

**Voices in the Village: An inquiry into tourism, communities and  
community-based tourism in Cambodia**

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## Acknowledgements

As I write the following acknowledgements, it is most fitting I sit in one of my favorite places at The Australian National University, the Menzies Library, where I am surrounded by the Southeast Asian collection that has become a trusted guide and friend over the last seven years. This building, this place inspires learning. It has done so for me and for many others who have gone before. Upon reflection, I tend to believe my passion for academia and research began many years ago. My earliest recollection belongs to my early childhood days, sitting at my mother's sewing desk, pretending it was a teacher's desk while attempting to teach my teddy bears who were neatly aligned in front of me. I also made good use of a red pen and stamp pad to mark their work (in reality work I had already completed for school).

I now believe it was completing Year Twelve at The Armidale School (1987) that later provided the foundation for me to pursue a teaching and research career many years later. I often tell my current students the story of 'Sunday afternoons with Mr Wilkinson'. As part of my Year Twelve studies I sat for Three Unit Modern History. There were only a handful of students who were also completing the same Unit. Apart from the usual Monday to Friday classes, our teacher Mr. Alan Wilkinson gave up his Sunday afternoons to meet with us in Classroom F1 and spent the entire afternoon simply leading inclusive, and often fascinating conversation concerning matters related to modern history. We all contributed toward providing afternoon tea, because weekend catering at school was fairly dismal. This was not your usual teacher *standing in front of the class and teaching* scenario; it was an open forum where we all encouraged each other to share thoughts and opinions on all things comprising modern history. Alan's ability to encourage learning and the pursuit of knowledge through mutually shared conversation was truly inspirational. All these years later, I now reflect fondly on these bygone afternoons and truly believe my love of learning was a consequence of Alan's teaching approach, especially his Sunday afternoons.

At school, I was not your 'top of the class' student, and often failed to put as much effort toward my studies that was required. I still have one of my Year Twelve modern history essays entitled 'To what extent did western penetration of China in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century bring about the collapse of the Manchu Dynasty?'. Alan's comments were as follows, 'the greatest problem with your essay is a lack of adequate analysis. Your research is reasonable, but you tend towards story-telling rather than using evidence to support your assertions. You must overcome this tendency. There are errors of expression and spelling which must be rectified'. Alan, all these years later, I sincerely hope I have done you proud, and this thesis reflects your superb teaching, impeccable standards, and thirst for maintaining scholarly excellence.

Very similar to Alan's Sunday afternoons is what I have now become to fondly refer to as 'lunch with Dr Jill at Petersham Heights'. I first met Dr Jill McRae some years ago. Instantly we formed a bond, as we soon discovered we knew the same people and shared similar interests and beliefs. It was not long before Jill invited me around to her apartment for lunch. Walking into her apartment (museum may be better word) for the first time, you just knew lunch would take quite a few hours. During that first lunch we must have conversed for at least five hours discussing history, politics, human rights, indigenous issues and of course education. I still recall Jill's voice telling me 'The Australian National University is this country's leading University. Just look at the Times Higher Education Rankings. You must complete your PhD, and this is the place to do it'. Once I commenced my PhD, lunch at Dr Jill's has become a regular occurrence, not only to discuss my studies, but also to explore topics of interest to both of us. Jill's latest email to me once again reinforced the magnitude of scholarly pursuit. She wrote 'striving imposes a punitive residue, once you've reached the summit and elected to head off into the wild blue yonder with flowers in your hair. We underestimate how much of us is appropriated by the rigors of scholarship, most of which is invisible to the outsider. As doubtless you are now all-too-aware, it is not a club to which one is admitted without proof of worth'. As my External PhD Advisor, Jill has been an integral part of my journey over the last seven years. I am indebted for her passion, kindness and relentless pursuit to ensure I completed this body of work and was able to demonstrate my own 'proof of worth'.

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In addition, I owe sincere thanks to the Community-Based Tourism Project and villagers of Banteay Chhmar for allowing me to incorporate the Project and community in my research. Over the years I have formed a strong bond of friendship with people from Banteay

Chhmar, especially Sopheg and Sreymom, Sopal and Andrew. All have given up their time and shared their knowledge in order to answer my many questions and support my fieldwork. When my wife and I returned to Banteay Chhmar in 2016, we were welcomed as family; and throughout our stay we very much felt part of the community. I also make particular reference to three young ladies, Lenna, Chhomdeb and Channyka, whose passion and optimism about their, and Cambodia's future was, and continues to be truly inspirational. There is something very special about Banteay Chhmar and its people. I sincerely hope the sense of community and pride in their achievements remains strong. Even though my research has concluded, I will continue to stay engaged with this special place.

Let me also make special mention of Dr Scott Richardson. I joined Scott's team at the Blue Mountains International Hotel Management School as his Deputy Head of School in 2014. Scott's background in tourism research soon stimulated conversation about my doctoral studies, and instantly Scott became interested in my topic. He was also quite concerned about my ability to complete, given the part-time nature of my studies. Scott strongly recommended we jointly publish articles drawn from my dissertation. He believed that this strategy would assist toward ensuring I remained focused on completion. Thanks to Scott's constant support and guidance, I was able to publish two of my chapters in 2016, one for a journal and another for a book. My sincere thanks to you, Scott, particularly over the last three years; I am sure our research partnership will continue.

In conclusion, my greatest asset and strongest inspiration is my family that is my father, Geoffrey, my mother, Giovanna, Sokha, my wife, and our son Alex Dara. I cannot thank you enough for your support, encouragement and above all, patience throughout. Over the past seven years my family have made significant sacrifices thus allowing me the time to complete. My wife has accompanied me on all fieldwork trips; more, she has provided me with an in-depth understanding of the Cambodian people and their culture, established important connections for me, and above all been a wonderful mother to our son, particularly by keeping him occupied while I was writing these chapters. Our son arrived during the last year of my studies and having him around inspires me every day to be the best dad and scholar I can be. One day I hope he will read this manuscript and understand why I chose to dedicate seven years of my life to the study of development of his country, Cambodia.

I shall miss working on this thesis but know this to be the beginning of future scholarly contributions related to communities, their development and to tourism itself.

Simon Alex Pawson

December, 2017

## **Abstract**

In this era of mass tourism, phenomena such as sustainable tourism, responsible tourism, rural tourism, ecotourism, pro-poor tourism and community-based tourism have received increased attention from both practitioners and researchers. If established and managed correctly, these alternative forms of sustainable tourism have the potential to substantially contribute toward community development and to provide visitors with unique, often educational experiences. This pathway is not without problems, for the literature also reveals that the majority of community-based tourism projects fail within the first two years of operation. In considering the benefits of sustainable tourism, in particular community-based tourism, as a mechanism for rural development and poverty alleviation, I have wanted to inquire how to better understand the merits and failings of community-based tourism in the context of the community itself and tourism development in a specific country. In attempting to achieve this, the aim of my research asked what we might learn regarding tourism development, communities and particularly community-based tourism as one viable means of sustainable rural development in Cambodia. Moreover, how might my contribution be utilized by others with respect to this aspect of tourism?

In order to understand and document the relationship between tourism development, rural communities and community-based tourism in Cambodia, I firstly draw upon a document and historical analysis that identifies a conceptual understanding of community development through tourism, particularly community-based tourism. I then provide a detailed narrative that concerns itself with the evolution, definitions and management of community-based tourism. The second part of this thesis focuses specifically on Cambodia. I investigate the social fabric of Cambodian communities, and in doing so, identify assets that may be beneficial toward sustainable tourism development. I continue through providing an analysis of tourism development in Cambodia from the iron age to contemporary times with reference to the evolution of sustainable tourism. An ethnographic study of community-based tourism is then utilized for the purposes of providing an in-depth understanding of the lived experiences of stakeholders within the community-based tourism environment.

My inquiry concludes by arguing that community-based tourism in Cambodia provides an opportunity to substantially contribute to sustainable rural development. Such development remains inhibited, however, because of weak government policy, minimal human capital in rural communities, a lack of training and development programs for those community members who are involved in community-based tourism, and the utilization of accreditation and certification mechanisms. There is also an over-reliance on external funding and expertise. Of critical importance was my discovery that the role of kinship, bonds and relationships in Cambodian rural communities has played a significant role in the way social capital has assisted

the development and operational longevity of these projects. This in turn provides evidence that in Cambodia social capital is an essential foundational component of community-based tourism projects. My thesis contributes a critical understanding of tourism development in Cambodia, with specific reference to the social fabric of communities, government policy and planning, and rural development through community-based tourism.

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## **Chapter One**

### **Foundations & Methodology**

*The industry's attitude toward the environment needs to progress from economic exploitation to one of stewardship if attractive landscapes and amenities are to be preserved or developed. Public opinion and political power must be courted and won if the industry is to continue to rely on government support and community assets for its survival and success. By stressing the community and systems aspects of tourism it becomes apparent that this activity is now interwoven into the social, economic and environmental aspects of all communities, whether or not they are major tourism destinations. Under these circumstances, tourism can be integrated into the general planning procedures of all communities and become coordinated with facility developments in the physical and social fabric of destination areas (Murphy, 1985, p. 176).*

#### **1.1 Introduction**

Throughout my teaching and research career, I have often reflected on two key issues. These involve the relationship between tourism and community development, especially in emerging economies and secondly, how the development of tourism and associated research as a specialized field of academic inquiry might better inform tourism at the community level. This thesis contributes toward both matters because it addresses tourism development in a specific country, specifically its influences on community-based tourism (CBT) as one viable means of sustainable rural development, and secondly, the study contributes to a growing body of specialized knowledge pertaining to CBT. The research of well-known tourism theorists such as Cohen (2001), MacCannell (1976), Murphy (1985) and Urry (2002) confirm that in the continued growth of global tourism, communities themselves, especially those in the developing world, have either benefitted or suffered from tourism development. The United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) suggests that small, remote and traditional communities are particularly vulnerable to the subsequent consequences of tourism development (n.d.). Jafari (2001) evinced this phenomenon by noting the expansion of mass tourism into the developing world during the late 1960s and early 1970s. He notes that there is now a body of evidence that clearly identifies the negative impact of tourism and associated tourism development in these peripheries. Moreover, this research calls into question the logic of unrestrained 'mass tourism' development, particularly of the western 'post-colonial' influence.

During the 1960s, as countries in the developing world became decolonized and independent, the United Nations (UN) began to promote community development as a mechanism for poverty reduction, specifically in rural areas. The objective of this approach was to remove the dependency on charity and to involve local people in decision-making with respect to their community. It was an approach that quickly identified existing flaws pertaining to top-down decision-making. From the 1970s onward a new dialogue commenced, suggesting that a more active involvement by local people, specifically concerning development issues in their community, would result in positive change (Sebele, 2010). From the late 1960s and early 1970s international aid agencies such as the World Bank and the United States Agency for International Development began to promote the merits of local participation in decision-making, notably with respect to community development. These agencies went further, moreover, and suggested that local participation might be extended as a means of program implementation, program monitoring and also sharing the benefits of development.

It was not long before the narratives concerning local participation and community development permeated the field of tourism studies. An argument was quickly proposed that supported the inclusion, and involvement, of the local community regarding the development and management of tourism. Beeton (2006) and Gunn (2002) both agree that local communities comprise a strategic resource in the development of sustainable tourism. Lea (1988) goes further, commenting that local participation becomes an essential ingredient if tourism is to be used as a catalyst for both rural and national development. Woodley (1993) suggests community participation in tourism, as well as the management of tourism, contributes to a more sustainable approach, more opportunities for local people to benefit from tourism, positive attitudes toward tourism development and to better conservation of local resources.

As mass tourism has continued to grow in the emerging world, so has the danger of excluding those whom tourism might benefit, especially rural, ethnic and minority communities. Dredge and Jenkins (2007) argue that those involved in tourism research have raised concerns that some communities, especially in developing countries, now have little voice with respect to their involvement in tourism and its associated development. This lack of participation has resulted in a multitude of complex and sometimes misunderstood factors. An example is provided in Cohen's (2001) extensive exploration of tourism in Thailand. Cohen reveals that hill tribe tourism north of Chiang Mai had begun to show negative social and economic issues as a consequence of tourism development, in particular the absence of 'voice' from local communities. Cohen cites the seminal work of MacCannell (1976) in discussing the 'artificial' or 'commodified' tourist space of Northern Thailand. The literature draws our attention to the towns of Meo Doi Pui and Lisu Lao Tha, highlighting inauthentic and contrived souvenirs, and traditional dress that contrives to display a primitive appearance for western tourist consumption and tastes. This example is one of perhaps many regarding examples of communities that have

lost control, or that are being excluded from tourism's positive outcomes, and are simply attempting to 'cash in' by meeting the consumption needs of the 'western mass tourist'.

My previous experience in tourism management and subsequent work with a community in Cambodia has also proven to me that involving the local community in a dialogue concerning the development and ongoing management of tourism can lead to a more robust and open decision-making process. Popular discourse promoted by practitioners and scholars of alternative forms of tourism tell us that a commonly held belief implies that unless community members are empowered and can participate in decision-making and ownership of tourism developments, tourism itself may not either reflect their values or deliver sustainable outcomes (Lea, 1988). I would also argue that not utilizing the local knowledge, skills and expertise that exists in communities could lead to a tourism industry operating in isolation from these communities, in the process delivering very few benefits. Murphy (1985) further promoted the idea that visitors will also benefit from local participation in tourism, receiving unforgettable, pleasant and authentic experiences, and in return their community can derive direct and indirect benefits from tourist visitation.

Since the 1980s, alternative forms of tourism, specifically sustainable tourism, responsible tourism, ecotourism and community tourism, have been utilized in an attempt to promote sustainable development through tourism, and hence to better manage the negative impacts of tourism in certain destinations. A particular type of sustainable tourism – community-based tourism (CBT) – has gained attention over the last thirty years, comprising a response to the belief that modern mass western tourism excludes minority small-scale communities and indigenous culture, often leading to disastrous social and economic consequences. Secondly, CBT has become particularly important to governments and practitioners because of its potential in contributing to rural development and to poverty alleviation. Given the possible merits of CBT, I remain concerned, notably in relation to the comments made by Goodwin (2009) that a substantial majority of community-based tourism projects have either failed or enjoyed very little success, chiefly attributed to both poor market access and poor governance. I have questioned aspects of the existing literature and considered, in developing and emerging countries how can well-implemented and well-managed tourism projects be established and managed, in turn becoming an asset for both the community and tourists alike?

I am also interested to learn how CBT affects the livelihoods of the actors involved, not through the application of statistics and economic modelling, but rather through the narratives contributed by these actors. I propose that the answers to my question raised in the previous paragraph lie with the stakeholders of CBT. In this study, I go beyond Goodwin's (2009) claims of failure and instead seek answers directly from the stakeholders that may assist in reducing the risk of such projects failing. In order to undertake this inquiry, I have chosen to

focus on the relationship between tourism development, communities, and CBT, notably through a Cambodian lens, in the main because CBT has now operated in Cambodia since 1988. To further understand the merits and failings of CBT through the stakeholders themselves, I have utilized extensive historical and contemporary literature concerning tourism and development in Cambodia, and an ethnographic study of a CBT project at Banteay Chhmar, a small traditional commune that surrounds a 12<sup>th</sup> century Angkorian temple in the north-west of Cambodia. In 2007 a French Non-Governmental Organisation '*Agir Pour Le Cambodge*' established this CBT project with the objective to 'help conserve natural beauty and local culture while improving rural livelihoods' (Marino, 2013). The CBT project has operated for ten years, and therefore has the potential to provide significant longitudinal input to this study.

The development of CBT specifically in Cambodia has attempted to promote the development of a direct relationship between the community, the tourism industry and the government. The underlying principle of CBT in Cambodia is for tourism to be used as a sustainable and responsible mechanism for overall rural community development. Numerous studies in recent times critiquing both tourism's relationship to community development, and the contribution of CBT have investigated similar phenomena (Harris, 2009; Hiwasaki, 2006; Reimer & Walter, 2013; Sebele, 2010). Their research and findings have provided me with a valuable insight into the evolution of CBT, but more importantly with a suitable methodological approach in order to complete my inquiry with respect to the efficacy of CBT in Cambodia.

From the early 2000s, tourism in Cambodia has grown significantly (see Table 1.1). Despite the growth and rapidly increasing social, economic and environmental impact, Cambodia has not as yet become a popular focus for study by tourism scholars. Both international and domestic tourists are now travelling beyond the main tourist areas of Phnom Penh, Siem Reap and Sihanoukville, choosing instead to include destinations in rural Cambodia in their itineraries. It is not only major tourism areas that are witnessing rapid change, but communities in rural areas are also beginning to experience the impact of tourism development. These communities are perhaps most vulnerable to rapid, unplanned tourism development.

**Table 1.1:** International Visitor Arrivals to Cambodia 1995–2017



Source: Ministry of Tourism (2017).

As a tourism scholar, I have come to appreciate that the nature of tourism exploits both the human element of society and the environment that is inhabited by its communities. As a response, the practice of sustainable tourism development has been promoted as a mechanism for achieving equilibrium between tourism activities and the environment where they occur. Regardless of progress toward sustainable tourism, there still exists an equality issue in relation to tourism stakeholders, specifically in developing or emerging countries. Complex ideologies and power plays, including the exploitation of natural resources, and of communities and minority groups, are commonplace occurrences that inhibit the sustainable tourism agenda. Cambodia is no stranger to these outcomes. These factors continue to contribute to a detailed and challenging global narrative that explores how tourism might better benefit the actors involved and the environment in which it occurs, most especially at community level. With respect to this manifestation, the overall aim of my research asked what we might learn regarding tourism development, communities and particularly community-based tourism as one viable means of sustainable rural development in Cambodia. Moreover, how might my contribution be utilized by others with respect to this aspect of tourism?

## **1.2 Why Cambodia? Why CBT? Why Banteay Chhmar?**

Cambodia provides the tourism scholar with significant historical and contemporary evidence of tourism development from a multitude of sources, and more recently, sustainable

tourism as an essential strategy of community development. Moreover, the dramatic political and societal changes that have occurred in Cambodia throughout history and the resilience of communities provides answers regarding any reasonable success of CBT in rural areas. Neither tourism development or sustainable tourism as it relates to CBT in Cambodia has been investigated and reported upon in a single manuscript, though being much called for by those with a vested interest in Cambodian tourism.



**Figure 1.1:** Map of Cambodia (produced with the permission of CartoGIS Services, College of Asia and the Pacific, The Australian National University)

Activities in Cambodia that we may be able to identify with a primitive form of travel can be traced back to the Iron Age. Certainly, between the 8<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries, travel for trading purposes to the Kingdom of Angkor become prolific. It was not until the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the French colonization of Cambodia that travel to the country become more formalized, in turn influencing early forms of tourism development. As part of the French colonies in Southeast Asia, the Protectorate of Cambodia was established in 1863 and concluded in 1949. Cambodia gained its independence in 1953. Attributed to a strong French cultural influence in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Cambodia was considered by the popular media as one of the



most sought-after destinations in Asia by European travelers. During the 1950s and 1960s Cambodia was often referred to as ‘the jewel of Asia’. Despite its popularity as a tourism destination in the decades preceding the civil war, the political turmoil and instability, specifically the devastating impact of the 1976–1979 Khmer Rouge regime, resulted in the complete decimation of the tourism industry. Following the 1993–1994 UNTAC (United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia) intervention, the country embraced a scenario of social, political and economic reconstruction. From the early 2000s, tourism has continued to grow rapidly. Cambodia attracts curiosity with respect to both its ancient and more recent history. The Cambodian government considers tourism essential to the country’s ongoing socio-economic development, and to re-establishing a national identity (Chheang, 2008).

Cambodia’s political history and temple architecture have left it with a considerable legacy with respect to tourism assets. Archeological evidence suggests that Cambodia may have been inhabited as early as 4200 BC (Chandler, 2008); however, it is the Angkor period between the 8<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries that continues to hold the greatest relevance to the Khmer people and to international tourism and the academic community. From the end of the French Protectorate in 1949, Cambodia has, however, experienced a multitude of political upheavals that culminated in thirty years of civil war. The 1970–1973 illegal American bombing of Cambodia was the catalyst for Pol Pot’s political party, the Khmer Rouge, to seize power during 1975. From 1976 until 1979, the Khmer Rouge forced Cambodia into agrarian collectivism. During the Democratic Kampuchea (DK) period Kiernan (1996) estimates that at least 1.5 million Khmers were either murdered by the Khmer Rouge or died of disease or starvation. Following the 1978 Christmas Day liberation of Cambodia by the Vietnamese, the country has undergone several painful transitions on its path to recovery and democracy. The remnants of the DK period, specifically the Killing Fields, popularized by an American movie of the same name, and the genocide museum, Tuol Sleng, are painful in their reminders that serve as attractions for many tourists who visit Cambodia.

Domestic and international political agendas have, however, substantially marred the rebuilding of Cambodia since 1979. Both Chandler (2008) and Tully (2005) agree that Cambodia in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is still desperately poor and underdeveloped. Political, social and economic conditions, particularly human rights, continue to be of concern to outside observers. The recent discovery of substantial oil deposits in the Gulf of Thailand and the recent boom in construction have provided a lever for possible economic independence and less reliance on international financial aid. Moreover, Chandler (2008) identifies the soaring birth rate, poor health and an unresponsive government as issues that serve to inhibit social and economic development.

The Human Development Report (HDR) and Human Development Index (HDI) published by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) looks beyond gross domestic

product to a broader definition of human well-being such as longevity, education and standard of living. The report measures a total of 182 countries, with the 182<sup>nd</sup> country being the least developed. The HDI of 2009 ranked Cambodia as 137. This same HDI also recorded that 35% (approximately 4.5 million) Khmers live below the national poverty line – an income of US\$0.45 per day (UNDP, 2009). In comparison, in 2016 the HDI ranked Cambodia as 143, with 33.8% of the population currently living in multidimensional poverty (UNDP, 2016).

The Royal Cambodian Government's National Strategic Development Plan 2006–2010 cited advantages related to the onset of peace, stability and robust economic growth in the country over the past decade. Cambodia is at a 'critical threshold' with respect to achieving more rapid progress. The plan indicates a current necessity to realize certain strategic goals, specifically that of reducing poverty through such mechanisms as tourism (Royal Cambodian Government, 2006). During September 2007, the current Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen utilized World Tourism Day in order to highlight tourism's contribution to socio-economic development and the importance of pro-poor and community-based tourism, when he stated:

The Cambodian tourism industry has been playing a vital role in socio-economic development. Within this cultural tourism is a dynamic influx source of tourists who have a high appreciation and admiration of cultural heritage linking to other historical heritage; and pristine white-sand beaches, beautiful landscapes of rivers, lakes, mountainous range and national parks...the Royal Government of Cambodia has determined tourism as an economic priority sector in improving the people's living standard, especially pro-poor, community-based tourism (Chheang, 2008, p. 292).

Prime Minister Hun Sen's speech alludes to the Royal Government of Cambodia's desire to attract a specific tourist market (a belief it does so already) and includes more than tourists visiting the temples within the Angkor Archeological Park. It cannot be ignored, however, that Siem Reap, home to the Greater Angkor Archeological Park, remains the most popular destination and attraction. For example, at the conclusion of 2011, the Ministry of Tourism (MOT) reported Siem Reap had received 1,610,076 (MOT, 2013) international arrivals compared to 1,271,786 visits to the remainder of the country. During 2011, visitors to the Greater Angkor Archeological Park numbered 1,442,611 (APSARA, 2013). Despite slow tourism development in areas outside the main tourism peripheries of Phnom Penh, Siem Reap and Sihanoukville, the government has continued a discourse that promotes the benefits of eco, community-based and pro-poor tourism development in rural areas.

The majority of current community tourism projects in Cambodia identify that tourism will benefit the local community or village through supporting socio-economic development or environmental protection. The projects commonly use the words 'community', 'village', 'traditional', 'authentic', 'conservation' and 'culture' in their description. These words tend to suggest the existence of a complex dilemma in the field of tourism studies, provoking an

overarching question with respect to ‘development according to whom’? Upon reflection I believed further questions also required investigation for those involved with the management or research of CBT in Cambodia. 1) How should the Cambodian community per se be defined and adequately explained? 2) What are the complexities concerning what communities determine as traditional and also what is authentic? 3) Who decides, and what comprises, a socio-economic development objective within a community? 4) What is the relationship between the community and the ‘tourism experience’ that is being marketed? 5) Are there similarities linking the voices of the community and the objectives of any strategic tourism plans? 6) Do macro forces impact on these projects and if so, how? and 7) What are the similarities and differences relating to the CBT Project stakeholders’ opinions and beliefs notably concerning CBT and its contribution to socio-economic development?

In my opinion an inquiry into these broad questions as they relate to Cambodia was overdue. An informed effort to examine them through one body of work such as this thesis may prove exhaustive, however what remains evident is the lack of studies that address these themes in detail. Similar to the work of Reimer and Walter (2013), I believed that focusing an investigation within my research on a specific CBT project longitudinally would allow me to learn about the relationship between tourism development in Cambodia, Cambodian communities and CBT. Through an ethnographic case study of a CBT project, I believed that documenting and critiquing a narrative of the opinions and beliefs of various project stakeholders, and moreover understand in depth why certain CBT projects in Cambodia have operated relatively successfully beyond the ten-year point would be valued. In 2011, I began a search for a suitable CBT project in Cambodia that would allow me to complete an ethnographic study over a period of time. I also recognized that existing research was absent concerning the uniqueness of Cambodian communities, and community assets that could be utilized toward sustainable tourism development. Secondly, the evolution of tourism development in Cambodia, particularly relationships between early and contemporary tourism, and the path toward sustainable tourism was missing from existing literature.

During my 2011 search for a suitable ethnographic study, a conversation with Dr. Dougald O’Reilly of the Australian National University provided me with information on a CBT project at Banteay Chhmar. Dr. O’Reilly is the founder of the NGO ‘Heritage Watch’ (<http://www.heritagewatchinternational.org/>). The organization is dedicated to the preservation of cultural heritage in the Southeast Asian region. Dr. O’Reilly shared with me that theft from heritage monuments in Cambodia was still a concern and an ongoing issue. Moreover, he noted that a CBT project at Banteay Chhmar through its cooperation with Heritage Watch had provided community development opportunities and assisted in the prevention of theft from the 12<sup>th</sup> century Angkorian temple. Following this conversation, I began to search for further information regarding CBT at Banteay Chhmar. I found very little literature, particularly

scholarly research, that has been devoted to CBT at Banteay Chhmar. My interest in an inquiry that serves to record and examine stakeholder discourses was also influenced by a thesis submitted to The Australian National University for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy entitled 'My Blood, Sweat and Tears: Female Sex Workers in Cambodia –Victims, Vectors or Agents?' (Sandy, 2006). Throughout the thesis, Sandy establishes narratives that are based on the discourses of Cambodian sex workers and sets about to demystify the popular images that surround these workers. I considered the viability of applying a similar ethnological and analytical design in order to investigate the CBT Project at Banteay Chhmar.

My first exploratory visit to Banteay Chhmar in September of 2012 quickly made me aware of a multitude of opportunities that could be utilized within my research. While touring the community and temple sites, I observed an abundance of heritage, cultural and natural resources. On the other hand, however, I also noted Banteay Chhmar was a relatively poor rural community where in some instances extreme poverty was evident. I conducted preliminary interviews with both CBT project members and the villagers themselves that revealed complex issues concerning land, employment, health, income, farming, sanitation, tourism expertise, heritage conservation and governance.

Further supporting my argument regarding the importance of investigating sustainable forms of tourism in Cambodia, specifically CBT, is the outcomes of the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Tourism. The Summit identified tourism as one of the few development opportunities available to the poor (Goodwin, 2007). Numerous countries, including Cambodia, that are ranked medium to low with respect to human development on the United Nations Development Program's 'Human Development Index' have also become popular western and Asian tourist destinations where tourism has significantly contributed to the socio-economic development of these destinations, particularly in rural areas (UNDP, 2013).

### **1.3 Methodology**

#### **1.3.1 The epistemological approach**

As a scholar of tourism, I have a particular interest in sustainable tourism, most notably community tourism initiatives. Earlier in my past career, I have had the opportunity to develop an insight regarding a range of NGO projects in Thailand and Cambodia that have utilized activities related to tourism for the purposes of contributing to community development. In the process of observing communities that are involved in tourism-related projects, from time to time I have attempted to critique their projects operating across Southeast Asia in an attempt to identify the contributions of the project. I have often questioned the extent to which community tourism and related NGO projects may have contributing toward beneficial community

development. My critique often concluded that in the main, tourism and NGOs have contributed toward rural and ethnic communities becoming separated from their identity, their way of life, their uniqueness and individuality—in other words, cultural and environmental degradation.

I acknowledge the expansive work of tourism scholars such as Weaver and Lawton (2010), Urry (2002), Leiper (2003) and Hall (2003) who explore in detail the negative social, cultural, economic and environmental impacts that are directly attributed to tourism. Hall (2003) cites Christaller in an attempt to use popular literature that alerts us to the more significantly detrimental effect with respect to the development of mass tourism:

The typical course of development has the following pattern. Painters search out untouched and unusual places to paint. Step by step the place develops as a so-called artist colony. Soon a cluster of poets follows, kindred to the painters: then cinema people, gourmets, and the jeunesse doree. The place becomes fashionable and the entrepreneur takes notes. The fisherman's cottage, the shelter-huts become converted into boarding houses and hotels come on the scene. Meanwhile the painters have fled and sought another periphery – periphery as related to space, and metaphorically, as 'forgotten' places and landscapes. Only the painters with a commercial inclination who like to do well in business remain: they capitalize on the good name of the former painters' corner and on the gullibility of tourists. More and more townsmen choose this place, now en vogue and advertised in the newspapers. Subsequently the gourmets, and all those who seek real recreation stay away. At last the tour agencies come with their package rate travelling parties: now, the indulged public avoids such places. At the same time, in other places the same cycle occurs again; more and more places come into fashion, change their type, turn into everybody's tourist haunt (p. 37).

My own epistemological reflections on Christaller's narrative have become more entrenched as Southeast Asia's tourism industries continue to grow rapidly. I draw upon well-known examples of destinations such as Pattaya and Phuket Island in Southern Thailand, where it seems the above narrative may now have an element of reality. My own observations as a Cambodia observer since 1999 cite the coastal resort town of Sihanoukville that has now become a well-established practical example of Christaller's narrative. Chinese casino tourism now dominates the town. Siem Reap is also on the verge of experiencing substantially negative social, economic and environmental impacts attributed to its recent exposure to mass tourism development, particularly to cater for the ever-growing Chinese market. Kep sur Mer, a comparatively smaller seaside resort, was popular in the 1950s and 1960s for wealthy French and Khmer. It too, exhibits signs of unwanted change that is a consequence of rapid development. Weaver and Lawton (2010) cite Finney and Watson's book entitled *A New Kind of Sugar: Tourism in the Pacific* that 'views tourism as an activity that perpetuates the inequalities of the colonial plantation era' (p. 11). The Butler 'Destination Lifecycle Model' as Weaver and Lawton (2010) argue 'demonstrates that unrestricted tourism development

eventually leads to product degradation as the place's environmental, social and economic carrying capacities are exceeded' (p. 11). The current lived reality of tourism development in Cambodia suggests sustainable outcomes are becoming less achievable.

The work of Winter, Teo and Chang (2009), in the publication entitled *Asia of Tour: Exploring the Rise of Asian Tourism*, has also influenced my epistemological views of tourism and its associated development in Southeast Asia. Initially the work explores beach culture and tourism's related images of the ideal beach, including its 'actors or imagined consumers' (p. 1). The authors note the extent to which genealogy of these images and the underlying values and ideals 'reveals their European and North American roots' (p. 1). They propose, furthermore that an argument exists suggesting that modern mass tourism has been interpreted mainly from a western perspective. This is evidenced by the comment 'in recent years leisure and tourism discourse has evolved from a mainly Western perspective...with no mention given to the cultural histories of beaches in Africa, the Middle East or Asia' (p. 1). Moreover, it states that 'to date, the vast majority of studies conducted on tourism in Asia have considered encounters between local hosts and their white, Western guests' (p. 2). The work also notes the rise of inter-regional tourism throughout the Asian continent, the rapid speed at which socio-cultural change is occurring and the move away from simply being a host destination to become a 'region of mobile consumers' (p. 4). It argues that tourism scholars need to address the imbalance in current tourism literature and its associated discourse by focusing on a narrative examining Asian tourism and its associated attributes. It is partly in response to their insightful observations that my research has as its focus an aspect of tourism throughout Asia that explores the phenomenon through the lens of a Cambodian point of view, in the process incorporating the voices of the Cambodians themselves.

The majority of my tourism practical undertakings have been in Southeast Asia. Between 1999 and 2016 I have witnessed the rapid growth of mass tourism and observed first-hand the negative impacts it has caused for rural and ethnic communities, and natural environments. I have noted how the growth of tourism has contributed to some people benefiting from tourism's economic contribution, and some becoming even more diasporic, excluded and marginalised. Tourism theorists suggest that the purpose of tourism is to deliver positive impacts for all stakeholders and can be used as a force for peace (Weaver & Lawton, 2010), however it's becoming even more well documented that the growth of tourism in Southeast Asia has produced outcomes that are considered unsustainable. My own opinion with respect to the development of tourism in Southeast Asia is closely aligned to Tucker's (1999) analysis of Critical Development Theory and its destructive Eurocentric discourse. On reflection, notably regarding my experiences of particular Southeast Asian destinations, I hold the view that many communities across this region have become oppressed by the ongoing influence of western tourism development. It is an opinion, moreover, that informs this research

with respect to the potential of sustainable tourism, particularly CBT in Cambodia, which is itself in line with the belief held by Jennings (2001) who states that it 'is a means to benefit the world and change conditions, practically for the oppressed or those at risk of becoming oppressed' (p. 41).

The development of tourism, in particular throughout Southeast Asia, continues to raise concerns regarding its appropriateness and subsequent lack of community involvement. Critical theorists have acknowledged synergies with the Interpretive Social Sciences or Constructivist Paradigm, specifically the role of subjectivity in tourism research (Tribe, 2008). Those, including myself, working in the realm of Critical Theory interpret the world through subjectivity and objectivity, viewing the world through levels of complex power struggles, exploitation, politics, corruption and subjugation—all common outcomes of mass tourism development in Southeast Asia. From Tucker (1999) we have a robust example of the way in which theorists, including myself have framed development of this kind:

Development is the process whereby other peoples are dominated and their destinies are shaped according to an essentially Western way of conceiving and perceiving the world. The development discourse is part of an imperial process whereby other peoples are appropriated and turned into objects. It is an essential part of the process whereby the 'developed' countries manage, control and even create the Third World economically, sociologically and culturally. It is a process whereby the lives of some peoples, their plans, their hopes, their imaginations, are shaped by others who frequently share neither their lifestyles, nor their hopes, nor their values (p. 1).

Tucker has not applied this point of view to tourism development in particular; he has, however, summarized in a single paragraph, the previous forty years regarding the development of tourism and its associated outcomes with respect to many countries, including Cambodia. Critical Theory, according to Jennings (2001) is essential to tourism research, notably because 'the researcher's values are an important part of the research process as the entire process is about the transformational change of the social setting being studied' (p. 42). To address the researcher's values and bias governing the research, it is essential that those conducting the research must be subjective as well as objective if they are to provide recommendations that will achieve positive change for both the marginalised and the oppressed. Fundamental to my research, therefore, is a declared objective to go beyond merely subjecting a community and its endeavours regarding tourism to a statistical analysis, notably because such a quantitative approach cannot provide an in-depth understanding of CBT, including its impact on stakeholders, that is holistic in outcome and effect.

Tourism's evolution as an academic field of study continues to play an epistemological role toward my research in Cambodia. The study and research of tourism is a relatively new academic discipline within tertiary institutions. Weaver and Lawton (2010) cite the origins of

tourism studies in the Australian university sector from the mid-1970s. Globally, specialized components of tourism education such as leisure, recreation, culinary, and hotel operations originated before World War II and were delivered as a vocational field of study. Key advancements in technology and transportation, changes in travel patterns and tourist behavior in the 1950s was the catalyst for tourism to emerge on the tertiary stage as an encompassing holistic academic discipline (Weaver & Lawton, 2010). The broad context of tourism education at a tertiary level has now been divided into two approaches. The first approach is tourism courses that have a strong vocational content usually delivered through training centers or technical colleges. The second comprises tourism as a phenomenon subject to scientific, analytical research, the study of which is usually undertaken at universities, where it is offered at both undergraduate and post-graduate levels. Since the 1990s there has been a further development; tourism is now offered as a component of degrees in business studies, rather than comprising a degree that specializes in aspects of tourism and its management.

As tourism grew as a specialized academic discipline, different epistemological approaches or philosophies as to how tourism scholars viewed the world were quick to emerge. Jafari's (2001) four philosophies or conceptual tourism platforms are an early, but still a relevant view of how post-World War II tourism has evolved. The first platform entitled 'The Advocacy Platform' promoted the development of tourism, stating that tourism is inherently good for destinations. Leiper (2003) identifies that this platform promotes 'pro-tourism policies' and is fairly uncritical of tourism development. During the 1970s it was noted by members of the tourism industry that unchecked tourism development was resulting in negative social, economic and environmental issues in some destination regions, especially the more sensitive ones. As a result, a new platform entitled 'The Cautionary Platform' was adopted. Leiper (2003) notes that researches began to publish material highlighting the 'dark side' of the industry and educationalists started to include these negative impacts into tourism studies. With the 1980s came another change of focus, when research was characterized by comparative studies that identified types of tourism in terms of their desirability. At this point, there emerged a new platform entitled 'The Adaptancy Platform', accompanied by literature that explored and promoted the benefits of small-scale, eco- and sustainable tourism.

The fourth 'Knowledge-based Platform' is Jafari's (2001) answer to the complexities and demands of modern mass tourism today. He asserts that, unlike the previous platforms, all of which might be defined as polarized in their effect, the fourth platform comprises a holistic and systematic approach that utilizes credible scientific methods in order to retrieve and assemble data, thus providing the knowledge and understanding that is applicable to an improved management of the industry (Leiper, 2003). My own approach to this research draws on the Knowledge-based Platform that distances itself from a populist, emotive or ideologically driven viewpoint and any related exploration of tourism. With respect to tourism and



community development in Cambodia (and nearby regions), it comprises a multitude of interrelated, interdependent and interacting elements that in turn constitute a system. By this means, the task of conceptualizing tourism in Cambodia by virtue of a systems approach serves usefully to identify and assist in explaining both the nature and extent of relationships between tourism's human elements (viz. its stakeholders), the environment where it takes place, and any such influence that is external to the system itself (Leiper, 2003).

Informing my epistemological approach is a further consideration, namely the limitation imposed by the fact that scholarship with respect to tourism is still in its infancy. Weaver and Lawton (2010) identify two approaches used to provide a framework for tourism studies and research. Firstly, 'the multidisciplinary approach' draws upon theories from mainstream disciplines such as economics, political science, sociology, anthropology, geography, ecology and legal studies to understand, explain and interpret the wide variety of tourism phenomena. Secondly, since the 1990s 'the interdisciplinary approach' has aimed to combine and synthesize various disciplines into a distinctive indigenous tourism perspective with its own theories and methodologies. An example of this approach is found in Apostolopoulos, Leivadi and Yiannakis's seminal 1996 publication entitled *The Sociology of Tourism*. Therefore, my research has relied on upon both multi- and inter-disciplinary approaches to critically proceed with the investigation.

### **1.3.2 The methodological approach**

The aim of my research asked what we might learn regarding tourism development, communities and particularly community-based tourism as one viable means of sustainable rural development in Cambodia. Moreover, how might my contribution be utilized by others with respect to this aspect of tourism? There have been limited in-depth qualitative studies investigating the rise of CBT in Cambodia, despite the rapid growth of tourism and the Cambodian Government's rhetoric promoting a sustainable agenda. Tourism and its associated development are regarded by the government as a substantial source of foreign exchange and essential to its strategies to reduce poverty. The government is still largely reliant on the expertise of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and on international expertise as a source of knowledge concerning all forms of tourism management.

Since the era of modern mass tourism (ca. the 1950s), the industry has witnessed unprecedented growth. Multiple and complex tourism systems (Leiper, 2003) now exist that call for a more nonlinear approach if related phenomena are to be investigated adequately. Rapid social change in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and the further development of social contexts have diminished the traditional quantitative approach to research that is based on a belief that data can be interpreted objectively, and then generalized, in the process comprising facts that inform a singular reality (Flick, 1998). Simply put, given the complexities of modern tourism, the focus is now upon delimited research that acknowledges the existence of multiple realities, ones that

can be better identified and explained in qualitative and mixed method studies (Charmaz & Mitchell, 2002). My approach to this inquiry, therefore, qualifies as contributing to the rapidly growing qualitative portfolio that is currently associated with tourism research.

