

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This research has found that the YECs hold both positive and negative attitudes toward the Vietnamese. The results also indicate that besides holding negative attitudes toward the Vietnamese, the YECs also hold negative attitudes toward their own government. Holding negative attitudes toward both the Vietnamese and the Cambodian government could cause a lot of problems concerning the relationship between the two countries. More importantly, it will affect the social, political and economic development of Cambodia. There could be violence between the Cambodians and the Vietnamese who live in the same Cambodian society. Besides that, negative attitudes can lead to psychological problems for the YECs such as the aggressiveness, fear, depression, loss of confidence toward their own government or some government policies. Negative attitudes should therefore be lessened in order to have peace and development in the society.

According to the results of this research, the understanding of the YECs towards the Vietnamese living in Cambodia should be encouraged. In fact, the YECs hold some positive attitudes toward the Vietnamese already. They like some good Vietnamese characteristics such as cleverness, professionalism, industriousness, and having respect for value on the job. Moreover, they perceive Vietnamese as good in doing business, having a strong sense of unity and as being friendly toward Cambodian people. These good characteristics of Vietnamese have been admired and proposed as a model for some Cambodians. The YECs also hold positive attitudes toward the Vietnamese government. They admire the VG for with their good performance in developing Vietnam and for having a good policy toward the Cambodians in Vietnam. However, there are still a lot of dissatisfied and suspicious feelings toward the Vietnamese.

The negative attitudes toward the Vietnamese people in Cambodia are much related to the difference between the two peoples in term of characteristics and culture. The YECs do not like the Vietnamese since they are different from them and this difference seems to cause harm to Cambodians, both in their daily life, their resources and their culture. Thus, the Vietnamese have still been considered as outsiders who have brought a lot of problems into Cambodia. This was recognized by the YECs after they had observed or seen the Vietnamese in their everyday life or in the socialization process.

Moreover, the Vietnamese living in Cambodia have been suspected of having a connection with the Vietnamese government in order to do harm to Cambodia and to Cambodians. The YECs suspect the Vietnamese government of still having a role in Cambodia politics, attempting to invade Cambodia territory and sovereignty and exploiting Cambodia both politically and economically. The Vietnamese people, in the YECs' suspicion, have been sent to Cambodia in order to do something for the Vietnamese government. They have a strong nationalist sentiment, do not want to be Khmer, and are loyal to Vietnam even though they are living in Cambodia.

Suspicious or negative attitudes toward the Vietnamese in political terms were formed according to the information the YECs have received. All this information was mostly generated in order to serve political purposes to gain political benefits. In some instances, the message echoed hostilities between the Cambodians and the Vietnamese in the past. Those messages have been passed to the YECs through their social environment and the mass media. The YECs received those negative messages and processed them by comparing the message they got from one source to another before they believed it. Since most of the sources gave negative information about the Vietnamese in the political realm, negative attitudes have been formed.

According to the findings relating to the attitudes and attitude formation of the YECs toward the Vietnamese, there are ways to improve the understanding between the people of the two countries. Attitudes can be changed but participation and strong

commitment from both the people and governments of the two countries is needed to make the change possible. Willing to have good neighbors, as mentioned earlier by both the ruling party and the opposition party, is good encouragement for this healing process.

However, there is still a wide gap between the Cambodian and the Vietnamese, even though they are living together in a single society. They do not understand each other due to the lack of reliable information about each other that is given to them. To solve this problem, a study of the Vietnamese in Cambodia should be conducted. What is the number of the Vietnamese people living in Cambodia? Why did they come? How do they live? How do they survive? What do they feel about Cambodian people and Cambodia? The results of such a study would certainly improve understanding of the Vietnamese by Cambodians. Moreover, the government of Cambodia should promote and create a good environment for Vietnamese studies in Cambodia in order to understand and distribute factual academic information about the Vietnamese to Cambodian people. At present, most of the people who have experience in working with the Vietnamese issues feel threatened due to the political situation. Vietnamese issue has become a very sensitive issue and no one dares to study it deeply. Scholars will not be able to conduct academic research if there is no insurance of safety from the government.

Cambodian political parties should also stop using anti-Vietnamese propaganda for gaining political benefits as it strongly affects the attitudes of the YECs and could cause more serious problems in nation building in the future. Instead, those political parties should work closely with the government to solve the existing problems between Cambodia and Vietnam.

As the result of the study, the free flow of information and messages was another important problem. The YECs have received negative and one-sided historical interpretations of history through many means. History has somehow been exploited to create negative attitudes toward the Vietnamese as well as towards the Cambodian government. In other words, negative attitudes of the YECs could be formed because of the

lack of neutral and grounded historical knowledge on which to base sound judgment and comparison. The way to give more neutral and wide historical knowledge to Cambodians is to place the subject of Southeast Asian history in the high school curriculum and university level curriculum. By not just seeing the problems only in the two states, students will understand the problems of the region and its connection with the world as a whole. The various types of information and knowledge will help them to compare and come out with a deeper understanding of the Vietnamese, of current political issues as well as regional problems as a whole.