seem to be disappearing with the younger generations, even if it does still exist. Another problem connected to stigmatisation is spiritual in character and takes its ground in the perception that a person with a disability is haunted and could pass on their disability as a matter of bad luck. This belief is intensely rooted in some communities, causing shame for parents who do not put any resources on their children, or as discussed above, keep them isolated from society.

The parents said to me: Please do not seat my child next to the disabled children. They may be contagious. (School Director Kampot Province)

The stigmatisation is part of the community. The people who are religious have a thinking that disability is a punishment. (Representative, The Rabbit School Cambodia)

Culture is a big part of attitudes; it is about tradition and beliefs. Parents try to hide their children from being seen, and also from being aware of the community, because they are ashamed. They do not believe that their children can learn. (POE, Prey Veng Province)

We have one staff member who has a little boy with Downs Syndrome and the father is often told that it is his fault because he named the child before it was born. And this is totally what his whole family and the whole community believe. (Representative, Epic Arts)
Another pattern found connected to attitudes is historical. The legacy of the Khmer Rouge Regime and the line of thinking, where value was put on individuals based on physical capabilities to some extent still live on. This argument is not hard to buy for someone who has spent a significant time living and travelling in Cambodia and seeing the extreme poverty that exists because of the Khmer Rouge. This is a country where a huge group of individuals have experienced a genocidal regime that left Cambodia in shatters. In many ways people are still traumatised by what happened and wherever you go the legacy of the Pol Pot regime is visible.

During the Khmer Rouge era people with disabilities were seen as useless because they could not work. I think it comes a lot from that, it has been ingrained into people, that if there is something wrong with you physically- then you cannot do anything. (Representative, Epic Arts)

This is an inheritance from the Pol Pot Regime. Most of my relatives call me by names associated with my disability and say that I did something wrong in a past life. Many are told this and believe it. One girl I know was told that she have broken the legs of a cricket, therefore her legs do not work now. She has been told this for her whole life and she believes it. This is a social stigma that we need to work against. (Representative, CDPO)

One informant told the story of a child who came to the organisation having lost both his legs in an accident. When he arrived all his friends and family members had told him that, because he was now disabled he might as well kill himself since he had no future anyways. He lived with the feeling of being worth absolutely nothing and could see no hope or escape from that.

The self-esteem of children is very limited, they have the feeling that they cannot do anything themselves. (Representative, CDMD)

In connection to the stigmatisation and discrimination around disabilities, symbolic violence is part of the equation. As Edwards and Imrie (2003) claim, and the evidence presented prove, the social encounters of everyday life for these children is a constant reminder of the value put on them because of their embodiment and it further reinforces their exclusion.

5.1.3 Discrimination
The last sub mechanism of exclusion is that of discrimination. In comparison to invisibility and stigmatisation, which can both become hidden in structures of societies, discrimination refers to a more direct and active lack of priority that causes exclusion.

The discrimination of people with disabilities exists on all levels of society and connects to a broader lack of understanding. During meetings and interviews it was found that to this day, there exists no special education faculty in the Teacher Training Department. When a Cambodian teacher student is trained to become a teacher, out of two years of training only
eight days is focused on inclusive education on how to assist children with disabilities. Looking at this reality it becomes easier to understand why the setting in schools do not provide accessible environments; if the government will not provide capacity, then neither will schools.

Many schools do not want to bring in disabled children in class because it takes focus away from the 'normal' children. When it comes to severely disabled it is even worse. Severely disabled children are allowed to come to school because it is the law, but they cannot access education. (DOE, Prey Veng Province)

There are many children with disabilities in this village, but no one brings them to school. (Villager, Prey Veng Province)

I have seen children with disabilities being brought to school to enrol but they have been refused. The teacher thinks it is too much work and therefore they are reluctant to receive them. (School Director, Kampot Province)

The lack of an inclusive classroom is a problem. The representatives from the government say that there is no need to build ramps or special designed toilets at the schools we request because there are no children with disabilities in those schools. But then I ask why is that so? They are not in school precisely for those reasons. Teachers are not prepared or interested to assist these children and the communities do not want to send them to school. (Representative, The Rabbit School Cambodia)