Qualitative research is 'generally not concerned with numbers but typically with information in the form of words, conveyed orally or in writing' (Veal, 2011, p. 35). Another interpretation of qualitative research is offered by Burns (2000) commenting that qualitative researchers believe humans are conscious of their own behaviors, therefore the thoughts, feelings, opinions, values and perceptions of their participants are vital. Qualitative researchers utilize a variety of methods to collect data concerning activities, events, occurrences and behaviors. Moreover, they seek understanding of actions, processes and problems in the social situation (Phillimore & Goodson, 2004). The qualitative approach also focuses upon participants' experiences, and therefore may also be considered in-depth and probing that ultimately results in the participants communicating their understanding of their social surroundings (Veal, 2011). Qualitative research differs from quantitative research as typically it gathers a large quantity of detailed data concerning a comparatively few subjects instead of gathering more limited information about a large number of subjects, more typical of the quantitative method (Veal, 2011). Jennings (2001) also remind us that the qualitative approach is the complete antithesis of the quantitative approach 'which takes the tourist experience, event or phenomenon and abstracts it to the level of numerical representation' (p. 20).

A methodology is considered as an explanation of the philosophical framework and assumptions of the research including why the data collection method is the most appropriate for the research to proceed (Veal, 2011). Qualitative methodology is informed by interpretive social sciences, is inductive and relies upon textual representations or descriptions of the subject under study. It also can be informed by feminist theory, critical theory and postmodern theory (Jennings, 2001). Section 1.3 justified the approach of Critical Theory to inform my research. There are synergies between the choice of methodology and the method, referred to as the specific tools to collect and analyze data (ibid). The methods applied to collect qualitative data generally include observation, interviewing – in-depth and of focus groups – participant observation, and the analysis of secondary sources (Veal, 2011). Burns (2000) goes further through suggesting social reality is the outcome of social interaction as perceived from the actors involved, not from the perspective of the observer. Therefore, the essential data gathering methods are 'participant observation and unstructured interviewing' (p. 388). The qualitative descriptive study of groups of people, or communities is referred to as ethnographic research (Veal, 2011), and as my research, particularly Chapter Seven, examines a Cambodian rural community, it is appropriate to utilize an ethnographic approach.

Veal (2011) identifies that tourism research based on a community is likely to involve observing, monitoring and recording stakeholder interactions, patterns and narratives in

quotidian routines, and investigating how these interactions in turn provide meaning, context, empowerment and influence overall community development. Nash (2004) suggests if the researcher is really interested in studying the interaction of hosts and guests, then they should consider ‘ethnographically attending to this subject which involves the production of tourists and tourism’ and in turn ‘tracing its consequences for destination areas’ (p. 171). The objective of ethnographic research is to construct a pattern of analysis that makes reasonable sense on the basis of observing human actions within an identified context of time and place (Fife, 2005). Ethnographic research lends itself perfectly to research, and to this study of a CBT project, therefore enabling one to make aesthetic judgements on the constant, often misunderstood fluid interactions that may occur in a community as a result of stakeholder influences and relationships (Fife, 2005). The following principles are critical to employ for those undertaking ethnographic research:

- a focus on understanding and interpretation
- a focus on process or negotiation of meanings
- research undertaken in natural settings
- social phenomena studies within the social context in which they occur in order that a holistic perspective is gained
- emic and etic perspectives jointly utilized
- the identification of multiple realities / perspectives
- the use of multiple methods that include participant observation and interviewing
- non-judgmental positioning (Jennings, 2001)

It also remains important for the ethnographer to narrate their presence so whomever is reading the research can identify how close the researcher was to the people under study. In other words, ethnographers must be able to openly describe their roles in events that take place during fieldwork periods.

My ethnographic study comprising Chapter Seven has been guided by the work of May Ebihara, a seminal anthropologist, who between the 1950s and mid-2000s has investigated and provided many detailed ethnographies of Cambodian community lifeways. Ebihara (1971) notes that the purpose of her original investigation ‘Svay, A Khmer Village in Cambodia’ was to provide an ethnographical narrative of Svay, a Cambodian farming village. This was the first detailed study by a westerner of Khmer peasant culture. Ebihara’s credibility in the field of Cambodian studies is chiefly attributed to her well-established reputation within the scholarly community as an expert concerning ethnography of Cambodian communities. Ebihara’s work, particularly her 1971 study, ‘Svay: A Khmer Village in Cambodia’, has now become an important reading for those, including myself who are pursuing studies concerning Cambodian history or anthropology. As Mertha notes in his introduction of Ebihara’s (2018) book publication of her thesis, ‘the aggregation of detail, from records of the agricultural cycle to the

donations people gave at Buddhist festivals, provides a foundation for our understanding of Khmer society' (p.xiii). Ebihara's work has provided me with an appreciation of the importance of kinship and reciprocity in Cambodian communities, the social organization of communities, the role of gender in communities and the importance of religion and associated festivals throughout the year. My chapter concerning Cambodian communities explores these themes in detail, and explains their contexts toward tourism, particularly community tourism. Ebihara's field methods have also proved important to those undertaking ethnographic fieldwork in Cambodia. Ebihara, through her meticulous detail provides an accurate account of Khmer village life. Mertha writes 'Ebihara once told me she was teaching a class at the CUNY Graduate Center and she used the phrase "giving voice to" rural peasants. But her students, good post-modernists, objected to the phrase, asking what right she has to "appropriate" peasants' voices? She said she was stunned. She had not "taken" their stories; they had wanted her to tell their stories' (ibid, p. xxvii). Reacting to Ebihara's comment, I have taken great care to ensure my participants have wanted me to share their stories with others, and that I have recorded and explained their voices in situ.

For the purposes of my ethnographic study in Chapter Seven, I have also drawn upon Ashley's (2002) working paper concerning methodologies for pro-poor tourism studies. Ashley's work provides an analytical framework for ensuring the focus of the research is balanced between poverty-related issues and project history and achievements. It is a methodological approach that focuses on identifying and then explaining a project's scope, strategies and stakeholder impacts. Ashley and Hussein (2000) provide a more substantive framework to support Ashley's approach through identifying eight key questions for a livelihood assessment and providing a worthwhile discussion on information gathering, analysis and interpretation methods. I have utilized the eight key questions as a framework toward my time in the field and to guide my data gathering. Within the narrative of Chapters Seven and Eight are responses to all eight questions;

1. Who are the stakeholders in the project?
2. Is the enterprise commercially viable?
3. What is the financial impact of the enterprise on local people?
4. What is the livelihood impact for local participants?
5. What is the impact on non-participating local residents?
6. What is the impact of – and on – government bodies, NGOs, private sector, & other external stakeholders?
7. What is the overall developmental impact?
8. What is the likely contribution of the enterprise to conservation?

Simpson (2008) proposes another useful method to investigate the relationship between tourism and community development. The study presented a structured integrated approach to assess the impacts of tourism on community development and livelihoods. Simpson identified four broad categories (Table 1.2.) that should be utilized to identify if community tourism is delivering social, economic and environmental benefits to the community. Throughout my fieldwork at Banteay Chhmar I have utilized these four categories as a mechanism to guide the gathering and documenting relevant data that contributed to Chapters Seven and Eight.

**Table 1.2:** Positive characteristics and the benefits of community-based tourism initiatives

Economic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direct employment opportunities (including administration, guiding, tours and transport, construction, hospitality, management, accommodation shopping, food and beverage outlets)</li> <li>• Indirect employment opportunities (including environmental management, entrepreneurs, other secondary industries)</li> <li>• Supports the development of multi-sector or mono-sector non-profit enterprises (benefiting/controlled or strongly influenced by communities)</li> <li>• Provides invigoration and development to local economies</li> <li>• Provides alternatives to changing or fading traditional industries</li> <li>• Increases land values, and thus rates payable to council for community services</li> </ul>
Environmental	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improves environment (changes in subsistence leading to less degradation of natural resources)</li> <li>• Encourages awareness and appreciation by the community of natural assets and the environment and other resources on which tourism relies</li> <li>• Enhances management and stewardship of natural resources</li> </ul>
Socio-cultural	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides and stimulates infrastructure development (roads, communications, healthcare, education, public transport, access to drinking water and food supplies)</li> <li>• Increases safety and security</li> <li>• Facilitates workforce development (e.g. rights and conditions)</li> <li>• Fosters civic pride (in community, culture, heritage, natural resources)</li> </ul>

	<p style="text-align: center;">and infrastructure)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mutually beneficial (to all stakeholders in the community)</li> <li>• Creates opportunities (broadening of idea horizons)</li> <li>• Promotes cultural understanding</li> <li>• Preserves cultural and social heritage and local languages or dialects</li> <li>• Supports and preserves local and unique crafts and skills</li> <li>• Creates a sense of well-being</li> <li>• Promotes greater cross-institutional understanding</li> </ul>
Building of skills and influence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Influencing and enforcing government policy (national, regional and local)</li> <li>• Skills enhancement (training; such as administrative, service industry, maintenance, guiding)</li> <li>• Building capacity collectively and individually</li> <li>• Fosters empowerment: gender and community; social, financial, political and psychological</li> </ul>

Source: Simpson (2008)

Another article that has also guided methodological approach was the work of Reimer and Walter (2013). Their research investigated community-based ecotourism in the Cardamom Mountains region of south-west Cambodia. The findings that are based on their fieldwork are organized around Honey's (2008) seven-part conceptual model for the study of ecotourism. The model focuses on appropriate accessibility to the site, minimizing environmental impacts, building educational awareness, providing financial benefits for ongoing conservation, providing financial benefits and empowerment for community members, respecting local traditions and culture, and supporting human rights and democracy. This model was useful for me to be able to identify what data should be gathered in the field, then documented in the thesis.

The chapter narratives for this thesis utilize Charmaz and Mitchell's (1996) approach that advocates developing an 'audible writer's voice that reflects our empirical experiences' (p. 285). In addition, I acknowledge that tourism development, communities and CBT in Cambodia need to be viewed and constructed by utilizing multiple layers of analysis. The first part of my thesis (Chapters Two to Four) therefore draws upon a document and historical analysis in order to provide a conceptual understanding of community development through tourism, particularly CBT. I have argued that a conceptual understanding of this relationship is essential to the task

of applying a theoretical interpretation to tourism development and to CBT in Cambodia. I then provide a detailed narrative that concerns itself with the evolution, definitions and management of CBT. Within this component, I develop a profile of the CBT tourist and position of CBT within the broader tourism industry. The second part of this thesis (Chapters Five to Eight) focuses specifically on Cambodia. I investigate the social fabric of Cambodian communities for the purposes of identifying assets that may be beneficial toward sustainable tourism development. I then provide an analysis of tourism development in Cambodia with reference to the evolution of sustainable tourism, specifically CBT. My inquiry then provides an ethnographic account of CBT at Banteay Chhmar for the purposes of offering an in-depth understanding of the lived experiences of stakeholders within the CBT environment. The study concludes with a discussion concerning the future of sustainable tourism and its relationship to community development in Cambodia.

To adequately provide a comprehensive narrative that addresses the aim of my thesis, I have identified five key research questions that have formed the structural basis of the chapters. Each question flows on from the previous question creating a logical structure and coherent around which this thesis is organized. The first research question was to ask what is the relationship between community development and tourism? The second question asked what is the role and related merit of CBT within the broader agenda of sustainable tourism and community development? The third question asked what are identifiers of Cambodian communities that we may consider in relation to tourism opportunities? The fourth question asked what was the evolving relationship between tourism in general and more recent efforts toward establishing tourism as a mechanism for social and economic development in Cambodia? The fifth and final question was to identify the centrality of CBT with respect to community development concerning a Cambodian community who had established a CBT project. My research concludes by finally asking the relevance of CBT to wider contexts, specifically rural development.

My experience of Cambodia of some eighteen years duration provides a credible and useful background for myself to pursue this investigation. My first visit was in May of 1999. Working in Bangkok, I visited both Siem Reap and Phnom Penh over a two-week period. I was captivated by the beauty of the country and the optimism of its people, in spite of the previous thirty years of civil war. The more I read about ancient and modern Cambodia, the more I became motivated to increase my knowledge of Cambodia, its people and its environment. Cambodian tourism in 1999 was in its infancy but showing signs of rapid growth. In 2002, I returned to Siem Reap over some months for the purpose of visiting my students who were managing a backpacker's hostel 'Earthwalkers'. At the time, I observed that Siem Reap had changed considerably in contrast to my previous visit. I had also observed there were many

more tourists complemented by new shops and hotels, not always constructed in the vernacular style, or complimenting Cambodian culture.

The observations comprising the 2002 visit were the basis of my Master's thesis entitled 'The Paradox of Angkor: The Social, Cultural and Environmental Impacts of Tourism in Siem Reap' (2003). This research also included an extended period of fieldwork. My thesis concluded tourism development was directly responsible for increased negative social, economic and environmental impacts. The most significant finding concluded that tourism development was in the majority poorly planned, unregulated and provided little contribution toward poverty alleviation. Following the conclusion of my Masters I continued to visit Cambodia on a yearly basis, chiefly to visit family and friends, but also to volunteer at Sangkheum Centre for Children located at Siem Reap. I also continued to make note of my observations and casual discussions I had with hoteliers, government officials, tourists and community members. I was also fortunate to be provided the opportunity to learn the Khmer language. Collectively, these experiences became useful for conference papers I wrote and presented between 2005 and 2015 concerning tourism development and community tourism in Cambodia. My doctoral research significantly departs from my Masters study as Siem Reap is a large city and Banteay Chhmar, the focus of my fieldwork, is a small rural community in which development problems are exacerbated and complicated by its remoteness. Banteay Chhmar is perhaps more typical of development problems that today face Cambodia' predominantly rural communities.

### **1.3.3 Data collection methods**

To adequately address the identified aim and subsequent research questions, this thesis has two predominant parts. The first part comprising Chapters Two to Four provide a contextual narrative that explores community development through tourism, and specifically the foundational concepts and practices of CBT. The second part of the thesis comprising Chapters Five to Eight is a specific inquiry into communities, tourism development, and CBT in Cambodia. To collect and analyze data for my research between 2012 and 2016 that contributes toward the research questions, the qualitative methods I employed were document and historical analysis, policy analysis, open-ended and unstructured conversational interviews, and naturalistic observation.

#### *Document, historical and policy analysis*

A document analysis is a credible method for qualitative studies (Yin, 2009). There are specific benefits for utilizing a document analysis. The first benefit is that documents can provide rich, focused information concerning the researcher's specific area of inquiry. Secondly, documents can offer a wide range of associated research data that may deliver support material to the overall investigation. Thirdly, documents may assist the researcher to consider further questions pertaining to their investigation. Fourthly, documents may prove



useful to provide additional material for longitudinal studies. Finally, and importantly documents can be used to explain, contextualize and justify the researcher's findings and recommendations (Bowen, 2009). Document analysis is considered a method to systematically review or evaluate printed and/or electronic material, either published or unpublished. It is important to note this also encompasses posters, film, photographs, television, recorded music and pictures (Veal, 2011). This method of data collection is considered appropriate for the purposes of collecting and analyzing data to address the aim and research questions for this thesis. Policy analysis provides information about often complex social and economic problems, including tourism development through which a policy, procedure or program is developed and implemented (Patton & Sawicki, 1993). Policy analysis can be conducted through all levels of government, from federal to local government. This type of analysis can also be applied to the private sector, and organizations' policies and plans. A wide range of documents were collected for review, application and analysis within this thesis. These included historical and contemporary journal articles, tourism advertising material, travel writings from tourists, postcards and photographs, tourist guide books, scholarly and popular text books concerning Cambodia, government policy and associated planning documents, district (local government) reports, business plans, consultancy reports. I make particular reference to the importance of newspaper articles from the *Phnom Penh Post* and *Cambodia Daily* that have proved invaluable to this research and have provided me with a rich source of accessible contemporary information concerning tourism and politics in the country. All of these sources have been relied upon throughout my research.

To make sense of modern Cambodia and all its complexities in the 21<sup>st</sup> century requires an understanding of Cambodia's early, and more modern historical events, and how these events have informed modern-day Cambodia. Leiper (2003) reminds us that 'an awareness of the past is necessary to understand the present, because everything in the present was determined by what has already happened' (p. 1). Therefore, documenting history is one way of understanding contemporary social phenomena. It may be considered that undertaking a historical analysis is a method that seeks to make sense of the past through the systematic analysis of the traces it leaves behind. Marshall & Gretchen (1989) propose that historical analysis, because of its sometimes many sources, becomes useful for researchers to gain knowledge in areas that have been previously unexamined by scholarly literature. A historical analysis is a necessary technique in its own right and failing to utilize this method in social research may result in any account of present-day phenomena being misinterpreted or misunderstood. The majority of historical data within this thesis was derived from secondary sources. The historical analysis pertinent to chapters, particularly Chapter Two, Five and Six was sourced from relevant books pertaining to the history, the sociology, the anthropology and the archaeology of Cambodia. The purpose of applying historical analysis throughout the thesis was to identify a synergy between the past and present that clearly demonstrates that historical

development continues to impact and influence contemporary culture and lifeways. Moreover, understanding and documenting the significance of Cambodian history in the context of modern culture has assisted me to explain phenomena and suggest appropriate recommendations that support sustainable tourism development.

#### *Fieldwork data collection methods*

Hall (2011) reinforces that the study of tourism has continually relied upon fieldwork to observe tourists and to examine the relationship between hosts and guests. Moreover, fieldwork is critically utilized to identify and analyze the social, economic and environmental impacts of tourism, necessary for the creation of sustainable tourism policies, plans and management. For this thesis, fieldwork was conducted in the community of Banteay Chhmar, a small village of 14,000 inhabitants located in the Northwest of Cambodia. Fieldwork is specifically confined to the ethnographic study presented in Chapter Seven.

My fieldwork occurred between 2012 and 2016. My first fieldwork trip to Banteay Chhmar took place in September 2012, when the primary purpose was to establish relationships and familiarizing myself with the project and community. I returned to undertake further fieldwork in January 2013, December 2015, and February 2016. During each stage of collecting data, the objective was to undertake observation and to conduct unstructured in-depth interviews with CBT project members, villagers, commune officials, and visitors (Table 1.3).

**Table 1.3:** Fieldwork schedule and purpose

Date	Purpose
September 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Meetings and permissions with CBT Project Committee Members to establish the fieldwork</li> <li>- Familiarization of the village and temple site utilizing local tour guides</li> <li>- Preliminary observation and test interviews</li> <li>- Experience the CBT products and services</li> </ul>
January 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Daily observations of village life</li> <li>- Daily observations in tourists and their interactions with the community</li> <li>- Conduct unstructured in-depth interviews</li> </ul>
December 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Daily observations of village life</li> <li>- Daily observations in tourists and their interactions with the community</li> <li>- Conduct unstructured in-depth interviews</li> </ul>
February 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Daily observations of village life with a focus toward identifying</li> </ul>

	<p>significant changes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Daily observations in tourists and their interactions with the community</li> <li>- Conduct unstructured in-depth interviews</li> <li>- De-briefing and acknowledgements to CBT Project Committee Members and community members who helped with the fieldwork</li> </ul>
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*Fieldwork observations*

Leedy and Ormrod (2010) tell us that within qualitative studies observations are usually recorded in some detail, utilizing fieldnotes, photographs and videotapes that capture a wide variety of ways people act and interact. Veal (2011) describes the observation method as an unobtrusive one that involves gathering information about people’s behavior without their knowledge. Veal also acknowledges that observation is an appropriate method to use in situations where the presence of the researcher would most likely lead to a modification of the subjects’ behavior. Angrosino (2007) notes the importance of the ethnographer relying on their senses, defining observation as ‘the act of perceiving the activities and interrelationships of people in the field setting through the five senses of the researcher’ (p. 4). Bryman (2004) talks specifically about ethnography and participant observation, noting this method entails the extended involvement of the researcher in the social life of those that constitute the study. He further identifies there are four classifications of observing for ethnographers: (1) complete participant, (2) participant as observer, (3) observer as participant, (4) complete observer. For myself to understand the tourist experience at Banteay Chhmar and to assist guide participants where necessary during the interviews, my chosen observation method was ‘participant and observer’. This method requires the researcher to participate in the social setting when required, with members of the social setting being aware of the researcher’s status as a researcher. ‘The ethnographer is engaged in regular interaction with people and participates in their daily lives’ (Bryman, 2004, p. 301).

During all fieldwork periods in Banteay Chhmar observation was undertaken on a daily basis. As I utilized the homestay facilities, shopped in the local markets, attended traditional events and festivals and visited families on a social basis while in the community, it can be argued I participated in the daily life of the community. At all times I carried a camera, either a DSLR camera or utilized the camera on my phone to record my observations. I also carried my ANU fieldnote book, and made numerous entries that described without subjectivity or bias what I was observing. My key targets for observation were carefully chosen for the particular

purpose of being able to re-observe on my return visits for the purpose of documenting observed changes. The key observation targets were:

- Local housing and construction
- Infrastructure, transportation and village facilities
- Daily activities of villagers
- Villagers' interaction with the temple
- Events and festivals
- Tourist behavior and activities in the village
- Host / visitor interactions
- CBT services, accommodations and visitor experiences
- The general natural environment
- Social and environmental impacts (positive / negative) directly attributed to tourism activities

Angrosino (2007) comments that it remains vital to the outcome of the research that the researcher can also recognize patterns, behaviors or actions that may be repeated over a period of time, so it can be identified that they are typical of the people under study. During the write-up phase of my findings, all photos and fieldwork notes were reviewed and those that were repeated over the four years of my fieldwork were included in the study of Banteay Chhmar documented in Chapter Seven.

### *Interviews*

The purpose of conducting in-depth interviews at Banteay Chhmar was to collect data concerning villagers' lifeways, and beliefs, opinions and attitudes concerning the CBT Project. Veal (2011) summarizes an in-depth interview as being characterized by firstly its extended length, generally more than thirty minutes. Secondly, its depth that has the researcher probing more deeply than a questionnaire-based interview through encouraging the respondent to talk, asks supplementary questions and requests the respondent on occasion to further extend or explain their answers. Thirdly its structure which should have less structure than a questionnaire-based interview. Jennings (2001) goes further and suggests in-depth interviews have no formal interview schedule. The interviewer will have an idea about themes, issues and topics and these are merely used as a guide. An in-depth interview can either be semi-structured or unstructured. Leedy and Ormrod (2010) note 'unstructured interviews are, of course, more flexible and more likely to yield information that the researcher hadn't planned to ask for (p. 148). Semi-structured interviews typically rely on a list of questions or alternatively topics and themes to be discussed. The respondent generally has a great deal of leeway in how to reply. The question schedule may not follow a sequential order and additional questions may be asked

as the interview proceeds. The unstructured interview commences with an introduction to the topic for discussion or a single question. The respondent is permitted to discuss the topic freely, with the interviewer simply guiding or responding to points that may require further discussion or explanation (Bryman, 2004).

My interview schedule relied upon both a semi-structured and unstructured format, with a focus toward unstructured interviews wherever possible. As much as possible I allowed the participants to lead the conversation in an inductive manner (Zahra & McGehee, 2013). My approach provided participants with an opportunity to provide a detailed narrative, often building upon and exploring their initial responses. The interviews were structured in such a way as to provide participants with the leeway to engage in free-flowing, detailed narratives concerning tourism (if they so wished), as well as CBT, social and economic developmental needs, their livelihoods, and if visitors, their experiences and opinions. In addition, I endeavoured to speak to the same villagers and project members each time I returned to Banteay Chhmar. It meant that I could determine if there were changes during the five-year period of my visits. My key questions for interviews were:

1. Please tell me about yourself, your family and life in this village (villagers)
2. Please share with me what you know about the CBT Project here (villagers and CBT members)
3. Please tell me about your experience while in Banteay Chhmar (visitors)
4. Please share with me your thoughts and opinions about tourism development here (all respondents)

When interviewing the CBT Project Committee members, I followed a more structured interview approach utilising the information in Table 1.2 to guide my questions. A more structured approach was required for me to gain a greater depth of understanding concerning the CBT Project's operations and its relationship and benefit to the community.

#### *Sampling and Participants*

Jennings (2001) informs us that sampling is the means by which research subjects, or study units from the target population are included in the research project. Burns (2000) defines the sampling process as 'taking a portion of the population, making observations on the smaller group and then generalising the findings to the larger population. Generalisation is a necessary scientific procedure, since rarely it is possible to study all members of a defined population' (p. 82). The sample will either be a probability sample where each unit in the population has a known chance of being sampled, or a non-probability sample where some units in the population are more likely to be sampled than others (Byrman, 2004).

Banteay Chhmar is a working farming community, where the majority of the population are involved in incoming generating activities on a daily basis, particularly farming. It remained

critically important throughout the fieldwork periods that I did not interrupt the local population going about their daily employment or income-generating activities. Likewise, when targeting visitors as potential participants, the first consideration was to ensure I was not intruding on their visitor experience. Females in the village play an important role in daily household activities, particularly in the mornings and evenings. I was conscious I did not approach potential female participants before 9am or after 5pm. With these considerations, the most suitable and unobtrusive sampling technique for my study was convenience sampling where the focus on identifying participants was not on a systematic selection process (Jennings, 2001). Convenience sampling is defined as one ‘that is simply available to the researcher by the virtue of accessibility’ (Bryman, 2004, p. 100). Jennings (2001) also confirms convenience sampling is the selection of potential participants based upon their proximity to the researcher, and the ease with which the researcher can access the participants. As my study was longitudinal, over a four-year period, the temporal nature of convenience sampling was negated, and I was able to compare the data, particular noting changes in the responses over a four-year period. Each day I was in the village, I developed a routine for identifying potential participants that was repeated every four days, excluding Saturday afternoons and Sundays as this time was set aside to attend village festivals and ceremonies, particularly weddings. Between 9am and 12pm I targeted the central market area. From 1pm to 4pm I targeted each of the satellite villages, spending one afternoon in the first satellite village and then the following day, moving onto the next satellite village. From 4pm to 6pm I targeted visitors who were returning from their day at the temple or touring the village and local surroundings (Table 1.4). The majority of interviews were between one to two hours in duration, with participants, particularly villagers, taking more time as they were willing to share many stories about their life in the village. The average length of interview was 92 minutes.

**Table 1.4:** Interview field schedule

Day	Location	Targets
Day 1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Local Market (AM)</li> <li>2. Phum Chhaeng (PM)</li> <li>3. CBT Restaurant / Homestays (4pm – 6pm)</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Villagers</li> <li>- CBT Project Members</li> <li>- Visitors</li> <li>- Local officials and NGO representatives</li> </ul>
Day 2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Local Market (AM)</li> <li>2. Phum Tboung (PM)</li> <li>3. CBT Restaurant / Homestays (4pm – 6pm)</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Villagers</li> <li>- CBT Project Members</li> <li>- Visitors</li> <li>- Local officials and NGO representatives</li> </ul>
Day 3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Local Market (AM)</li> <li>2. Phum Sras Chrev (PM)</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Villagers</li> <li>- CBT Project Members</li> </ul>

	3. CBT Restaurant / Homestays (4pm – 6pm)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Visitors</li> <li>- Local officials and NGO representatives</li> </ul>
Day 4	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Local Market (AM)</li> <li>2. Phum Lech (PM)</li> <li>3. CBT Restaurant / Homestays (4pm – 6pm)</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Villagers</li> <li>- CBT Project Members</li> <li>- Visitors</li> <li>- Local officials and NGO representatives</li> </ul>

A total of 76 participants were interviewed between 2012 and 2016. The respondent's demographics are identified in Table 1.5 below. The age of the participants was difficult to precisely identify as the majority of villagers were unsure of their exact age. In the main this is attributed to the loss of records during the Khmer Rouge period, 1975–1979.

**Table 1.5:** Respondent demographics and occupations

Fieldwork period	Total participants	Gender	Occupation
September 2012	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 8 male</li> <li>- 4 female</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 4 CBT Project representatives</li> <li>- 2 NGO representatives</li> <li>- 4 Villagers</li> <li>- 2 Visitors</li> </ul>
January 2013	22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 9 male</li> <li>- 13 female</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 6 CBT Project representatives</li> <li>- 1 NGO representative</li> <li>- 10 Villagers</li> <li>- 2 Commune officials</li> <li>- 3 Visitors</li> </ul>
December 2015	23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 11 male</li> <li>- 12 female</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 4 CBT Project representatives</li> <li>- 2 NGO representative</li> <li>- 11 Villagers</li> <li>- 1 Commune official</li> <li>- 4 Visitors</li> </ul>
February 2016	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 9 male</li> <li>- 11 female</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 4 CBT Project representatives</li> <li>- 1 NGO representative</li> <li>- 10 Villagers</li> <li>- 2 Commune officials</li> <li>- 3 Visitors</li> </ul>

#### *Interview procedure and materials*

Throughout all interviews I had the benefit of assistance from a Cambodian national who is fluent in English and functioned as a research assistant and interpreter. For this, I chose a

person who had no ties with the community at Banteay Chhmar yet has had extensive experience working in rural communities throughout north-west Cambodia. As identified in my sampling procedure, potential participants were identified through walking around the village. Those who appeared not busy were approached. I was introduced to non-English speaking villagers by my interpreter. I organised a suitable time to meet with CBT Project and Commune Officials. The majority of interviews with the villagers were conducted in Khmer, the local language. My interpreter translated every few sentences into English and I recorded the dialogue directly into my ANU fieldnote book. The interpreter also constantly checked and ensured my interpretation and documentation of the interviews were an accurate objective reflection of the participants' dialogue. With the participants' written permission, I used a voice recorder to record the interview. Prior to the interview commencing all participants were requested to sign an approved Australian National University Statement of Agreement to Participate. All participants also received a Research Information Statement that summarized the purpose of the research and their role as participants. Both these documents were written in English and the Khmer language. The majority of interviews took place in-situ, either in the participant's house, shop, field or other place of work. Upon the interview's completion the participant was sincerely thanked by me in the Khmer language (*aw-koon chran*) and informed that when I return I would be grateful to be able to speak with them again. Seventy percent of the villagers participated in an interview more than once over my four years of visits. At the conclusion of all fieldwork periods the transcripts underwent a content analysis, firstly as a means to identify common themes between the responses and the existing literature, and secondly to identify similarities and differences between participants (Jennings, 2001). Representative respondent narratives of the key themes were selected to be documented and discussed in Chapter Seven.

#### **1.3.4 Research trustworthiness and authenticity**

I have also paid attention to the trustworthiness and authenticity of the research through consideration of Lincoln and Guba's (1985) four criteria for qualitative research's trustworthiness and authenticity: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. This is an important element of the research process to determine if the research methods were reliable and valid (Burns, 2000; Byrman, 2004). The four criteria determined by Lincoln and Guba (1985) have been applied to my research as follows;

- Credibility – ensuring the research is carried out according to an appropriately approved research process and submitting the findings to the participants who were the subject of the investigation for confirmation that the research is an accurate reflection of their social world. This was achieved through the interview process. At the conclusion of all interviews, I summarized the key points the participant had made and discussed the



outcome of the interviews at length with my interrupter at the conclusion of each day of fieldwork to ensure I had correctly understood what had been communicated to me.

- Transferability – do the findings apply in some other context, or even the same context at some other time? I have chosen to focus on one specific community in Cambodia, however I suggest we may apply the majority of findings and recommendations to similar communities in Cambodia who either have an established CBT project, or are considering embracing CBT as a mechanism for development.
- Dependability – to establish the trustworthiness of the research, investigators should adopt an auditing approach. This entails keeping accurate records of the research process throughout the research period. As my research has proceeded, I have constantly updated my methodology to reflect my progress and ensured I have kept accurate fieldnotes for all fieldwork undertaken. Once the research was completed, the fieldnote books have been kept secure in accordance with ANU’s research policies.
- Confirmability – acknowledging that complete objectivity is impossible in social research, therefore demonstrating that the investigator has not overtly allowed personal values or theoretical views to sway the written narrative, particularly discussions and findings. My knowledge and experience of Cambodian tourism and community is based upon my connections with Cambodia, and having lived in there, particularly with the Banteay Chhmar community for short periods of time. While I have aimed to contribute in a positive fashion to the research, there existed the possibility that familiarity may result in bias, not only during the interviews themselves, but also regarding the interpretation of data. Utilizing the theory of reflexivity (Veal, 2011) I constantly reviewed in detail the current tourism and community development literature and discussed my progress in detail with my Doctoral Supervisory Panel. This process allowed for the relevant fieldwork technique and process to be developed and to ensure responses from participants were considered through multiple theoretical perspectives as identified in the thesis’s initial chapters.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) also suggest the appropriateness of identifying the authenticity of the research. I have ensured throughout my research progress, both the secondary and primary components of my thesis, that I have fairly and objectively represented the views and opinions of those who are part of this inquiry. I propose that my thesis when considered in its entirety will help those involved in tourism development in Cambodia, particularly the community of Banteay Chhmar better understand their relationship with the tourism industry, and better inform them of the perspectives of others. My recommendations have the potential to translate into action concerning the planning and management for CBT in Cambodia, and moreover may have the opportunity to be utilized in other settings across the Asia-Pacific region.

### **1.3.5 The contribution of the thesis**

My thesis, when considered in its entirety, contributes a critical understanding of tourism development in Cambodia, with specific reference to the social fabric of communities, government policy and planning, and rural development through sustainable community-based tourism. This level of detail concerning tourism development and Cambodian communities in one volume of work has been noticeably absent from tourism studies and associated research related to Cambodia. The dramatic social and economic dislocation that has occurred in Cambodia has resulted in rural communities being left significantly behind urban areas in terms of development. Effectively managed sustainable tourism, particularly CBT, presents a viable opportunity for addressing issues relating to longstanding rural development and poverty, and also as a means of empowering communities. Community strengths, such as resilience, are assets that can be effectively managed with a view to empowering communities, both economically and socially.

Harnessing community resilience through the development of social capital offers an optimum way forward, for it plays to the strengths my study finds have been significantly underutilized. As a thesis, it will also serve as a resource for those involved in academia, in tourism management and in CBT development and management. I have taken the liberty of incorporating an analytical perspective that examines tourism development, communities and community development in the context of Cambodia. In addition, I have provided a study of tourism development in Cambodia and utilized an ethnographic case study that documents a practical example of community development through tourism in a vulnerable rural Cambodian community. The thesis identifies important thematic concerns; more, it provides a significant body of work regarding the relationship between community development and tourism in Cambodia, most notably with reference to CBT. My detailed narrative of community development and tourism in Cambodia can be utilized to enable current endeavors to be usefully assessed within a continuum, and we can note and understand with confidence what to date has worked and what has failed. The thesis also brings to light the causal relationship between the community, the tourism industry, government, and other stakeholders by exposing the strengths and weakness of certain recent and related endeavors.

I also acknowledge the potential contribution toward the teaching of tourism. Because I have taught tourism subjects within the Australian Higher Education sector since 2004, I have also considered how knowledge generated by this study will make a warranted contribution to the disciplines of tourism education and research. Knowledge generated by this scholarly undertaking might be included in tourism courses that address tourism development and in turn be proactively used by tourism graduates moving into similar fields of employment. The thesis provides a critical insight into macro and micro issues pertaining to community and its relationship to tourism. As such, this study may also be useful for tourism academics and

graduates in Cambodia itself. Tribe (2005) succinctly summarizes the necessity of such a relationship:

There is a flow from both tourism knowledge and the tourism curriculum back to the phenomenon of tourism. This captures the important point that tourism knowledge and tourism education have the possibility of influencing and changing the phenomenon of tourism itself. So, for example, the elaboration of theories of socio-cultural impacts of tourism and the transmission of such theories into the wider world through tourism education may lead to pressure to amend tourism to take more account of its socio-cultural impacts (p.50).

Most higher education courses involving tourism are designed to equip a graduate with broadened knowledge pertaining to managing the impact of tourism. I would suggest that tourism and its associated development at the local level are both influenced by both micro and macro elements. The individuality of a particular community, as well as its social, economic and environmental constructs are essential to understanding the context of sustainable tourism planning and management. Tourism education, specifically in countries such as Cambodia, should address not only macro issues and influences, but also the 'micro' complexities of tourism as they relate to community development. Graduates who choose to embark on careers in tourism within their own communities should have intimate knowledge of the uniqueness of communities and tourism, and most specifically how tourism can affect rural, ethnic or minority communities within any one particular destination.

The relevance of studies concerning specific communities has also played an important role toward a better understanding of community development through tourism. Gunn (2002) explores a study involving a regional tourism-planning project for Baffin in Canada. The project was commissioned in 1981 with the objective of utilizing tourism in order to enhance community development. A review of the project took place ten years later and important issues that were identified included: 1) local people felt they had lost control of their own future because of the dominance by government, 2) lack of understanding of key roles and implementation, 3) inadequate local knowledge and education on tourism, and 4) turf protection by other businesses and the public sector. I have highlighted this study as an example of how knowledge and technical expertise could have significantly benefited the project. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century world of tourism management, studies both past and contemporary, of community development through tourism, specifically CBT, continue to be invaluable both to researchers and to those involved in the management of such projects. My overall thesis, particularly my study of the CBT Project at Banteay Chhmar, adds usefully to the existing body of knowledge.

Gunn (2002) suggests that traditionally those persons involved in tourism governance and policy roles have tended to focus on individual parts or components rather than taking a more holistic approach. Gunn argues that a new approach is called for that contextualizes

tourism as a jigsaw puzzle, with planners or decision-makers required to fit the pieces together. This thesis examines how these pieces may best fit together, and by utilizing an ethnographic study, it identifies the multiple stakeholders involved in a CBT project, as well as their attitudes, opinions and beliefs, including the impact of the project upon the community. My thesis also, therefore, adopts Gunn's (2002) theoretical approach of viewing CBT as a complex jigsaw puzzle that examines how the pieces fit, and what additional pieces might be required in order to deliver sustainable outcomes regarding tourism development in Cambodia, specifically CBT.

I also refer to benefits for those involved in CBT in Cambodia and the community this study addresses. The thesis identifies the social, economic and environmental concerns of community members and identifies whether or not a CBT project does in fact address these issues. The findings might well assume importance with respect to efforts regarding the implementation of future management strategies that in turn focus on tourism as a mechanism for social, economic and environmental sustainability across rural Cambodian communities.

### **1.3.6 The structure of the thesis**

The first chapter addresses the question related to my reason for deciding on Cambodia to base this thesis upon, in particular the functioning of CBT. The chapter also importantly confirms the particular methodological approach to research, notably the way in which it provides a holistic body of work with respect to the challenge posed by community development that is based on tourism. The chapter provides a justification of the methodological approach and a further explanation with respect to the theoretical concepts that inform the study overall. The task of the second chapter is to explore the impact of tourism regarding community development. Initially it examines the principles that inform community development and then it constructs a relationship between this kind of development and tourism. The second half of the chapter analyzes the impact of the sustainable tourism paradigm and the importance of community participation to the way it functions overall. The third chapter introduces the concept of CBT. It documents the evolution of various definitions and offers a conceptualization of the phenomenon. Critiques of CBT are presented, followed by an explanation of CBT's development in Cambodia itself. The chapter concludes with an analysis that examines the motivations and behaviors of the CBT tourist; in addition, it offers an explanation of CBT in terms of its position in the marketplace. The fourth chapter provides an analysis of CBT in terms of actual practice. The content moves beyond scholarly literature and reviews technical publications that have been written by CBT practitioners. The second half of the chapter devotes itself to promoting the importance of the ASEAN Community Based Tourism Standard, and its value with respect to improving the capacity of CBT, notably regarding its continuous improvement and accreditation. The fifth chapter investigates the definition, concept, and constructs with respect to a community per se, and then it identifies the

way in which theories regarding community as a concept relate to Cambodian communities between the years 1200 and 1992, as well as to communities there post-1992.

The remaining chapters deal with the development of tourism, with particular reference to sustainable tourism and to the functioning of CBT as an exemplum in Cambodia. Chapter Six investigates the evolution of tourism, again in relation to Cambodia. Here I assert that because of constant changes in the historical record, tourism as an activity has always been a feature of Cambodian lifeways, adapting itself to intrinsic social, economic and environmental conditions. I divide and review tourism activities in the context of Cambodia's most important historical periods. In conclusion, the chapter examines the ways in which the political landscape has shaped the development of tourism and has established a sustainable agenda. My fieldwork at Banteay Chhmar comprises Chapter Seven, providing in detail an account of the CBT Project, including interviews with stakeholders. It discusses significant themes as provided by stakeholders, in the process noting relevant theories related to tourism and community development. The concluding chapter begins by providing a contemporary analysis with respect to the impact of tourism on rural development in Cambodia. The chapter continues, presenting an analysis of the outlook regarding the future of tourism with particular reference to CBT. In conclusion, there are recommendations with respect to supporting the ongoing development of CBT at Banteay Chhmar. Finally, there is an estimate of the thesis's limitations and suggested post-doctoral work from themes identified in the thesis.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Community Development and Tourism: A conceptual understanding**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

*Tourism has had a close connection with the local communities, particularly as hosts and guides, but the opening up of travel to the mass market from the 1960s propelled the development of the package holiday that in effect removed the tourist from the community (Beeton, 2006, p. 1).*

Before I introduce my examination of the CBT project at Banteay Chhmar later in this thesis, I argue it is essential to explore and attempt to conceptualize the principles of community development and how it relates to tourism. I precede this chapter with the argument that to provide a characterization of community-based tourism and the community it serves, an appreciation of community development, specifically its social and other forms of community capital is vital. A community's ability to identify, harness and control its tangible and intangible resources or assets is essential for the positive development of livelihoods, in this case the development of sustainable tourism. Poor resource management, the scarcity of resources and political interventions to control or deprive the community of their resources are more frequent in rural communities and serve as a barrier to effective community development. If a community is unable to build and utilize its social capital and deploy political capital to better control resources, community development projects such as CBT risk failure.

This chapter, through an examination of sustainable tourism then establishes the relationship between community development and tourism. The context of this relationship is essential so one may gain a detailed appreciation of why the global tourism industry embraced the concept of sustainable development, which in turn has led to the inception and growth of CBT. I have provided a narrative exploring the evolution of modern mass tourism and the associated social, economic and environmental consequences. I argue it was the negative consequences from modern mass tourism that influenced the agenda for utilizing principles of sustainable development in tourism management. Consequentially the establishment of sustainable tourism development influenced the argument of local communities having greater control over how tourism was developed and managed in their periphery, hence the growth of CBT.

## 2.2 The principles of community development

The concept of community development has become increasingly relevant over the past decades as a recognized inquiry for both professionals and sociological scholars. Scholars have differing points of view regarding the origins of modern community development as a specific discipline. Wise (1998) suggests the origins align to post-Second World War reconstruction efforts in less developed countries. Green and Haines (2002) argue the 1960s American ‘war on poverty’ had a significant influence on modern community development theories. Phillips and Pittman (2009) cite the North American social movements, and the collective actions resulting from them, such as the Sanitary Reform Movement of the 1840s and later housing reforms. Further afield, subsequent progressive movements of the 1890s extending into the 20<sup>th</sup> century were all grounded in the objective to ‘develop the community’. Social philosophers from Plato to Marx and Weber have all documented concepts that relate to modern theories of community development such as class, social inequality and social stratification (Tumin, 1967). Applying ‘development’ to the contexts of definitions concerning community, it may be argued the role of people is to develop stronger communities through the psychological and social ties the inhabitants share. This highlights the concept of community development as an educational process that enables community members to collectively address problems. This process also may contribute toward the strengthening of the community’s human and institutional relationships (Ploch, 1976).

The terms ‘community development’ and ‘economic development’ are widely used with multiple definitions applied. Economic development is a more specific term that to the layperson implies a relationship to elements of an economy and how the economy may influence aspects such as new homes, employment, consumerism, and per capita income. Economic development is interrelated with community development but should not be used as a substitute term. A suitable way to differentiate the two is to consider that community development’s purpose is the production and utilization of assets to benefit the community while economic development’s purpose is to assist in the mobilization of these assets. Phillips and Pittman (2009) suggest many explanations of community development focus on a specific or particular process of teaching people to work together with the goal of addressing common problems. They also suggest that other authors focus on community development as an ‘action, result or outcome’ (p. 5) that may result in a better community to work and reside in. Community Development is therefore best considered as both a process and an outcome with a simple broad definition being:

A process: developing and enhancing the ability to act collectively, and an outcome: (1) taking collective action and (2) the result of that action for improvement in a community in any or all realms: physical, environmental, cultural, social, political, economic, etc. (Phillips & Pittman, 2009, p. 6).

Pivotal to an understanding of community development are the resources or assets that are essential for a community to develop, specifically what is required to capitalize on resources. Phillips and Pittman (2009) refer to this requirement as ‘social capital or social capacity’ (p. 6), simply meaning the residents’ abilities to manage and utilize their resources in order to achieve specific goals. This concept is very similar to organizational strategic capability being ‘the adequacy and suitability of the resources and competences of an organization for it to survive and prosper’ (Johnson, Scholes, and Whittington, 2005, p. 117) and in turn be able to deliver value to its stakeholders. Another way to consider the concept of social capital or capabilities is the extent community members work together collectively and collaboratively to build strong relationships and in turn work toward planning, achieving goals and solving community problems. Green and Haines (2002) in their publication *Asset Building and Community Development* explore other types of community capital such as 1) human capital referring to labor and skills, 2) physical capital referring to the tangibles in the community, streets, buildings, parks etc., 3) financial capital referring to financial arrangements and lending that are controlled or owned by the community such as micro loan schemes, 4) environmental capital referring to leisure and recreational facilities, topography and weather, and natural resources. While these other forms of capital are important, unless social capital or the capacity to utilize resources for community benefit exists, community development will be hindered and opportunities will not be realized. The more social capital a community has, the more likely it will be to take advantage of other forms of community capital and engage in effective problem solving.

Rather like the elusive definition of tourism, social capital too has seen a vast amount of academic literature from its commentators, offering a plethora of conceptualizations and definitions. Notably Kay (2006) found consensus in the literature. He notes this consensus appears to be that social capital within a community ‘is something that exists between individuals and organizations. This “something” emerges from connections between entities and is further developed through trust, through mutual understanding and through reciprocal actions based on shared values and norms’ (p. 162).

Social capital has been extensively explored in the literature (see Agnitsch, Flora & Ryan, 2009; Bridger & Alter, 2009; Coleman, 1988; Emery & Flora, 2009; Stuetevant, 2009). Most agree the concept of social capital is not a new sociological theory; however, in recent times, the theory has been explored in more detail. The origins of social capital has its roots in the work of Durkheim, who argued group life may prevent the breakdown of moral guidance and social bonds, and Marx’s observations between a classed society and an ‘effective and mobilised class for itself’ (Portes, 1998, p. 2). While there is some discussion about the first contemporary definition of social capital, Bourdieu’s (1985) definition is widely cited, being ‘the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable



network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance or recognition' (p. 248). This definition is simplistic, suggesting social capital is useful toward maintaining class relations or accessing cultural or economic capital allowing people to move to a higher class. The definition neglects other possible outcomes or relationships that can be bought about by social capital. Coleman in his detailed 1988 exploration of social capital argues that social capital if used productively can bring about certain achievements or goals that would be not possible if social capital was absent—it brings about 'productive activity' (p. 101). More importantly, he examines the necessary ingredients to develop social capital within a social structure. The first concept is understanding what the obligations, expectations and trustworthiness of actors may be. Second is the ability to share information that in turn can facilitate action. Third is the existence of effective norms shared by a social structure. Coleman concludes his investigation by examining the importance of the right social structure to facilitate social capital, chiefly the existence of 'closure' (p. 105) in a social structure. He uses the example of gossip to illustrate his theory. For gossip to be effective there must be a collective relationship in existence before the gossip can be effectively circulated or halted. In a structure with closure actors can combine to sanction or reward an action.

A project of the Danish Government entitled 'The Social Capital Initiative' (SCI) was established to assess the impact of social capital on the effectiveness of development projects and to investigate mechanisms for monitoring and measuring social capital across twelve independent studies. The findings identified strong evidence that social capital is an essential ingredient of community development and an important tool for the reduction of poverty in communities (Grootaert & Bastelaer, 2001). The Danish project is important as it provides recommendations for measuring social capital, usually cited in the literature as extremely difficult if not impossible to measure (Kay, 2006). As my investigation is not focused specifically on the measurement of social capital in relation to the operation of CBT, I am particularly interested as to how others, including the Danish project, have applied a methodology to better understand the dynamics of social capital within a community. From these methodologies we may learn what could be useful analytical tools that could be applied to seek a better understanding of the relationship between CBT and the community. Islam and Morgan (2012) used a number of qualitative data methods in their study of NGOs' contribution to the development of social capital. These methods included 'participatory rural appraisal, social mapping, participant observation, in depth study, focus groups discussion and documentation survey' (p. 347). Sturtevant (2009) and Dale and Newman (2010) applied similar data collection methods, and also used an in-depth case study of a community. Grootaert (2001) included household economic data in his study. A general theme of these previous studies is they were all influenced by ethnography simply because they considered independent yet interconnected social and cultural factors such as values, attitudes, norms, practices, and

beliefs concerning the day-to-day life of community members. Evans (2007) clearly reinforces this theme by stating:

Social capital consists of resources within communities which are created through the presence of high levels of trust, reciprocity and mutuality, shared norms of behaviour, shared commitment and belonging, both formal and informal social networks and effective information channels which may be used productively by individuals and groups to facilitate actions to benefit individuals, groups and community more generally (p. 16).

Scholars have built upon the seminal work of Coleman (1988) and others by identifying the forms of social capital that may exist in a community. This approach is also an important consideration as it offers an explanation as to what may be advancing or distracting social capital from utilizing resources and in turn influencing community development. Gittel and Vidal (1998) and Putman (2000) proposed there are two forms of social capital identified as bridging and bonding capital. Phillips and Pittman (2009) defined the distinction between both as ‘bonding capital refers to the ties within homogeneous groups (e.g., races, ethnicities, social action committees, or people of similar socio-economic status) while bridging capital refers to ties among different groups’ (p. 6). Putman’s (2000) definition as explained by Agnitsch, Flora and Ryan (2009) is somewhat more comprehensive:

Bridging social capital in contrast, connects people or groups who are very different from each another in some way and addresses how social capital facilitates resource acquisition. Unlike bonding social capital, where networks are comprised of similar people with presumably similar resources, bridging social capital is crucial in acquiring a wider variety of resources and enhancing information diffusion within and between groups (p. 39).

The next important aspect of social capital is its relationship and interdependency with other forms of capital. As Paxton (1999) notes ‘when social capital is present, it increases the capacity for action and facilitates the production of some good’ (p. 93). For the production of some good to occur, other resources or forms of capital (as noted above) need to be present, utilized and managed. Social capital therefore can be considered an instrument that facilitates other forms of community capital to be developed and utilized to deliver collective community benefits. Agnitsch, Flora and Ryan (2009) draw attention to various studies that have empirically tested and documented the results from the effective use of social capital. The working paper by Grootaert and van Bastelaer (2001) is of particular relevance to CBT as their work provides ‘strong evidence that social capital is a pervasive ingredient and determinant of progress in many types of development projects, and an important tool in poverty reduction’ (p. 11). Two of CBT’s primary objectives are developing tourism as a means to contribute toward poverty reduction and utilizing tourism as a tool to advance community progress.

Emery and Flora (2009) provide a more detailed examination of community capital through providing a methodology in the form of a framework. They suggest a beneficial way to examine community capital is to firstly identify assets in each capital area; secondly identify the types of assets invested or deployed; and thirdly identify the interaction and results across the capitals. They identify seven components of capital as natural, cultural, human, social, political, financial and built. The logic behind this approach is that development and deployment of only specific assets may be helpful to the community or certain members of the community and not necessarily increase overall capacity and in turn overall development. According to Guiterrez-Montez (as cited in Emery & Flora, 2009), ‘the flow of assets across capitals—that is, human capital invested in a project leading to increases in the stock of assets in financial, political, cultural, and social capital—can initiate an ongoing process of assets building on assets, leading to the effect of an upward spiral. Or, as many have observed, success builds on success’ (p. 22). This approach is also ideal for appreciating and understanding the fundamental principles of CBT and other related community projects. A key trait to the success of CBT is the amount of human capital invested during the early stages of development—and appreciating that human capital can only be effectively developed if the right balance of bonding and bridging social capital are initially present and deployed.

Social capital is predominantly redundant in the context of community development if it is not used to create collective community action. This implies the mobilization of residents and the deployment of other forms of community capital toward a common agreed goal. It may also mean the establishment and management of community projects, with the project’s governance and operations controlled by the community. An example of this could well be CBT. As noted by Agnitsch, Flora and Ryan (2009) ‘the main criteria is that the action involves local efforts that benefit the community in some way’ (p. 40). To bring about action, both bonding and bridging capital are necessary ingredients. It can be concluded that when both forms of social capital are available and effectively utilized, there is a greater commitment to the community from the residents and they are more willing to act on the community’s behalf (Temkin and Rohe, 1998). Similarly, if an imbalance between bonding and bridging capital is deployed to create an action, the result will most likely be negative. Portes (1998) and Alder and Kwon (2002) both found the dominance of bonding capital over bridging capital was a catalyst toward the creation of mutually exclusive groups and the inequity of distribution derived from deployed resources.

To turn social capital into action, it becomes necessary to also develop political capital. Jacobs (2011) identifies political capital as the community’s ability to influence rules, regulations, policies, the access to funds and the distribution of resources. It also is about the community’s access and influence over those in power, either within the community, regionally or nationally. It may refer to the community’s ability to form a united voice and facilitate action

in the interests of the overall community. Political capital can reflect how decisions are made within the community, how funds are distributed and resources allocated. Weak political capital sees decisions centralized in a rigid vertical system of decision-making with only few community members benefiting from the decisions while strong political capital sees decisions influenced by the community as a whole, resulting in more equitable utilization of funds and resources. Again, we see this is where bonding and bridging ties (capital) become important toward establishing networks between members of the community and those outside local groups. The larger and more connected the network the more opportunity the community has to deploy its political capital and reach out to political figures, decision makers and others in power (Dale & Newman, 2010). For CBT projects that operate in developing countries, often it is political issues, such as corruption, vested interests, power imbalances between the community and those who control the community including the centralization of power that may prohibit social capital from being effectively developed and deployed.

The following example illustrates where both social capital (including bonding and bridging capital) and political capital become a necessary condition for community development. In a rural poor community, civic organizations such as CBT have the ability to positively contribute toward community development and poverty reduction. Initially the organization's ability to apply both its bridging capital and political capital can result in the acquisition of external funds and access to resources previously unattainable. Bonding capital that exists between the organization and the community will determine the distribution of benefits to the community. This example presumes the community firstly has sufficient social and political capital and secondly is able to effectively use it. If I relate this example specifically to Cambodian rural communities, it may be argued certain types of bonding capital may be available, such as a high degree of kinship, close family ties and reciprocity, but bridging and political capital is low. The community's ability to build internal and external networks and access resources beyond the community is often compromised because of its remoteness, marginalization and lack of abilities to develop beneficial networks.

Grootaert (2001) specifically examined whether social capital benefited the poor, investigating communities in Bolivia, Burkina Faso and Indonesia. He initially identified in the context of social capital at a micro level 'the networks and norms that govern interactions among individuals, households and communities. Such networks are often (but not necessarily) given structure through the creation of local associations or local institutions' (p. 1). He further argues there is abundant evidence that illustrates local associations can play a significant role toward sustainable community development practices and outcomes. The study found social capital couldn't be considered as a mechanism that benefits the community equally. The attributes of local associations determine the amount of benefit the poor will receive. It also found returns to social capital are higher for the poor than the wealthy, therefore it is important

to include social capital in any poverty alleviation program. The findings drew attention toward the importance of household participation, specifically decision-making from their membership with local associations in order to obtain maximum benefits. It concludes that the study makes 'a compelling case that social capital increases household welfare and reduces poverty' (p. 29).

In the narrative above I have drawn attention to the importance of social capital regarding overall community development. In some communities the understanding, identification and deployment of social capital may not be realized without external support, for example an NGO project. An NGO can be of immense benefit to a community in assisting the development and utilization of its social capital. In some cases, it may be argued the success of a community development project is dependent on its ability to harness social capital. Traditionally NGOs' work in rural communities has tended to focus on the development of resources such as health, education and infrastructure, however some NGOs are aiming at social capital and community empowerment (Islam & Morgan, 2012). Broader perceptions toward the contribution NGOs make to communities they serve continue to be mixed. While their work toward local ownership and participation, human rights, gender equality, the environment and sustainable development has been generally commendable, their image has begun to suggest an illegitimate move toward for-profit activities and low service initiatives, resulting in short-term limited developmental benefits for the communities they serve (World Bank, 2006).

Islam and Morgan (2012) found that some NGOs working in developing countries such as Bangladesh were beginning to focus on assisting communities develop and utilize social capital. They specifically examined two NGO projects, the Markets and Livelihoods program managed by Practical Action Bangladesh and the Small Economic Enterprise Development program managed by Proshika. The findings from the two NGOs identified both positive contributions (outcomes) and limitations toward assisting with the development of social capital. Contributions included the informal community leaders having a better opportunity to build both social and community capacity as they could bypass some of the socio-economic processes and political activity that may hinder development. Secondly, they found a clear correlation between existing social networks, bonding and bridging capital and their ability to mobilize resources. The more networks available in the community, the more mobilization of community resources, or other forms of community capital. Thirdly, they found NGOs' own networks, communication and ability to share knowledge assisted to improve the community's external networks and created more community awareness about their own needs. The identified limitations for NGOs to assist communities develop their social capital included community members' poor level of education, the marginalization of the community, class conflicts, leadership and governance problems, power relations, shortage of available funding and financial capital, lack of social trust, lack of co-operation between community members, inaccessibility to local and external markets, exclusion of the extremely poor community

members and corruption. The research also identified that NGOs and communities were negatively affected by broader external forces, specifically the country's socio-economic structure and socio-cultural conditions.

I also make reference to another important report (Evans, 2007) entitled CONSCISE (The Contribution of Social Capital in the Social Economy to Local Economic Development in Western Europe). The objective of the CONSCISE project was to 'examine the extent to which social enterprises in the social economy both use and generate social capital and thereby facilitate local economic development, social cohesion and inclusion' (p. 13). The concept of social enterprises (such as CBT) having the potential to generate forms of social capital is a worthwhile hypothesis, and worthy of consideration when examining the contribution of CBT projects in remote and rural locations. The project profiled eight localities in Western Europe and then undertook a social accounting and social audit. The findings from the report cover six specific areas.

I have summarized below the most relevant areas and findings of the CONSCISE Report that are useful toward a more rigorous understanding of social capital and CBT, specifically the deployment of social capital in the context of CBT at Banteay Chhmar and other Cambodian destinations:

#### Re-examining Social Capital

1. The presence of social capital varies from community to community, specifically in regard to context, relationships and scale. It is therefore recommended to consider social capital as a heuristic device rather than an accurately defined measurable concept.
2. The community's relationships (individual to group, societal etc.) especially the level and scale of these relationships becomes an important consideration when investigating how social capital is deployed.

#### The Impact of Social Capital on Social Enterprises

1. In remote and rural locations, the local community plays an important contextual role in the development of social enterprises (such as CBT). This is chiefly due to its isolation, socio-economic and political remoteness.
2. In some communities NGOs, social welfare groups and community organizations provide more social capital than the community itself.
3. The level and type of social capital is impacted by social structures, social homogeneity and the actual size of the community.
4. Low skill level and poor education is a common trait of remote and rural communities in developing countries. This in turn has a direct negative impact on the amount of human capital available. In these circumstances, a good balance between bonding and bridging social capital can be used to compensate for the lack of human capital. This is

achieved through creating strong support structures and diversity of relationships, resulting in more opportunities for community members to access training and education.

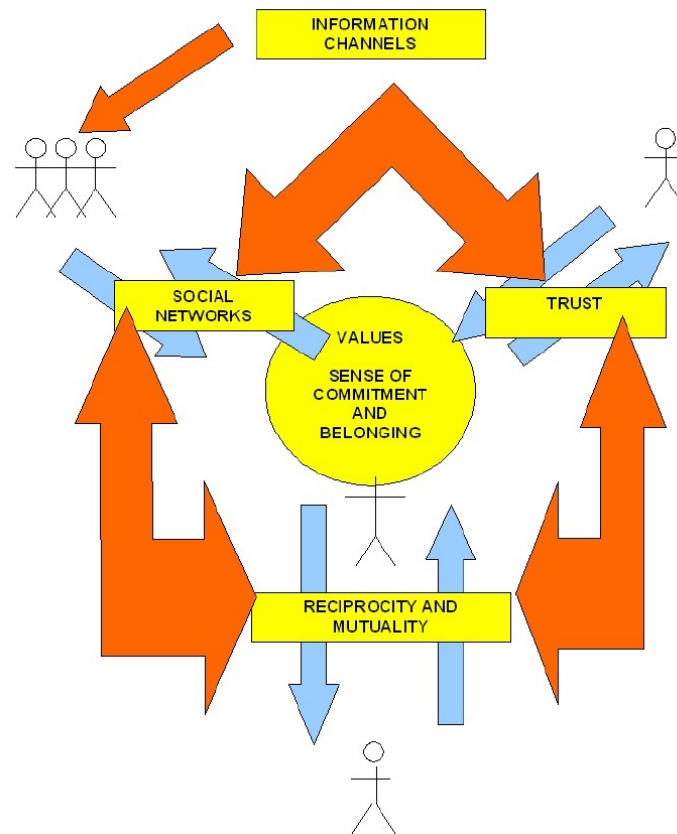
5. Within communities those with power and influence can easily manipulate social capital and the social economy for legitimate or questionable reasons. No individual can successfully operate in the collective, developing both social capital and social economies, without the permission and support of the community. This usually requires a positive relationship with the community and in some situations, reciprocity.

#### The Impact of Social Enterprise on Social Capital

1. There is a danger of social enterprises focusing too much on developing bonding capital within the enterprise. The result of this could lead to the community perceiving the enterprise as mutually exclusive, and operating for its own interests.
2. A social enterprise can run the risk of being complacent or not appreciating the importance of its social capital. This could result in the loss of social capital within the enterprise, rendering it unable to meet its community obligations.
3. Good awareness and understanding of social capital within the enterprise, specifically what it is and how it can be effectively used, allows the enterprise to continually develop and deploy it.
4. When a social enterprise is able to consolidate its social capital, the result establishes trust within the enterprise and the broader community, specifically the ability of building and utilizing trust to allow other community development opportunities.

#### Modelling Social Capital, Social Economy and Local Development

1. It is important to appreciate social capital is essential for the conception, development, deployment and sustainability of social enterprises. Once the enterprise has been established, there is an opportunity for the continued development of social capital. Its importance toward the development and deployment of other forms of community capital will vary, depending on the context. It is concluded that a commonality of social enterprises that are not performing well or have failed is the failure to maintain their social capital.
2. Social enterprises contribute toward continually generating social capital, and this can be considered a cycle. Social consensus concerning a specific community problem or need can contribute toward other forms of social capital being enhanced, specifically community values, trust, respect and reciprocity. The cycle is illustrated in the following diagram:



**Figure 2.1:** The Social Capital Cycle (Evans, 2007, p. 136)

At the center of the diagram is an organization, for example a CBT organization. The CBT organization has developed within itself norms and values, a sense of commitment and a sense of belonging. Through these traits it has further developed trust with other entities, such as local government authorities, NGOs and other organizations. In turn, this becomes a two-way relationship. The CBT organization then develops a series of social networks with other entities, either individual or organizational. These networks are two-way, as the CBT organization can receive from, and give to the network. This also establishes and enhances information channels between the CBT organization and other stakeholders. Of note are the two-way links that exist between reciprocity and mutuality, trust and social networks. These links serve as essential components to ensure social capital is continually produced and enhanced for stakeholders, including the CBT organization.

I argue that a CBT project/organization should have the fundamental belief it is also a social enterprise. Social capital can be used to establish social enterprises or community-based organizations that contribute to the overall development of the community. The difference with these types of organizations is they better represent the community's goals regarding how developmental needs or problems are solved and asset-based community development. Evans (2007) establishes the following criteria for social enterprises: 1) they must be not for profit; 2) they have a legal structure in place that ensures all assets are accumulated wealth and not able to



be owned by individuals; 3) assets are held in trust and are for the benefit of the stakeholders identified in the enterprise's social aims and objectives; 4) they have a structure in place that allows for equal rights and full participation of its members; and 5) they establish a culture of mutual participation.

### **2.3 Constructing a relationship between community development and tourism**

Beeton (2006) states 'tourism is one of the most significant community development tools, particularly in marginal or peripheral communities such as indigenous, remote, or rural communities' (p. 16). Community development and its relationship to tourism is a multidisciplinary and complex field of inquiry. It encompasses definitional understandings of spatial and physical communities; it also concerns social, economic, environmental, political, cultural issues, community assets, resources and capital, specifically how they may be harnessed to become building blocks of healthy sustainable communities. It is possible to establish an integrated relationship between community development and tourism through identifying the commonalities between community development and concepts of tourism. The further consideration of social, economic and environmental impacts of tourism needs to be appreciated in this relationship, specifically how these impacts influence community development and tourism. Another element encompassing this relationship is sustainability; that is, how sustainable development is intrinsically linked to tourism and destination communities.

There has been much discourse relating to community development, and also its relationship to tourism. Communities as a holistic concept, their tangible and intangible assets, are a resource on which tourism depends and also consumes. The interaction between the tourist, tourism, development and the community is in a constant state of evolution, contributing toward either positive or negative outcomes for the associated stakeholders. Challenges for those involved in this field of inquiry are initially defining 'the community', 'sustainable community development' and 'tourism's contribution to community development'. Questions are often raised in the initial stages of the inquiry, specifically, whose community? How can the community be defined in spatial, social and economic terms? How should the community be presented to the tourist? Who decides this, the tourist or the community? Adding to this milieu are the complexities of how social mobility is changing the 'local' composition of the community and its relationship to the emergence of a global community (Hall & Richards, 2000). It may prove challenging or problematic at the early stages of inquiry to have definitive answers for these questions; however, they do require ongoing consideration as inquiries in community and tourism proceed.

Beeton (2006) commences her examination of community development and tourism by also exploring the concept of 'communitas', explaining that chiefly it is a whole group of people entering a liminal time and space with associated consequences. This concept becomes

particularly meaningful when considering the relationship between globalization, tourism and the community as noted by Hall and Richards (2000) and further explored by Leiper (2003) and Weaver and Lawton (2010) in their narratives concerning the evolution of tourism. The global phenomenon of modern mass tourism confirms communities are in a constant flux as a result of the mass tourism era. The majority of the literature succinctly concludes that interactions between tourists and their host communities result in a multitude of widely researched and documented consequences affirming communities in continual change (Cohen, 2001; Gunn, 2002; Hall, 2003; Hall & Richards, 2000; Leiper, 2003; Weaver & Lawton, 2010).

From the 1950s tourism practitioners have noted the influence tourism and the tourist can have on communities, especially communities in developing countries and emerging economies. Equally, communities have realized embracing tourism can significantly contribute to social, economic and environmental development. As initially identified in the 1992 Agenda 21 Plan, tourism's contribution to the development of a community has now been widely discussed in tourism literature (Beeton, 2006; Cohen, 2001; Goeldner & Ritchie, 2009; Gunn, 2002; Hall, 2003; Hall & Richards, 2000; Leiper, 2003; Weaver & Lawton, 2006). There are commonalities between Hall's (2003) and Phillips and Pittman's (2009) definitions of the term 'development' referring to a process and outcome. Hall (2003) investigates the term 'tourism development', arguing that it is a much used yet little-understood term. Hall (2003), drawing on the work of Tourism South Australia, has defined tourism development as:

The setting aside of resources for particular sustainable human uses. In the case of tourism, it is to enhance visitors' experience of these resources in order to derive economic, social and environmental benefits for individuals, governments, operators and communities (Hall, 2003, p. 26).

As with other definitions within the field of tourism studies, a holistic conceptual definition that is all-inclusive for community development and tourism development is still yet to be identified. Acknowledging Beeton's (2006) work, I also argue there is a close relationship and commonalities between the theories of 'community development' and 'tourism development', in other words 'community development through tourism'. Beeton identifies that the term 'community tourism' has also been used in a similar context, but argues that it may suggest tourists simply observing or 'gazing' upon community life, with the community becoming the 'product'. Beeton further suggests that tourism has the potential to enhance social, economic and environmental well-being, but if misunderstood and exploited, it can cause considerable damage to a community's well-being and associated physical environment.

To better appreciate the importance of community development through tourism in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it is essential to first understand the context and evolution of modern mass tourism. The majority of tourism scholars acknowledge Thomas Cook's contribution to tourism beginning in 1851 with his first full-day excursion was the birth of a modernized large-scale

industry. Weaver and Lawton (2010) propose that the absolute concept of mass tourism on a global scale had its origins during the 1950s; however, we cannot discount that people did not travel '*en masse*' before the 1950s, and the Grand Tours of the 18<sup>th</sup> century is one such example. Cook relied on establishing relationships with other organizations, such as the railways and guesthouses for the purposes of providing a means whereby a greater number of people could participate in leisure activities affordably and efficiently. By exploiting this concept, by 1872 Cook was able to offer through his travel agency the first round-the-world tour ticket. In turn, this gave western tourists greater accessibility to destinations that had previously only encountered few tourists. Cook's foray into the world of travel gave other entrepreneurs motivation to pursue opportunities in 'package mass travel', resulting in the rapid growth of travel agencies in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries offering affordable tickets *en masse* for both domestic and international locations.

During the 1914–1918 and 1939–1945 world wars tourism declined, but the end of the Second World War and commencement of the 'space age' in the 1950s saw a rejuvenation of the tourism industry. There are several important factors worthy of consideration that contributed to the rapid growth and modernization of tourism since the 1950s. These factors include changes and advancements in the economic, social, demographic, and technological environments. Weaver and Lawton (2010) refer to these as 'push factors': societal issues that have allowed, influenced and encouraged participation in tourism-related activities. It is reasonable to argue that since the end of the Second World War, western society began to experience affluence. This has provided households with more discretionary income that can be spent on goods and services that are non-essential to survival, such as luxury goods and travel. China is a useful example to illustrate this point. Given China's rapid industrialization since the 1970s, urban areas have rapidly grown, a middle class has appeared, employment and wage payments have become more transparent and discretionary income has increased. Domestic and inter-regional tourism has substantially grown from 524 million tourists in 1994 to 3.2 billion in 2013 (CNTA, 2014). Fully industrialized countries such as the United Kingdom, Singapore, the United States, Australia, Japan and others in Western Europe now have a population that is mostly urban and highly affluent where consumerism is paramount and a comprehensive system of domestic and international tourism activities exist.

Societal factors since the 1950s have also significantly pushed people toward participation in tourism activities. Dann (1977) and Crompton (1979) moved away from simply attempting to identify tourism movements and economic contributions and focused on a better understanding of what motivated people to become a tourist. Dann (1977) considered a range of societal factors. He then examined a range of factors existing in destinations that influenced tourist decisions. Weaver and Lawton (2010) used these early investigations to provide an extensive narrative of push and pull factors commencing with the argument that the industrial

revolution gave society a new concept of the relationship between time and task. Work and rest were divided in chunks of time establishing delineations between the task and what was required to complete tasks, and between different periods of time and when people could officially stop for rest. Days off were identified and periods of longer-term breaks were established, for example the two-day weekend and annual leave. This gave employees more time to pursue leisure activities during their periods away from work and greater opportunity to engage in tourism activities requiring a longer period away from home.

Attitudes toward leisure activities also have changed since the industrial revolution, specifically with more emphasis now placed on the meaningful benefits of travel such as cultural and educational enlightenment. These social attitudes toward tourism activities have also resulted in a different approach to work, rather than the industrial age's emphasis on production; we now see an emphasis on consumption, with tourism being part of consumption patterns. It may be argued employees now 'work in order to play'—work is important for the purposes of acquiring funds for leisure-based activities such as tourism. Urbanisation, a general reduction in family size and increased life expectancy over the past one hundred years have also influenced people to pursue tourism-related activities. Smaller families, increased leisure time and discretionary income suggest it has become more affordable to take the family on a holiday while urbanization has provided a reason for those living in a 'concrete jungle' where congestion, noise and overcrowding are commonplace to escape from their environment by pursuing tourism activities. Increases in life expectancy, the introduction of superannuation and societal affluence has resulted in older persons pursuing more tourism-related activities from the time of retirement. This trend has seen a significant increase in the older persons tourism market. Leiper (2003) also examined motivations to travel using a sociological approach. He utilizes Barzun's (2001) cultural trends, chiefly emancipation, secularism, individualism, self-consciousness and primitivism arguing they 'have shaped tourism, contributing to its growth, forms and present popularity' (p. 45).

The technological advancements of the 1950s onwards are especially important for both the consumers of tourism and the industry itself. Advancement in various technologies between the 1950s and 1980s resulted in transportation and communication improvements for the tourism industry. Firstly, those selling tourism products, such as destination marketing organizations and travel agencies, were given more efficient ways to communicate with their respective consumer markets through improvements in radio communications, but particularly television. Centralized reservation systems were established across the transportation and accommodation sector, giving the consumer more choice, more confidence, and flexibility. Advancements in technology had a strong impact on the transportation sector. Improvements in technology for airlines resulted in faster, more economical long-haul flights, while efficiencies in road and rail transportation resulted in a greater choice for tourists to reach destinations.

These advancements are considered pivotal for the rapid growth of domestic and international tourism arrivals and provided a mechanism for society to have a far greater choice of tourism products influencing tourism to known or exotic destinations.

Early tourism researchers referred to the 'pleasure periphery', meaning equatorial destinations and islands in the developing and developed world that saw a large increase of tourism numbers from the 1950s onwards (Turner and Ash, 1975). With new 'western' societal attitudes toward leisure pursuits and interactions with leisure activities, destinations with 3S resources (sun, sand and sea) began to rapidly experience growth of inbound arrivals. Given the above factors, especially greater knowledge of other destinations and more efficient affordable ways to reach them, these equatorial destinations quickly became attractive considerations for prospective tourists to visit, retire to, or simply relocate for part of the year or permanently. Examples of destinations considered in the pleasure periphery include Southeast Asia, specifically Thailand, Maldives, Caribbean nations, South Pacific islands, Hawaii, Tahiti, Cyprus, Seychelles and the Mediterranean region. The economic impacts attributed to the increase in tourism numbers for these destinations were significant. Of note, the pleasure periphery has grown to include regions beyond the equator where the focus of the destination is leisure activities, for example snow resorts.

The counterculture movement on the 1960s and early 1970s and its relationship toward tourism and communities has played a foundational role toward identifying the impacts of tourism and encouraging sustainable management strategies. Popular literature may point towards the first pioneering hippies having a minimal footprint on the host communities along the Hippie Trail across South Asia, but it's clear that as the movement progressed into the 1970s, negative consequences on host communities became far more commonplace. In a search for the origins of what scholars term the 'negative impacts of tourism', these so-called hippie communities located in places where the local culture was far removed from their visitors, provide compelling evidence. These negative consequences can easily be interpreted through Jafari's (1989) Tourism Platforms where we see tourism moving from the Advocacy Platform (tourism considered as inherently good for the community, therefore it should be allowed to develop free from regulation and policy) to the Cautionary Platform stressing that tourism is not the panacea once thought; it comes with many socio-cultural, economic and environmental costs. To avoid these costs, tourism should be strictly regulated or alternatively avoided in total (Leiper, 2003). The change in attitude regarding the types of tourism that was occurring in the pleasure periphery and other culturally and environmentally sensitive destinations were substantiated by Doxey's (1976) Irridex Model (irritation index). Doxey proposed that as tourism developed in destinations and the negative costs began to appear, the host community moves through a sequence of initial euphoria toward tourism to feeling antagonized and then when the community has become drastically altered by tourism, rejecting tourism altogether.

From the mid-1970s onwards, politicians, academics and destination managers began to acknowledge the existence of negative social, cultural, economic and environmental impacts attributed to mass tourism and inappropriate tourism development, specifically in sensitive locations and hippie communes in developing countries.

#### **2.4 The paradigm shift towards the sustainable development of tourism**

In the context of CBT studies, an understanding of the evolution and principles of sustainable tourism and sustainable tourism development will provide a foundation to examine, develop and manage CBT. Therefore, for the purposes of this thesis, I will provide an insight of how the sustainable tourism agenda has developed and contributed toward the establishment of CBT. While Murphy (1985) was one of the first to apply the term CBT in his examination of tourism development, its evaluation and strategies for future development, it was not until the 1990s that the narrative concerning sustainable tourism substantially increased and CBT was identified as a specific strategy contributing toward sustainable tourism development.

Doxey's (1976) Irridex and Butler's (1980) Destination Lifecycle Model provided the initial analytical approach that informed a better understanding of mass tourism and its material positive and negative impacts (Weaver and Lawton, 2010). These early narratives were quick to identify the 'ills of mass tourism' (Leslie, 2012, p. 17). In contrast, the tourism narrative emerging from the 1980s regarding a new approach to manage destinations, specifically ways to avoid negative tourism impacts, gained momentum; it did so most particularly with the publication of the 1987 Brundtland Report, *Our Common Future*. The report is generally regarded as the foundational document, particularly with respect to sustainable development and the factors influencing the principles of sustainable tourism and its associated development and management (Sebele, 2010). It is important to appreciate that the concept of sustainable development is perhaps somewhat older than we may initially believe. Bramwell and Lane (1993) explain the concept was officially identified at the 1972 Stockholm Conference on Humans and the Environment while Hardy, Beeton and Pearson (2002) concur, but also state 'it can be argued that the concept of sustainable development originated many years prior to this in three forms: first, in the form of conservation vision; second, in the form of a community vision; and third, in the form of economic theory' (p. 476).

The Brundtland Report concerning Sustainable Development *Our Common Future* provided explicit recognition of the concept of sustainable development. The report proposed the following definition: 'Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs' (WCED 1987, p. 43). The report highlights a balance between the natural environment and socio-economic development. Community participation, specifically toward the protection and improvement of a community's quality of life, is also paramount within the report. Since the

report's publication, the definition of sustainable development and the report itself has been the subject of widespread analysis and discussion from scholars, scientists, environmentalists, lobby groups and politicians alike. Using the principles of the report, the United Nations implemented a non-binding voluntary action plan to address sustainable development entitled Agenda 21. The plan identifies important priorities for sustainable development for the 21<sup>st</sup> century (United Nations Division for Sustainable Development, 1992). The intent was to establish a global partnership to engage in a continuous narrative concerning the challenges of the environment and development, and in turn inform communities, organizations, industry, and government, national and international policies on sustainable development practices. At various stages throughout the report tourism is referred to, regarding how the industry should address sustainable development practices. The initial reference states:

Individual cities should as appropriate, promote the formulation of environmentally sound and culturally sensitive tourism programmes as a strategy for sustainable development of urban and rural settlements and as a way of decentralizing urban development and reducing discrepancies among regions (United Nations Division for Sustainable Development, 1992, p. 49).

Agenda 21 argues for the importance of international co-operation, as well as the role of education and training programs to assist sustainable development practices, inclusive of tourism development. It looks at ways to provide technical assistance to developing countries, in support of their efforts towards sustainable tourism as a business proposition. It suggests ways in which host communities might reduce the more negative outcomes related to tourism and promotes, furthermore, a diversification of economic activities that encourage the participation of local enterprises. The report specifically referred to government and industry creating functional partnerships to grow the economic impacts of tourism, support of the private sector to develop ecotourism for the purposes of protecting forest, marine and mountain areas and in general, the role of countries toward promoting environmentally sound leisure and tourism activities (United Nations Division for Sustainable Development, 1992).

From the release of Agenda 21, and fuelled by Jafari's (2001) Cautionary Platform, the concept of sustainable tourism and sustainable tourism development gained considerable momentum for both tourism scholars and practitioners alike. Butler's (1980) sequence of tourism development model gave further credence to the negative consequences for destinations as tourism numbers and development move through an evolution process not dissimilar from product lifecycles. Butler's model identifies that destinations move through five specific stages of growth, specifically exploration, involvement, development, consolidation and stagnation. Each stage has a set of indicators or variables used to identify traits and likely scenarios of tourism development. The model clearly draws attention to the economic, physical and social elements within a destination; their ability to absorb tourist and associated tourism development; and the damage that could be caused once the destination's capacity has been

exceeded. Butler's model in its simplistic form predicts a dire outcome of unregulated and unmanaged tourism development, suggesting tourism has the ability to 'kill' tourism.

By the late 1980s and early 1990s the tourism academic environment had begun to actively explore the concept of sustainable tourism. The amount of research and literature concerning sustainable tourism and associated tourism development has considerably grown. For those involved in scholarly research in this area, one of the first observations is the myriad of literature that agrees, opposes, challenges, and argues conceptual and theoretical views on the topic. Examples of early investigations include The International Academy for the Study of Tourism first conference in August 1989. The purposes of the conference were to discuss alternative forms of tourism. These discussions resulted in a subsequent publication in *Tourism Management* entitled 'Towards Sustainable Tourism'. Of similar importance was the 1991 conference of the Canada Chapter of the Travel and Tourism Research Association. The purpose of the conference was to identify a suitable approach for the research agenda concerning tourism, sustainable development and the environment. Substantially contributing toward the literature concerning the role, growth and research of sustainability in tourism was the *Journal of Sustainable Tourism's* inaugural and subsequent publications from 1993. The initial articles by Bramwell and Lane (1993) and McKercher (1993) were quick to provide strong arguments for the role of sustainable development practices in tourism. While the concept of sustainable tourism development may be considered an oxymoron, and is often chastised (see Beeton, 2006 and Weaver & Lawton, 1999), the tourism industry has now by-and-large accepted the meaning of sustainable development of tourism defined as 'Tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities' (UNWTO, n.d). Of note is the terminology the UNWTO applies, 'sustainable development of tourism' rather than 'sustainable tourism development'. At this point I make specific reference to the UNWTO's 2001 identification of three dimensions essential toward guaranteeing tourism's long-term sustainability:

- Make optimal use of environmental resources that constitute a key element in tourism development, maintaining essential ecological processes and helping to conserve natural resources and biodiversity.
- Respect the socio-cultural authenticity of host communities, conserve their built and living cultural heritage and traditional values, and contribute to inter-cultural understanding and tolerance.
- Ensure viable, long-term economic operations, providing socio-economic benefits to all stakeholders that are fairly distributed, including stable employment and income-earning opportunities and social services to host communities, and contributing to poverty alleviation.