Even if children with disabilities do manage to make it to school, the environment and the understanding in that setting varies a lot. For example, it may be easier for some children with disabilities to go to school due to accessibility, but once there the understanding of their conditions may still obstruct their capabilities. As was found by the Roeher Institute (1994), if the educational system and schools function with the perception that disability equals subordination then structural violence easily translates into direct violence. In discussion with informants from the field and in interviews, the presence of psychological abuse in the form of name-calling, as well as physical violence from other children and teachers was brought up as a phenomenon. One informant shared a story that shows this process:

For some deaf students that I have met, other students and teachers got very violent with them. For example some of them have had stones thrown at them because they are seen as very rude. They are asked a question but then they do not answer because they cannot hear. A lot of them end up leaving school because of this. The acceptance in classrooms and the understanding of teachers are major problems. (Representative, Epic Arts)

When visiting a school that practices inclusive education, the lack of resources was unmistakeable. The actual school was in fact no school at all, but the backyard of the teacher’s home where the students gathered on a concrete floor covered by thin bamboo carpets under a roof with no walls. In the class observed there was a young girl with a severe
mental disability participating, however the degree of her participation can be questioned. The teacher explained:

I face a lot of challenges as a teacher. I can bring in children with disabilities in my class, but I have no resources to actually look after them and at the same time take care of the other 20 students. There is not enough support given. During the technical meetings with the ministry I voice these concerns, but I never get any response. (Teacher, Prey Veng Province)

When it comes to the discourse used when talking about disability in Cambodia, this can further reinforce and consolidate the discriminating structures that lead to exclusion, albeit be it unintentional sometimes. The quote from the DOE above, using the word 'normal' to describe non-disabled children, was experienced on several occasions during field visits and interviews. When attending the Professional Education Congress in Phnom Penh in March 2015, a representative from the Cambodian Government stated that more focus needed to be put on teaching the blind, the deaf and 'the dumb'. As the use of the adjective dumb is old English for people who are unable to speak, this may be what was referred to. However, the wording itself is most commonly used to refer to someone who is considered stupid rather than someone who is unable to speak, and when discussing the word with informants the general perception was that, when used it often refers to people with mental disabilities. Further more, in Khmer- the national language of Cambodia, certain words used to describe disabilities add to the discriminating discourse. For example, the Khmer word used for someone suffering from epilepsy in English translates into 'mad pig'. One informant told the story of a boy with Downs Syndrome who, when he was born, was given a name that translates into 'lizard'. The reason was that his family thought he looked like one, and because of it, he was never given another name. When meeting with one NGO that works with educating and empowering disabled individuals in Cambodia with a special focus on artistic performances, the discourse used was once again brought up as a limiting factor. When reading reviews of their performances in magazines, the informant explained how performances made by physically disabled individuals many times were described using words such as 'cripple'.

Moving beyond the sub-mechanisms of exclusion, the following sections present the results connected to oppression and agency.

5.2 Oppression
The mechanism of oppression has been operationalized using Galtung’s idea of ‘underdogs’ (see Galtung in Galtung & Fisher, 2013). This term refers to individuals becoming the underdogs in an unequal society and thus given less opportunity, and seen as less important.
What has been found in the study is that the oppression experienced by disabled individuals is institutionalised in Cambodia. Even though laws protect children with disabilities, the real life practices systematically create inequalities based on their physical or mental disabilities. The oppressive structures are part of everyday life for disabled individuals as they form part of norms and habits in other people. As Galtung explains, the oppressive structure is centred on the fact that people are different, and the people at the bottom are deemed as less important. The underdogs get their needs looked after to a lesser extent. This is visible when it comes to education for children with disabilities in Cambodia. The role as the underdogs in society can be met differently as both observed and understood during the study. For example, in some instances disabled individuals are looked upon as incapable or 'uneducationable', and in some instances they are viewed as an object of charity, as described by one informant below:

When I meet with the ministry at different levels they usually look at me with pity. When I went to talk about policy they said: oh what a pity, we need to carry him to our office (because there were no ramps) so let us give him some money instead. Then I say, why? I am here to talk about policy and implementation of rights of disabled people! How can they implement the laws when they do not even understand what disability is? Why do they need to carry me? Because they have no ramps! And that was a government building. They promise to do this and that, but nothing happens.