(Tourism and Community Development: Asian Practices. UNWTO, 2008, p. 2).



It is also important to acknowledge that the specific organizations within the global tourism industry discussed below were, and still are also partly responsible for recognizing and promoting the concept of sustainable development and its three key dimensions as identified above. The United Nations (UN) is considered the global entity for the promotion of sustainable development through tourism. The United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) is the UN's division that spearheads and coordinates the sustainable development of tourism. The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) has also played a significant role in creating, implementing and promoting sustainable development through tourism policies and practices. At the Millennium Summit in 2002 the UN identified that poverty would remain one of the world's biggest challenges, and therefore one of its millennium goals was identified as to eliminate extreme poverty by 2015. The UNWTO subsequently identified tourism as a mechanism to contribute toward this goal and developed the ST-EP Initiative, Sustainable Tourism Eliminating Poverty (UNWTO, n.d.). In 2004 the UNWTO also released a significant publication entitled 'Indicators of Sustainable Development for Tourism Destinations', a much-utilized resource to assist decision makers make better, more informed decisions regarding sustainable development of tourism. The UNWTO has been active in Cambodia for a number of years, regularly hosting conferences and workshops concerning appropriate tourism development in cultural and natural sites. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has a focus on working with governments to encourage them to pursue policies related to the sustainable growth of tourism (OECD, n.d.). The Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) has also been active toward supporting sustainable development through tourism, producing for member states and organizations a sustainable tourism code (APEC, n.d.). Other organizations of note include the World Travel and Trade Council (WTTC) representing the private sector of tourism organizations. The WTTC has remained an active supporter of sustainable and responsible tourism practices through its member organizations. The WTTC recently endorsed its support of the Global Sustainable Development Goals (WTTC, n.d.). The WTTC also releases annually detailed data concerning tourism's contribution toward economic development in Cambodia, and also a 'country report'. The Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) promotes sustainable tourism practices through its Office of Environment and Culture and also through its sustainable tourism website, [www.sustain.pata.org](http://www.sustain.pata.org). Examples of PATA's activities in Cambodia include promoting sustainable and responsible tourist experiences, and communicating other activities that have contributed, or will contribute toward sustainable tourism development.

Since its foray into the tourism industry, the sustainable tourism movement has favoured alternative small-scale tourism projects and similar destinations as a product of sustainable tourism, simply because of the argument that these types of projects, products and destinations are more likely to have a positive socio-cultural, environmental and economic impact for the majority of stakeholders. Weaver and Lawton (2010) discuss that alternative

forms of tourism began to appear in the 1980s and can be better explained through the principles of Jafari's (2001) adaptancy platform. This platform proposed that large-scale mass tourism was inherently not sustainable, specifically regarding the associated negative impacts arising from mass tourism. Scholars and industry practitioners proposed that alternative forms of small-scale tourism were more environmentally suitable, and would provide positive outcomes for stakeholders. Examples of alternative forms of tourism included cultural villages, homestays, indigenous tourism, vacation farms, religious tourism, educational tourism and volunteer tourism (Weaver & Lawton, 2010). It may also be argued that ecotourism is a form of alternative tourism as Ryan, Hughes and Chirgwin (1999) propose: 'originally ecotourism was proposed as a means to deal with negative environmental effects of mass tourism by encouraging small groups to act in environmentally friendly ways' (p. 148). A more extended discussion of ecotourism will be completed in the following chapter.

Part of the sustainable development for tourism discourse, and an essential component of CBT is the widely defined, debated and examined relationship between sustainable tourism and community development. Beeton (2006) refers to the relationship as 'community development through tourism', while Hall and Richards (2000) identify 'tourism and sustainable community development'. Mair and Reid (2007) differentiate between 'tourism and community development vs. tourism for community development'. Simpson (2008) argues in favour of 'community benefit tourism initiatives', opposed to Choi and Murray's (2010) approach identifying it as 'sustainable community development'. As early as 1983, the literature was drawing attention toward the relationship between tourism and community. Murphy (1983) in his article entitled 'Tourism as a Community Industry: An Ecological Model of Tourism Development' outlines:

The purpose of this paper is to present a conceptual alternative to the economic emphasis of tourism planning. It is an attempt to provide a base by which future tourism planning and empirical research, particularly in developed countries, may be located and assessed. To do this it is suggested that tourism would be better served if it was viewed as a 'community industry', a corporate enterprise that represented the interests of the whole community (p. 181).

Murphy then proposes that for tourism to benefit the community, a more sensible approach toward tourism planning process would be to consider tourism as part of the community's ecosystem. He deduced that:

Tourism would fit into such a system since it involves an interaction between visitors and physical amenities, and an exchange of revenue between various sectors. Two important characteristics of an ecosystem approach are first, that it can be applied at any scale and, second, the concept of reciprocity between its living and non-living component parts. For tourism with its planning at all levels

and its symbiotic relationship between prosperity and a healthy environment such features appear to be most appropriate (p. 185).

Beeton (2006) acknowledges that Murphy's seminal work examining the role of communities in tourism is one of the most cited sources for those investigating communities and tourism, even though its original publication has been considerably built upon. Of value with this particular approach is the consideration of reciprocity between tourism and the living and non-living parts of the system. Murphy's model of Ecological Tourism Planning clearly illustrates the importance of local community at every stage of the tourism planning process, local, regional and national. The multitude of literature now published concerning the role of sustainable tourism toward community development acknowledges that through the planning stage, tourism's objectives should be to improve the residents' quality of life by advancing and capitalizing on the economic benefits of tourism, to protect the natural and built environments of communities, specifically as tourism relies upon these resources, and to provide high-quality, meaningful, authentic and educational experiences for visitors (see Bramwell & Lane, 1993; Choi and Sirakaya, 2006; Hall & Lew, 1998; UNDSO, 1992). Moreover, it is commonly agreed that for tourism to benefit communities in a sustainable way there should be healthy long-term relationships between the destination community and the broader tourism industry, with a greater degree of ethical behavior and codes of conduct among stakeholders. Choi and Sirakaya (2006) specifically identify the necessity that 'decision making and development processes require multi stakeholder involvement at all levels of planning and policy making, bringing together governments, NGOs, residents, industry and professionals in a partnership that determines the amount and kind of tourism a community wants' (p. 1275). Community leaders, managers, planners or those with influence were also identified and tasked to ensure information distributed through workshops, community meetings, etc., that is targeted toward residents, visitors, the tourism industry and other identified stakeholders clearly explains the planning process, the role of the community and the necessity of sustaining the community's resources. This is particularly important for the implementation of CBT, as the guiding principle for CBT is community participation, management and ownership.

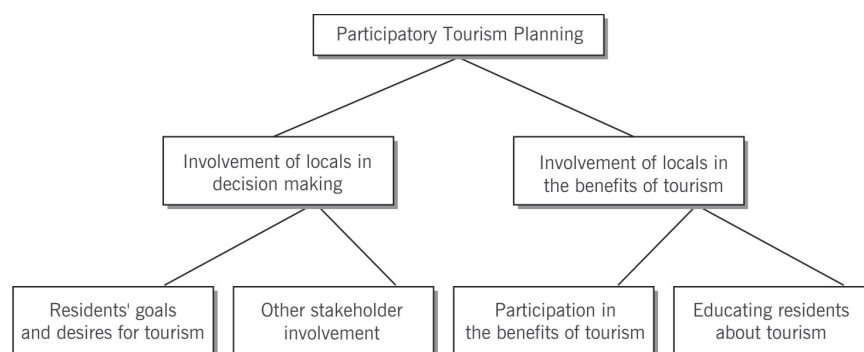
## **2.5 Sustainable tourism and the role of community participation**

A commonality arising from the discourse and literature of sustainable tourism and community development is the essential involvement and participatory role of the community itself. Bramwell and Sharman (2000) state that there are many potential benefits for the community if it is involved in the tourism planning process. Tosun (2006) explains that participation by the community would in turn facilitate the implementation of sustainable practices because of the opportunities created for the community to gain more equitable benefits from tourism development. Lee (2013) found that community attachment and community involvement were critical factors influencing the success of sustainable tourism development

within communities. It is reasonable to argue that tourism studies tend to agree that allowing a community to participate and become involved in tourism planning and execution can lead to high levels of engagement and support for the sustainable development of tourism. Scholars have also paid attention to the different types of participation, from artificial or coercive participation leading to poor levels of support to genuine holistic participation resulting in an engaged community that is supportive toward tourism development (see Tosun, 2000; Tosun, 2006).

As identified by the UNWTO (2008) there are four arguments as to why community participation in tourism development and management remain essential. Firstly, a top-down or insular approach has previously failed to address issues arising from tourism and associated development at the community level. Secondly, involving the community will enhance social and human capital that will be required to tackle further problems. Thirdly, the community will have the ability to better control large tour operators and developers, in turn avoiding the negative consequences of mass tourism. Lastly, the community will be able to better identify and address developmental needs at a grass roots level, and moreover examine ways tourism may be able to address these needs. Reflecting these arguments, McIntosh and Ritchie (2011) proposed a model of holistic or normative participation in tourism planning (Figure 2.2). The model shows two perspectives, firstly the involvement of the local community in decision-making, and secondly the involvement of the local community in the benefits of tourism. Involving the local community in decision-making concerning tourism development and management can assist the community determine their own goals reflecting developmental needs in the community and also the role stakeholders should play in supporting the community to achieve these goals. Involvement by the community also has the potential to better educate the community members regarding the benefits of holistic participation, and secondly the benefits of educating the community in the positive and negative outcomes of tourism. This process also has the possibility to build upon the pool of community human capital available; specifically, through shared community knowledge the participatory environment allows to develop (Timothy, 1999).

**Figure 2.2:** A Normative Model of Participatory Tourism Planning (Timothy, 1999, p. 372)



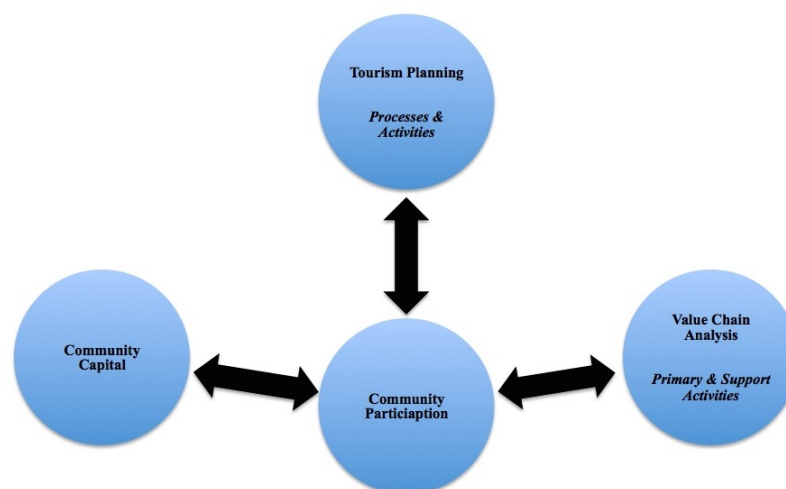
Both Timothy (1999) in his investigation of community participation of tourism planning in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, and a later study by Iorio and Wall (2012) examining tourism and community in Mamoiada, Sardinia, identified very similar findings. Timothy found in Yogyakarta the resident participation in tourism planning was in essence non-existent; moreover, official plans did not identify community or interest group involvement. His research showed residents felt they should not be involved in the planning process, and socio-political forces played an important role in how the residents felt. Little consideration by authorities was shown toward local traditions, and poor economic conditions plus the lack of expertise discouraged community participation. Iorio and Wall found power relations and the roles played by local institutions in connecting community members with the outside world were a significant factor encouraging community participation in Mamoiada. Their study also identifies the influence of competing community interests such as farming and agriculture and the role of the external forces toward overall community development. They conclude, 'By definition, tourism requires contact with the outside world because tourists come from elsewhere. Can poor, remote communities, with little prior exposure to tourism, really be expected to be successful in a competitive marketplace in the absence of outside assistance? And if outside assistance is involved, then is it really community-based tourism?' (p. 1448). Interestingly, Timothy at the conclusion of his earlier 1999 investigation concluded that his findings 'would be similar to conditions in other developing countries whose cultural traditions, social mores, political structures and economic situations' (p. 388) were similar to the ones identified in his particular case study of Yogyakarta.

Another approach toward tourism planning, management and community participation is to utilize generic business management theories, models and frameworks. Beeton (2006) confirms this by exploring further specific business theories that can and have been applied to tourism planning and management. While these theories provide broad knowledge of the business of tourism management, they can also be applied to underpin the importance of community participation in tourism planning. Strategic direction is a concept used to identify the desired future state of an organization, and is a fundamental principle of guiding the strategic planning process. Strategic direction consists of the successful creation and implementation of an organization's vision, mission and values (Johnson et al., 2005). Contemporary strategic management discourse argues for the importance of 'stakeholder buy in' or majority support of the organization's strategic direction, specifically considering that stakeholder support is essential to an organization achieving its strategic direction. Therefore, the importance of involving an organization's stakeholders in the process of deciding strategic direction is essential (Enz, 2010). The concept of strategic direction and stakeholder support could easily be applied to tourism planning and communities. In deciding the vision, mission and objectives for tourism development, if those guiding the planning process were to involve the community in these decisions, there is a greater probability of unified support from the

outset. There is also the opportunity to avoid, as Doxey (1976) describes, the host community rejecting tourism development and the industry in general. This became apparent when the community had lost control over tourism development, and benefits from tourism ceased to flow into the community.

Moutinho (2000) examined the overall role of generic strategic management theories and their contribution toward tourism management. While he did not discuss Michael Porter's Value Chain at length, I argue there is the opportunity to consider the importance of Value Chain analysis and the role it plays toward advancing community participation. A value chain is identified as activities or processes an organization does in order to create and deliver value to its customers (Enz, 2010). A Value Chain Analysis assists an organization examine these activities and processes, what organizational resources are required for each activity or process and how a combination of organizational resources, activities and processes could be harnessed to deliver superior value and in turn a competitive advantage (Johnson et al., 2005). Given the focus of strategic management in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is more aligned toward delivering value to not only customers, but a broad range of stakeholders, including the community and environment, a Value Chain Analysis could be harnessed to identify how value can be delivered to organizational stakeholders, rather than just a customer focus. For effective tourism planning, a stakeholder approach becomes essential. As Figure 2.3 shows below, involving community members in identifying how tourism can deliver value to the community and how resources should be utilized in the tourism development process allows for a high level of beneficial community participation, and in turn may generate further social capital.

**Figure 2.3:** Value chain approach to beneficial community participation



## 2.6 Conclusion

The importance of this chapter toward a better understanding CBT was the analysis of the broad factors that have influenced the development and management of CBT. I have argued for the importance of understanding context, specifically in this regard referring to the historical factors contributing to the phenomena being investigated. The chapter reviewed various definitions and principles of community development before entering into a detailed narrative concerning community capital. I have argued for the importance of community capital, specifically social capital to the development and management of CBT. The success (positive outcomes for the majority of stakeholders) of tourism in destinations relies upon the sustainable use of physical and intangible resources within a community. The utilization of these resources specifically depends on how community capital is developed and deployed within a community. I argue for any of this to be possible, community members must have social capital available and know how to effectively use it. This argument was also clearly explained and substantiated by Emery and Flora (2009). The chapter then addressed the relationship between community development and tourism. It first established the context for a relationship between community development and tourism through the exploration of mass tourism development and the subsequent consequences. I argue a significant catalyst toward identifying the negative consequences of tourism was the hippie counterculture movement of the 1960s, and the subsequent impact on destinations from interactions between hippies and the host community. I also made reference to the willingness of destinations in the 1960s and 1970s to embrace rapid tourism development chiefly due to the economic benefits, while ignoring any negative consequences that may have been associated with welcoming mass tourism.

The chapter identified and discussed the Butler Sequence and Doxey's Irridex to further explain the negative social, cultural, environmental and economic impacts attributed to unregulated mass tourism development. This evolutionary understanding of tourism, development and communities provided a platform on which sustainable tourism and associated development could be introduced. Sustainable tourism was discussed from multiple perspectives, arriving at two important documents that provide the foundations on which sustainable tourism precedes, the 1987 Brundtland Report and the 1992 Rio Earth Summit's resultant manifesto, Agenda 21. I demonstrated an essential component of community development through tourism was the involvement/participation of the local community in tourism planning and management. A participatory approach assists to develop community social capital, contributes toward identifying community development needs and how tourism can contribute toward those needs. It also assists to establish a better dialogue between stakeholders and educates community members on the positive and negative outcomes of tourism. I further examined the role of generic business theories, models and frameworks,

specifically strategic direction and value chain analysis, and how they may assist toward advancing the role of community participation in tourism planning and management.

Considering the current abundance of literature now available concerning community participation in tourism planning and management, my exploration and observations have led me to propose that while there are now many frameworks and models for community participation, in practice there still are a limited number of documented best practice examples. Given the rapid growth and current size of the global tourism industry, more investigations concerning actual best practice examples of community participation are called for. These examples are imperative for any community or destination that has agreed on a path of sustainable tourism development. As Tosun (2006) correctly identifies, there are different typologies of community participation, and what we lack are best practice examples of spontaneous participation rather than the more typical typologies of induced and coercive participation.



## **Chapter Three**

### **Community-based Tourism: An exploration**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

*In Third World societies the cleavages are great and the policies are devised by the educated, upper class urbanites for the application on rural, uneducated, lower class, poor people. As such, many development policies are not designed by the people they are supposed to benefit...thus, policies and programs may be very inappropriate (Smith, 1985, p. 142).*

The purpose of this chapter is to contextualize and discuss key themes pertaining to the development and management of CBT. Exploring these themes will assist a better understanding of my narrative concerning CBT at Banteay Chhmar and provide possible explanations of the various stakeholder's opinions, beliefs and points of view. The chapter initially reviews the evolution of CBT and drawing from the literature, offers a suitable definition for the purposes of this thesis. Central traits of CBT are also identified. CBT both from the theoretical and applied perspectives has not been without its critiques. The chapter provides numerous examples of CBT's challenges and failings. Appreciating these failings becomes essential for those involved in the future endeavours of CBT. The chapter then narrows its focus and concentrates upon conceptualizing CBT in a Cambodian context. Here I argue that the existing forces of neo-colonialism and neo-liberalism that have emerged in Cambodia have contributed toward the emergence of a sustainable development agenda. As a response to these forces, more enlightened Cambodians and external organizations are pursuing sustainable development opportunities, specifically in the tourism sector. The final component of this chapter turns its attention to examining who is the CBT tourist, and over time how has this tourist and associated motivations and behaviors developed. Understanding the constructs of a CBT tourist assists us to position CBT as a separate yet connected entity to sustainable and responsible tourism experiences.

#### **3.2 The evolution, definition, and conceptualization of community-based tourism**

The previous chapter established the context that paved the way for the inception of CBT, specifically the sustainable tourism movement and the advent of small-scale and ecotourism products as an alternative to unsustainable mass tourism. The importance of community and community tourism has appeared in the literature since predominantly the 1970s; for example, Telfer (2009) argues that an alternative perspective toward tourism development grew in the 1970s, suggesting that:

development also began to focus on community-based initiatives, stressing local participation and self-reliance [...] tourism development has followed many of the concepts associated with the alternative development paradigm with respect to empowerment and sustainability. One of the pillars of the alternative development paradigm is local empowerment and this has been the focus of indigenous tourism, community-based tourism, ecotourism and the empowerment of women through tourism (p. 156).

Further literature addressing the importance of utilizing and involving the community in tourism planning and related activities continued to grow throughout the 1980s and early 1990s (see Cooke, 1982; Heenan, 1978; Loukissas, 1983; Murphy, 1983; Rifkind, 1981). From the mid-1980s onwards several publications began embracing the term 'community-based tourism' (see Anderson, 1991; Ashley & Garland, 1994; Dernoï, 1988; Haywood, 1988; Jafari, 1989; Long & Glendinning, 1992; Pearce, 1992). It may be argued the first application of the term was a result of Murphy's (1985) seminal publication *Tourism: A Community Approach*. Murphy's publication specifically examined the importance of community involvement in the planning and management of tourism. It is in Chapter 3, page 36 where he first introduces the notion of a community approach toward tourism management, applying the term and subsequent model entitled 'a community-orientated tourism strategy' (p. 37). In 1986, *The Annals of Tourism* published a book review of *Tourism: A Community Approach* written by Getz (1986). In the review Getz writes:

Section one concludes with a discussion of 'Issues in Tourism' (Chap. 3), leading to a model which gives shape to the rest of the book. It is entitled 'Components for a Community-Oriented Tourism Strategy,' and at its center is the 'Community's Tourism Product.' This encapsulates Murphy's central philosophical argument that the whole of tourism rests on its local resources and hospitality. The 'product' must, therefore, be based on the ecology of the host community and be self-sustaining, rather than exploitive. Surrounding the product are four prime considerations which must be included in the community-based tourism strategy (p. 667).

This is a good example of the actual term 'community-based tourism' becoming more prominent in the academic journal literature. Getz, however, applied the term as early as 1983 in connection to Fourteenth Annual Conference of the Travel and Tourism Research Association in Banff, Alberta. Kontogeorgopoulos et al. (2014) provide a similar analogy, explaining 'most assessments of CBT trace scholarly interest in the concept back to the 1985 publication of Peter Murphy's *Tourism: A Community Approach*. Although several authors explored the community dimensions of tourism prior to this time...' (p. 108). A further example of early explorations concerning CBT is provided by Anderson (1991) through his examination of tourism development in Canada's eastern Arctic region. Anderson pays attention to the Arctic Islands of Baffin and associated tourist experience the locality provides. He provides an overview in some

detail of the Baffin CBT strategies and consequential impacts, specifically the role the government plays in financial support for the developmental stages of CBT. Of note is that perhaps Baffin is one of the earliest examples of formalized and identified CBT. Corless (1999) provides a detailed analysis of the development and associated planning processes of Baffin CBT. She details how CBT in the Baffin region resulted from an initial 1981 study investigating if the recent growth of tourism could better contribute to local economies.

Another early and perhaps more comprehensive study relating to CBT can be found in the work of Ashley and Garland (1994) entitled *Promoting Community-Based Tourism Development: Why, What and How?* This investigation, relying upon Namibia as a case study, examined the stakeholder perspectives of CBT, and how these perspectives or approaches assisted toward community involvement in tourism meeting the various local, regional and national objectives. The report concluded in a multitude of recommendations, chiefly policies for effective CBT. Apart from the scholarly narrative, the authors also provide an insight into the operation of early CBT in Namibia. Hobson and Mak (1995) also offer an exploration into early CBT that examined home visits and CBT in the context of Hong Kong's Family Insight Tours. During the early 1990s we also see scholars identifying and exploring CBT in their Masters and Doctor of Philosophy dissertations. Examples include Woodley's (1994) dissertation that investigated culture, perceptions and community-based tourism in Baker Lake, Northwest Territories, while Reimer (1994) investigated community development and participation in Pangnirtung, Northwest Territories, using the location to collect ethnographic data concerning CBT for her applied analysis of community participation.

To better appreciate the evolution of CBT and CBT research, Stewart and Draper (2009) draw our focus to the importance of CBT projects and resulting studies arising from Northern Canada since the 1970s. While their article focuses on the role of the researcher, the reader can easily deduce from the narrative that CBT has been operating and studied in numerous Northern Canadian communities for the past four decades. It is reasonable to argue that from 1996 to the present day, CBT enterprises have become more commonplace in many destinations, especially in the developing world. This is chiefly attributed to greater knowledge concerning the benefits of CBT as an alternative to mass tourism and as a tool to address poverty in rural and regional communities (Harrison & Schipani, 2007). Also since the 1990s, a far greater focus in academic literature has been paid to CBT, evidenced by the increase in publications and variance in investigations and case studies specifically concerning CBT and its various components (for earlier publications see Godde et al., 1999; Harrison & Schipani, 2007; Hiwasaki, 2006; Jones, 2005; Ndlovu & Rogerson, 2003; Novelli & Gebhardt, 2007; Russell, 2000; Sproule, 1996; Wearing & McDonald, 2002).

Essential to this chapter and the overall thesis is to identify definitions of CBT in academic and technical literature. As with the majority of definitions concerning tourism and

hospitality, there has yet to be a universally accepted definition of CBT. I make reference here to a method I teach students concerning definitions related to tourism and hospitality. Rather than accepting and utilizing one definition, I suggest they consult numerous interpretations of the definition then identify themes common to all the definitions. It is these themes that should be utilized and applied to the relevant study. There are enough definitions to apply the same process toward an accurate understanding of CBT. This can be achieved through identifying definitional commonalities, and in turn provide a base on which to determine the essential fundamental concepts of CBT.

A logical commencement point for this particular discussion lies in the work of Tasci et al. (2014). The authors explain ‘community-based tourism is a tourism resource development and management paradigm distilled from half a century’s evolution of conceptual and philosophical approaches to resource management. Its ontology is embedded in the sustainability paradigm that encourages community participation for a more equitable and holistic development’ (p. 263). Early CBT investigations such as Anderson’s (1991) study choose to use a specific case study rather than a purely theoretical discussion concerning CBT. Anderson focuses on the Baffin Regional Tourism Strategy and the Community-based Tourism Strategy and further identifies that the aim for the CBT strategy was ‘to assist communities and their residents across the NWT in achieving their tourism revenue and employment objectives in a manner compatible with their lifestyles and aspirations’ (p. 216). Here we may have one of the earliest actual attempts to define the concept of CBT. A later study of CBT in Namibia by Ashley and Garland (1994) does not go as far as offering a precise definition of CBT, but they do offer a more developed explanation of CBT than Anderson’s (1991) article, identifying:

Tourism development in communal areas, where the poorer majority live, has potential to not only increase local incomes and jobs, but also to develop skills, institutions, and bring about empowerment of local people. Tourism is therefore a key industry for facilitating greater growth, equity, and poverty alleviation in communal areas. In addition, benefits from tourism in communal areas are seen by many as a key tool for building local support for conservation and sustainable natural resource use (and a sustainable tourism product) in the communal areas (p. 3).

Ashley and Garland (1994) also identify and discuss Namibia’s White Paper on Tourism, and its national objectives for promoting CBT development, chiefly 1) the importance that CBT provides benefits to communities through better welfare, economic growth and empowerment, 2) CBT provides benefits to conservation through encouraging communities to commit further to the protection of natural resources including wildlife, and 3) CBT provides benefits to Namibian tourism specifically as it diversifies the country’s tourism product and promotes long-term sustainability of resources. Their study also examines the feasibility and the

socio-economic impact of CBT enterprises in Namibia and in turn their findings have contributed to proposing a framework for CBT analysis.

From the mid-1990s onwards, as the study of CBT increased and CBT enterprises became more abundant, definitions and conceptual narratives expanded and became 'scientific'. Blackstock (2005) examined a number of other authors' definitions, concluding 'CBT shows obvious parallels with broader community development and participatory planning philosophies, which also advocate greater community control of processes at the local level' (p. 40). Rather than a specific definition, Choi and Sirakaya (2006) choose a conceptual approach and identified the goals of what they term sustainable community tourism. They note sustainable development for community tourism should be focused on the improvement of resident quality of life through the optimization of economic benefits, the protection of tangible and intangible community resources and providing an education experience of high quality to visitors. Reference is also made to the importance of connections with the broader tourism industry and a holistic understanding and practice of ethical implications, responsibilities and associated policies. The importance of transparent stakeholder involvement at all levels of planning and policymaking and good educational programs for stakeholders, specifically concerning tourism development, is also recognized as a goal. Jamal and Getz (1995) make reference to how CBT, if developed well, has the ability to overcome resentment between stakeholders concerning resource management. Moreover, it has the ability to empower the residents because of its ability to provide employment opportunities, and therefore improve incomes, broaden skill sets and make improvements to institutions. They do predict if the community is not involved with all stages of CBT they will be unable to share the benefits and contribute toward better management of the costs.

Hiwasaki (2006) also takes a conceptual approach toward defining CBT. Rather than offering a specific definition, the author explains the two contexts that CBT has emerged from being: one, the global activities promoting sustainable and responsible tourism: and two, the approach to link local communities with biodiversity conservation for the purposes of better stewardship toward protected areas. The approach toward defining CBT is also noteworthy, as the definition was driven by outcomes of CBT investigations across three countries. The author defines CBT through four key objectives: empowerment and ownership, conservation of resources, social and economic development, and quality visitor experiences. The footnote then explains 'this definition has been adopted from the one developed in the collaborative research project on community-based tourism conducted in protected areas of Indonesia, Japan and Thailand' (p. 689). Spenceley (2008) provided another similar example of this approach confirming the current lack of an 'internationally recognized and standard definition of CBT enterprises in the academic or institutional literature' (p. 287).

For the purposes of the Spenceley's (2008) study of CBT in Southern Africa, three criteria were established to determine if an enterprise qualified as CBT. These criteria are useful toward the initial identification of what may constitute CBT. The criteria were taken from existing CBT enterprises and identified as:

1. located in a community (e.g. on communal land, or with community benefits such as lease fees);  
or
2. owned by one or more community members (i.e. for the benefit of one or more community members); or
3. managed by community (i.e. community members could influence the decision-making process of the enterprise).

It was acknowledged that in general, communities involved in CBT are:

- relatively remote from national centers of learning, economy and industry;
- constrained by poor infrastructure, in terms of roads, electricity and water;
- economically poor, with little or no capital for investment in the tourism industry;
- inexperienced and under-skilled at developing and managing tourism enterprises, working with tourists;
- rich in distinctive cultures and histories firmly rooted in the local area; and
- largely dependent on local natural resources (such as trees, medicinal plants and wildlife)

(p. 288).

Giampiccoli and Kalis (2012) provide the CBT field of inquiry with a rich analysis of CBT, community development and local culture, critiquing in some detail conceptual and definitional explorations. They also confirm 'definitions are always difficult to elaborate and are only partial. CBT has not been immune to these problems, and has been defined in many ways. In fact, some of the meanings attributed to CBT vary quite considerably from one another' (p. 175). Reference is made to the importance of considering CBT as a mechanism for the development of poor communities and essentially can only be successful if the enterprise is initiated, planned and managed by the community chiefly for the purposes of achieving their needs and wants. The authors, similarly to others, also identify criteria to be considered when attempting to define CBT, specifically the importance of respecting local culture and lifeways in the community, the need to utilize external expertise as facilitators to assist develop human capital, the recognition that CBT is an informal activity and that CBT is to contribute foremost to community development and not be used as a major source of revenue for the national economy. The disbursement of benefits derived from CBT is also salient. Their narrative argues members of the community not directly involved in the management or operation of CBT should in some way receive indirect benefits, and benefits should be distributed to the greatest possible number of community members. For the purposes of their study, they conclude 'CBT can be identified as a strategy for community development by means of self-reliance,

empowerment, sustainability and the conservation and enhancement of culture for improved livelihoods within the community' (p. 175). Their definition does come with words of caution concerning the fact that the word 'development' is somewhat more problematic than the word 'community'.

Other authors have approached the definition by exploring not what CBT is, but what it does. For example, Ellis and Sheridan (2015) write 'community-based tourism (CBT) which, when well implemented, has emerged as an effective model to promote the development of sustainable tourism which benefits for all sectors of the community while protecting the longevity of the tourist product, and encouraging environmental and cultural conservation' (p. 244). Their work also explains that CBT's role in gaining the involvement and participation of the community with clear objectives toward ownership is a fundamental aspect of sustainable tourism management resulting in benefits for visitors and the host community. The authors also identify obstacles toward community participation in LDCs, specifically power imbalances, lack of experience, reliance on external aid, and comment that CBT projects are usually initiated and supported by external organizations, specifically NGOs. This theme is also explored in the work of Zapata et al. (2011), who argue 'the development of CBT is strongly correlated with support from the NGO community' (p. 727). They demonstrate their point, identifying that more than 60% of CBT projects in Nicaragua, where their research was based, were initiated by external organizations. Of particular importance in their work is the cautionary note regarding NGO support. They explain CBT projects initiated by NGOs usually result in a top-down development model, resulting in little contribution toward poverty alleviation, a short-term life span for the project, and corruption, specifically of the elites taking control of the benefits and excluding the poor from participation. Reference is also made to the location of CBT projects, usually located in poor rural areas often removed from main tourism routes and supply chains and lacking in the business and tourism management skills necessary for the long-term success of the project.

Both Goodwin and Santilli (2009) and Lapeyre (2010) utilize The Mountain Institute's (Jain, Lama & Lepcha, 1999) definition of CBT, 'an activity which through increased intensities of participation, can provide widespread economic and other benefits and decision-making to communities' (p. 5). Goodwin and Santilli (2009) suggested this definition is very broad, preferring what they deem a more rigorous definition offered by the Thailand Community Based Tourism Institute: 'tourism that takes environmental, social and cultural sustainability into account. It is managed and owned by the community, for the community, with the purpose of enabling visitors to increase their awareness and learn about the community and local ways of life' (p. 11). I argue, however, that the work completed by The Mountain Institute cannot be dismissed as too broad. Their paper entitled 'Community Based Tourism For Conservation And Development: A Resource Kit' provides a rationale for the premise of CBT followed by four

key objectives identified as (1) the importance of CBT contributing toward the improvement of natural and cultural resources in the community, (2) the contribution of CBT to the community's economic development through increased tourism revenues and the number or participants involved in CBT, (3) CBT must have a suitable and growing level of participation with the objective of achieving self-mobilization, and (4) the CBT product must provide a socially and environmentally responsible experience to the visitor. Goodwin and Santilli's (2009) investigation also provides an important narrative toward a better understanding of CBT. The authors focus on exploring if CBT has been a success. They are quick to identify 'there is evidence that the large majority of CBT initiatives enjoy very little success' chiefly due to 'poor market access and poor governance' (p. 4). Their work concludes there is still much misunderstanding among experts and practitioners of CBT as to what constitutes a 'successful' project.

For a more contemporary exploration of CBT, specifically the key concepts, Tolkach and King (2015) provide a meticulous narrative of definitions and associated commentary. They commence by identifying 'the term Community-Based Tourism (CBT) describes alternative forms of tourism development which maximize local benefits and advocate capacity building and empowerment as a means of achieving community development objectives' (p. 388). Similar to literature previously identified in this thesis, they discuss the debates surrounding the concepts of participation and specifically community, noting that it is 'frequently idealized' (p. 389) in association with a geographically identifiable group of people with common shared interests. The authors argue that this idealistic notion is often removed from the reality of modern communities that experience division between those who have and those that don't, and constant change influenced by internal and external development forces and globalization. The result is that tourism development often alienates and causes conflict in the community, rather than uniting and benefiting the community. Their work also suggests that most of the current CBT definitions are drawn from fundamentals related to the social economy (as defined by Lukkarinen, 'the social economy is composed of people-centered organizations and companies, owned and run by the members on the basis of their needs. The aims are socially, democratically, and solidarity based'. 2005, p. 420). I also argue this consideration needs to become an important foundational principle for CBT in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, particularly given the emphasis now placed on the role of social economies toward community development. The existence of a social economy within a community has the potential to generate employment where mainstream employment has failed; it can meet local needs where existing markets, profit organizations and the public sector have been unable to do so; it favours the lower socio-economic and disadvantaged members of a community through providing them access to employment, education and health; and it also provides for encouraging the community participation essential for the functionality and sustainability of social capital. These themes all are essential principles supporting the development and operations of CBT.



Similar to many specific definitions of tourism, it becomes an exhaustive task attempting to identify a globally accepted definition of CBT. As evidenced in the previous paragraphs, there exists enough scientific literature to provide an in-depth conceptual understanding of what CBT is, its purpose, its key components and its stakeholders. As with Spenceley's (2008) study in southern Africa, a more logical approach for those attempting to study CBT, including my investigation, is to develop a 'working definition or statement' of CBT that clearly identifies the key criteria for CBT. Based upon previous definitions and conceptual analysis of CBT presented in this chapter, I argue the following components are integral to CBT (common to the majority of CBT definitions), specifically for its development, management and success. I therefore provide my definitional statement for this thesis and more broadly, CBT in Cambodia:

*The key objective of CBT is to deliver sustainable positive outcomes to identified stakeholders, specifically the community itself and in turn providing visitors with immersive educational experiences of community lifeways. CBT should be considered a catalyst for improving community capital, participatory activities and the protection of natural and cultural community resources. Successful CBT endeavors are those that have been inclusively developed and continuously managed by the community with benefits derived from tourism activities flowing directly to the community.*

I also propose additional important traits and outcomes of CBT to include:

- Holistic and inclusive decision-making and participation
- The empowerment of women, ethnic and minority groups within a community
- The ability to generate greater economic welfare, education and employment opportunities
- Greater awareness of community resources, their protection, conservation and management requirements
- The ability to develop greater community capital, specifically social capital
- Greater community control, especially over outside influences
- Increased ownership outcomes and control over community businesses and resources
- Community pride contributing to enhanced visitor experiences
- Balanced relationships and power between CBT stakeholders.

### **3.3 Critiques of CBT**

Before I discuss the positioning of CBT within the tourism industry, it is beneficial to highlight the key themes of Spenceley's (2008) critical appraisal of CBT. Concurring with the work of Goodwin and Santilli (2009), Spenceley identifies the majority of CBT projects have not been successful in the context of reducing poverty or providing better protection and

conservation of community resources. In recent years a common trait of the CBT discourse has been the lack of accountability regarding responsibilities and performance criteria of CBT projects. As evidence, Spenceley cites the work of Salafsky et al. (2001), that examined the performance of thirty-nine community-based conservation projects in the Asia-Pacific region. The quantitative investigation's hypothesis was a commonly held belief that 'if local communities receive sufficient benefits from a viable enterprise that depends on biodiversity, then they will act to counter internal threats caused by stakeholders living at the project site, and external threats, caused by outsiders, to that biodiversity' (p. 1586). The investigation's findings concluded that community enterprise activity can lead to the conservation of resources on which the enterprise depends, but only under limited conditions; moreover, enterprises were unable to achieve this outcome on their own. While Salafsky et al. (2001)'s study is not specifically related to CBT, specifically CBT in Cambodia, it provides a critique for consideration. Given the above hypothesis, CBT enterprises depend on the community and its associated resources. The conservation of these resources is also paramount for the success of CBT, as they comprise the tourism product sold to tourists. In reverse, an argument is created suggesting the ongoing conservation of community resources can assist the financial viability and ultimate effectiveness of the CBT enterprise. The challenge exists as to what the community motivation may be to initially understand the importance of resource conservation and then act upon it.

Salafsky et al. (2001) identified three required conditions or factors for their hypothesis. Firstly, the enterprise must be financially viable (enterprise factors); secondly, the enterprise must generate benefits for stakeholders (benefit factors), specifically the conservation of resources; and thirdly, the community stakeholders must have the capacity to manage threats presented from within the community and from externalities (stakeholder factors). Enterprise factors contributing toward viability included competent management, sufficient accounting and book-keeping skills, established markets providing adequate marketing intelligence, and utilization of skills existing within the community. The results from Salafsky et al. (2001)'s study identified from the thirty-seven enterprises examined, '4 had no revenues, 3 had minimal revenues, 13 covered only their variable costs, 10 covered their variable and fixed costs, and only 7 made a profit' (p. 1591). The study further noted 'a weak association between enterprise success and conservation success, but a strong association between local involvement in the enterprise and conservation success' (p. 1591). The findings from benefit factors identified that stakeholders did not require large cash/financial incentives to act upon conservation initiatives, and moreover participation in conservation was achieved through a variety of non-cash benefits. Stakeholders appeared to require some form of motivation to actively engage in conservation activities, and non-cash benefits proved a productive way to build trust and develop cooperation between the stakeholders and the enterprise. This finding is of significance for CBT projects in developing countries, specifically Cambodia. The high extent of continuing corruption from government to communities has resulted in low levels of trust around financial matters. Offering

non-cash and financial benefits to stakeholders creates the opportunity to demonstrate a higher platform of transparency, trust and cooperation, in turn leading to a greater willingness to participate in the project. The third condition, stakeholder factors, suggested the stakeholders required the necessary ability to work collectively to counter any internal and external threats that may prohibit achieving the outcomes of the project (in this case biodiversity). The study further demonstrated how achieving the ability to effectively manage internal and external threats was difficult when stakeholders demonstrated heterogeneous behavior, and when conflict existed between different stakeholders. The conclusions of Salafsky et al. (2001)'s investigation focused on the concept of linkages. They suggested an alternative 'linked' strategy toward enterprises achieving an outcome (conservation) and ultimately being successful may occur when:

a conservation organization comes in and establishes an enterprise. The enterprise gives the project staff members entry into the community. Community members participate in the enterprise and develop enhanced confidence in themselves. They also come to know and trust the project team and become more receptive to the conservation ideas that the team members introduce. If the project promotes education and awareness, then the stakeholders may be more willing to listen and take actions to counter both internal and, especially, external threats (p. 1592).

When considering this comment, it may be argued the majority of NGOs who establish CBT projects should follow the same strategy. Lessons learnt from CBT projects in Cambodia suggest several factors exist that contribute toward the realization of this strategy. Firstly, external organizations working with CBT projects should identify the community/environmental needs through sound needs assessment. Secondly, is the ability of NGOs to identify what community capital will be required to operate the project effectively. Thirdly, project goals are established in cooperation with the stakeholders. Finally, enough community capital should be developed for the community to ultimately take control of the project at a point where it is, or is close to being sustainable.