The informant continued to explain:

When I passed high school my mom told me to stop study... I wanted to be a lawyer but society rejected me. Then I wanted to be a teacher and the Teacher Training Department rejected me. They said a candidate had to be fully functional physically. At the time I felt my life was ending… I thought maybe this is my karma? Even to this day, people tell me these things… People look at me strangely and say, oh what a pity. (Representative, CDPO)

Looking at what it means to be an underdog, this thesis aims at exploring the everyday experience of disabled individuals and the evidence found indicate that the treatment, much like the theoretical background suggests, has become routinised in the practices of parents, community members and educational personnel. Here, an important point to keep in mind is, as experienced by the researcher; because of the structure and naturalisation of roles, many people taking part of the oppression are not themselves aware of their own roles as oppressors. It is in their habitus. These power differences do not only exist between disabled and non-disabled individuals but are part of the whole Cambodian social structure.

A reoccurring theme found in connection to the role as underdogs comes from the lack of priority and understanding. Besides the shortage of teacher training in inclusive education, the fact that the training in Child Friendly Schools, which is the programme focusing on inclusive education, is done as a separate part of teacher training and not part of the overall pedagogy,
fortifies the view of disability as a separate, different (from the once again called 'normal') right to education. What was voiced during meetings with development partners is the lack of capacity and investment in accessible education. When meeting with a representative from MoEYS at district level she explained that even though she works for MoEYS herself, changing structures is hard and too much responsibility is put on too little staff. For example, at the district she holds the responsibility for 55 schools, spanning over 70 villages and receiving support is not easy. She explained:

I have requested help from the ministry, but I never see any. I see many children with disabilities who never access school because they cannot get any help. (DOE, Prey Veng Province)

The lack of priority becomes further visible when looking at enrolment. In one province visited, the POE presented data collected showing that, compared to the EMIS data presenting over 9000 enrolled preschool aged students in the province, their data revealed that only 29 of them were disabled. Further more, the POE explained that they had in fact identified almost 200 primary aged students with disabilities that should be enrolled in school. The accuracy of that data could not be confirmed but either way, due to a combination of structural reasons, those 200 children were not in school.

Another example regarding attitudes given by an informant is a story of a child that went from a special school to a mainstream, government run school. This child used a walking frame and, after pressure from the NGO, the school built a ramp to make sure that he could access the classroom. However, when the informant made a return visit to the school it was found that the teacher had placed the child at the back of the classroom. What is problematic about this is that in order to answer questions in Cambodian schools, children are supposed to get up and walk to the front of the class and write on the board. Whenever this child put his hand up to participate the teacher would just ignore him, because it took him too long to get up and answer the question. The simple solution of putting him at the front of the class apparently had not even been discussed as an option showing the attitude and lack of interest in focusing on children with disabilities that exist in some classrooms. When visiting Prey Veng Province the line of thinking of disability as lack of capacity was further reinforced, as exemplified below.

I do not think my daughter will be able to learn. She can come to school to be happy with her friends, but my expectations of her learning capabilities is low. (Mother of child with mental disability)

I have a nephew with a severe disability and he has to use a wheelchair. Because of this he cannot access school and his family is too poor to take care of him. He just sits at home all day. I do not believe that he can ever learn because not only can he not walk, he has a vision problem. (Villager, Prey Veng Province)
5.3 Agency
The possibility to withstand other mechanisms such as oppression and discrimination is strongly connected to a person’s ability to voice their concerns. The last mechanism of structural violence to be presented, agency, refers to an individuals possibility to act based on their own will and interest. In comparison to invisibility, which in this analysis is viewed as an absence of something (for example economic opportunities or representation in data), lack of agency refers to having one’s suffering silenced (Farmer, 2009). It connects back to the creation of a categorisation and a stratification of individuals, which in turn leave them voiceless and limit their capacity to act freely.

As mentioned above, the cultural context in Cambodia is that of a strong hierarchy where disabled people are on the lowest step of the social ladder. When interacting with children in the field these structures were very obvious as respect and obedience is of utter importance. Being young in this structure is hard enough as agency is already limited due to being a child since parents are the voice of the family. Add being categorised as disabled to this equation, together with the evidence presented above, agency becomes further restricted.

When discussing the situation for children with disabilities the general idea from both informants, but also other encounters, was that parents are the key to children’s agency. Due to the cultural context, children do not speak up against their parents, let alone teachers or other community members. In order for a negative condition to be brought to light parents need to carry the voice of their children. However, since the habitus of the Cambodian people is to view disability as incapability, chances are that many parents, as proven in the discussion above, ignore that voice and instead focus on other, ‘more important’ issues.