Critical appraisals of CBT in the literature tend to share similar themes that concern poor performance and the reasons behind ultimate failure. Goodwin (2006) reviewed published and unpublished material with the objective to identify why CBT projects fail. Goodwin's study identified:

Few projects understand the need for commercial activities: local people must sell crafts, food, accommodation and wildlife or cultural experiences to tourists. This is the only way to ensure a sustainable supply of local income or conservation funds.

CBT projects must engage with the private sector, including travel agents, tour operators and hoteliers. The earlier this engagement takes place and the closer the partnership, the more likely it is to succeed.

Location is critical: for poor people to benefit, tourists must stay in or near to these communities. Very few communities have tourism assets which are sufficiently strong to attract tourists—they rely on selling complementary goods and services. Tourists need to be close by for this to happen.

CBT projects do not always provide appropriate tourism facilities for generating income. For example, too many CBT initiatives rely on building lodges, which are capital intensive and need considerable maintenance, or walking trails from which it can be difficult to secure revenue.

Protected areas increasingly rely on money from tourists to pay for conservation initiatives. Local communities often have to compete with conservation projects for revenues (Goodwin, 2006, para. 4).

Comparing Goodwin's (2006) findings and Blackstock's (2005) critical look at community-community based tourism, Blackstock takes a somewhat different approach. The author argues existing literature 'takes the local community's relationship with tourism as the main premise for analysis' (p. 39) rather than the broader, and more influential relationship between CBT and community development. To illustrate this theory, Blackstock uses an Australian locality, Port Douglas, as the study setting, identifying it as a tourism town. The fieldwork interviews focused on the residents. The discussion focuses on three failings of CBT literature. The first failing is that CBT literature has focused on sustaining the tourism industry, rather than the community development narrative that seeks empowerment and social justice. Supporters or advocates of tourism are focused on convincing the community that tourism and its associated development will be the panacea for the community, therefore encouraging residents to be more accepting of tourism. Blackstock identified these particular themes in the participant responses and argued 'the community is co-opted into supporting tourism through an illusion of power sharing but they are not empowered to reject tourism as a development option. Thus, CBT lacks the transformative intent of community development, which starts from a recognition that current economic, political and social structures must change' (p. 41).

The second failing discusses the weakness of CBT literature to adequately address the complexities of the term 'community' (explored extensively in a previous chapter). Blackstock suggests advocates of CBT work from a 'stereotypical idealization of community' (p. 42) resulting in community being presented as 'an ideal masquerading as a social fact' (p. 42). Not addressing the concept of community adequately further results in a failure to recognize structural inequalities and how these inequalities impact power and decision-making processes. Blackstock identifies how the inadequacy of CBT to recognize and address power and structural issues in the community resulted in a high percentage of the residents believing 'some form of class system stratified Port Douglas' (p. 42). The third failing focuses on community participation, specifically barriers that may exist hindering local participation and control. Blackstock argues CBT literature 'sidesteps the barriers to local participatory decision-making'

(p. 44). The respondents demonstrated grave concerns toward external developers and the inequality that existed between these developers and the local community. Respondents felt this had further resulted in a feeling of powerlessness. Another point is made concerning the neo-liberalistic approach toward tourism development in the locality, seeking to ‘enable capital investment and increase economic activities’ (p. 44), rather than a socially equitable tourism industry able to balance investment, development and sustainability. Blackstock concludes the study by suggesting ‘the current conceptualization of CBT is naïve and unrealistic’ (p. 45), specifically narratives that address CBT’s relationship to social justice and local empowerment.

Fortunately, since the 2006 publication of Blackstock’s critique, CBT literature and associated discourse has become far more robust concerning the relationship with community development, no longer simply ‘side-stepping’ the role of participation, power, community structure, community capital and external influences. Blackstock does reinforce for the theorist and the practitioner, the importance of conceptualizing CBT through a framework that includes an in-depth examination of community development components and considerations. The study also demonstrates the need to identify and analyze community opinions, attitudes and beliefs concerning the relationship between tourism and development, particularly as the perception of these elements may be somewhat different to the reality of how the community has reacted toward tourism and its associated development.

### **3.4 A conceptualisation of CBT in Cambodia**

Tolkach and King (2015) provide a useful narrative to conceptualize and understand the development of CBT in Cambodia. Their study pursues the idea that the motivations to develop CBT in marginalized, remote, rural and ethnic communities have been in response to the forces of ‘neo-colonialism, neo-liberalism and mass tourism’ (p. 389). These are important considerations when attempting to conceptualize CBT and its related outcomes, particularly in Cambodia. Considering the path of Cambodia’s road to recovery following its civil war, these three concepts become important considerations when attempting to examine ongoing development and its associated consequences within the country. Neo-colonialism is broadly defined as ‘the State which is subject to it is, in theory, independent and has all the outward trappings of international sovereignty. In reality, its economic system and thus its political policy is directed from outside’ (Nkrumah, 1966, p. 1). Colonialism then neo-colonialism has played a major influencing role in Cambodia’s development and subsequent tourism agenda from the 19<sup>th</sup> century French colonization of the country, and more recently since 1979, the end of the Khmer Rouge regime. Winter’s (2007) monograph entitled *Post-Conflict Heritage, Postcolonial Tourism: Culture, politics and development at Angkor*, while not specifically an exploration of neo-colonialism in Cambodia, provides a rich narrative concerning the complex relationship between Cambodia’s colonial past and the country’s road to recovery post-1992. Moreover, Winter’s narrative demonstrates how tourism, heritage and the tourist dollar have

become in themselves part of a broader political and socio-economic agenda that more often than not has been driven by the Royal Cambodian Government, either in cooperation with or by the Government's 'questionable' international relations. Winter (2007) summarizes his study by identifying the reoccurring theme 'has been the cultural and political parallels between the contemporary era and a former period of European colonialism. In both eras heritage and tourism have been two interweaving arenas through which Cambodia's culture and history have been narrated and framed in terms of resuscitation and revival' (p. 143).

Modern Cambodia has often been accused of allowing neo-colonialism to actively flourish, specifically by the international press. Its ties to government and the elite have strongly been criticized. Two monographs, *Aid Dependence in Cambodia: How Foreign Assistance Undermines Democracy* (Ear, 2013) and *Cambodia's Curse: The Modern History of a Troubled Land* (Brinkley, 2011) both provide an in-depth account of how outside forces and their relationship with the Hun Sen government have essentially been responsible for Cambodia's development agenda since the 1990s. During a 2010 radio broadcast, the Head of Cambodia's Human Rights Commission commented; 'as a sovereign state, Cambodia does not want to receive order from any institutions. Some organizations are acting in the we-know-all-about-Cambodia attitude, or even we-know-Cambodia-better-than-Cambodia attitude. This is the mentality of colonialism that needs to be eliminated. As a representative elected from the will of people, the obligation of the government is to answer to what Cambodian people really need and not to the satisfaction of those groups' (Vireak, 2010). Winter (2007) places Angkor and tourism at the forefront of these complexities, on one hand restoring the past and providing future social and economic development, but also creating opportunities for international parties and NGOs to influence political agendas concerning tourism and development that may only deliver benefits to those involved.

Neo-liberalism, a policy framework that aims to embrace the free market economy for the purposes of economic development (Larner, 2000), also plays an important role toward shaping tourism development and its associated consequences in emerging economies. Coburn (2000) makes several notable claims regarding neo-liberalism and its destructive influence toward lowering social cohesiveness and creating inequality in communities. He argues there is a specific relationship between neo-liberal ideologies and social disorganization and social distrust, and that neo-liberalism is partly responsible for the decline of the welfare state, allowing inequality and lowered social cohesion to flourish. I would suggest that modern Cambodia, through pursuing both neo-colonialist and neo-liberalist ideologies concerning strategies for development, specifically tourism development, has experienced a general level of internal and external distrust toward the government's agenda and associated strategies. One example of this is evidenced by the government's repossession of private land and the various taxation and operational concessions afforded to international tourism developers and

businesses operating in the country. Siem Reap, the country's tourism hub, suffers a multitude of negative social, economic and environmental impacts. This is directly attributed to the previous absence of a strategic developmental plan for tourism and over-reliance on international operators who have been granted generous concessions to conduct their business operations (Pawson, 2003). Other examples of how neo-colonialism and neo-liberalism flourish in the Cambodian tourism sector can be identified along the Cambodian coastline, especially the resort towns of Sihanoukville and Kep where the repossession and on-selling of land has been evident since the early 2000s. For a specific example of this activity I refer to Koh Tonsay, more popularly known as Rabbit Island. Parts of the island have been sold to developers for the purposes of building a resort, and land has been purchased under questionable circumstances (see Muong & Murray, *The Phnom Penh Post*, Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> February 2015, 'A Sea Change for Island Residents').

The ills of pursuing neo-colonialist and neo-liberalist development strategies and associated behaviors, or in Cambodia's case allowing the continued growth of mass tourism influenced by a neo-liberalistic agenda, has resulted in a tourism sector where negative social, economic and environmental elements are taking precedence over the possible shared benefits of tourism and improved livelihoods for the majority (Springer, 2011). For consideration concerning CBT, is the possibility these influences may have consequential impacts for rural and ethnic communities attempting to develop and manage community tourism. Specifically, is there a risk of developers and government agencies influencing or directing the course of tourism development and deployment of resources? In turn, this would most likely result in the benefits of tourism development extended to those with the most power and influence rather than invested back into the development of the overall community. Winter (2007) accurately confirms this, stating 'developing country government programs to promote places of tourism invariably lead to tensions between the state and localized communities, as disproportionate levels of wealth are accrued by a small elite within a situation of imbalanced modernization' (p. 17).

Springer's (2011) approach toward a better understanding of neo-liberalism in Cambodia is worthy of consideration. Springer argues neo-liberalism in Cambodia requires interpretation through a process of articulation. In essence, this refers to the appreciation of local variations in how a single country has reacted toward and reinterpreted the overarching principle of neo-liberalism— in other words 'a series of articulations with existing political economic circumstances' (p. 2554). In the case of Cambodia, its tumultuous period of French colonialism, the politics of the Sihanoukville period, the American bombing campaign, the Khmer Rouge regime, the UNTAC transition period and the politics of Hun Sen have all contributed to and influenced a 'localized' interpretation and pursuit of neo-liberal ideals. Springer (2011) notes 'what constitutes "actually existing" neoliberalism in Cambodia as distinctly Cambodian are the ways in which the patronage system has allowed local elites to co-opt, transform, and

(re)articulate neoliberal reforms through a framework that has “asset stripped” public resources thereby increasing peoples’ exposure to corruption, coercion, and violence’ (p. 2555). An example of this specifically related to tourism is the under-resourced police force units and associated authorities that investigate, police and prosecute sex tourism offences. These entities have struggled, and often failed to effectively police sex tourism, especially child sex tourism, still less develop and implement effective policies to better protect actual and potential victims and associated human trafficking (Chheang, 2008; Cotter, 2008). Specific themes concerning Cambodia’s neo-liberalist agenda and its relationship to tourism will be further explored in the chapter concerning tourism development in Cambodia.

Two further studies, also of note, provide rigorous explanations of CBT that can be useful to contextualize CBT in Cambodia. Matutano (2012) in her investigation of how CBT effects socio-cultural values in Namibia argues CBT is generally defined and influenced by the ‘social and institutional structures in the area concerned’ (p. 24). Matutano also states a definition of CBT will imply two key themes, firstly a ‘collective responsibility’ and secondly ‘approval by representative bodies’ (p. 24). For the purposes of her study, Matutano combines two fragments of Häusler and Strasdas’s (2002) and Suansri’s (2003) definition together:

CBT is a form of tourism in which a significant number of local people has substantial control over, and involvement in its development and management. The major proportion of the benefits remains with the local economy with the purpose of enabling visitors to increase their awareness and learn about the community and local ways of life (p. 25).

Matutano’s narrative provides useful identification of essential indicators or ‘characteristics’ (p. 25) that inform fundamental traits of a CBT project. The indicators are:

1. To include as many community members as possible in the decision-making process, thus insuring a level of participation from the start.
2. It is generally, but not exclusively, organised for small groups by small, specialised and locally owned businesses.
3. It insures environmental and socio-cultural sustainability, which includes education and interpretation providing socially and environmentally responsible product, thus increasing local and visitor awareness of conservation.
4. It distributes benefits fairly among community members even those who are not directly involved in the tourist activities.
5. It contributes a fixed percentage of income to community projects (p. 26).

A further commentary presented by Matutano suggests the importance of involving international consultancy, NGOs, local government and the private sector for the purposes of supporting the community in developing the funding, skills, knowledge and expertise required to successfully development then manage a CBT project. This also comes with a caution,



suggesting that forces external to the actual community can contribute negatively toward development and control of CBT. This is evidenced through the community's exposure to the forces of globalization, urban development and westernization, in turn possibly contributing toward individualism and materialism among community members that may erode elements of social capital—essential to the development and ongoing management of CBT. In the context of Banteay Chhmar, this theme will be explored in greater depth in proceeding chapters. At the conclusion of 2015, the road between Sisophon and Banteay Chhmar was sealed and electricity cables were connected, enabling households to access 24/7 power. These two developments have had a significant impact on the community, specifically the increase in families with whitegoods and entertainment appliances, for example televisions.

The second study that can be useful to contextualize CBT in Cambodia is the work of Thapa (2013), who examined gender dimensions of community-based ecotourism (CBET) in Cambodia. While Thapa conceptualized her research through the framework of ecotourism, similar to Matutano's (2012) work, she makes a strong connection to the importance of local participation in tourism activities. Thapa states 'community-based ecotourism is one type of ecotourism in which local communities are closely involved in its implementation and thus benefit from additional income'(p. 13). Thapa makes similar comments to Matutano (2012) inasmuch as commenting that CBET can provide more than just environmental protection and economic development for the community. CBET can effectively contribute toward poverty alleviation, improvements in education and gender empowerment. The two authors agree that CBT and CBET should involve support from other sectors, specifically NGOs and governments, chiefly for the purposes of training, business and marketing activities and capacity building.

### **3.5 Constructing the CBT tourist and positioning CBT**

The CBT visitor or tourist cannot be ignored as an important stakeholder of CBT. An understanding of who the CBT visitor is, their motivations to visit and their particular needs remains essential toward the planning and management of effective CBT. The purpose of this discussion is to provide a detailed analysis of the CBT tourist. As with destinations, tourists and subsequent tourism markets also change over time. Often these changes provoke those involved in developing and selling tourism experiences to adapt accordingly. A study of CBT not only involves a deep understanding of the community and associated internal and external forces, but also an understanding of who the CBT tourist is and what has motivated them to pursue CBT experiences. It also remains important to appreciate where CBT is positioned within the multitude of sustainable tourism experiences. To date, I have been unable to locate in the scholarly or industry literature a specific segment profile of a typical CBT tourist. For the development, marketing and management of CBT, I argue that identifying and understanding the CBT tourist is critical for the overall success of the venture. For scholars and practitioners of

CBT, it becomes of benefit to understand who CBT tourists are, how CBT is positioned within a tourism system, and also CBT's relationships with other forms of tourism. As discussed in the proceeding narrative I will attempt to offer an analysis of these themes. I identify that the construction of a typical CBT tourist derives from important relationships with theories pertaining to tourist decision-making and the principles of sustainable tourism. I suggest that once we are able to construct the typical CBT tourist, it is then possible to differentiate or position CBT within the broader tourism system. It is normally assumed by tourists that CBT is simply another type of service or experience related to ecotourism. Given the advancement of CBT practitioners and related research agendas, CBT has become a recognized service or experience positioned within sustainable tourism. The same can also be said for the CBT tourist. I propose that appreciating the similarities yet differences between CBT, ecotourism, voluntourism, pro-poor tourism, small-scale tourism, ethnic/minority/indigenous tourism, rural tourism and other similar sustainable tourism experiences is essential for those involved in the management or inquiry of these products (services).

From the advent of contemporary tourism (circa CE 1950) more attention has been paid to the reasons that motivate people to travel, and in turn become tourists. Tourist needs and motivators have influenced the development and popularity of tourism products (services). I argue it is incorrect to refer to the actual tourism experience as a product (usually incorrectly identified as a product in tourism-related literature) as the word product can imply experiences are tangible. Tourism experiences are more correctly a service with associated activities that may have various tangible elements to them, specifically for the delivery of the service. Some examples of tourism services or activities include resort tourism, 3S tourism, adventure tourism, sports tourism, urban tourism, indigenous tourism, nature tourism, space tourism, culinary tourism, backpacker tourism, thanatourism, cultural tourism, education tourism, health/medical tourism, religious tourism, ecotourism etc. Identifying the motivations of a tourist who seeks these services can assist the development, marketing and management of the service, particularly CBT. It may also assist to understand the differentiation between the actual service and similar services that could be identified as competitor services.

To better appreciate tourism motivators and behaviors I argue the contributing factors need to be initially investigated. Applying a contextual understanding to the motivators and behaviors of the CBT tourist, a worthwhile commencement point is the work of Boorstin (1961) and Turner and Ash (1975). While Boorstin's (1961) monograph addressing the unreality of the modern world is not specifically about tourism, his chapter entitled 'From Traveler to Tourist: The Lost Art of Travel' provides the reader with an appreciation that tourist attitudes towards travel have greatly changed. He examined attitudes and motivations toward travel in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, identifying how travelers of that period were motivated to seek new and

unfamiliar experiences that would provide them with adventure, cultural enlightenment, refinement and improvement. Boorstin applies Descartes to explain this phenomenon:

There is no better illustration of our newly exaggerated expectations than our changed attitude toward travel. One of the most ancient motives for travel, when men had any choice about it, was to see the unfamiliar. Man's incurable desire to go someplace else is a testimony of his incurable optimism and insatiable curiosity. We always expect things to be different over there. 'Traveling', Descartes wrote in the early seventeenth century, 'is almost like conversing with men of other centuries'. Men who move because they are starved or frightened or oppressed expect to be safer, better fed, and more free in the new place. Men who live in a secure, rich, and decent society travel to escape boredom, to elude the familiar, and to discover the exotic (p. 78).

In the western world, travelling during the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries became commonly known as 'The Grand Tour'. As Boorstin accurately explains 'to travel was to become a man of the world. Unless one was a man of the world, he might not seem cultivated in his own country' (p. 82). A particular group of British Grand Tourists, later known as the 'Levant Lunatics' could be identified as the pioneers of modern-day adventure tourism. The Napoleonic wars of 1796 to 1815 disrupted the popularity of the Grand Tour. Travelers were forced to consider destinations beyond Italy and France. Writings from early travelers who visited Portugal, Corsica and Greece inspired potential young men from Britain to consider destinations in the Levant (the Eastern Mediterranean region between Greece and Cyrenaica) that was unexplored and generally difficult to visit. Tregaskis (1979) writes the Grand Tour had made classical archaeology a fashionable pursuit that resulted in expeditions by young rich aristocrats to the Levant for the purposes of recording and collecting examples of ancient Greek art. Of note are the destinations these young gentlemen traveled to, often challenging to get to, in some cases dangerous, and considered relatively remote and unvisited compared to towns and cities well known to previous Grand Tourists. The writings of these 'Levant Lunatics' provide a rich narrative of their exploits and interactions in the destinations they travelled to, and local hospitality. One of the most prolific Levant Lunatics, Lord Byron, provided an extensive account of his expeditions and adventures in the Levant, particularly Greece. Byron noted that youth, courage and a classic education were the specific chief ingredients that made him a Levant Lunatic (Tregaskis, 1979).

Boorstin (1961) suggests that in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the behavior of travelers and motivations to travel began to change. These changes are often attributed to Thomas Cook. Weaver and Lawton (2010) argue 'more than any other individual, Thomas Cook is associated with the emergence of tourism as a modern, large-scale industry' (p. 65). Cook's idea of chartering trains and guest houses, then offering a planned tour with a reduced single fare for day and overnight excursions marked the beginning of commercialized mass tourism. Cook

initially established his excursions for spiritual purposes, but this purpose quickly changed to include sightseeing and leisure pursuits. Excursions expanded to Scotland, Ireland and Europe. Continuous advancements in rail and shipping offered Cook more destinations to visit, and by 1872, his company Thomas Cook and Son offered the first round-the-world excursion. As Boorstin (1961) explains, this new form of commercialized travel attracted critics from those who believed the Grand Tour should be about adventure and learning, not a mass sanitized pleasure activity:

Sophisticated Englishmen objected. They said that Cook was depriving travelers of the initiative and adventure and cluttering the continental landscape with the Philistine middle classes. 'Going by railroad', complained John Ruskin, 'I do not consider as travelling at all; it is merely being sent to a place, and very little different from becoming a parcel' (p. 87).

There is no argument that Thomas Cook and his travel company changed British society's attitude toward travel. Before the Thomas Cook era, travel was seen as an adventure limited to the few. From the 1850s onwards, travel became an affordable pleasure pursuit for both the upper and middle classes. The period between the 1950s and 1970s heralded a chapter for the massification/commercialization of tourism. After the Second World War, economic, social, demographic, political and technological changes have all contributed toward stimulating demand for tourism activities (Leiper, 2003; Weaver & Lawton, 2010). During the 1960s and 1970s advancements in technology in the aviation sector contributed to more affordable air tickets, faster travel times and more routes. Better communication methods through print, radio and television exposed potential tourists to greater amounts of information concerning destinations. Thomas Cook had already firmly established the popularity of seaside resorts and associated pleasure activities such as sunbathing and swimming. The pursuit of 'sun related' activities continued throughout the 1950s, or as popularly identified in tourism literature as 3S tourism (sea, sand and sun), resulted in the rapid growth of tourism destinations in warmer regions, especially countries in equatorial areas. Turner and Ash's (1975) monograph entitled *The Golden Hordes: International Tourism and the Pleasure Periphery* provides a detailed examination of modern mass tourism's impacts on the tourist and the destination. The overarching argument created throughout their chapters draws attention to tourism moving from an adventurous cultural pursuit with minimal harm to societies and environments visited, to tourism as a modern sanitized activity that has been rapidly commercialized and has resulted in severe negative outcomes for certain destinations. Turner and Ash conclude 'we have already argued that alternative tourism will never be more than a fairly minor aspect of international tourism. The bulk of this industry will be made up of mass tourists who are not really interested in the countries in which they travel. For most people, a foreign holiday will be a socially acceptable device for filling some of the increasing amount of leisure time we will be faced

with' (p. 282). Boorstin (1961) succinctly refers to this phenomenon as 'the lost art of travel', stating:

we go more and more where we expect to go. We get money-back guarantees that we will see what we expect to see. Anyway, we go more and more, not to see at all, but only to take pictures. Like the rest of our experience, travel becomes a tautology. The more strenuously and self-consciously we work at enlarging our experience, the more pervasive the tautology becomes. Whether we seek models of greatness, or experience elsewhere on earth, we look into a mirror instead of out a window, and we see only ourselves (p. 117).

The above and associated narratives clearly demonstrate tourism moving from the 18<sup>th</sup>-century adventure journey to a mass commercialized activity, and from a predominantly learning experience to the pursuit of safe, contrived leisure activities. The recent advent of the sustainable development movement and associated sustainable tourism initiatives has seen a shift in tourists' motivations and what they seek from their tourism experiences. It is also relevant to consider the change in general consumer attitudes toward products and services, influenced by the growing environmental movement, climate change debates and environmental sustainability discourses. Combined, these forces have contributed toward the emergence of a new typology of traveler identified as a 'green tourist' (Bergin-Seers & Mair, 2009; Poon, 1993; Weaver & Lawton, 2010). In the early 1990s, Poon (1993) was one of the initial scholars to identify the emergence of this market segment. Applying Poon's conceptual identification of this market, Weaver and Lawton (2010) provided specific characteristics of the 'new traveler';

- Green consumer
- Sensitive to local culture
- Conscious of social justice concerns
- More independent-minded and discerning
- Knowledgeable about environmental issues
- Prefers flexible and spontaneous itineraries
- Carefully assesses tourism products in advance
- Searches for authentic and meaningful experiences
- Wishes to have a positive impact on the destination
- Motivated by a desire for self-fulfilment and learning
- Searches for physically and mentally challenging experiences (p.347)

From this we can now commence to construct the green tourist and specifically the CBT tourist, and explore their decision-making processes and motivations. As potential tourists move through a decision-making process (see Hall, 2003, p. 18) concerning the consideration to travel, they are influenced by numerous factors generally identified as internalities and externalities. Scholars have provided several theoretical approaches to identifying and examining these factors. General marketing theory provides a useful starting point. Kotler, Brown, Adam, Burton and Armstrong (2007) argue there are two sets of influences that play an important role in consumer choices pertaining to products and services. Psychological and

personal factors are considered internal influences while cultural, social, environmental and marketing factors are considered external influences. Combined, these influences play an essential role in a tourist's choice of tourism services and activities. These choices influence which services and products are developed by tourism providers.

Tourism theorists have utilized an interdisciplinary approach to further understand how internal and external consumer influences specifically relate to how potential tourists make decisions about travel and associated activities. Leiper (2003), applying sociological theories, examines how certain western socio-cultural trends have shaped and influenced tourism services and activities. Leiper relies upon the ideas of Jacques Barzun (2000), who identified nine cultural trends that have influenced aspects of western society between 1500 and the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Leiper focused on emancipation, secularism, individualism, self-consciousness and primitivism and their relationship to tourism. To provide an example of Leiper's theory, he identifies primitivism as 'a desire for simplicity in life' (p. 47). Leiper further states:

as a cultural trend in western civilization it has existed in various forms for centuries. The idea of the noble savage, usually associated with the 18<sup>th</sup> century philosopher Rousseau but given that name earlier by the poet Dryden, is the idea that a high state of existence is possible in the natural world but impossible in civilized, luxurious, decadent societies (p. 47).

Considering modern society, the nature of employment and urbanization, the need to emancipate and to seek escapism through an alternative simplistic experience has influenced people to seek tourism services and activities offering an alternative experience. Examples of this include camping holidays, ecotourism experiences, trekking, visiting ethnic, minority and indigenous communities, CBT, adventure tourism, and bush walking.

Other scholars such as Cohen (1979) have argued that simply applying the term 'tourist' is problematic as it suggests tourists are all the same in terms of activities, behaviors, expectations, needs and wants, influences and motivators, and post-purchase behavior. Given this argument, theorists and those specifically involved with tourism marketing commenced to arrange and classify tourists into 'types' based on a variety of variables including demographics, psychographics and behaviors (Leiper, 2003). Demographics was one of the first variables to be applied in the early tourism studies of the 1970s. Examining specific demographics such as age, gender, education, employment/occupation, marital status, ethnic and cultural background, social class and life cycle revealed that the relationship between people and the variables resulted in a propensity for specific tourism services and products. Psychographic segmentation provided a way to identify certain tourist groups or segments based on their purpose for travel (trip). While this method identified the various types of trips tourists pursued, it failed to identify what influenced or motivated a tourist to undertake the trip; moreover, it also failed to address what influenced or motivated tourists to seek specific services and activities during their

visit. This shortcoming was eventually addressed by Gray in 1970. One of the earliest forms of terminology applied to identify different types of tourists based on the services and activities they pursued was termed 'wanderlust' and 'sunlust'. Gray (1970) explained wanderlust as the 'basic trait in human nature which causes some individuals to want to leave things with which they are familiar and to go and see at first hand different exciting cultures and places' (p. 57). Sunlust does not necessarily imply seeking sun, as explained by Leipier (2003) it means 'when tourists' main needs are for recreation. They want rest, or entertainment, or relaxation, or a mix of these three forms of recreation' (p. 55). These two theories have formed one of the most popular bases for tourist motivation since the 1970s and are widely quoted in tourism literature. Plog (1991), building upon Gray's (1970) identification of wanderlust and sunlust, suggested two further psychographic typologies to describe certain groups of tourists based on their behaviors. Firstly, allocentric tourists are defined as 'intellectually curious travelers who enjoy immersing themselves into other cultures and willingly accept a high level of risk' (Weaver & Lawton, 2006, p. 186). Moreover, this group of travelers prefer to avoid fixed itineraries and may spontaneously change elements of their trip. They tend to avoid destinations where mass tourism development is prominent, preferring destinations offering an authentic 'localized' experience. The opposite group of travelers were identified as psychoentrics who are 'self-absorbed individuals who seek to minimize risk by patronizing familiar, extensively developed destinations where a full array of familiar goods and services are available' (Weaver & Lawton, 2006, p. 186). These types of travelers prefer destinations that are easily accessible, popular and have known brands available. They desire structure and organization in their experience and seek generic contrived or staged tourism experiences.

At this point of inquiry, the green tourist and specifically the CBT tourist could easily be constructed and defined as 'wanderlust' and 'allocentric'; however, these two terms, while good broad descriptors, fail to provide an in-depth profile of the specific CBT tourist. Identifying psychographic variables (motivations, expectations and reasons for travel) and behavioral variables (activities and actions undertaken during the experience) of the CBT tourist provides an in-depth understanding for those involved in the research or management of CBT. Bergin-Seers and Mair (2009) provide an excellent typology of green tourists' behaviors and attitudes. It is reasonable to suggest green tourists including CBT tourists share similar traits. The authors commence their investigation through examining literature pertaining to the green consumer, and then specifically the green tourist. The focus of their methodology was to utilize a green consumer scorecard for the purposes of measuring their respondents' engagement with consumerism and environmental activism. The anticipated outcome was the development of a typical green tourist profile. Their findings toward developing a green tourist profile focused on three key identifiers, 'sourcing of information', 'green views and intentions' and 'green purchasing'. Firstly, concerning sourcing of information, consumers who were considered more environmentally active were more likely to source information about tourism products through a

wide variety of sources, such as travel agents, the internet, newspapers, friends and family, and visitor information centers. Of these sources, the internet was identified as the most used source. Secondly, concerning green views and intentions, consumers who were already environmentally active would be more likely to change to environmentally friendly products if they were available and the consumer became aware of them. Thirdly, green purchasing identified consumers who are 'influenced by their environmental beliefs and practices; who are interested in being environmentally friendly on holiday; at times select holidays by considering environmental issues; and are potentially willing to pay extra for products and services provided by environmentally friendly tourism operators' (p. 117). Of note was the author's comments suggesting 'there is not enough evidence to indicate that they are changing their tourism product purchasing behaviors largely for environmental reasons. Nevertheless, it is not unreasonable to suggest that this group of environmentally motivated travelers are an emerging group important to sustainable tourism' (p. 117). The study concluded by acknowledging that the role tourism operators play in engaging green tourists and the product offering has not as yet been fully understood. It is suggested the industry assist operators to become more aware of how they can develop green activities and then communicate the associated benefits to their respective markets. Their findings summarize that 'given the increasing environmental concern of tourists, it is likely that a particular type of green tourist will purchase green products if they can see evidence of practical benefits to themselves, the local and broader communities' (p. 118).

Moving toward profiling the CBT tourist, it becomes useful to also consider traits of eco-tourists and volunteer tourists (voluntourists). My fieldwork at Banteay Chhmar identified that CBT tourists who visited Banteay Chhmar exhibited similarities to the above two types of tourists. Two useful studies assist in identifying the traits of eco-tourists. Zografos and Allcroft (2007) examined environmental values of potential eco-tourists. Their research was able to identify four specific segments based on the respondent's environmental values and attitudes toward the consumption of ecotourism products. The first segment 'Disapprovers', were specifically concerned about the limits of natural resources available and human inaction toward environmental initiatives. This segment placed a high emphasis on seeking products that enhanced biodiversity preservation and use minimal exhaustible resources. The second segment, 'Skepticals' had a low concern about the earth's resources and the longevity of these resources. They also were skeptical about aspects related to human skill and capacity. Similar to the Disapprovers, this segment also pursued ecotourism experiences that enhanced biodiversity preservation and minimized the use of exhaustible resources. They were not confident of human skill and development or concerned with the earth and its limits. This segment considered biodiversity preservation as the most important aspect of ecotourism and associated products. The third segment was identified as 'Approvers'. This segment demonstrated a high belief in human ability and skill and generally disagreed with criticisms of human attitudes toward the environment. While this segment rated biodiversity preservation as important, there was only a



marginal difference between this element and low use of exhaustible resources. This particular segment also ranked 'the well-being of local people' higher than evidenced in other segments. The fourth segment, 'Concerners' identified its members as clearly refusing to consider or accept nature as equal to humans. They did identify biodiversity preservation as the most important aspect of ecotourism, but assigned it a low overall ranking. From the four segments, this was the only segment to prioritize responsible action and well-being of local people over low use of exhaustible resources.

The second study by Buffa (2015) entitled *Young Tourists and Sustainability: Profiles, Attitudes and Implications for Destination Strategies* contributed toward identifying characteristics of what the researcher termed Hard (HPYT) and Soft (SPYT) Path Young Tourists. The research concluded that young people are interested in certain aspects of sustainability and these interests influence their motivations, decision-making processes and their behavior at destinations. The results developed a personal, organizational, motivational and behavioral profile of HPYT and SPYT. Key characteristics included HPYT being more likely to participate in voluntourism-related activities, and both HPYT and SPYT are likely to organize their trips independently, with HPYT choosing to travel alone. Internet and word of mouth remain for both types the most important source of information. HPYT destination choice is influenced by adventure whereas SPYT choices are influenced by relaxation, entertainment and comfort. Price is a key motivator for both types, with HPYT influenced by the availability of local products, services and labor and SPYT finding value in comfort. HPYT are somewhat more sensitive to the effects tourism has on the built and natural environment and tended to be critical of other tourists and their lack of respect toward the environment.

Both the above studies can be considered useful toward providing a commencement point for profiling the common/typical characteristics of CBT tourists. Other helpful studies that have attempted to provide a profile of eco-tourists include Lawton's (2002) work profiling older adult eco-tourists in Australia, Cini, Leone and Passafaro's (2010) study entitled *Promoting Ecotourism Among Young People: A Segmentation Strategy*, and Benckendorff, Moscardo and Pendergast's (2010) editorial of *Tourism and Generation Y*. Concepts relating to responsible tourism, pro-poor tourism and voluntourism can also be identified in a typical CBT tourist. Responsible tourism, more akin to a tourism management approach, promotes the involvement of local communities, respects local, cultural and natural environments in its marketing activities, recommends the use of local resources in a sustainable way, calls for sensitivity to the host culture, and encourages natural, economic, social and cultural diversity (Spenceley, 2008). It is therefore rational to suggest if there is responsible tourism practiced in destinations, there are responsible tourists, or tourists seeking responsible experiences. Dolnicar and Long (2009) were able to successfully identify through the application of a segmentation analysis the specific characteristics of environmentally responsible tourists. Their findings concluded:

environmentally responsible tourists, operationalised by their willingness to pay for environmental initiatives taken on by the tour operator they are travelling with, demonstrate a profile that differs significantly from other tourists in areas such as travel information seeking, destination preferences, travel behaviour and willingness to pay. Some of the characteristics revealed are of benefit to destinations or tourism businesses. For instance, willingness to pay premium prices for specific components of a trip could be used in product development and pricing strategies (p. 23).

Volunteer tourism or voluntourism, as McGehee (2014) clearly stated has recently seen an expansion of definitions that in turn have influenced further investigation of the themes of commodification of experience, volunteer motivations and the need for a more organized theoretical approach concerning the study of voluntourism. As identified by Smith and Font (2014), the practice of volunteering overseas and combining this act with tourism activities has resulted in a relatively new tourism activity identified as voluntourism. Another way to conceptualize voluntourism is to consider a working holiday where an individual or individuals volunteer their time for a cause they believe is worthy. Discourses concerning motivations, attitudes and behaviors of voluntourists have been robust, especially as these aspects also involve the individual's ethical approach toward the world they inhabit. Much of this discourse has taken place around debates that center upon motivations of self-interest or motivations of altruism (Wearing & McGehee, 2013). Moreover, Wearing and McGehee demonstrate that other studies (Callanan & Thomas, 2005; Wymer, Self & Findley, 2010) have identified three types of voluntourist motivations: 1) shallow tourists who are dominated by personal interest, 2) intermediate tourists, and 3) deep tourists who care more about the contribution to the community, or altruistic actions. Callanan and Thomas (2005) also proposed four key aspects that are considered motivations for voluntourists: cultural immersion, making a difference, seeking camaraderie, and family bonding. Intrinsic motivations identified by Benson and Seibert (2009) included the experience of doing something that was different or new, to meet other cultures, to learn about another country and its culture, to have the opportunity to live in another country, and to broaden one's knowledge.

During my fieldwork in Banteay Chhmar, I was able to identify that the majority of CBT tourists whom I came into contact with showed an interest toward assisting the community through volunteering their time, expertise and labor. Examples of this included teaching English to children, helping with the growing and harvesting of cassava, helping in the rice fields or assisting in the local community health center. While there were limited opportunities available to volunteer, the intent from the visitor remained apparent. Most suggested their motivations to volunteer in the community were driven by altruistic and intrinsic desires, specifically the desire to make a positive difference to the community and the opportunity to immerse themselves into

Cambodian culture while simultaneously learning about the uniqueness of culture as it related to a small rural community in Cambodia.

CBT tourists also exhibit motivations and behaviors similar to tourists who seek responsible and pro-poor tourism products, services and experiences. Mitchell and Ashley (2010), explained defining pro-poor tourism as ‘bedeviled by contrasting and often sloppy usage of terms found in the literature’ (p. 8). Ashley, Goodwin and Roe (2001) suggest pro-poor tourism is ‘tourism that generates net benefits for the poor. Pro-poor tourism is not a specific product or sector of tourism, but an overall approach. Rather than aiming to expand the size of the sector, pro-poor tourism strategies aim to unlock opportunities—for economic gain, other livelihood benefits, or engagement in decision-making—for the poor’ (p. 1). Roe and Urquhart (2001) further discuss how the debate concerning sustainable tourism initially focused on environmental sustainability or the community’s involvement in tourism, and failed to address the relationship between poverty, environment and development. Pro-poor tourism therefore seeks to bridge this gap. Ashley and Mitchell (2005), in their seminal publication addressing tourism, poverty and development in Africa, demonstrated that through participation, the use of resources in rural areas and employment opportunities, tourism had significant potential to contribute directly toward poverty alleviation and pro-poor growth. Australia’s former Department of Tourism (1993, cited in Hall, 2003) clearly identified that unemployment, population loss and poor economic growth in rural areas has resulted in tourism for these areas being given high priority, specifically for its development potential. Moreover, diversifying of rural economies into tourism would 1) provide further employment opportunities, 2) diversify the income of farmers and associated businesses, 3) justify the development of further local infrastructure, 4) expand local services and provide maintenance for existing services, 5) integrate regional development strategies, 6) enhance the quality of life for local residents through extended leisure time and cultural opportunities. It is essential to appreciate that pro-poor tourism is not a tourism product/service, but is rather an approach toward tourism management with the objective of using tourism as a mechanism to benefit the poor, specifically in rural areas (Chok, Macbeth, Warren, 2007). One of the approaches or strategies toward pro-poor tourism is the adaptation of the tourism industry, specifically tourism businesses where ‘corporate engagement should be based on commercial opportunity not just ethical appeal’ (Ashley, Goodwin & Roe, 2001, p. 1). Examples of tourism services that may contribute toward pro-poor tourism strategies include wilderness safaris and eco-tours, heritage tours, CBT, accommodation providers, etc. It may be argued that a pro-poor approach can be utilized by the majority of the industry, particularly in Cambodia; however, business practices need to be focused toward pro-poor people development and ‘mechanisms to unlock opportunities for the poor at all levels and scales of operation’ (Ashley, Goodwin & Roe, 2001 cited in Chok, Macbeth, Warren, 2007, p. 149).

It is reasonable to argue there is a clear relationship existing between CBT and pro-poor tourism. However, Chok, Macbeth and Warren (2007) caution this statement by suggesting CBT and ecotourism focus more toward the preservation of tourism resources (the environment and cultural resources) and fail to address the full range of impacts tourism may have on the livelihoods of the poor. The majority of CBT projects do attempt to increase local involvement and participation in tourism activities; however, the authors identify that to truly embrace pro-poor tourism outcomes, CBT projects need to address how they can maximize the use of available local labor, goods and services, and expand their informal linkages through a policy framework and a planning context in which the primary focus is on meeting the needs of the poor in the destination.

Pro-poor tourism is an approach to tourism management that can involve a multitude of different tourism services. It is therefore not feasible to suggest a 'pro-poor tourist market segment' exists, as the segment would be too heterogeneous. However, there are tourists who seek specific pro-poor tourism experiences, motivated to do so chiefly through altruistic reasons. This could be considered similar and compared to the buying behavior of consumers choosing products that are environmentally friendly or from sustainable sources. Further opportunities exist for those involved in the management of CBT to understand and embrace pro-poor tourism strategies, and moreover, use the strategies as an approach to attract and sustain potential target markets.

Apart from technical industry reports concerning specific CBT projects, there remains no consumer/segment profile for CBT in the scholarly literature that I could identify during the lifespan of this thesis. A market segment is defined as 'a subgroup of the total consumer market who share similar characteristics and needs relevant to the purchase or use of a product, service or experience' (Hsu, Killion, Brown, Gross & Huang, 2008, p. 93). Market segmentation therefore becomes the process of dividing a consumer market into homogeneous segments. The reason why this is important for tourism businesses including CBT is simply the appreciation that not all tourism products/services appeal to all tourists. A CBT project needs to find the right match between what experience is offered and the needs and wants of tourists seeking to participate in CBT. Understanding this relationship equips those involved with the management of CBT 'to better formulate marketing objectives and to more effectively deploy limited marketing resources' (Hsu et al., 2008, p. 93). Moreover, I argue the segmentation process contributes toward a deeper understanding of tourists' expectations and contributes toward continuous improvement of the service. An understanding of tourists' consumer behavior (as examined through my discussion pertaining to eco-tourists, voluntourists and pro-poor tourism) provides rich data for those undertaking a segmentation process. Kotler et al. (2007) note that most marketing scholarly texts will identify five key variables by which they identify market segments and therefore their target market/s. Geographic variables (nation, state, city, postcode,

neighborhood etc.), demographic variables (age, gender, family size, family life cycle, culture, employment, income etc.), psychographic variables (attitudes, activities, lifestyles, interests, values, opinions), behavioral variables (purchase reason, loyalty status, product engagement etc.) and benefits variables (benefits sought by the consumer). This remains a useful model for those involved with the development, management and marketing of CBT to create a consumer profile of their potential and current target markets, in turn providing valuable intelligence toward the management of their marketing mix.

Of further benefit for those involved with the management of CBT is to appreciate how CBT is positioned in relation to the numerous sustainable tourism services/experiences that are available. Positioning CBT within the broader tourism industry will provide a greater understanding of its similarities and points of difference to other similar services and experiences. According to Hsu et al. (2008), positioning refers to the place a tourism brand, service or experience is positioned in a prospective tourist's mind relative to other brands, services or experiences that the tourist is considering or in the competitive set. Positioning generally is processed in the mind based on certain characteristics, specifically features, benefits, value, advantages and price. To illustrate the complexities of this exercise we may commence by identifying and defining the main typologies of sustainable tourism, as well as terms that are commonly used in marketing efforts to promote experiences as they relate to sustainable tourism as identified in Table 3.1 below.

**Table 3.1** (adapted from Spenceley, 2008, pp. 109–110; Weaver & Lawton, 2006)

Sustainable Tourism Typologies	Definition / Description
Responsible tourism	Providing better experiences for visitors and better opportunities for business, in turn creating a better quality of life for the host community through increased social and economic benefits and improvements in natural resource management.
Ethical tourism	Embracing the principles of sustainable tourism, but further promoting visitors and hosts taking some responsibility for their behavior, actions and attitudes. Furthermore, ethical tourism calls for stakeholder equity concerning decision-making processes.
Ecotourism	Travelling to, and the management of relatively undisturbed and uncontaminated natural areas for the purpose of education or to admire the natural and cultural resources found in such areas.
Pro-poor tourism	An approach to tourism development and subsequent management that promotes poor people, specifically in rural and marginal areas, receiving economic benefits derived from tourism in a manner that is ethical, fair and sustainable.
Cultural / heritage tourism	A form of tourism that calls for respect and subsequent protection / conservation of a natural or built environment of cultural or heritage significance. For the visitor, the emphasis of the visit is upon education.
Alternative tourism	An umbrella term that promotes large-scale, mass tourism as unsustainable and therefore small-scale alternative tourism businesses and experiences were in most cases, more desirable. Characteristics of alternative tourism include majority local control and high linkage opportunities.

The challenge therefore exists as to where CBT is positioned within a specific sustainable tourism typology or should it be positioned as separate to the existing sustainable typologies? I am not convinced scholars or practitioners have successfully and definitively achieved this, or found a workable answer to CBT positioning as yet. For example, in the Kampong Speu Province of Cambodia, the Chambok communities have established a community-based ecotourism project. Their website relies upon a narrative that aligns itself closely to the principles of ecotourism (<https://chambok.org>), but the front page of the website identifies an award for ‘socially responsible tourism’. For the potential visitor, immediate

assumptions may be drawn participating in this experience would constitute a form of ecotourism, therefore is CBT positioned as ecotourism? Likewise, the Chi Phat community located near the Cardamom mountains in the south of Cambodia promote their project (<http://www.chi-phat.org>) as ‘community-based ecotourism’, moreover they say ‘guides, once poachers, lead you on jungle treks to waterfalls, grasslands and mountains that they know well, but few others have seen. In 2007 Wildlife Alliance started a program in the Chi Phat area in the Cardamom Mountains to educate and help the community make their living from tourism instead of animal trafficking’ (Chi Phat, n.d). The narrative from the project website places far more emphasis on wildlife and forest conservation than the principles of CBT. When aligning this project to sustainable tourism typologies, it could easily be positioned as either responsible tourism, ecotourism, cultural/heritage tourism, or alternative tourism.

Adding to the milieu of complexities concerning the positioning question is Spenceley’s (2008) contribution of scholarly inquiry entitled *Responsible Tourism: Critical Issues for Conservation and Development*. The book contains three chapters dedicated to CBT. It is clear through the narratives contained within the book that Spenceley has drawn the conclusion CBT is a form of, or displays characteristics of responsible tourism. We may also consider other tourism experiences apart from CBT that are generally categorized under the broad umbrella of sustainable tourism, and also where these experiences have been positioned or aligned with sustainable tourism typologies (as identified in Table 3.1). For example, indigenous tourism, ethnic tourism, rural tourism, wildlife tourism, and slum tourism. While these considerations remain beyond the scope of this thesis, it remains important to employ them as part of the positioning question concerning CBT. The consensus still remains divided among the scholarly and practitioners’ community concerning the correct positioning of CBT as part of sustainable tourism typologies and experiences. As with similar sustainable tourism experiences such as indigenous or wildlife tourism, CBT can possess elements drawn from the majority of sustainable tourism typologies as identified in Table 3.1. I argue that the concept of CBT places the community as the central element. It relies upon utilizing tourism as a mechanism to support and contribute to sustainable community development. This can only be achieved if there are responsible and ethical practices as part of the CBT planning and management processes. The experience for the visitor should be authentic and educational, introducing them to the unique attributes of the community. CBT also has the opportunity to address poverty and elements associated with poverty in the community.

As CBT becomes more commonplace in the 21<sup>st</sup> century tourism industry, I suggest it will remain associated and positioned with other sustainable tourism typologies, especially by potential tourists. This will also continue to depend on where the CBT project is located and the resources it relies upon to create the tourist experience. For example, if the project is in a rural farming village, the tourist experience may be influenced by the lifeways of the village,

specifically its farming activities. If the project is in a village located in a forest or jungle, the tourist experience may include the lifeways of the village and also include the villagers' interaction and use of the forest or jungle. A potential tourist may position both of these CBT projects as a form of ecotourism, given the learning experience both projects offer. CBT practitioners through their marketing strategies and the delivery of the actual tourist experience have the opportunity to clearly differentiate CBT as another sustainable tourism typology that may draw upon components of other sustainable tourism typologies.

### **3.6 Conclusion**

This chapter provided an in-depth investigation of CBT, specifically offering a contextualization of CBT and exploration of key themes. I document CBT scientific literature dating to the 1980s and argue it has grown considerably, becoming in the 21<sup>st</sup> century an interdisciplinary study. As evidence, I have identified Rifkind's 1981 study that examined the relationship between tourism and communities, Murphy's 1985 foundational monologue where the community's contribution toward tourism planning and management was explored in detail, to Beeton's 2006 seminal publication that investigated the development of the 'local' community through sound business and tourism strategies. I have also commented on contemporary CBT studies that suggest a more interdisciplinary approach toward CBT, specifically Spenceley's 2010 investigation of responsible tourism with four chapters devoted to CBT, Thapa's 2013 examination of the relationship between gender and CBT in Cambodia, and Matutano's 2012 publication focusing on the social and cultural impacts of CBT projects in Namibia. Moreover, to emphasize the growing contribution of CBT scientific investigations between 2015 and 2016, the preeminent scientific journals concerning tourism, *Tourism Management* and the *Annals of Tourism Research* collectively published eighteen articles specifically relating to CBT.

Within the chapter I have also critiqued definitions of CBT. I have concluded that like numerous tourism definitions, consensus within the tourism industry concerning a holistic accepted definition of CBT is yet to be reached. I argue when defining CBT, it appears the scientific literature and technical narratives appear to be moving more toward taking a conceptual approach than relying purely on an identified definition. The chapter provides specific examples of this contextual approach, mainly Matutano's (2012) use of indicators or characteristics to determine if a project can be identified as CBT and Spenceley's (2010) application of CBT qualifiers that utilize specific criteria that also determine if a project can be referred to as CBT. For the purposes of this thesis, I have drawn from a detailed critique of CBT literature to be able to provide a definitional statement and associated considerations of CBT. This definition and associated considerations may also have broader implications beyond the thesis, particularly useful for those involved in the study or management of CBT.



I have also referred to the importance of the relationship between the social economy and CBT. Establishing a social economy within a community has positive benefits for establishing and operating successful CBT projects. I argue that a social economy's unique approach based upon social morals and humanitarian undertakings, and the focus to develop new sustainable social, economic and environmental strategies to address the failings of conventional public/private undertakings substantially complements the purpose and endeavors of CBT. I examined the concept of neo-colonialism and neo-liberalism that in turn provides logical arguments for the establishment of social economies and CBT. Tolkach and King's (2015) investigation has provided substance for my argument, specifically their narrative identifying that the motivations to pursue CBT in marginalized, remote, rural and ethnic communities have been in response to neo-colonialism, neo-liberalism and mass tourism. I further extended this theme into Cambodia for the purposes of conceptualizing the growth of CBT. I provided specific examples of where neo-colonialism and neo-liberalism have flourished and have had a significant negative impact on the equality of distributing benefits derived from the country's recent tourism growth. I have specifically referred to the illegal repossession of land for tourism development, government corruption, and as evidenced in the 2016 Global Witness Report into the corporate empire of the Hun Sen Government, the questionable linkages and influence government officials have with industry, including tourism. In conclusion, despite the downside to neo-colonial and neo-liberalism forces, there has been a strong push to establish a sustainable tourism agenda that may counteract these forces and the continued growth of the mass tourism market.

This chapter has also provided an exploration of the CBT consumer (tourist) and identified the complexities of positioning CBT within sustainable and responsible tourism experiences. I have taken a somewhat different approach toward this task, deviating from previous literature that has attempted to contextualize the CBT tourist, and provided a new approach toward this contextualization. To understand the traits, characteristics and behaviors of the 21<sup>st</sup> century CBT tourist, I have argued the commencement point of an examination must be the exploits of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century grand tourists, specifically a lesser known group referred to as the 'Levant Lunatics' and their quest for seeking out remote destinations that would provide significant adventure and cultural enlightenment. I have identified the work of Boorstin (1961) and Turner and Ash (1975) and their focus on examining the changes from the 1950s onwards of tourist behavior influencing the identification of the 'mass tourist'. As a revolt of mass tourism and associated behaviors, I have relied on the work of Poon (1993) and Weaver and Lawton (2010), to construct a profile of a contemporary 'green tourist' that I have identified as the most likely consumer for CBT experiences.

## Chapter Four

### Community-based Tourism in Practice: Management, quality and accreditation

#### 4.1 Introduction

*For the things we have to learn before we can do them, we learn by doing them. (Aristotle, n.d)*

The scholarly literature is not the only source of knowledge pertaining to CBT. Those investigating CBT should also consider referring to technical data and associated reports that provide a wealth of knowledge from the practitioners of CBT. This chapter analyzes such material for the purposes of understanding the merits and failings of CBT from the viewpoint of specific projects. The chapter pays particular attention to the failure of the Dolphin Discovery Trail in Cambodia attributed to poor stakeholder involvement and ongoing support. Other CBT projects in Cambodia have shown signs of effective development and management. I utilize the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation's Community-based Tourism Best Practice Manual to specifically review the Chambok and Chi Phat CBT Projects. The chapter then turns its attention to quality and accreditation issues. Unlike hotels that are accredited through various mechanisms, usually star ratings that provide the guest with an evaluation of quality, globally, CBT lacks formal accreditation programs. I argue the 2016 development of the ASEAN Community Based Tourism Standard has now provided a suitable framework for capacity building, continuous improvement and accreditation of CBT projects in member countries. This second part of this chapter provides a detailed analysis of the ASEAN Community Based Tourism Standard, concluding the Standard is an important contribution to the development and ultimately sustainability of CBT in Southeast Asia.

#### 4.2 Community-based tourism in practice

Of value to this research is a summary of technical literature produced for CBT and specific CBT projects. I was interested to examine and include technical reports by consultants or NGOs and communications produced directly by projects as part of this thesis's contribution. For those involved with managing or investigating CBT, this process may assist toward a deeper understanding of CBT, specifically the CBT experience. A worthwhile commencement point is the 'Community Based Tourism Handbook', published in 2003 by Responsible Ecological Social Tour (REST), an NGO operating in Thailand. This pioneering project in Thailand commenced in 2000, focusing on sustainable tourism development and environmental protection. The project's work with communities across Thailand, particularly the hill tribes in Northern Thailand, has focused on the participatory 'grassroots' approach that has empowered communities to employ tourism as a mechanism for social and economic development. This has

in turn assisted the community to better manage and protect their resources. It also contributed toward the development of community capital. REST states:

Since our conception, REST has been working with over 15 local communities in Thailand. Our work has shared multiple benefits across a spectrum of stakeholders. Participating communities have adapted and applied the CBT concept to design their own tour programs and to establish profit sharing models including 'Community Funds'. REST encourages local women and youth to play a leading role at all stages of community activities, from research and development to implementation and evaluation (Suansri, 2003, p. 119).

REST's experience allowed the NGO to publish a handbook specifically for other CBT practitioners on developing and managing CBT. The handbook's information focused upon choosing a destination (community and market potential, government policy and funding), completing a feasibility study (goals and motivations, impacts of tourism, potential of community, participation potential), and business planning (vision and objectives, administration, designing the tourist experience, marketing, monitoring and evaluation, stakeholder management).

An in-depth 2008 publication commissioned by the UNWTO examined tourism and community development in Asia (UNWTO, 2008). The goal of the study was to investigate linkages between tourism and community development for the purposes of developing strategic guidelines and establishing a common approach toward the development and management of CBT in the Asian region. The publication reviewed and evaluated CBT projects in China, Cambodia, Thailand, Lao, Vietnam, Korea, Mongolia, Japan, Sri Lanka and Nepal. Various important aspects of CBT were examined, including community participation and external factors impacting participation, challenges of sustainable community development in Asia, and utilizing a systems approach to better understand and evaluate the complexities existing between tourism, the community and sustainable development. The publication further argued 'the evaluation of community tourism should be viewed from a long-term point of view and the policies should be based on pattern change rather than short term issues' (p. 12). Attention is drawn toward the importance of examining two systems to better understand and evaluate community tourism. The two systems identified for examination are the macro/global tourism system and the local 'political, cultural, social, economic and environmental system in which community tourism is embedded' (p. 12).

Of note in the UNWTO's 2008 Tourism and Community Development publication is a case study specifically relating to Cambodia entitled 'The Dolphin Discovery Trail: A proposal for adventure tourism, conservation and poverty alleviation in Cambodia'. To better understand how tourism may be used for conservation of the endangered Mekong River Dolphin and also for community development purposes, the study employed a stakeholder analysis for its

methodology. The findings identified a wide and complex range of similar and competing interests among stakeholders. The study also determined conflict between members of the same stakeholder group was common, and on occasion as great or greater than conflict between the different stakeholder groups. The conclusion of the analysis drew attention toward four major stakeholder weaknesses: 1) a specific emphasis on only one area of the river left a further 130 kilometers of river unattended, 2) a tourism and conservation focus on only one area of the river would not achieve a holistic conservation effort along the total dolphin habitat therefore risking uncontrolled development in other vulnerable areas, 3) equity in tourism development was required for the 75 villages not located directly on the banks of the dolphin pools, and 4) external economic and business interests were more focused toward the profitability of short-term dolphin ecotourism rather than conservation and long-term community and wildlife sustainability.

The concept to address stakeholder concerns and differences as identified in the previous paragraph—‘The Dolphin Discovery Trail’—had two overarching purposes. The first was to create a partnership between the tourism industry and conservation agencies with the objective that these two sectors would work together on developing appropriate forms of tourism and secondly suitable conversation strategies. The second purpose was to utilize Royal Cambodian Government (RCG) policies that could achieve positive outcomes deemed beneficial to the majority of the stakeholders with poverty alleviation being the central focus. It was proposed the Dolphin Discovery Trail would be a non-vehicular walking and cycling trail commencing at the Lao Border and extending 190 kilometers south along the Mekong River. The trail would therefore allow for a detailed and comprehensive management strategy achieving consistency in its approach over a larger area. As the proposed trail would pass through every village, the villagers would have the opportunity to develop small-scale tourism commerce, specifically accommodation, food and beverage, local tours and handicrafts. The proposal identified capacity building and human resource development for village communities, greater employment opportunities for women, youths and disadvantaged minorities as key outcomes contributing toward poverty alleviation. Also identified was the potential to harness the tourism multiplier effect through backward linkages into agriculture through the sale of produce to guesthouses and tourists.

The solution this proposal offered (The Dolphin Discovery Trail) had wide-reaching opportunities for similar tourism and community development projects in the developmental phase or currently operating in Cambodia. The successful implementation of the solution relied upon the Royal Government of Cambodia’s legislative and regulatory frameworks for protection and conservation (for this specific case, legislation concerning the Mekong River Dolphin protection, conservation and tourism development). The proposal states a very important point that remains a constant weakness for similar projects in Cambodia, ‘however

the intent of these government initiatives requires support by strong action and constant monitoring in their implementation if they are to be effective in protecting the dolphin' (p. 63). The stakeholder analysis provided the necessary information to develop a comprehensive sustainable strategy that would deliver positive outcomes for the majority of stakeholders, specifically addressing poverty alleviation, conservation, backward linkages and diversification of local incomes, capacity building, broadening the Cambodian attraction inventory, and employment opportunities. The proposal concludes by suggesting 'the future of the Mekong River dolphin now rests in the hands of many stakeholders' (p. 70).

The proposal came to realization in 2010 as a joint initiative between the Cambodian Ministry of Tourism, the UNWTO and the SNV Netherlands Development Organization. At the time of this thesis's publication it is reported the trail has not been maintained. Guesthouses have been abandoned and are in disrepair, the official website has been taken offline, signage along the trail has disappeared and stakeholders now appear to be disengaged and showing little interest in the initiative (Camboguide, 2016). Despite strong stakeholder support in the early phases of the project, within six years the project has fallen apart. No published analysis to date provides an examination of its failures; however, as the initial proposal suggested, the project would only be successful if there was little stakeholder dissonance, ongoing government support and strong capacity building in the project's early phase. The proposal has merit concerning a workable tourism and conservation strategy, specifically its methodology focusing on stakeholder analysis. The negative outcome further suggests the complexities of sustaining a project of this size and scope in developing countries, and the challenges of uniting stakeholders.

Another offering for CBT practitioners was the 2010 Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) publication of 'Effective Community Based Tourism: A Best Practice Manual'. Researchers working with the Institute of Sustainable Futures at the University of Technology, Sydney, produced this manuscript guided by APEC and the Sustainable Tourism Cooperative Research Centre (STCRC). The purpose of the manual was to provide guidance to local communities in regional and rural areas on the issues concerning the development of CBT. A further key objective was to increase awareness in the Asia-Pacific region of utilizing CBT as a mechanism for social, economic and environmental development (Asker, Boronyak, Carrard & Paddon, 2010). The manual also argues its purpose is to integrate the general principles of community development, sustainable tourism and community needs while protecting social, cultural and environmental resources. Through case studies, the manual utilizes CBT best practice examples, process, practices, risks and challenges that may collectively contribute toward developing and managing successful CBT ventures. Notably, two of the case studies employed are the Chambok and Chi Phat Ecotourism Projects in Cambodia.

The Chambok CBET, established in 2002, is located on the periphery of the Kirirom National Park in the Kampong Speau province of Cambodia. The project encompasses nine villages of approximately 2500 villagers. The main attraction for visitors is the waterfall and guided natural forest tours; however, the Chambok CBET project highlights village life as a significant visitor experience. Secondary experiences include swimming, ox cart riding, bicycling, traditional crafts, trekking and camping (<https://chambok.org>). The project allows villagers to generate alternative incomes through tourism, rather than traditional forms of dependence and income that included destructive forest practices such as logging and clearing the forest for agricultural purposes. The project also allows for community capacity building through villager skills development in tourism and hospitality-related functions. Of note with this project is the empowerment of village women through their involvement in the management of food, handicrafts, ox-cart rides and bicycle renting (Asker et al., 2010). The project has also constructed a visitor's center. Village children who are taught traditional Apsara dancing provide cultural performances for visitors. This activity allows for children to appreciate and learn the importance of the stories embedded in the actual Apsara dances. The Chambok CBET webpage states that since 2003 the project has managed to protect 1260 hectares of forest from destructive practices such as logging and hunting (<https://chambok.org>). The Chambok case study identifies a key challenge for the project as to become financially sustainable and to be able to manage the project without the support of an NGO. The study also makes the valuable point of the importance of tourism development risk awareness. The community should clearly understand what the positive and negative implications may be once tourism development occurs, and how development may impact the villagers' livelihoods and lifeways (Asker et al., 2010, p. 95).

I have previously discussed the Chi Phat CBET project in this chapter, but here I will summarize the findings from the APEC 2010 publication. Like the Chambok CBET project, the main objective for the Chi Phat CBET was to provide villagers with an alternative source of income, therefore reducing their dependence on logging and other practices that involve forms of deforestation. In turn, the CBET could play a role toward protecting the region's biodiversity. The Cardamom Mountains (where the project is located) is ecologically important. The forests contain many of Cambodia's plant species and are home to a large array of wildlife including 14 globally threatened mammal species (Asker et al., 2010). The main threat to this region is illegal logging, hunting activities and forest clearing for agricultural purposes. These activities are chiefly caused by poverty in the region and the availability of commercial markets (specifically with China) trading in live animals and associated animal products for the purposes of Chinese medicine and clothing. Direct benefits delivered by the CBET are chiefly the achievement of sustainable livelihoods through the involvement in management and conservation of the forest and associated biodiversity. Villagers have been trained as eco-tour guides, homestay hosts, first aiders and in mountain bike management. Community capacity building has included

ecotourism training for villagers, specifically focusing on the main principles of ecotourism, conservation, product management and satisfaction, impact monitoring and developing English language and communication proficiency. Financially, the CBET operates with similarities to the Banteay Chhmar CBT project. A community fund has been established and a nominated percentage of tourism revenue is deposited into the fund. The fund is primarily used for maintaining CBET operations and essential infrastructure utilized by the entire community. Key challenges for the CBET include ongoing conflicts between those involved in the project and others involved in illegal logging, hunting and forest clearing. Knowledge barriers, shared community decision-making, involving more community members and distribution of the CBET economic benefits have also been identified as challenges. Of special note with this project is the community's resilience and willingness to protect their natural resources. The case study notes when the project commenced the villagers were concerned they were powerless to stop the destruction of the forest, mainly because of poverty and a lack of education. In 2008, 80% of villagers had embraced or become involved in ecotourism, accepting it as an alternative and sustainable livelihood for the community (Asker et al., 2010).

I make reference here to another significant study of the Chi Phat CBET project by Reimer and Walter (2013) entitled 'How do you know it when you see it? Community-based ecotourism in the Cardamom Mountains of southwestern Cambodia'. The purpose of Reimer and Walter's exploratory qualitative case study was to illustrate through an analytical framework the complexities of CBET in practice. The study used the Chi Phat project as its target. Following the application and analysis of the framework, the results and subsequent evidence gathered from interviews and associated fieldwork at Chi Phat suggested because of the CBET project the villagers' livelihoods had improved. The findings drew attention to fewer villagers engaging in logging and hunting activities, greater villager engagement in conservation awareness and associated activities, and village lifeways were now being documented and taught to others in the community. The study concludes by clearly arguing 'the importance of local context in understanding the nature of ecotourism and its impacts...In practice, there can be no one size fits all model of ecotourism: different local contexts will introduce different challenges and complexities' (p. 131).

The technical and consumer (online) information pertaining to the Chi Phat and Chambok projects also assists to identify how these projects, and other Cambodian CBT projects contribute value to the tourist, the community, the environment, and importantly the differentiation of the visitor experience from other CBT projects across the region, particularly in Thailand and Vietnam. The uniqueness of Cambodian culture, its food, customs, built and natural environment, history and lifeways constantly feature throughout the Cambodian CBT projects public communication efforts. Given that often tourists from western nations unfamiliar with Southeast Asian countries assume that this region shares similar if not generic culture, it

has remained important for Cambodian CBT projects to promote ‘unique Cambodian experiences’ for the primary purpose of differentiation.

#### **4.3 The ASEAN Community Based Tourism Standard**

The most recent and valuable contribution (January 2016) for CBT practitioners is a manual developed by the Cambodian Ministry of Tourism with the support of the ASEAN Tourism Standards Task Force. The manual entitled *ASEAN Community Based Tourism Standard* (ASEAN, 2016) is perhaps the most valuable and extensive strategy document concerning the management and operation of CBT published to date. The construction of the ASEAN CBT Standard has stemmed from the Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria, Green Globe 21 and the Thai Community-Based Tourism Institute (CBT-I) Standards. The Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria was established as a response to the UN’s Millennium Goals for the purposes of reducing the social, environmental and economic outcomes of tourism, and providing to communities the opportunity to enhance sustainable planning initiatives. The identified standards are relatively broad and useful for application at a destination level; however, standards and criteria specifically relating to CBT are missing. These include accommodation, food and beverages, hygiene, guiding, guiding and business practices—all essential components for the development, operation and accreditation of CBT. Green Globe 21 is a global membership of tourism organizations who have been identified as making positive contributions to people and the planet (Green Globe 21, 2016). The Green Globe 21 certification criteria identifies four key standards and sub criteria: 1) sustainable management, 2) social/economic, 3) cultural heritage, and 4) environmental. The organization provides certification, education and training to tourism services seeking Green Globe certification and membership. The identified criteria, while useful for destinations, like the Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria fails to identify key developmental strategies for local CBT projects. The Thai Community-Based Tourism Institute (CBT-I) Standards was the third influencing component of the ASEAN CBT Standard. The Standards were introduced in 2013 in response to the need for greater market access, increased competition between CBT projects and the growing number of tourists seeking CBT experiences. The CBT-I Standards identify that communities will benefit from the Standards through utilizing an integrated frame for community development, driving quality and sustainability initiatives and building confidence with tourism intermediaries and tourists. The main objective of the Standards had a community orientation, specifically toward understanding and protecting community rights (Suansri & Yeejaw-Haw, 2013). The Standards identify five key criteria that are not necessarily purely about certification, but are also utilized for internal assessment, benchmarking and improvement. These five criteria are: 1) sustainable tourism management for CBT, 2) CBT distributes benefits broadly to the local area and society and improves quality of life, 3) CBT celebrates, conserves and supports cultural heritage, 4) systematic, sustainable natural resource and environmental management, and 5) CBT service



and safety (Suansri & Yeejaw-Haw, 2013, p. 22.). The weakness of the Standards primarily is geographic. The Standards were designed for specific application in Thailand, therefore applying them in other ASEAN countries and contexts would be restrictive.

Given the rapid growth of alternative forms of 'green' tourism throughout Southeast Asia, specifically CBT, and the need to develop a cohesive set of unifying CBT standards, ASEAN members set about developing a regional standard and certification for CBT. Novelli, Klatter and Dolezal (2016) show how between 2007 and 2009 the European Centre for Ecological and Agricultural Tourism implemented a project in Cambodia, Indonesia and Mongolia that focused on CBT standards and marketing, specifically aiming to identify and common set of standards and to improve supply chains. Funding from the European Union Asia-Invest initiative enabled Cambodia to become the host country for the purposes of implementing CBT standards. The funding enabled the Cambodia Community-Based Ecotourism Network (CCBEN) to develop a set of standards with the support of external expertise and the Cambodian Government. The aim of this task was to provide a CBT standards manual that could guide sustainable development, operational and management strategies, continuous improvement and a certification process for CBT projects across ASEAN countries.

The University of the Sunshine Coast and Griffith University, both in Australia and under the leadership of Professor RW (Bill) Carter, provided support for significant consultation, workshopping and a conference (International Conference on Community Development Through Tourism, Phnom Penh, 2014) throughout the developmental stages of the manual. The objective and scope of the ASEAN CBT Standard manual identifies consistent CBT standards to be adopted by all member states with a focus toward using community assets, specifically livelihoods, cultural and natural features to create quality visitor experiences presented in a manner considered attractive and safe (ASEAN, 2016). Reference is also made to the importance of protecting community resources, specifically the local economy, utilizing CBT to improve the well-being of community members, and the empowerment of community members through the development and management process of CBT. Importantly, the manual clearly states that all CBT, to be considered CBT in the ASEAN member states, need to meet the following criteria that are integrated into the performance standards and associated criteria:

1. Involve and empower community to ensure ownership and transparent management,
2. Establish partnerships with relevant stakeholders,
3. Gain recognised standing with relevant authorities,
4. Improve social well-being and maintenance of human dignity,
5. Include a fair and transparent benefit sharing mechanism,
6. Enhance linkages to local and regional economies,
7. Respect local culture and tradition,

8. Contribute to natural resource conservation,
9. Improve the quality of visitor experiences by strengthening meaningful host and guest interaction, and
10. Work towards financial self-sufficiency.

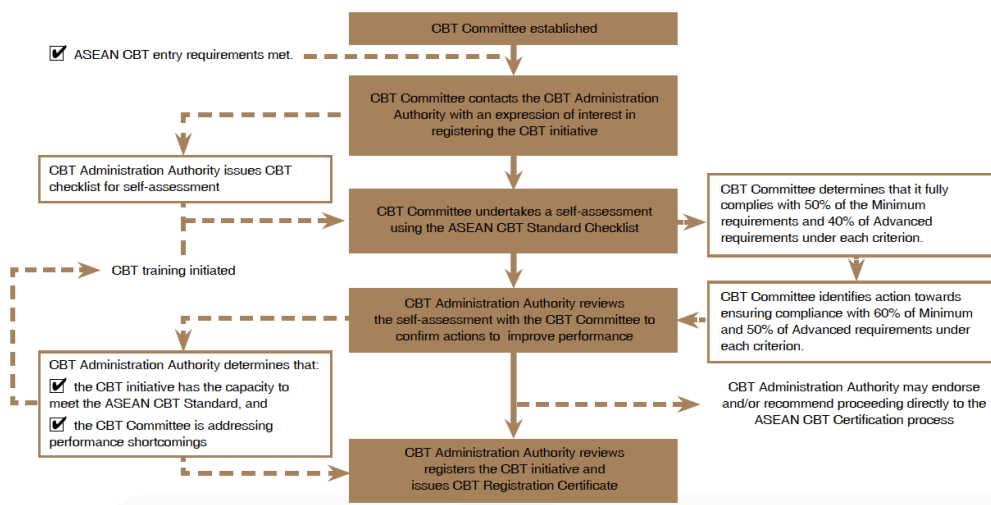
(ASEAN, 2016, p. 2).

The ASEAN CBT Standard manual (2016) is divided into four comprehensive chapters. The first chapter identifies and explains the eight key standards and related codes of conduct as being: 1) standards for community ownership, 2) standards for contribution to social well-being, 3) standards for conserving and improving the environment, 4) standards for encouraging interaction between the local community and guests, 5) standards for quality tour and guiding services, 6) standards for ensuring quality food and beverage services, 7) standards for ensuring quality accommodation, and 8) standards for ensuring the performance of (in-bound) CBT-friendly tour operators. These standards then have 23 sub-criteria. Each of the sub-criteria then has minimum requirements, advanced requirements and best practices requirements attached to them. There are 171 performance criteria and indicators in total. Chapter Two provides a checklist for the purposes of assessment concerning the performance of CBT projects and actual achievement of the ASEAN CBT standards. The checklist was designed as a practical tool for CBT projects and assessors to utilize in determining the merits and failings of the project and therefore develop strategies to capitalize on the merits and address the failings.

The CBT Standard Checklist contained in Chapter Two of the manual provides guidance for registration, endorsement and certification. Of interest in this chapter is the narrative concerning these processes. The manual states ‘application of the ASEAN CBT Standard to specific CBT initiatives involves registration with, and endorsement by, an in-country CBT Administration Authority, and for certification, under the auspices of ASEAN, through the National Tourism Organization’ (ASEAN, 2016, p. 46). This suggests each ASEAN member country will take ownership of the registration, endorsement and certification process. I and others (Novelli et al., 2016) argue that while the ASEAN CBT Standard serves as a constructive mechanism to assist communities toward the strategic planning, operation and management of CBT, governance (especially at the country level), funding and adequate infrastructure are current existing barriers. I further argue that immediately implementing the certification and registration requirements for CBT projects in Cambodia would result in failure. Before successful practices for auditing, certification and registration can occur, the development of transparent governance, capacity building through appropriate funding of training and development for those at government or community level who will be responsible for CBT, and sufficient in-country CBT expertise needs to be achieved. In Cambodia’s defense, the government’s continued sustainable tourism agenda, the longevity of existing CBT projects,

and the expertise at community level in the operation and management of these projects provides a strong foundation to work toward the implementation of the ASEAN CBT Standard.

Chapter Two of the manual also provides a detailed explanation concerning the registration, endorsement and certification processes and emphasizes learning and improvement are essential to every stage of the processes. The ASEAN CBT Standard is based upon the standards initially identified in the ASEAN Tourism Standards manual and as noted above, is the responsibility for each member country to administer. Once a CBT project complies with 50% of the minimum requirements and at least 40% of advanced requirements, they can be registered for endorsement through the country's CBT Administration Authority (Figure 4.1). In the case of Cambodia, this would be a nominated sub-committee within the Ministry of Tourism. The first stage for registration is the CBT project, in cooperation with the CBT Authority if required, undertaking a self-assessment. Following the assessment, the CBT authority will review the application and determine if the CBT project has met the requirements or further training and capacity building is required. Once a CBT project has been registered, they become eligible for endorsement and certification.







**Figure 4.1:** The process of registration as a CBT initiative (ASEAN, 2016, p. 48)

The further two steps of the ASEAN CBT Standard process are endorsement and certification. The manual says that when a CBT project has complied with 60% of the minimum requirements and 50% of the advanced requirements, the CBT Authority can proceed to award the ASEAN CBT Standard Certification. Similar to the registration process, the CBT project conducts a self-assessment, followed by the CBT Authority reviewing the assessment and either endorsing it for certification or recommending further training and capacity building activities. In both the registration and endorsement processes, CBT projects must also demonstrate strategic actions toward continuous improvement and achieving higher minimum and advanced





compliance percentages. The final stage is CBT certification by the country's government tourism organization. This occurs through a recommendation from the CBT Authority once the CBT project has completed a full audit covering all CBT services as identified in the ASEAN CBT Standard manual.

ASEAN CBT Standard certification of CBT projects require both an independent auditor and CBT representative undertake the compliance audit with the CBT Committee. Once complete, the audit is submitted to the country's CBT Authority with a recommendation to certify or for further compliance. To be eligible for certification, the CBT project must meet 70% of the minimum ASEAN CBT Standard requirements and 60% of the advanced requirements. As with registration and endorsement, the CBT project must also demonstrate a strategy of continuous quality improvement management, with the objective of best practice. The National Tourism Organization is identified as being the endorsing authority. The manual recommends the independent auditor to be a tourism industry representative, an academic (with experience in CBT), a CBT committee member from an already certified project or any person identified by the government tourism organization who has suitable experience to undertake a tourism audit. The manual also refers to 'evidence based assessment' (p. 50). It explains that many of the indicators will involve subjective assessment, therefore multiple sources of evidence may be required, for example, documents relating to CBT operations, assessor observations, stakeholder interviews and photographic sources.

Chapters Three and Four of the ASEAN CBT Standard are two workbooks, the Standard Audit Workbook contained in Chapter Three and the Community Workbook contained in Chapter Four. The Standard Audit Workbook is to assist the independent auditor(s) with the audit process. The workbook identifies various codes of practice that should be used as suitable evidence for certain indicators. The chapter also provides a more detailed explanation of what constitutes acceptable forms of evidence and how evidence can be scored against the indicators. Through each of the criteria and sub-criteria the workbook requests identification of the type of evidence, explanation of evidence, actions to improve performance and the rating (Figure 4.2). The conclusion of the chapter is utilized for the assessment summary tables and the auditor's recommendation. Chapter Four, the Community Workbook, is for the CBT project to undertake self-assessment. The self-assessment can be used specifically for registration and endorsement. The workbook is also a useful tool for working toward CBT certification. The ASEAN CBT Codes of Conduct are also part of the workbook and are identified as 1) CBT Member's Code of Conduct, 2) CBT Guide's Code of Conduct, 3) CBT Food and Beverage Service Provider's Code of Conduct, 4) CBT Accommodation Provider's Code of Conduct, 5) CBT Friendly Tour Operator's Code of Conduct. Each one of the above codes has sub-criteria attached to it for the CBT project to confirm they will agree to it before signing the Code of Conduct Agreement.

Explanation of evidence				Fully complies	Partly complies	Does not comply	Not applicable
4.1.6 A program of cross-cultural communication and understanding exists. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Best practice requirement				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence	 <input type="checkbox"/>	 <input type="checkbox"/> E.g., host and guest interactions	 <input type="checkbox"/> E.g., Advice of members	 <input type="checkbox"/>	Not essential		
Action to improve performance							

Explanation of evidence				Fully complies	Partly complies	Does not comply	Not applicable
4.1.7 Opportunities exist for tourists to contribute to local activities alongside community members. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Best practice requirement				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence	 <input type="checkbox"/>	 <input type="checkbox"/> E.g., guests working with hosts	 <input type="checkbox"/> E.g., Advice of members	 <input type="checkbox"/>	Not essential		
Action to improve performance							

**Figure. 4.2:** Performance Criteria and Indicators (ASEAN CBT Standard, p. 137)

With reference to Cambodia, while the ASEAN CBT Standard has been approved by the Ministry of Tourism, no actual CBT project has completed the full process from registration to certification. In a presentation (Carter & Cheatham, 2014) at the International Conference on Community Development Through Tourism, it was identified during 2015 the ASEAN CBT Standard would be reviewed, revised and ratified by ASEAN. It would then be tested in Laos and Cambodia before final reviews and revisions were made. A small number of training workshops for CBT projects were conducted by the Cambodian government, and currently there exists some awareness among Cambodian CBT projects of the ASEAN CBT Standard. In January 2017, when I questioned the Bantray Chhmar CBT project members about applying for endorsement and certification, they responded that two CBT members attended two days of training during the summer of 2016. Moreover, there was no Cambodian version and they had heard this may be developed and be somewhat different from the original document. Since the training workshop, they have heard no further information concerning the Standard, endorsement and certification apart from rumors the government was yet to agree upon a final version for Cambodia. The implications of a fairly slow response toward the application and continued use of the Standard across CBT projects in Cambodia will result in a lack of quality assurance and continuous improvement initiatives, therefore diminishing the overall quality of the visitor experience and the opportunity for CBT to meaningfully contribute to community development.

The ASEAN CBT Standard is a significant planning, benchmarking and continuous improvement tool to support CBT projects in their quest to deliver sustainable best practices and quality visitor experiences. There appears to be strong commitment from the Royal Cambodian Government and broader tourism industry toward implementing the ASEAN CBT Standard, but certain barriers remain. Novelli et al.'s (2016) investigation noted the Standard's self-assessment tool 'can be regarded as being devised as a sustainable tourism planning tool, and is likely to remain the main if not the only achievable objective, given the diversity of those involved and the complex political environment' (p. 12). More broadly, governance concerning the Standard remains complex and disconnected. ASEAN's tourism direction, objectives and strategies are assigned to the ASEAN economic cooperation framework and subsequent tourism policies identified within economic ministries. The implementation of these tourism policies becomes the responsibility of country-specific tourism ministries. Inter-ministry cooperation and understanding in ASEAN countries, or the lack thereof, limits the ability for initiatives such as the ASEAN CBT Standard to be successful. Moreover, considering the role in ASEAN countries played by external intermediaries in these initiatives, for example NGOs and international advisors often with very limited budgets, the need for a coordinated and connected approach toward governance remains paramount for these stakeholders to effectively provide the required technical assistance. Another consideration is a community's ability to effectively utilize the ASEAN CBT Standard documentation, undertake the required self-assessments and work with government authorities to seek endorsement and certification. The interpretation of criteria and associated requirements may be somewhat different between the Standard itself and the community. For example, the ASEAN CBT Standard 6.1.2 states 'food and beverage providers possess or can demonstrate commitment to hygienic food preparation and service techniques' (p. 63). From a western interpretation this involves complex procedures surrounding the storage of food, cleanliness of preparation areas and personal hygiene. In regional Cambodia, particularly in the more remote areas, these procedures become incredibly foreign and somewhat challenging for those involved in CBT food preparation and service. The question may also be raised as to the balance between western practices and the authenticity of the CBT experience. Can the implementation of the Standard's criteria requirements erode culturally authentic experiences? Initially for the success of the ASEAN CBT Standard, external expertise working 'alongside' the community addressing these complexities and building overall capacity for the community to take ownership of the Standard's requirements may become a critical component of overall success.