The children cannot voice their situation. Because of their culture, they will not raise issues like that. There is a hierarchy to obey. Children are meant to obey, so it is even worse for children with disabilities. (Representative, CABDICO)

For many children a lot is dependent on their parents to advocate for their needs, and if they do not believe their children are able to learn or worth the effort, then these children will be very voiceless. (Representative, Krousar Thmey)

Young children with disabilities do not really have a voice. If they actually make it to school they are often not able to voice their need of help because there is a strict hierarchy and they may not dare say that they do not understand or that their teachers are not helping enough. Parents are key, but if parents do not know or understand it is difficult. (Representative, AAR Japan)

Another discussion regarding agency that came up is connected to symbolic violence. Lack of agency and lack of power in society are linked, and having no power eventually causes children to start thinking it is not possible. The fact that Cambodia does not have any real representation of disabled individuals in politics or mainstream culture gives little
encouragement for children to believe that a successful future is possible. The creation of symbolic violence is therefore important to understand as it further pushes people down, forcing them to accept their roles as voiceless objects rather than giving them opportunity to be agents of change.

We need to start promoting awareness within disabled individuals themselves. If they see role models they can become motivated and committed and think about their future. Today we have no such successors in Cambodia and the feeling is more no future and no worth. (Representative 3, UNICEF Cambodia)

5.4 Discussion of the Results
The story at the beginning of this thesis explains an encounter where the everyday life situation for a child with disabilities was made visible in, at least for this researcher, quite a rough way. Unfortunately, what has been found from the study is that this girl’s story is not extraordinary. The empirical results presented above show evidence to support the hypothesis that structural violence, operated through the mechanisms of social exclusion, oppression and lack of agency, works as an obstructing force for children with disabilities in accessing education. As discussed in the methods section, the Bourdieuan triad of laws, practice and habitus can be used to explain this gap. Structural violence operates through the habitus of the Cambodian people as it is played out through the norms and habits connected to disability. The attitudes towards disabilities are part of the habitus and it creates a view of the disabled body as incapable and less valuable to society. As the oppressive structures are imbedded in people’s routines it seems that the habitus of the Cambodian people has, due to a combination of history and culture, taught them how to react to disability: as a problem, a curse or punishment, an impairment that makes people less valuable to society. Because of this belief in a lack of capabilities related to embodiment, these individuals become the underdogs of society with little possibility for escape. As one informant stated when discussing the view of disability in Cambodia:

Disability is not coming from a bodily impairment; disability comes from the social network, the social protection. Whether society is paying attention, giving opportunity. (Representative, CDPO)

What was found in the Cambodian case is that the cultural context that enables the continuation of structural violence is of great analytical importance, as it works as a legitimising force. The presence of stigma connected to religion and other cultural dogmas feed the excluding forces and give people cause, thus in a sense obstructing them from realising their own roles as oppressors. The stigma further feeds the symbolic violence, which should be incorporated into any discussion on structural violence. Adding symbolic violence
to the equation is important for the way the broader concept of violence should be viewed, as it is a mechanism that robs children of both agency, but also any belief in the possibility of a better future ahead.

Looking at the practices as part of the Bourdieuan triad, lack of enforcement further foster excluding and oppressive structures. Lack of understanding and incentive in investing in children with disabilities, together with the idea that disability rights are not rights at all but a matter of charity or pity complicates matters more. If the government do not put focus and resources into understanding and enforcing disability rights on all levels of society change is unlikely.

Connecting Bourdieu with Galtung’s concept of structural violence, further developed by Farmer, the former states that symbolic violence is at the heart of all social relations and institutions, and that this violence is often invisible, exercised by dominating structures (see Bourdieu, 1977, 1990, 1998). Closely quoted, Farmer states that social inequalities are at the heart of structural violence (Farmer, 2004:317). The statements show the depth of violence and make good arguments for the need to broaden the violence framework. Because of the structures, the invisibility of marginalised children is difficult to detect and the ethnographic approach has helped uncover patterns of violence that are of great importance for future policy makers. The implication of this work is that it can give strength to advocates for expanding the rights for children with disabilities. By framing this lack of access as one brought forward by violence, the urgency of change should be of utter importance.
6. Conclusion

This thesis took off by claiming a rights-based approach to development based on Amartya Sen’s definition which reads that development “…requires the removal of major sources of unfreedom: poverty as well as tyranny, poor economic opportunities as well as systematic social deprivation, neglect of public facilities as well as intolerance or overactive repressive states” (Sen, 1999:3). When examining the situation for disabled children in Cambodia today these unfreedoms are very much a reality; poverty, poor economic opportunities, social deprivation, neglect of public facilities and intolerance are part of the everyday life of these children, and the possibility to live a valuable life is strongly restricted without access to the same capabilities as other children.