Novelli et al. (2016) have been very succinct in providing a discourse concerning the challenges toward implementation and utilization of the ASEAN CBT Standard. Themes of these challenges included lack of stable governance, funding opportunities and misaligned political culture, the lack of capacity in the community to execute the Standard, the complexities of multiple stakeholder involvement and clashing agendas, the diversity of communities in

different ASEAN nations and the challenge of common standards, and the balance between offering a ‘localized experience in a globalized and standardized world’ (p. 16). Opportunities were also identified concerning the Standard, specifically providing support for communities toward managing growing tourist numbers, the utilization of the Standard as a tool for planning, development and continuous improvement rather than certification that in turn may enhance community capacity building and sharing knowledge with other CBT projects in the ASEAN region to assist avoid the negative outcomes of increasing tourism development. Moreover, the Standard could become a mechanism to improve the management skills of CBT members and better improve sustainable development strategies within the community.

Novelli et al.’s (2016) investigation concluded the ASEAN CBT Standard has significant benefits toward tourism as a mechanism for sustainable community development, and to improve the overall quality of the CBT product. The challenge lies with the implementation of the Standard at a national level and the ability of the Standard to acknowledge local differences, specifically in the more remote regional and rural areas of ASEAN nations. The authors make the point of arguing there are other issues to be addressed before CBT standards and certification should be implemented. These issues are an overall lack of understanding regarding the complexities of CBT, and the utilization of CBT to address poverty in regional areas—given the challenges current CBT projects face of their own long-term sustainability. While this statement has merit, I further assert that understanding the complexities of CBT has significantly advanced, moving from a multidisciplinary study to now an interdisciplinary study ‘in which the perspectives of various disciplines are combined and synthesized into distinctive new tourism perspectives’ (Weaver & Lawton, 2006, p. 8). This includes both broader disciplines and tourism-specific perspectives that have been utilized to produce both scientific articles and books dedicated to CBT, many of these identified within this thesis. Moreover, Cambodia has made recent advancements to take the criteria to the CBT projects, and with technical expertise identify the actual community requirements when utilizing standards for the purposes of capacity building, continuous improvement and certification.

#### **4.4 Conclusion**

This chapter has provided an examination and critique of CBT industry practices, specifically technical literature, management strategies and the ASEAN Community Based Tourism Standard. I have provided an insight into the technical aspects of various projects in the Asia–Pacific region. Of note was the 2003 publication *Community-based Tourism Handbook* by the REST NGO operating in Thailand. The handbook served as a broad strategy document identifying key aspects and criteria for CBT projects. An extensive publication by the UNWTO was provided in 2008. This publication entitled *Tourism and Community Development* provided valuable case studies, particularly one centered on the failed Dolphin Discovery Trail CBT project in Cambodia. The case study provided an analysis as to why the project failed,

identifying the lack of operational capacity within the community and the lack of government support. Important to the technical literature was the 2010 APEC publication *Effective Community-based Tourism*. Like the UNWTO publication, this document provided numerous CBT case studies across the region, two relating to Cambodia, Chambok and Chi Phat CBT projects. The case studies cite the merits and challenges for the projects, specifically the ongoing need to protect community resources, human capacity to effectively operate the projects and the lack of local empowerment. I have also provided a detailed analysis of the most recent contribution to the technical literature concerning CBT, the *ASEAN Community-based Tourism Standard*. To date, this document/manual is the most detailed and important contribution to the development, operation and certification of CBT projects. The manual is not solely focused in certification for CBT projects; the key underlying strategy is continuous improvement and quality for projects. I have agreed with Novelli et al.'s (2016) argument that the ASEAN CBT Standard has significant benefits for tourism as a mechanism for sustainable community development, but the challenge lies with the implementation of the Standard at a national level (within the country), the ability of the Standard to acknowledge local differences, human capacity within a community to implement the standard and funding for the Standard to be successful. I conclude that Cambodia provides a fertile environment to develop a best practice framework for the application of the ASEAN CBT Standard, therefore allowing other ASEAN nations to follow. Moreover, for CBT projects in Cambodia to achieve overall sustainability and provide significant benefits for both the local community and visitors, the implementation of the ASEAN CBT Standard is logically the next step.



## **Chapter Five**

### **Contextualizing Community and a Study of Cambodian Communities**

*Community is one of those words—like ‘culture’, ‘myth’, ritual’, ‘symbol’—bandied about in ordinary, everyday speech, apparently readily intelligible to speaker and listener which when imported into the discourse of social science however causes immense problems (Cohen, 1985, p. 11).*

#### **5.1 Introduction**

The concept of community is central to this thesis because the importance of interpersonal relationships within a community is fundamental to the overall success and effectiveness of CBT. This chapter initially seeks to better understand the term community; it then provides a narrative of the social evolution of communities in Cambodia. I have divided my examination of Cambodian communities into two key periods, 1200 to 1978 and then 1978 to modern day. For any scholar undertaking research involving Cambodian communities, I argue it is essential to firstly have an understanding of the concept, identity, organization and workings of community and secondly an appreciation of the changes to these communities over time, specifically what has influenced these changes. An understanding of these community constructs provides a base upon which a sustainable tourism experience can be built. For the purposes of this study, an understanding of community and the evolution of Cambodian communities provides context and meaning to my observations and narratives gathered from Banteay Chhmar and the associated CBT stakeholders. Firstly, the chapter seeks to explore the myriad theories concerning the fundamentals of community. I then commence an analysis focusing on the social evolution of communities in Cambodia, identifying what has changed over time, and what has remained constant.

From the tourism perspective, this chapter also challenges existing perceptions potential tourists may have about Cambodian rural communities. In the age of mass media and access to information, tourists have developed idealistic perceptions of rural villages in Southeast Asia, perceptions influenced strongly by western media. The proliferation of travel and cooking television productions featuring localities in Southeast Asia is one such example. Images of a small rural community happily and collectively working in the rice fields during the day and retiring in the evening to share the evening meal and engage in traditional cultural activities are not uncommon. Villages in where the members wear traditional dress and lead a ‘subsistence’ life, where villagers live in traditional houses without modern contrivances, and a strong sense

of solidarity and community are also common perceptions. In the context of rural Cambodian villages, a lot of these perceptions can be proved incorrect.

## **5.2 Defining the concepts of community**

A logical commencement point for any study of CBT is to examine the concept of 'community' as it relates to the community or communities in question. Sherlock (1999) comments that the concept of community, though widely used by practitioners, governments, NGOs and the general public is 'a deeply problematic term' (p. 126). Studdert (2005) notes themes concerning community have reached all levels of politics and is championed by social science investigators. He believes this fevered interest can be attributed to 'widespread concerns over social cohesion and the degenerative effects on community of two decades of neo-liberalism and globalization' (p. 9). Specifically, the key forces playing upon the destruction of social cohesion in communities can be identified as a decline in voluntary association in communities, a lack of confidence toward political and NGO institutions, a loss of confidence with governmental institutions, the rise of neo-liberal individualism, the breaking down of traditional industrial communities as a result of globalization and the breaking down of cultural codes and values as a result of the cultural upheavals in the 1960s (Bauman, 1992; Etzioni, 1993; Giddens, 1998; Hirst, 1994; Putnam, 2000; Rifkin, 1995).

The result of these forces is the idea of conceptualizing communities as a fluid concept. Esposito's (2010) opening remarks from his philosophical manuscript examining the origin and destiny of communities suggest the misery of new individualisms have caused the failure of all communisms. He argues 'nothing seems more appropriate today than thinking community; nothing more necessary, demanded and heralded' (p. 1). Esposito (2010) then draws attention to narratives promoting that 'community is not translatable into a political-philosophical lexicon except by completely distorting it as occurred in the last century' (p. 1). This refers to societies radically altering discourses of community and diminishing the concept to simply an object. This could be conceptualized by appreciating the notion of individualism and its influence on society and communities over time. Barzun (2000) explores the theory that over the past century ideas and habits have chiefly shaped, united and divided cultural life. He identifies one result of this being individualism, conceptualizing it by suggesting 'primitive societies had no strong sense of self as individual apart from the community, and that reflects a fundamental truth, as it is only via relationships to others that one can develop and sustain a sense of who one is and what one represents' (Leiper, 2003, p. 66). Esposito's (2010) narrative appears to support Barzun's (2000) work, both connecting individualism as the destructive force that has eroded the collectivism and social cohesiveness of communities.

Block (2008) provides a more contemporary examination of communities. He suggests the traits of modern communities are isolation and self-interest. He offers a response to this

through suggesting the challenge is to reconnect elements of community fostering a ‘caring for the whole’ (p. 1). Block identifies the isolation and self-interest existing in modern communities is a result of ‘western culture, our individualistic narrative, the inward attention from our institutions and our professionals, and the messages from media’ (p. 2). The underlying principle of Block’s methodology to reconnect communities is the ability to develop sociality between members.

The above narrative has highlighted the forces contributing to the plight of modern communities, chiefly the decrease in sociality. The task is now to examine definitions of ‘community’ that may be suitable to conceptualize communities holistically rather than geographically. Mattessich and Monsey’s (2004) definition provides a possible insight to better understand the fundamentals of a modern community: ‘people who live within a geographically defined area and who have social and psychological ties with each other and with the place where they live’ (p. 56). They also suggest the majority of ‘community’ definitions refer to the elements that connect the community together and the geographic locality of the community, for example: ‘a grouping of people who live close to one another and are united by common interests and mutual aid’ (p. 56).

Mattessich and Monsey’s (2004) definitions imply the human element is just as important as the physical and spatial element. Without the human element communities simply become a collection of innate buildings, parks, streets and mailboxes. We then have Scott and Marshall’s (2009) definition emphasizing the importance of relationships and identity:

The concept of community concerns a particularly constituted set of social relationships based on something which the participants have in common—usually a common sense of identity. It is, to paraphrase Talcott Parsons, frequently used to denote a wide-ranging relationship of solidarity over a rather undefined area of life and interests (para. 1).

Beeton (2006) argues the importance of seeing beyond the popular geographic and political definitions commonly applied to identify communities and provides a more robust concept of community:

A community is an amalgamation of living things that share an environment. What truly delineates a community are the acts of sharing reciprocity and interaction, which can be realised in a number of ways. In human communities, intent, belief, resources, preferences, needs and a multitude of other conditions may be different for some community members, which in turn influence the mixture of that community. Nevertheless, the definitive driver of community is that all individual subjects in the mix have something in common. Such complexity can be seen in any community group, particularly those based on geographic boundaries (which is often the case in tourism as people tend to visit

places or destinations), as their members are continually changing, evolving and developing (p. 6).

Esposito (2010) moves away from these definitions and explores the word ‘common’ as applied to community stating:

What is common is that which unites the ethnic, territorial, and spiritual property of every one of its members. They have in common what is most properly their own; they are the owners of what is common to them all (p. 3).

I make reference to words such as ‘ties’, ‘uniting’, ‘common’, and ‘ownership’ that bind these definitions together. Another predominant theme emerging from the definitional literature is the concept of socialization, and the importance of this activity providing communities and their members with a sense of connectedness, of being-ness. Studdert (2005) suggests that communities are ‘never in a fixed state’ (p. 2). He applies the example of expatriate interactions to explain this concept, stating ‘expatriates may belong to multiple communities and communal multiplicity is not something the expatriate has control over’ (p. 2). Moreover, communal multiplicity ‘is created in the act of sociality, in the social being-ness’ (p. 2) the expatriate brings to the community. Studdert (2005) then argues any community that may have new members joining it, and as expatriates join, communities will be ‘constructed as a hybrid outcome of all our previous socialities and histories’ (p. 2). He then concludes community should be considered as a verb. The reason given identifies the outcome of sociality as an action or speech and as impossible to perform in the context of community without other people present. Simply, without ‘action and sociality, community cannot exist’ (p. 3). Therefore to be considered a member of a community the person must be engaging in ‘social action—sociality’ (p. 3). Rather than define ‘community’ Studdert (2005) offers five elements that are common to all communities and the concept of sociality:

- Multiplicity
- Hybridity
- Action, not thought as creative of community
- Communal as something constructed by some form of conscious or unconscious agreement
- Community as something more than the individual (p. 3).

A similar approach is taken by Bridger and Alter (2009), who stated most definitions of community have four commonalities: locality, local society, collective actions and a mutual identity. They note that each of these elements has become problematic in the 21<sup>st</sup> century; however, there appears to be one constant of communities and local life providing the community with an identity, and that is social interaction. The above concepts have varying applicability to communities in Cambodia. However, as I will document, the development of social interaction, kinship and bonds in Cambodian communities have contributed to their

resilience through times of significant change and hardships. In turn this has provided the catalyst for the development of community social capital with the potential for it to become an asset.

### **5.3 Cambodian communities 1200–1992**

A starting point to examine Cambodian communities is to acknowledge the existence and importance of kinship—as an act of socialization. Kinship and reciprocity are a societal concept apparent in both post-Angkorean and modern Cambodian villages (Demont & Heuveline, 2008; Ledgerwood, 1996; Kim, 2011). Ledgerwood’s scholarly paper examining Khmer kinship argues that while it has been generally acknowledged Khmer society was (and still is) matrilineal in structure, recent specific ethnographic research has agreed Khmer kinship is bilateral. Ebihara (1977) succinctly summarizes this argument:

The Khmer kinship system is basically bilateral or cognatic. There is no consistent weighting of either the male or the female lines in respect to property ownership or inheritance, the kin terminological system as a whole, and recognition of or behaviour toward kinsmen. The family or household constitutes the basic social unit in village life. There are no larger, organised kin groups, although each person recognizes a personal kindred of bilaterally related consanguines and affines. A personal kindred does not have clear-cut boundaries, membership, or function; it might better be considered a ‘field of association,’ whose exact nature varies according to individual recall and choice (p. 253).

Hughes (2001) writes ‘anthropologists have long debated the question of whether the Cambodian village should be viewed as a community linked by lines of solidarity, or simply as a collection of individual units grouped together for practical convenience’ (p. 5). Regardless, what is apparent in any investigation of Cambodian community is the higher degree of connectedness that exists either through kinship, solidarity, cultural practices, or work activities when compared to western communities. This sense of connectedness is necessary for community members to provide meaningful interactions with each other and in turn a commonality between them. This study favors a kin/bond-based model rather than territorial, as these are the links that have come to identify and define Cambodian communities rather than location.

My narrative concerning Cambodian society commences with Zhou Dagan, a gentleman who was part of a Chinese delegation visiting Cambodia in 1296–97. He is acknowledged for documenting one of the first ethnographic accounts of Cambodian community life. Chandler (2008) notes it is ‘the most detailed account we have about everyday life and the appearance of Angkor’ (p. 83). Dagan’s account does not specifically recall community interactions but it provides a broad description of social and cultural elements of the

Angkorian society as a whole. Of interest is Daguean's comments firstly relating to the existence of ninety or so prefectures with officials and then to village organization:

In every village there is a Buddhist temple or a pagoda. Where the population is quite dense there is normally an official called Maijie who is responsible for the security of the village. Resting places called Senmu, like our posting-houses, are normally found along the main roads (Daguean, 2007, p. 79).

Of interest to note, in 21<sup>st</sup> century Cambodia, the country still remains divided into provinces (*kheat*), districts, communes and villages (*phum*). Each village has an administrative head, the village chief (*Protean Phum*). The importance of a Wat or Pagoda remains central to village life. Daguean's account, while not detailed, also provides the reader with a sense that social stratification, kinship and reciprocity were important societal elements, an anthropological concept extensively explored by numerous Cambodian scholars (Chandler, 2008; Collins, 1998; Demont and Heuveline, 2008; Ebihara, 1971; Frings, 1993; Hughes, 2001; Ovesen, Trankell and Ojendal, 1996).

Ebihara (1971) identifies that sources specifically concerning the peasantry during the Angkor period are somewhat limited. She suggests a large proportion of the population was engaged in agrarian and fishing activities and the outcomes of these activities were used for trade, taxes and everyday necessities. Ebihara (1971) also comments:

There was some tendency to endogamy in royal and priestly lines, but the system of social stratification was essentially one of class rather than caste. There were, however definite rights and symbols of status associated with particular ranks and strata (e.g., certain kinds of dress and houses were forbidden to the ordinary populace) (p. 29).

A fairly extensive knowledge gap exists between the 15<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, particularly concerning village life. Ebihara (1971) refers to the period between 1431 and 1864 as a 'transition period' (p. 35) with Cambodia falling into 'a sort of limbo' (p. 35). Mabbett and Chandler (1995) note the period between the end of Angkor and the conclusion of the Second World War 'suffers from a shortage of useable sources and a lack of scholarly attention' (p. 218). Key events of this period were the relocation of the capital from Angkor to Phnom Penh and the influence of foreign relations on politics. The fall and subsequent decline of Angkor in the 15<sup>th</sup> century contributed to the deconstruction of the elite, or priestly class, who essentially held influence over the throne, religion, matters of state, education, landholdings and slaves. Another key element of the period post-15<sup>th</sup> century was the influence of Thai on all social and cultural aspects of Cambodian life. The population dispersed from the north-western rice growing areas around the ancient capital, Angkor. Communities were established along the southern river systems and during this period society became more reliant on trade from the ports.

The population between the 15<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries were mostly rural and engaged in rice farming, religious and official life. The majority of Cambodians lived in villages of three different types. Firstly, there were villages of several hundred people located along rivers used for trading and transportation (*kompong*). People who lived in these villages were usually in touch with other *kompongs* and had a greater awareness as to what was happening in other parts of Cambodia. The *kompong* was also used as a port. Usually located close to *kompongs* were the second type of village, predominantly a rice-growing community. Houses in these villages usually clustered around a Buddhist temple and were also close to a water source or pond providing water to the villagers. The third type of village was located in the forests or wilderness areas (*prei*). The villagers spoke a dialect related to Khmer, were illiterate, did not practice Buddhism and had no loyalties or connections to the *kompongs*. These villages remained economically important for two reasons, first because slaves were usually sourced from them and second because the villagers were able to harvest valuable forest resources.

Village life after the 15<sup>th</sup> century, specifically in rice-growing villages and villages in the *prei*, were not totally devoid of structure and order. Ayres (2000) tells us ‘the villages were usually centered on a local wat. On the surface they appeared loosely structured, with family and monkhood constituting the only durable groups. Beyond these groups, cohesion was maintained through a network or relationships between patrons and clients’ (p. 10). During this period it was common practice to identify yourself in relation to the status of the person you were communicating with. This practice assisted to embed relationships and societal positioning, from the king to slaves and people living in remote areas. Through this societal system, patronage and clientship become virtually essential to increase chances of survival (Chandler, 2008). This was especially important in peasant communities with members who required a patron referred to as *neak kro* (person who is poor) and patrons, *neak mean* (person with wealth).

Scholars and researchers generally agree that had the French not established a protectorate in the 1860s, Cambodia would have separated. The constant politicking and incursions of Vietnam and Siam for territory during the 18<sup>th</sup> and early part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century almost caused the dissolution of Cambodia. Siam would have claimed the western regions, and Vietnam the eastern regions. It may be argued the French intervention created a mediator between the three countries. Under the ‘protection’ of the French from the 1860s, a series of reforms were championed, specifically the abolition of slavery, the establishment of formalized ownership of private property, reforms and restructure to the bureaucracy and cuts to the monarchy expenditure. Tully (2005) notes land ownership prior to the establishment of the protectorate was somewhat different to the normally accepted understanding of property ownership in today’s world. All land was deemed crown land, in essence property of the king with no separation between the monarchy and the state. The French believed this was ‘a barrier

to material progress' and 'encouraged sloth and passivity on the part of the peasants, who made up the overwhelming majority of the Cambodian population' (Tully, 2005, p. 86). The French also saw this had negative implications for an efficient taxation system, as anybody could use land for farming purposes, as long as they had the king's blessing. If land was abandoned or became unproductive for a period of three years, other peasants could take the land over. State revenues were generated through a requirement for peasants to pay one-tenth of their income, in kind. This encouraged a focus on subsistence-based farming rather than private enterprise and its ensuing benefits such as a workable fair system of taxation and a better way to manage corruption evident in the existing system. Given this, the French instigated land reform, removing crown ownership and championing private land ownership.

Mabbett and Chandler (1995) state, 'French colonialism was a relatively painless affair' (p. 233) as Ebihara (1971) also notes 'it would seem, however, that much of the culture, particularly that of the peasantry, remained largely and fundamentally unmodified' (p. 43). The benefits for society seemed to outweigh any downside the French reforms caused. The chief benefit was continuous peace and stability, unachievable during the previous centuries. Improvements in health, agricultural knowledge and education also were achieved. Of interest is an observation made by Chandler (2008), which certainly may not seem foreign in 21<sup>st</sup> century Cambodia. He notes the French officials believed the Cambodian countryside and rural communities still remained 'terra incognita' (p. 179), specifically the lack of knowledge pertaining to how many people lived in these areas and who had titles of ownership over land. Servitude over debts was commonplace, even though slavery had been abolished, and bandits carried on their nefarious activities without hindrance. Village life and conditions were no more improved than they had ever been. From King Sisowath's ascent to the throne in 1906, Cambodians stopped governing themselves and the westernization of Cambodian life truly commenced, particularly in the urban areas. Chandler (2008) suspects that up until the end of the 1940s few Cambodians would have felt the French had a harmful or damaging effect on aspects such as subsistence farming, family routines and traditions, or religious practices.

To the credit of the French, they did improve accessibility and communication in regional Cambodia, establishing a greater network of gravel and fully paved roads, a functioning railroad and the dissemination of news through Khmer and French newspapers. As Chandler (2008) explains, these developments allowed the population to move in greater numbers around the country. The downside of the expansion into regional Cambodia was that it allowed the French and Chinese traders or entrepreneurs to exploit the rural economy and only really benefitted these people. Ebihara (1971) also identifies specific areas where French development and innovation resulted in identifiable benefits for peasantry. Ebihara concurs with Chandler (2008) that improvement in communication and transportation provided a means for villages to interact. Other benefits for the peasantry included improvements in the educational



system giving greater access for more young people to attend school or technical/higher education and improvements in the health system, for example, the introduction of vaccinations.

The end of both the Second World War and then French rule in 1953 heralded the beginning of a new chapter in Cambodian history that was to have a major and profound impact on communities and society in general. Mabbett and Chandler (1995) explain ‘after 1945 Cambodian history became a portion of world history, affected by decisions taken in Washington, Moscow and Beijing as well as in the capitals of Thailand and Vietnam’ (p. 236). During the years proceeding 1945, Cambodian communities continued their daily lives, routines and rituals, as they had done for the past few hundred years. The political changes upon Cambodia post-1945 caught many Cambodians ‘off guard’ and unprepared.

The majority of historical narratives pertaining to Cambodia’s modern history identify politics dominated by the king and then prime minister, Norodom Sihanouk, who was the single most important influencing factor contributing to rapid economic and social change after 1945. The Sihanouk era culminating in the rise of the Khmer Rouge were the foundations leading to the complete deconstruction of post-Angkorean communities and their social structure, leaving an ongoing legacy of trauma for the Khmer people.

Following the 1955 elections and subsequent election of the abdicated King Norodom Sihanouk to the prime ministership, the years that followed were a period of relative political stability. The 1957 Country Survey Series of Cambodia records the following:

The majority of the population live in small rural villages and towns, where they are occupied mainly as independent rice farmers or fishermen. The better-educated Cambodians fill the ranks of the government bureaucracy in the urban centers. The Buddhist monks, the bonzes, are influential and numerous members of both rural and urban society. Western influences in technology and administration have had some effect on the urban centers, but the character of society remains essentially rural and agricultural (Fitzsimmons, 1957, p. 1).

The country prospered from exports, specifically rubber and rice. While Sihanouk focused on developing a robust school and university education system in urban and regional areas, it is noted he was not really interested in social change and failed to address social inequality and human rights issues (Mabbett and Chandler, 1995; Martin, 1994). The Sihanouk years are often seen as the modernization of Cambodia and its foray onto the world stage. Arts and entertainment flourished in urban areas and western products such as fashion items, food and beverage and household commodities became readily available. While communities in rural areas had far better access to the urban municipalities of Phnom Penh, Siem Reap and Battambang, westernization had little impact on everyday life, apart from perhaps clothing, food and beverage items. The 1957 Country Survey Series also notes:

The rumble of an engine (car, plane, or train) can be heard in most settlements in Cambodia at some time. The Cambodian does not feel isolated. He knows he can (and he often does) travel to the capital and return to his own province in one day. He can also visit his friends and relatives by oxcart or boat (Fitzsimmons, 1957, p. 35).

The undoing of Sihanouk's period of stability was bought about by his robust, often confusing approach to foreign policy. The underlying neutralist approach was to elicit as much foreign aid as possible while ensuring Cambodia maintained independence. This strategy, which included an alliance with communist China and close ties with Russia, continued to maintain a position of neutrality, particularly during the early stages of the Second Indochina War. During 1963 Sihanouk, not wanting to offend communist North Vietnam, ceased relations with the United States. He believed the Chinese and French, being sympathizers toward the anti-American cause, would make up the shortcomings in financial aid contributions—this of course did not eventuate, causing internal political instability and weakening the armed forces. Sihanouk negotiated a secret agreement with communist North Vietnam to allow the movement of troops and supplies through Cambodia to South Vietnam. This act enraged the United States, proving that Sihanouk's policies and rhetoric were far from neutral.

As an alternative to Sihanouk's politics, a small but effective communist movement led by Saloth Sar (later known as Pol Pot or Brother Number One) began to gain momentum in regional Cambodia. The movement was popular with the peasantry, as they had felt betrayed by Sihanouk. Sar travelled to Vietnam then onto China where he was influenced by the Cultural Revolution, calling the Chinese approach to revolution 'more authentic than Vietnam's, more radical and more to his taste' (Mabbett and Chandler 1995, p. 242). Upon Sar's return to Cambodia in 1966 he began work to rally the peasantry toward an armed revolution. Sihanouk responded to the Cambodian communists and the direction of war in Vietnam by moving toward re-establishing diplomatic relations with the United States. With civil unrest on the rise in Phnom Penh and a government in turmoil, in March 1970 the National Assembly voted to remove Sihanouk as chief of state. Lon Nol, the former chief of the armed forces, replaced Sihanouk as prime minister, and Cambodia, no longer a monarchy, was renamed the Khmer Republic.

The year 1970 was a turning point in the turbulent arena of Cambodian politics. The country had managed to remain neutral in respect to the Indochina War and the escalation of hostilities in Vietnam. Lon Nol's focus on rekindling an alliance with South Vietnam and the United States was the beginning of Cambodia's involvement in the Indochina War and the internal atrocities of the 1975–1979 Khmer Rouge regime. The coup, although popular with the urban Khmers, was not met with the same excitement and support from the rural peasantry. Tully (2005) explains 'the New York Times correspondent Henry Kamm warned that the peasants who made up the overwhelming bulk of the population would follow to the other side

with equal facility' (p. 155). This quickly began to ring true, specifically in eastern border areas as military action between Lon Nol's forces and communist North Vietnam intensified. During 1970 Lon Nol broke off relations with Hanoi and ordered all Vietnamese communist troops to leave the country. The Cambodian military and the police embarked on a form of 'ethnic cleansing' resulting in the slaughter of 'tens of thousands of Vietnamese' (Tully 2005, p. 157). Neutral Cambodia was rapidly eroding toward a state of war.

The American intervention in Cambodia also played a significant role in Cambodia's modern history. During 1968 the United States began to consider Sihanouk's request to reinstate diplomatic relations but insisted the Sihanouk regime deal with the communist threat in his country, or let the United States do so. The Nixon administration believed the best way to test Sihanouk's hand of friendship was to allow US forces to reinforce the border between Cambodia and Vietnam and mount short-term operations on Cambodian soil (Shawcross, 2002). The United States believed that communist forces were illegally using Cambodia to transport military and other supplies, therefore requiring immediate attention from US forces. On March 17<sup>th</sup> 1969 President Nixon signed the order to allow US forces to commence aerial bombing of communist sanctuaries in Cambodia. Bombing commenced the next day, codenamed 'Operation Breakfast' as part of a broader strategy named 'Operation Menu' (Shawcross, 2002). As Sihanouk made no formal protest the Nixon administration took this as a green light to continue bombing operations renamed 'Operation Menu'. America's National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger reassured the US administration that areas bombed contained no Cambodians.

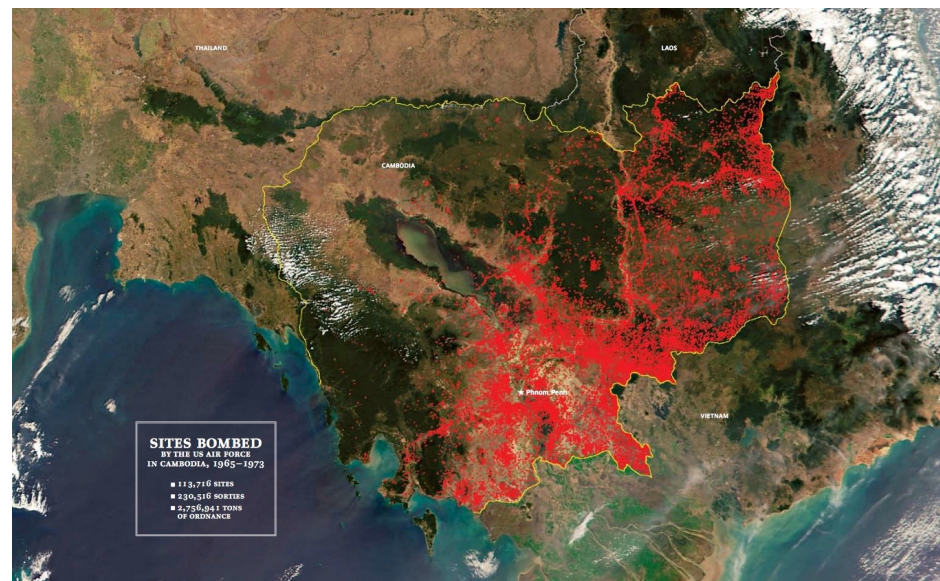
In 2000, United States President Bill Clinton declassified the Air Force's bombing activity over Indochina. Owen and Kiernan (2006) report the data revealed US Air Force bombing along the Cambodian-Vietnamese border commenced much earlier in 1965 and:

the total payload dropped during these years to be nearly five times greater than the generally accepted figure. To put the revised total of 2,756,941 tons into perspective, the Allies dropped just over 2 million tons of bombs during all of World War II, including the bombs that struck Hiroshima and Nagasaki: 15,000 and 20,000 tons, respectively. Cambodia may well be the most heavily bombed country in history (p. 67).

Onwards from 1970, as the war deteriorated for the United States, President Nixon and Kissinger ordered the bombing to intensify to the extent of carpet-bombing raids. The initial rhetoric coming from Washington was that areas bombed under Operation Menu were uninhabited and contained no Cambodians, but as later revealed the actual death toll was significant. Tully (2005) identifies that estimates of the death toll range between 150 000 to 750 000 Cambodians, but the true figure will probably never be known. It is well documented that between 1965 and 1973 thousands of innocent Cambodian peasants from the eastern provinces

were killed or seriously injured as a consequence of US bombing (Chandler, 2008; Mabbett & Chandler, 1995; Martin, 1994; Tully, 2005). The bombing ceased in 1973 only after:

Donald Dawson, A B-52 co-pilot on leave in the United States, saw television footage of the carnage inflicted on a Cambodian wedding party at Neak Luong by a US raid. When he had realized the horror of what he had done, Dawson refused to fly any more sorties. He was threatened with a court martial, the public outrage halted the proceedings and the US Congress ordered the complete cessation of bombing (Tully, 2005, p. 168).



**Figure 5.1:** Sites bombed by the U.S Air Force in Cambodia, 1965–1973 (Owen and Kiernan, 2006)

The American intervention and subsequent bombing of Cambodia was the catalyst for substantial societal change both in urban and rural areas. From 1965 onwards peasants affected by military action around the border areas and the US bombing raids began to relocate to urban areas, mainly Phnom Penh and Battambang. By 1973 the Khmer Republic had lost control of more than three-quarters of the country to the Cambodian Communists (the *Khmer Rouges*). The numbers of rural people seeking shelter in urban centers quickly grew to hundreds of thousands (Mabbett and Chandler, 1995) as an internal civil war between the Khmer Republic and Cambodian Communists rapidly gained momentum.

Villages in the eastern provinces had been severely affected by the US bombing, chiefly in the disruption or destruction of farming activities and in turn the destruction of villagers' economic livelihoods. City dwellers were encouraged to grow their own vegetables and raise fowl. The combination of refugees from rural areas, food shortages, overcrowding, and military

activities resulted in urban areas losing their cleanliness, charm and tourism appeal of the previous 1950s and earlier 1960s Sihanouk era. Martin (1994) succinctly explains the situation:

From the end of the 1970s beggars took over Phnom Penh; city residents and refugees, abandoning their dignity, searched for new riel to survive. Military skirmishes along the national highways, frequently cut, allowed only irregular transportation of rice from the rich province of Battambang to the capital, and the exorbitant prices bore unjust on the poor (p. 126).

He also comments on the plight of the peasantry during this period:

rural people, displaced from their habitual sociological context, tried to survive in the camps, no longer knowing which spirits to honor; their entire lives were dislocated. Women and children had fled without husbands or eldest sons, who were dead or involved in the fighting; family units were shattered (p. 127).

In the regions already under the Cambodian Communist's control, radical social and economic reforms had already commenced, specifically land collectivization. The Khmer Rouge, through a targeted propaganda campaign, began recruiting peasants whose livelihoods and communities were damaged as a result of military hostilities and the US bombing campaign. Between 1970 and 1975 the Khmer Rouge movement substantially grew in numbers (Martin, 1994). By the beginning of 1975 the Lon Nol administration had all but lost control of the country. Many Khmers had grown dissatisfied with the corruption of officials benefiting from the US financial aid that was flowing into the country, the state of the economy, declining social conditions and Cambodia's involvement in the Vietnam War. Ayres (2000) notes three themes brought about the collapse of the Republic. Firstly was the politicking occurring around the war, secondly and supporting the first was the large amount of US dollars given to the Republic to support the war effort against the communists, and thirdly was 'the fracture between the republic's rulers and those who they ruled, with Phnom Penh's decision makers demonstrating a total ignorance of the plight of the nation's poor' (p. 87). Moreover:

as highly ranked military officers speculated on Phnom Penh real estate, buying up villas and buying luxury cars, the number of refugees escaping the conflict and squatting in the city increased markedly. Starvation, malnutrition, and disease manifested themselves among the masses eking out a miserable existence in Phnom Penh's parks, the riverbanks, and the shell of the incomplete Cambodianna Hotel (p. 88).

By 1975 connectedness and solidarity, the principal binding factors of Cambodian urban and rural communities, had to a large extent diminished if not disappeared. The focus of people from rural communities that had no allegiance to the communists was characterized by divisions of political loyalty, economic hardship and confusion. The Lon Nol Republic finally fell to the Communist Party of Kampuchea, the Khmer Rouge, on the 17 April 1975. There are many accounts of daily life during the Khmer Rouge period 1975–1979, perhaps being one of

the most published periods in Cambodian history (for a comprehensive study see Chandler, 2008; Kiernan, 1985; Kiernan, 1996; Locard, 2004; Short, 2004). It is also somewhat unfortunate that Cambodia tends to be better known for the events that took place between 1975 and 1979 than for any of its other history.

The Khmer Rouge regime affected communities in different ways. The initial change to society was the forced expulsion of the entire population of Phnom Penh to rural areas for the purposes of joining with the peasantry and working on collective farming. Urban dwellers, especially the middle class, the educated and ruling class or anybody who was thought to be collaborators with the west were considered enemies of the state and treated brutally. Peasants were forced to be obedient to the new regime, and those who were not were executed or simply 'disappeared'. The doctrine influencing the Khmer Rouge leadership was a form of social engineering driven by ideologies of Marxism, Leninism, Stalinism and Maoism. A concoction of these ideologies was used to establish the foundations for a communist utopia and return Cambodia to the greatness of the Angkorean period (Marston, 2011). For this to succeed a number of substantial changes were made to social life, politics and economic policies. All forms of capitalism, including money and land ownership were abolished, and in its place a strict collectivist regime was instigated. All forms of worship including Buddhism were banned, entertainment and holidays were banned, the freedom to move around the country was banned, villages, families and kinship ties were forcibly split up and people were sent to where labor was required. The regime believed the hard work and the labor of the people would provide the necessary means to build the nation's wealth and achieve their vision of a collective utopia (Tully, 2005).

From 1978 the Vietnamese Government became concerned about crimes the Khmer Rouge might be committing along its borders and the reports from international journalists about the poor condition of the country. Following failed negotiations with the regime, on the 25<sup>th</sup> December 1978 Vietnamese troops launched an offensive against Cambodia. On 7<sup>th</sup> January 1979 Phnom Penh was taken by the Vietnamese troops, a new government was installed and the Khmer Rouge were pushed back to the north-west border regions. The aftermath and toll on communities was devastating. Chandler (2008) describes rural communities as 'a shambles' (p. 279). While the Khmer Rouge kept accurate records of whom they executed, it is impossible to place an exact figure on the amount of people who died of exhaustion, disease or starvation. I have read and heard many accounts concerning Cambodia's plight following the defeat of the Khmer Rouge in both popular media and more scientific works. It is the work of the Australian journalist, John Pilger, that I continually reflect upon. His words from his 1979 BBC documentary describing what he saw flying into and walking around Phnom Penh were perhaps the most realistic, detailed and accurate account provided to the western world. In a subsequent

article for the British tabloid *Daily Mirror* written thirty years later he recalls his experience of Cambodia in 1979. The article commences:

The aircraft flew low, following the Mekong River west from Vietnam. Once over Cambodia, what we saw silenced all of us on board. There appeared to be nobody, no movement, not even an animal, as if the great population of Asia had stopped at the border. Whole villages were empty. Chairs and beds, pots and mats lay in the street, a car on its side, a bent bicycle. Behind fallen power lines lay or sat a single human shadow; it did not move. From the paddies, tall, wild grass followed straight lines. Fertilized by the remains of thousands upon thousands of men, women and children, these marked common graves in a nation where as many as two million people – or more than a quarter of the population – were ‘missing’. At the liberation of the Nazi death camp in Belsen in 1945, The Times correspondent wrote: ‘It is my duty to describe something beyond the imagination of mankind.’ That was how I felt in 1979 when I entered Cambodia, a country sealed from the outside world for almost four years since Year Zero’ (Pilger, 2009, p. 1).

Kiernan (1996) provides a more scientific account of the toll. Figures from various surveys estimate deaths of between 740 000 and 1.5 million people, with the main causes of death attributed to starvation and disease (p. 456). The two years after the fall of the Khmer Rouge, 1980 and 1981 saw continued deaths from similar causes chiefly due to the slow arrival of aid. Therefore, as a consequence of the Khmer Rouge regime it is safe to estimate that between 1975 and 1981 approximately two million Khmers died, amounting to 25% of the overall population. Ebihara’s (1993) essay focusing on the aftermath of the Khmer Rouge period in one particular village provides a detailed analysis of the consequences. Again, her work provides an example for a broader understanding of what may have occurred to similar communities across Cambodia. She notes from 1990 local district office statistics the male to female ratio in the village of Sobay (a pseudonym Ebihara used for the actual name of the village her essay focuses on) was alarming: 339 females and 82 males. Ebihara also tells us:

Many more households are now headed by or include widows, or consist of a lone couple or single person who has lost family members. Such households are usually at an economic disadvantage. Because paddy fields were redistributed on a per capita basis, small families have little land to cultivate. Moreover, those without able-bodied males and oxen (essential for plowing fields) in the household or among close kin must now enter into sharecropping agreements, hire wage labor, or reciprocate with hours of female labor. Such arrangements also existed in pre-revolutionary village life, but they now occur more frequently because of the shortage of male labor power. Thus, more families face the economic problems of reduced subsistence with sharecropping, the need to earn

cash to pay hired workers, or increased work for women with labor exchange (Ebihara, 1993, p. 51).

In the immediate years after the fall of the Khmer Rouge, international politics continued to hinder and deprive rebuilding of the nation, particularly in rural communities where humanitarian and development assistance was required the most. The west, led chiefly by America, placed restrictive sanctions on Cambodia. This was because of Vietnam's ongoing military involvement in Cambodia and the Soviet Union's support of the Vietnamese-backed newly established predominantly socialist government, The People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK). It is also worthy of consideration that in 1982 the United Nations chose to recognize an alliance between the Khmer Rouge and two smaller non-communist resistance forces calling itself Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea (CGDK). This recognition made it even more difficult for the PRK to seek the international humanitarian assistance. John Pilger made reference to this in his documentary, stating:

When the Vietnamese army threw out the Khmer Rouge, they rescued this country for whatever reason, from slavery and possible extension. Western governments may not wish to recognize that fact but nothing is more obvious to the Cambodian people. On the day of liberation my interpreter, a young girl was due to be killed. The British Government knew all along what Pol Pot and his fanatics were doing to these people. Mr Callaghan's Government presented a report to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights with information as shocking as anything you have seen tonight. And yet people here are being allowed to die for want of the simplest things, food, drugs, transport because governments including our own are bent on isolating and punishing the Vietnamese. In other words saving Cambodia would mean cooperating with Vietnam. Both the Cambodians and Vietnamese have told me at the highest level that any relief plane can come without conditions. At the time of filming three planes had come in nine months (Pilger, 1979).