Looking back we can now see that the Millennium Development Goals failed to accomplish education for all, even though a lot of progress has been made. In order for the new Sustainable Development Goals to succeed there is a great need to focus more on marginalised groups who many times cannot advocate for themselves. Children are one of those groups, disabled individuals another. As Buvinic and Mazza (2008) found in their research, belonging to more than one of the groups who are extra vulnerable put people at greater risk of exclusion, both from society but also from educational opportunities. This negative trend needs to stop and uncovering the processes that allow structural violence to operate is the first step. Therefore this thesis is relevant for future work on education for children with disabilities. By framing these mechanisms as violence it is possible to, as Barnes et al. claim (1999), push decision makers and citizens to challenge and confront the oppressive conditions experienced by disabled individuals today. The examples presented from this case study are part of a first step in broadening the analysis and provide examples from the real, everyday experience of the individuals participating. This is the strength of an ethnographic approach. Edwards and Imrie (2003) advocate for a more comprehensive understanding of the relationships between disabled people’s bodies and the effect it has on socio-cultural values and practices; this thesis hopes to contribute to that by adding violence as a variable of interest. The empirical question guiding this research has been:

**How are children with disabilities in Cambodia structurally excluded from education?**

The purpose of this thesis has been to provide an ethnographic view of the situation for children with disabilities when it comes to accessing education. The paper seeks to explain the lack of access to education by referring to the presence of structural violence, a type of
violence that takes its toll through the routine and ritual of the everyday life of the individuals affected (Farmer, 2003). Structural violence, as Sen and Farmer (2003) explain it, causes people harm because the social structures that they live within, and the way people in those structures act, limit the subjected individuals agency and accessibility to live valuable lives compared to the rest of the people in that structure.

Looking at the Cambodian case, disabled children are subjected to this exclusionary categorisation not only by the people in schools, but by the whole structure they live within, from policymakers and implementers all the way down to teachers, fellow students and even sometimes their own parents. Hence there is a need to move beyond a pure legalistic approach to looking at disability rights and for future policymakers to understand that in order to solve the issue, social contexts need to be added to the analysis. The structure created in Cambodia hinders teachers from accessing quality training and understanding of disabilities; it hinders parents and communities in receiving assistance and to gain understanding. The structure hinders access since no public transport is available and the lack of implementation of laws causes this situation to continue. The cultural perceptions and attitudes, many times linked to lack of education to begin with, create unequal access and add to the exclusion of marginalised groups.

Farmer (2009) stresses the need to dig deeper than to simply observe the current structure in order to understand societies and the inequalities they produce. In the Cambodian context this argument seems vital and both culture and history, together with the political context of then and now, have a lot to do with how the habitus of the Cambodian people has developed, and how it is legitimised. Galtung (1969) discusses cultural violence as the legitimising force for both direct, and structural violence and once again, history plays a significant role in the Cambodian society’s cultural development. Because of this, when one discusses structural violence and the negative consequences it creates, what is needed in the analysis is also the understanding that other factors than what is ethnographically visible today limit access to education, and to a certain extent MoEYS’s ability to provide that access. History plays a significant role and the past is very much alive and linked to the matrix in which structural violence lives and grows. As rightfully stated by the Deputy Prime Minister at the Educational Congress 2015:

You have to understand the past. If you do not understand the past, you cannot change the present.

(Dr. Sok. An, Deputy Prime Minister of Cambodia)
The Khmer Rouge regime created a path for Cambodia where structures are uneven, and the access over the decisions in that structure is uneven. Changing structures takes time, even if the right intentions are beginning to appear, including with representatives of the government.

In Cambodia there is a great need to provide MoEYS, school directors and teachers with the capacity to create a more inclusive educational setting for children with disabilities. The question and challenge at hand is who is to take responsibility for that capacity development. At the moment the government are not the leaders and a lot of the responsibility falls on NGOs. In addition to the necessity of an increased sense of responsibility from the Cambodian Government, there is a need to expand the ability and interest to question and challenge the existing structures, where belief and attitudes negatively influence how the everyday life of children with disabilities are lived. For children it is imperative that inclusion starts already in the classroom. Otherwise, as Klasen (2001) stresses, schools become a sphere where social exclusion is manifested, leading the poverty-disability spiral to continue on.

This thesis states that the Bourdieuan concept of symbolic violence should be added to the discussion on structural violence. Looking at the evidence, the mechanisms that structural violence operates through feed the presence of symbolic violence. By constantly being viewed as less valuable to society, disabled individuals themselves become routinised in their own oppression and both the feeling of shame and lack of self-worth becomes part of their habitus. If disabled individuals are to become agents of change they need to know that they deserve equal rights as everyone else in society; structural violence needs to stop in order for this to happen, and it is important that societies care enough to make that happen. Even if the oppressive regime of the Khmer Rouge is gone, the structures created live on and they do not change overnight, especially with no education and no way to prove them wrong by giving disabled individuals equal capabilities. As Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois (2004) point out, and what was experienced during the five months in Cambodia, attitudes are not created to be oppressive as such, but because of cultural violence they are legitimised and routinised as normal behaviour. Changing attitudes takes time as they are deeply rooted in society through the habitus. However, if real change is to come it has to be rooted at the top in order to spiral down in society. If attitudes can change and focus can be redirected it is possible to create inclusive education for all in Cambodia.

This thesis has shown that violence is an important concept as it correlates to both macro-level development, as well as individual poverty. Structural violence, the way the concept is defined, is important in this discussion as it greatly hinders individual development by limiting capabilities and harming those affected by its forces. As Farmer (2004) states, social
inequalities are a core of structural violence. If social institutions such as schools do not function, then those inequalities will only grow. Education alone cannot guarantee inclusion; it needs to be implemented in an environment that can accept that inclusion on equal terms. The resources needed to improve the current situation can be found, and the exclusion, oppression and lack of agency can be prevented. Galtung (1969) describes violence as the difference between the potential and the actual. Violence is present when a person’s capabilities are restricted in comparison with others; this is the situation seen in Cambodia today. The lack of education for disabled children is preventable if the right actions are taken, but as today they are not. This is structural violence.
7. List of References

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8. Appendix

8.1 Appendix 1. Interviews with Key Informants

Association for Aid and Relief Japan (AAR Japan)
Interview conducted 2015-05-19
AAR Japan is a Japanese NGO established locally in Cambodia in 1992. Since then they have been running long-term development projects in Cambodia with a focus on assisting people with disabilities.

Capacity Building for Disability Cooperation (CABDICO)
Interview conducted 2015-05-19
CABDICO is a local NGO that has been active in Cambodia since 2006. Their main projects are community-based rehabilitation, education for children with disabilities and poverty reduction.

Cambodia Development Mission for Disability (CDMD)
Interview conducted 2015-04-21
CDMD is a local NGO that has been active in Cambodia since 1993. In 2007 they became an official NGO whose main projects are community rehabilitation, social care and inclusive education for children with disabilities (since 2013), a day care center for poor children, a vulnerable pregnant women programme and disability inclusion in community projects.

Cambodia Disabled People’s Organisation (CDPO)
Interview conducted 2015-05-25
CDPO is a local NGO that has been active in Cambodia since 1994. CDPO works as a disability movement in Cambodia advocating for full inclusion and equal rights on all levels in society.

Epic Arts
Interview conducted 2015-05-11
Epic Arts is an international NGO established locally in Cambodia in 2003. They work with empowering people with disabilities through projects connected to education, communities and social enterprises.

Komar Pikar
Interview conducted 2015-03-27
Komar Pikar is a local NGO that has been active in Cambodia since 1997. Before that they worked in collaboration with Save the Children and have been part of the Disability Action Council in Cambodia. They work with empowering children and young people with disabilities.
Krousar Thmey
Interview conducted 2015-05-21
Krousar Thmey is a local NGO established in 1991. They work on integrating all Cambodian children into society with a special focus on education for blind and deaf children, child welfare for poor children and cultural and artistic development.

The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MoEYS)
Interviews conducted 2015-05-22
The interviews were conducted with two representatives of a Provincial Office of Education with a special focus on inclusive education for children with disabilities.

The Rabbit School
Interview conducted 2015-05-04
The Rabbit School is a local NGO established in 1997 with focus on providing education for children with intellectual disabilities.

The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF)
Interviews conducted 2015-05-25
The interviews were conducted with two Educational Officers with special knowledge on inclusive education for children with disabilities from the Education Section at UNICEF Cambodia’s National Office.