During the early part of the 1980s the CGDK, supported by western and ASEAN governments continued a guerrilla war against the PRK Government. The continued toll on rural communities constantly caught in the middle of military skirmishes was substantial. Moreover, the threat became twofold, firstly from the Khmer Rouge soldiers who did not discriminate between villagers and PRK soldiers and secondly from the thousands of land mines laid by both sides to protect gained territory and impede military advancements. Villagers who had commenced farming activities again were often the victims of land mines. Despite the Khmer Rouge irritations, the newly formed government moved quickly to establish basic services, especially food production. Tully (2005) makes reference to the government's focus in the countryside being to allow private farming once again, but also introducing collectivization of the agricultural sector 'by organizing peasants into *krom samakki*, or production solidarity groups, and by setting up a number of model villages in which work was done on a cooperative



basis' (p. 202). Both Tully (2005) and Frings (1991) acknowledge the strategy of collectivized farming was not successful chiefly because it was too similar to the forced collective life of the peasants during the DK years.

Tully (2005) and Vickery (1984) suggest the PRK Government was influenced by Stalinist traits taught by their Vietnamese mentors. Political oppression, arbitrary justice, violence, and continued abuses of human rights were commonplace. The poor treatment of Khmers who were subscribed into the armed forces to assist build fortifications against the Khmer Rouge is one example of the abuses of the time. Martin (1994) provides an extensive summary of the societal outcomes between 1979 and 1989. I have summarized the outcomes with consequences directly related to the rehabilitation and redevelopment of communities. The first outcome was the large number of Khmer refugees moving toward what they believed to be safe regions near the Thai border. These Khmers, through the propaganda of the Khmer Rouge, were led to believe they would be persecuted by the Vietnamese liberators. Rather than returning to their villages they sought protection either in the north-west mountain regions or the Khmer Rouge-controlled refugee camps along the Thai border, specifically around Aranyaprathet, a border town in Thailand. It is estimated between 1979 and 1981 approximately 630 000 Khmers had left the country, and by 1987, 260 000 refugees still remained in Thai refugee camps (Country Data, 1987). The second outcome was the extensive food and medicine shortage, chiefly caused by the aid sanctions placed on Cambodia by the United Nations. Bureaucracy and a poor administrative process prohibited the distribution of what little food (mainly rice) and medical supplies were available in Phnom Penh to regional areas. The third outcome was the 1982 introduction of levying peasants for 'socialist labor' (Martin, 1994, p. 222) for the purpose of repairing public buildings.

From 1993 the frequency of compulsory duties for peasants substantially increased, taking on more of a military purpose. Peasants were required to clear large amounts of forest in an attempt to destroy Khmer Rouge sanctuaries. There was no regard or concern for the safety of peasants who worked in areas riddled with mine fields. Before long casualties from land mine explosions grew dramatically. This in turn created another social problem for Cambodia, with a large number of land mine victims and amputees and no social services to assist with their rehabilitation or return to work. Martin comments 'Despite a political regime that was more or less severe than the preceding one, daily life – already difficult – involved a real risk of death during socialist labor' (1994, p. 225). The fourth outcome revolved around compulsory military service conscription extended to men younger than the age of eighteen. Young conscripts were usually taken to hostile areas near the Thai border, poorly trained then required to fight. Sweeps of rural villages occurred in which boys and girls as young as fourteen were taken or as the government proclaimed 'levied' to military service. The fifth outcome related to the Vietnamisation of Cambodia. The Vietnamese were quick to insist their citizens be allowed

to legally settle in Cambodia. The urban areas were quickly populated and specific neighborhoods become a majority Vietnamese demographic. Cambodians were forced out of parts of their houses and gardens or to assist building houses for the Vietnamese newcomers. The cultural impacts were substantive, especially for the peasants who felt displaced from their suburbs or villages. Moreover, the concerns over mixed marriages and loss of national identity, cultural heritage gained momentum. Cultural conflicts between Cambodians and Vietnamese were commonplace. In summary Martin (1994) states:

For ten years, the Vietnamese tried to apply to Cambodia a policy of ethnocide – the destruction of a culture within those who carry it – insidiously carried out, particularly in the beginning, in the education domain (p. 230).

By 1989 the PRK Government officially acknowledged that the introduction of a collectivized agricultural sector had neither gained the support of the majority population nor had it been an economic/social success, therefore the decision was made to abandon it (Frings, 1994). It has been suggested the failure of collectivization was chiefly due to the immense dislike of it by the Khmer people as it substantially conflicted with their cultural value of individualism and reminded them too much of the DK period (Ovesen, Trankell and Ojendal, 1996). The other argument concerning the failure of collectivism is the fact it was introduced by the Vietnamese-controlled PRK government; therefore it could never be fully acceptable for the Khmer to adopt. The PRK Government had also changed its original socialist ideology and attitude toward the Vietnamese, heralding the gradual withdrawal of the Vietnamese troops with the final troops leaving the country in 1989. The progressive reforms of the PRK Government, now renamed the Cambodian People's Party, the removal of Vietnamese troops and the waning support for Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge presented the United Nations, ASEAN, the United States and China with a new opportunity to become involved with the redevelopment of the country (Tully, 2005). On the 23<sup>rd</sup> October 1991 the United Nations officially became involved through bringing the four major Cambodian factions together in Paris to sign an agreement allowing for free elections under the supervision of the United Nations. This marked the beginning of what is known as the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) period and the commencement of the reconstruction of modern Cambodia as it is known today.

#### **5.4 Cambodian communities post-1992**

Following the work of other Cambodian scholars, specifically those who have contributed to Marston's (2011) collection of Cambodian rural studies, I emphasize the destructive role that thirty years of civil unrest has played for communities. The concept of community prior to the 1960s may have been a lot easier to identify, specifically themes such as functionality, socialization, social cohesion, and social capital. Beliefs and lifeways of communities had remained relatively unchanged for over a thousand years. The Pol Pot Regime

and their radical social experiment of retuning the country to an agrarian economy destroyed the majority of existing community structures. This has meant that social organization in Cambodia post-1979 has had to be reinterpreted and recreated. Since the end of the civil war, and with the country's development agenda since 1992 still chiefly focused on the Phnom Penh and Siem Reap areas, I make particular reference to the continued vulnerability of rural villages that in some cases have been left behind in the efforts to rebuild the country.

Marston (2011) explains that to understand post-conflict community in Cambodia, it becomes important to appreciate the 'social connectedness at a local level' (p. 12) that exists. Strong connections, specifically around family, may have been influenced by the destruction of communities and separation of families during the Pol Pot Regime, and following its conclusion, an emphasis placed on the importance of connectedness to rebuild communities and families. It can be argued past and continuing political events have made rural Cambodian communities more cohesive and self-reliant.

The complexities of defining modern Cambodian community were notably debated at a conference in Phnom Penh during 1999, 'The Meaning of Community in Cambodia'. An article by Thion (1999) summarized the proceedings and identified not one but three definitions emerging from the conference. Pellini (2007) identified the foundational concepts of the three definitions as firstly, the pre- and post-Pol Pot communities with the pre-Pol Pot communities characterized by relationships between community members and post-Pol Pot communities characterized by destroyed networks and relationships. Secondly, an argument was offered that suggested 'community feelings have survived the civil war and the Khmer Rouge regime and that in Cambodia it is possible to apply the two definitions: geographical community, the people who live and share common institutions in a certain geographical area (e.g. village) and functional community, people who join in formal or informal groups to share problems and act together to solve them' (p. 91). Thirdly was the importance of linkages and relationships between family members. This was considered essential in the context of community, as cooperation between individuals rarely exists beyond the community.

Despite the complexities for communities and families attempting to reconstruct their lives following the DK period, traditional lifeways underpinned by Khmer values are recognizable in the majority of modern rural communities and villages. These communities still face numerous developmental and social challenges. The United Nations Development Program (UNDP, n.d.) identifies the following key challenges: 1) the growing inequality, specifically income and regional disparity between the rural population and the rapidly modernizing urban centers of Phnom Penh, Siem Reap, Battambang and Sihanoukville; 2) Women in both urban and rural areas remain at a disadvantage in gaining a school or university education and employment opportunities in the government sector. For those who are employed, opportunities to move into decision-making roles remain limited; 3) The insufficient investment in human

capital has continued to cause a skills shortage, especially with youth between fifteen and thirty years of age; 4) Perhaps of the most concern to communities in rural areas is deforestation and climate change. The rich bio-diversity of rural areas, specifically forests, provide resources that the livelihood of rural communities and poor people depend on. The deforestation and economic use of these areas has placed communities at risk. Cambodia, chiefly because of its geography, is extremely vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. The rural population and communities are most at risk from extreme and destructive climate change events.

## **5.5 Conclusion**

This chapter has examined two key themes, firstly an exploration of the concept of ‘community’ and secondly the evolution and key themes of Cambodian communities. The synthesis of literature pertaining to community establishes that social relationships, sharing, reciprocity, interaction and commonalities are essential elements when considering the meaning of community, and important foundations toward development sustainable tourism opportunities for the community. The literature establishes that the concept of community is far more complex than simply considering community as a group of people identified by a spatial border. The chapter then turned to examining the evolution of communities in Cambodia from Angkorean times to the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The literature clearly indicated the importance of kinship, solidarity and cultural practices serving as an act of socialization that has remained a constant trait of Cambodian communities. The Buddhist temple was also identified as an important concept of the Cambodian community, serving as the social, moral and cultural center of communities. The period between 1860 and 1992 was examined in detail as substantial political and social changes occurred. Of particular importance was the colonization of Cambodia by the French, the complexities of Sihanouk period politics, the American intervention, the Khmer Rouge Democratic Kampuchea period and the Vietnamese liberation/Peoples Republic of Kampuchea period. The chapter discussed how from 1945, politics and urbanization influenced the rapid denigration of rural communities, specifically in the areas of local economies, agriculture, health and education. This culminated in the 1960s and 1970s American bombing of Cambodia and the proceeding 1975–1979 Khmer Rouge period. Since the onset of relative peace and stability in 1992, communities, especially rural communities have struggled to rebuild their lifeways and overcome poverty. The gap between affluent urban areas and rural Cambodia continues to grow, despite the country’s overall economic growth and rhetoric from the government concerning improving infrastructure, human development and tourism opportunities in regional Cambodia. Without exception, despite the last fifty years of dramatic social change in Cambodia, especially in rural communities, kinship, commonalities and cultural practices have remained fundamental to their survival and an opportunity for sustainable tourism development.

## Chapter Six

### Temples, Tuk Tuks & Genocide: Historical and contemporary tourism development in Cambodia

#### 6.1 Introduction

*The Grand Hotel des Ruines had had several lean years. It was said that one or two of the guests had been kidnapped. The necessity, until a few months before, of an armed escort, must have provided an element of drama not altogether unsuitable in a visit to Angkor. Now the visitors were beginning to come again, arriving in chartered planes from Siam, signing their names in the register which was coated as soon as opened with a layer of small, exhausted flies falling continually from the ceiling. Perking up, the management arranged conducted tours to the ruins. In the morning the hotel car went to Angkor Thom, in the afternoon it covered what was called the Little Circuit. The next morning it would be Angkor Thom again and in the afternoon Angkor Vat. You had to stay three days to be taken finally on a tour of the Grand Circuit. Naturally in the circumstances the hotel wanted to keep its guests as long as possible (Lewis, 1951, p. 221).*

In this chapter, I summarize the evolution and current status of tourism in Cambodia. I will also address tourism's influence in the areas of economic, social and environmental development. The purpose of this chapter is to navigate the path toward the growth and outcomes of the sustainable tourism movement in Cambodia, specifically ecotourism and community-based tourism (CBT). Moreover, the chapter offers an understanding of similarities and changes attributed to tourism development from the iron age to contemporary times. The research for this chapter involved examining a combination of literature from the scientific journals, government policy and plans, travel writings, technical reports, tourist information literature, the media, particularly newspapers, and my own observations based upon previous experiences in Cambodia between 1999 and 2016. The contribution of this chapter to the overall thesis is important, firstly as it provides a detailed summary of tourism's evolution in Cambodia, and secondly, it provides a deeper understanding and context toward the Royal Cambodian Government's current, relatively focused approach toward sustainable tourism initiatives. I argue that those involved in the research, planning, development and management of tourism in Cambodia require a contextual understanding of the changes to Cambodian

tourism over time, its contributions toward development, and the continued complexities of achieving a sustainable tourism industry. The broader contribution of this chapter is an extended narrative examining the evolution of tourism in Cambodia from pre-modern tourism to contemporary tourism. Previous researchers and associated literature investigating tourism in Cambodia have contributed a brief overview of tourism development; however, a holistic account remained absent. I approach and frame this chapter influenced by the paradigm utilized by numerous tourism scholars identifying as a consequence of tourism and associated development, both positive and negative outcomes (or impacts), chiefly economic, socio-cultural and environmental (Goeldner & Ritchie, 2009, 2012; Hall, 2003; Leiper, 2003; Weaver & Lawton, 2010).

Traditionally governments, especially those in developing countries, have been favorable toward tourism development because of the possible economic benefits and employment opportunities (Jenkins, 1994). Weaver and Lawton (2010) go further by identifying that tourism benefits extend beyond economic outcomes and may also include enhanced cross-cultural understanding, tourism as an incentive for peace and stability, a greater focus on and understanding of the preservation of culture and heritage, better social stability and poverty reduction, and a collective approach toward workable environmental protection initiatives. However, as identified through Jafari's (2001) tourism platforms, particularly the cautionary platform and Butler's (1980) destination lifecycle model, not all tourism impacts should be considered as beneficial or favorable for a destination. Jafari and Butler both support the view of tourism's power to become a destructive force, ultimately leading to the destruction of a destination and negative outcomes for host communities. While these views may be considered 'extreme' in the world of 21<sup>st</sup> century tourism, there are continuing and recent examples in Cambodia of Jafari's and Butler's fears, mainly economic misalignment and leakage, the marginalization of the poor in key tourism destinations, environmental degradation due to tourism development, the misrepresentation of Cambodian culture and heritage through its commodification for tourism purposes, sex tourism and pedophilia, and the dispossession of land ownership. Following many years of discussions and draft versions, in 2012 the Royal Government of Cambodia endorsed its 2012–2020 Tourism Development Strategic Plan. The plan broadly attempts to address many of the existing and possible future negative impacts of tourism development that have arisen since the country reopened its borders to tourism in the 1990s, and the subsequent 1991 world heritage listing of the Angkor monuments that has significantly contributed to the recent tourism growth in the country. I will conclude this chapter by identifying the current consensus toward the key challenges the tourism industry in Cambodia faces, specifically its contribution toward community development and environmental protection in the poorer regions of the country.

## 6.2 Chapter Context

Before I commence this chapter, I further provide a justification of the importance of identifying historical events that have influenced the growth of tourism in Cambodia. Leiper (2003) accurately argues that having an awareness of events in the past is important, as these events have determined what is happening in the present and in consequence, events and actions that occur now can shape future outcomes. Leiper also comments on the philosophy that suggests if we don't learn from the past we are likely to repeat the same mistakes. He writes 'all humans follow the principle in its various applications and on occasions, even if not conscious of it. "Learning from experience" is the term we often use and, whenever we try to avoid repeating a mistake, we are, in effect, attempting to learn from history' (p. 1). While some may dismiss the necessity of devoting a chapter to the evolution of tourism in Cambodia, for the reasons identified above, and the theme of tourism management evident throughout my thesis, an understanding of Cambodian tourism's historical and contemporary events as they relate to tourism development becomes justified and essential. An example of this can be drawn from the previous chapter. I provide an extensive analysis of the destructive Khmer Rouge Period, 1975–1979. It remains these historical events that continue to attract international tourists to visit Cambodia, and provides secondary attractions that could be identified as 'dark tourism or thanotourism' experiences.

A good starting point for this discussion is an attempt to classify the evolution and development of tourism in Cambodia into a timeline. Weaver and Lawton (2006) identify and review tourism development through three key periods: premodern tourism dating from 3000 BC to 1500 AD, early modern tourism from 1500 to 1950 and contemporary, or mass tourism from the 1950s onwards (p. 56). Components of the same approach are viable for a more focused analysis of the evolution and development of tourism in Cambodia; however, Weaver and Lawton's analysis has been constructed purely from a 'western perspective' and the identified events have only had a 'broad' impact on evolution of tourism in Cambodia. Winter (2009), as a response to the western approach of tourism studies, calls for a better understanding of tourism in the east, commenting 'scholars of tourism need to address the analytical imbalances that characterize tourism studies today by focusing on domestic and intra-regional tourists in non-western contexts' (p. 2). Considering Winter's concerns, and for the purposes of this chapter, I initially suggest the evolution and development of tourism in Cambodia has been influenced by the west, but it is also important to consider 'non-western', or domestic influences have also played an important role in shaping tourism in Cambodia, specifically developments in the 1950s and 1960s during King Sihanouk's rule. For the purposes of this chapter I will classify the evolution and development of tourism in Cambodia into six distinct periods. Firstly, the Iron Age period 500 BC to 800 AD, the Angkor Period dating between AD 800 and 1400, the Colonialization Period between 1800 and 1950, the Golden Age between 1950 and 1970, the

Reconstruction Period between 1990 and 2000, and the Mass Tourism period from 2000 onwards. A consideration of significant events throughout the five identified periods may provide a clearer understanding of the opportunities and challenges evident in today's Cambodian tourism industry.

I also make note of the importance of travel writings to the tourism researcher. Often they can provide a detailed ethnographic monograph of places and peoples visited by the traveler and should not be dismissed by tourism scholars and researchers as 'unscientific' or lacking empirical evidence. Since Zhou Daguan documented his experiences of Cambodia in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, there have been many more 'everyday' travelers who have felt compelled to document their experiences in Cambodia, and subsequently have had their travel diaries published. These writings, specifically the work of Mouhot (2000), Tooze (1962), Lewis (1951), Rau (1955), Olivier (1964), and the Shell and Lonely Planet travel guides will be utilized throughout the chapter to provide a richer understanding of their views and opinions, as tourists in Cambodia, of people and places visited. These narratives also provide evidence of the significant changes to the tourism product in Cambodia over time, from the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century 'scientific' travelers to Cambodia, the leisure travelers embracing Cambodia's Golden Age in the 1960s to the mass tourists and budget markets of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### **6.3 Pre-modern tourism in Cambodia (500 BC–1800 AD)**

It may be argued by the layperson that there was no tourism, tourists or tourism industry in Cambodia until the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This example suggests these concepts may have only been considered through a 20<sup>th</sup> century frame, and interpreted relying on knowledge of the modern formed industry that exists in today's world. I propose this approach is too simplistic, and leads to a shallow appreciation of the types of tourism and associated industry that existed in Cambodia through different historical periods. Did simplistic forms of tourism activities occur in 13<sup>th</sup> century Cambodia? Applying contemporary definitions of tourism, or approaching this argument through contemporary frames, this question may be answered in the negative. However, it is known and documented that tourism-related activities in the form of trade, war and visiting friends and relatives (VFR) was occurring throughout the 8<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> centuries in Cambodia, and therefore it would be naïve not to acknowledge the existence of those who participated in tourist-related activities over this period. For the purposes of this chapter I consider a 'tourist' as a person or persons that travel beyond their usual place and neighborhood of domicile for the purposes of leisure, business and trade, sport, spirituality, health or education. I then propose 'tourism' to be a combination of interactions between tourists, businesses, governments, communities and the environment that result in positive and negative outcomes for stakeholders. I avoid placing a date or timeframe on these definitions, although I do acknowledge there was no formalized tourism/leisure industry in Cambodia until the late 1950s. I argue forms of tourism activities, especially travelling for trade and business purposes,



and the pursuit of leisure and recreational activities can be traced back to prehistoric times. Leiper (2003) also confirms this stating ‘these antecedents and early forms of tourism helped shape modern tourism in various ways’.

Weaver and Lawton (2006) begin their analysis concerning the evolution and growth of tourism through a discussion of events in Mesopotamia, Egypt, Greece and Rome (3000 BC–400 AD). They give particular attention to the development of a ‘leisure class’ and discretionary time and income, the fundamental enablers of tourism-related activities. Could the same concepts apply for the beginnings of documented Cambodian history? Compared to western historical accounts, not much is known about early Cambodia, where the Khmers originated from and the languages spoken (Chandler, 2008). Archeologists working in Cambodia have recently begun to publish their findings concerning Iron Age settlements in Cambodia, and it would appear these findings suggest trade-like activities were occurring during this time. Carter (2015) writes that the Iron Age, 500 BC–500 AD, was a period of significant socio-political change within Southeast Asia, particularly in the areas of trade and ideas brought to Southeast Asian communities from the trade networks that grew between Southeast Asia, East Asia and South Asia. Evidence of these trading patterns were found in Cambodia and Thailand with the discovery of stone and glass beads, some considered of prestige value made with advanced technology. Carter further explains ‘these changing bead exchange networks are likely associated with the growth of an early state in the Mekong delta region of Cambodia and Vietnam, which may have been using beads and other exotic objects as part of a network-based political strategy’ (p. 734). Two further studies of note support the argument of an emerging state during the Iron Age in Cambodia and Vietnam. Higham (2016) identifies from around 500 BC Iron Age communities that were involved in an expanding maritime exchange network linking Southeast Asia, China and India. The network brought exotic goods and ideas to the region. Iron and salt were also abundantly traded and the cumulative result of these activities was an agricultural revolution, the formation of class structures, land ownership and the establishment of an identifiable state ‘Chenla’ Age, from 600–800 AD. One of the most significant Iron Age excavations in Cambodia took place at Phum Lovea between 2011 and 2012. O’Reilly and Shewan (2015, 2016) write ‘the prehistoric cultural assemblage discovered through the excavation of the Iron Age sites in Cambodia provides evidence for the increasing sociopolitical complexity and innovations that can be viewed as precursors to the profound cultural transformations that characterize later first millennium CE politics in the region’ (p. 469). O’Reilly and Shewan utilize the archeology found at Phum Lovea and other Cambodian sites to deduce that during the Iron Age the region experienced an expansion in trade and exchange, the development of intricate settlements, the increase of population, social conflicts and advancements in technology and agriculture. Of further interest is the commentary concerning regional and possible continental trade noting ‘exotic artifacts recovered from both burial contexts and occupation deposits at these sites include agate, carnelian and glass beads.

Other items of cultural assemblage illustrating regional interaction include ceramics, jewellery and possible foreign coinage' (p. 476). They conclude their findings concerning Iron Age Cambodia by writing 'exchange and interaction extended to eastern regions (China) as well as to the west (South Asia) as evidenced by the presence of a Chinese coin at Phum Lovea. It is possible such items travelled up the Mekong and Tonle Sap rivers from the Mekong Delta region' (p. 481).

While I do not wish to provide an extensive narrative concerning the Iron Age or Prehistoric Period in Cambodia, the significant theme of research pertaining to this period is trade, agriculture, community and formation of class. The archeological findings and associated analysis do not directly discuss tourism-related activities, but for the tourism scholar there exists enough evidence to suggest tourism activities were occurring in Cambodia before the formation of the first Angkorian State, around 800 AD. Firstly, the establishment of a small 'wealthy class', 'elite' or 'leisure class' either from trade or agricultural activities would suggest the existence of discretionary time and discretionary income, enabling people belonging to the elite to engage in tourism pursuits. This chiefly may have included activities such as visiting friends and relatives or sightseeing. The next, perhaps more compelling evidence presented by the archeologists of tourism activities is the existence of trade in the region and beyond. Travelling for business-related reasons can be traced to prehistoric times. Leiper (2003) notes that in the European region, archeological evidence suggests tens of thousands of years ago traders were travelling long distances. It is also important to recognize the importance of the Silk Road that was actively used for trade between the east and west between approximately 200 BC and 200 AD. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the Silk Road, no longer used for trade, has become a popular tourist destination. The existence of these early business travelers, or traders and associated trading routes in Iron Age Cambodia and neighboring regions may have been the beginnings of multi-destination leisure tourism across Southeast Asia as we are familiar with in today's world—in other words, the well-known 'tourist trails' across Thailand, into Cambodia and then Vietnam. Leiper (2003) argues 'tourism follows trade' (p. 2); once business travelers or traders return home they generally share their journey with others, recounting the memorable experiences, encouraging others to partake of the same journey as leisure tourists.

The Funan (100–500 AD) and Chenla (600–800 AD) periods can be identified by the extensive trading routes that existed throughout the region, specifically the established trading ports of Oc Eo and Angkor Borei in the Mekong Delta, and advancements in agriculture, mainly irrigation and rice growing. The way of life during these two periods was extensively recorded (Tully, 2005), leaving enough evidence to suggest tourist activities were occurring. Stark (2007) adds:

The Mekong delta played a central role in the development of Cambodia's earliest complex polities from approximately 500 BC to

AD 600. In what is now southern Cambodia and southern Vietnam, substantial populations established new coastal and inland settlements, constructed religious monuments within their cities and in the surrounding countryside, and participated in the South China Sea economic and social network that linked cultures from China to Rome (p. 98).

Tully (2005) explores this theme further, noting there are three key forms of evidence that provide significant knowledge about the Funan period, its people and society, chiefly Chinese chronicles, inscriptions from Sanskrit stone carvings and the archeological evidence gathered to date. A Chinese delegation to the region (again, another form of tourism activity) who visited in the mid-3<sup>rd</sup> century wrote about the Kingdom of Funan, the large-scale urbanization of the region, its politics, religion, writing and economic activities (Stark, 2007). Both Stark (2007) and Tully (2005) agree the people of Funan were seafarers, travelling to India and China for the purposes of trading and to send tribute to the Chinese emperors. Further evidence of leisure activities has been identified through the Chinese chronicles, identifying the Funanese people ‘watched cock and hog fights for diversion’ (Tully, 2005, p. 12). The Chinese chronicles also provide accounts of slavery being part of a stratified society (Chandler, 2008). This provides further evidence of tourism activities. Firstly, a stratified society would suggest the existence of an ‘elite’ class, with available discretionary time and income and therefore the opportunity to pursue leisure activities. Secondly, the existence of slaves would suggest the ‘forced’ migration of people for the purposes of slavery. While not a normal form of tourism, nevertheless, slavery still involves the movement of people within a region or beyond. In the world of 21<sup>st</sup> century tourism, this activity is referred to as human trafficking for the purposes of forced labor. To summarize this period, while scholars and researchers have not paid attention to the concept of leisure or tourism activities, they have provided sufficient evidence concerning societal structures and activities to conclude the elite class participated in leisure activities and the main type of tourism activity revolved around travel for trading purposes.

The Angkorean period, 800 to 1400 AD is the most studied period in Cambodian history. The period’s history and architecture are the primary attraction of contemporary tourism in Cambodia. This perhaps is due to the sheer size and scale of the civilization, and the management of the environment, particularly the hydraulic systems and the extensive construction of religious monuments. To date there has only been one external eye witness account of life in Cambodia during this period documented. The 13<sup>th</sup> century writings of Zhou Daguan, the Chinese official who visited Cambodia for a year, provide a detailed account of society and everyday life in the Angkorean Kingdom between 1296 and 1297. Zhou’s monograph clearly draws the reader’s attention toward a stratified society, chiefly through religious and political official positions, and the pursuit of leisure activities such as bathing. Slavery also features in Zhou’s writing; he refers to slaves being taken captive from the

mountain tribes and taken to the capital. This provides evidence of the forced movement of people, similar to slavery activities in the Funan period. Of particular interest to the tourism scholar in Zhou's accounts are observations relating to carts, palanquins and boats. Zhou writes 'for long distances they also ride on elephants and horses, or use carts. The carts are made in the same way as other places, but the horses have no saddles. The elephants, on the other hand, carry benches to sit on' (Daguan, 2007, p. 78). Zhou also writes about the construction of boats identifying the use of both small and large wooden vessels. While he is not specific concerning where people travel to on animals, carts and boats, we can safely assume given the size of the kingdom, travel activities were occurring throughout the kingdom and beyond. Another relevant observation made by Zhou related to the existence of leisure activities, specifically bathing. He notes because of the heat, bathing was a frequent activity for most people. Most families had a pool or access to a shared pool, and bathing was a communal activity, apart from the elderly and young children. Zhou observes;

every three or four days, or every four or five days, women in the capital get together in groups of three or five and go out of the city to bathe in the river. When they get to the riverside they take off all the cloth they are wrapped in and go into the water. Those gathering together in the river often number in thousands. Even the women from the great houses join in, without the slightest embarrassment. You can get to see everything, from head to toe. In the big river outside the city not a day passes without this happening. On their leisure days Chinese regard it as quite a pleasant thing to go along and watch; and I have often heard that there are those who go into the water for a surreptitious encounter (p. 81).

Reading Zhou's accounts of leisure and bathing in the Angkorean Kingdom, I find this useful to link these bathing activities and the proliferation of health and beauty spas, catering for both the local community and the tourist industry in 21<sup>st</sup> century Cambodia. While bathing for leisure may not be considered a normal leisure pursuit of modern Cambodians, the concept of water and leisure has been well utilized in the design of hotels, resorts and beauty spas. One of the many examples of this, and the parallel I draw between bathing activities in 12<sup>th</sup> century Angkor and 21<sup>st</sup> century Cambodia, is the design of Siem Reap's Foreign Correspondents Club accommodation (see Figure 6.1). Zhou writes of families having their own pool for bathing, specifically to take respite from the heat, and if not having their own pool, sharing a pool with other families. The design of the Foreign Correspondents Club has residences constructed around a shared swimming pool, where many of the residents also take respite from the heat on a daily basis. Beyond the pool there is also a beauty spa, designed with plentiful water features. Similar Siem Reap hotels, for example Shinta Mani Club and Resort, the Park Hyatt and the

Amansara Hotel, have also utilized water and bathing as a significant design feature for their leisure guests.



**Figure 6.1:** Foreign Correspondents Club, Siem Reap – Rooms, Swimming Pool and Beauty Spa (Pawson, 2013)

Through Zhou's writings it is also evident the Chinese were frequent visitors to the Angkorean Kingdom. Chandler (2008) notes 'it seems likely, in the view of Cambodia's trade with China, that many Chinese had by this time settled in Cambodia to engage in commerce' (p. 87). Zhou records there is a vibrant trade with China in Cambodian products such as beeswax, rhino horns, ivory, salt, pepper and cardamom. Chinese goods sought after and traded in Cambodia included double threaded silk, pewter ware, lacquer dishes and celadon ware. Other popular Chinese items traded in Cambodia were mercury, writing paper, sulphur, sandalwood and similar products, combs, needles and umbrellas. Zhou makes references to beans and wheat being in high demand but not imported. Further evidence of travel for business purposes in 12<sup>th</sup> century Cambodia is Zhou's observations of Chinese soldiers living in Cambodia. While only a brief reference, Zhou notes 'Chinese soldiers do well by the fact that in this country you can go without clothes, food is easy to come by, women are easy to get, housing is easy to deal with, it is easy to make do with a few utensils, and it is easy to do trade. They often run away here' (p. 81). Within Zhou's writings there also appears to be evidence of a very early form of organized accommodation to cater for travelers undertaking trips between villages, or from the capital to regional areas. In Harris's 2007 translation of Zhou's writings, he refers to a particular word used by Zhou, 'senmu' and the possible Khmer meaning of the word 'som-raak' referring to

taking rest or staying in a guest house. Harris further notes inscriptions on steles provide evidence of guest or rest houses built by Jayavarman VII (1181–1218) on roads between the capital of Cambodia and other destinations, specifically the prefectures of Champa and Phimai. Harris notes the road between the capital and Champa had ‘at one time fifty-seven rest houses located at regular intervals’ (p. 126). The National Museum of Cambodia (n.d) also refers to these rest houses, noting a network of roads linking the capital, Angkor Thom with Champa (Vietnam) and Phimai (Thailand). There was a total of 121 rest houses, with one every 15 kilometers. Inscriptions of the rest houses have also identified their patrons, or in modern day terms, the ‘guest register’.

#### **6.4 Tourism during the French Protectorate (1864–1949)**

Following the decline of the Angkorean Kingdom in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, Cambodia fell into the equivalent of Europe’s Dark Ages. A limited historical record provides little information of Cambodia from the end of the Angkorean period until the arrival of the French in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Of significance to tourism scholars in 19<sup>th</sup> century Cambodia is the many French ‘scientific expeditions’ and associated consequences of these expeditions. The early French missionaries and explorers who came to Cambodia in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and the French settlers who came as part of the French Protectorate left extensive narratives of their discoveries and experiences. These narratives may be considered an early form of travel diary or ‘blog’ that becomes useful in constructing an interpretation of 19<sup>th</sup> century tourism activities in Cambodia. Two of the key travel narratives are provided by Henri Mouhot, a French naturalist and Louis Delaporte, a French explorer and artist.

Like the ancient Egyptian monuments, graffiti inscriptions at temple sites throughout Cambodia have provided a rich narrative of both domestic and foreign visitation from the Angkorean period onwards. Edwards (2006) quotes:

in the central cruciform gallery of Angkor Wat, fourteen calligraphic inscriptions in Chinese ink testify to a series of Japanese visits to Angkor between 1612 and 1632. Most give only the name and place of the origin of the writer, and were probably the work of merchants conducting maritime trade in the region who made the pilgrimage to Angkor. One text stands out: Morimoto Ukondaya Kazufusa arrived in January 1632 to make offerings to four Buddha images, to perform rituals for the soul of his father, and to pray for his mother’s life (p. 26).

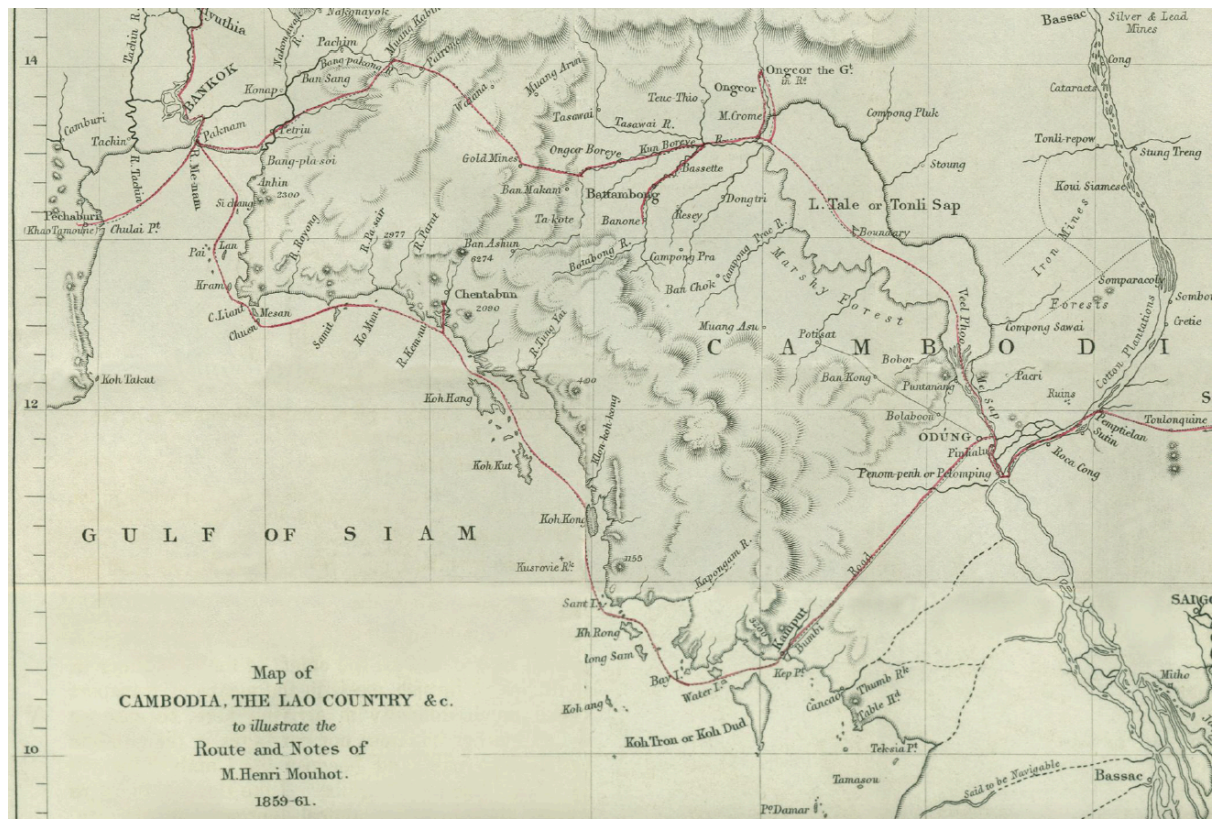
Graffiti and historical manuscripts show Japanese travelers and French missionaries had already been present in Cambodia since the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Tully (2005) suggests the French military officers who were the first regional administrators based in Saigon may have had interests in Cambodia some years before it fell under the protection of the French. During the

first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Cambodia fell victim to numerous attacks by Vietnamese and Thai military forces. King Chan, the Cambodian ruler for most of this period, pursued a policy of independence through either seeking the protection of Thailand or Vietnam, resulting in ‘playing the Thai and Vietnamese against one another’ (Chandler, 2008, p. 42). From the 1840s most Cambodian territory had fallen under the administration of the Vietnamese. Cambodia had also gathered significant interest in France, chiefly attributed to the publication of the French naturalist Henri Mouhot’s diaries that contained a narrative of his expedition up the Mekong River and his ‘re’ discovery of the ruins at Angkor. Another appealing attribute for the French was the belief that the Mekong River might provide a mechanism for trading opportunities with China.

The commencement of the 1860s was marred by the death of King Duang, the Khmer King. In the final years of his reign, Duang had sought friendly relations with the French administrators in Saigon, as he saw them as a way to regain Cambodian territory lost to the Vietnamese during previous conflicts. Duang’s death in 1860 resulted in further internal instability, as Duang’s three sons all commenced politicking for the throne. Thailand had become increasingly concerned that the French would gain further control in Cambodia and attempted to increase their influence in Cambodia through the manipulation of one of King Duang’s sons, Ang Vodey, who later in 1864 became Duang’s heir and reigned as King Norodom. Before Norodom’s coronation in 1864, frustrated with the constant interference of Thailand and on the advice of French missionaries, he entered ‘friendly’ talks with France. In 1863, the talks concluded positively in the form of a treaty signed with France offering Cambodia protection through French residency in Cambodia. In return, the French would receive rights for timber and mineral concessions. The treaty also allowed for the French to trade freely throughout Cambodia and the Catholic Church to receive precedence. In April 1864, the treaty was finally ratified in Paris by Napoleon marking the official commencement of Cambodia as a ‘French Protectorate’.

Henri Mouhot’s contribution to promoting 19<sup>th</sup> century tourism in Cambodia is significant. Mouhot’s prime motivation for exploration in Indochina came from earlier explorers and missionaries, specifically Father Charles Emile Bouillevaux and Diogo do Couto, who had navigated across Thailand, Cambodia and Laos utilizing various rivers and waters including parts of the Mekong River. Both Bouillevaux and do Couto had written accounts of their visit to Angkor. Mouhot’s interest to mount an expedition to Indochina commenced in 1856 with his decision to study and collect botanical and zoological from the region. His initial requests made to French companies and the government for sponsorship and funding were rejected. In 1858, Mouhot secured a commission from the British Royal Geographic Society and in September 1858, he sailed to Singapore then Bangkok. Mouhot established his base in Bangkok for his planned journeys into the interior of Indochina, culminating in a total of four expeditions. His

second expedition (Figure 6.2) in Cambodia was his longest, and it was this expedition that visited Angkor in 1860.



**Figure 6.2:** Map of Mouhot’s second expedition in Cambodia 1859–1860 (Mouhot & Hodgkin, 1862)

Mouhot’s ‘travel diary’ entitled *Travels in Siam, Cambodia, Laos and Annam* begins by telling us he left London in 1858 with the intention of completing his ‘long-cherished’ (Mouhot, 2000, p. 1) project of exploring Southeast Asia, specifically Siam (Thailand), Cambodia and Laos, and the further exploration of the Mekong river system and the tribes that may live there. Mouhot’s diary continues detailing his accounts of exploration in Siam (Thailand). His second expedition, commencing in the spring of 1859, is attributed with the ‘re-discovery’ of the ruins at Angkor. Mouhot commenced his second expedition from Chantaboun, a small village located in south-eastern Thailand (modern day Chanthaburi, Thailand). From there he travelled by fishing boat to Kampot Province, Cambodia, and arriving at the Head of the Foreign Missions was immediately introduced to the King of Cambodia. From Kampot, Mouhot planned the next leg of his expedition that would take him by oxen and cart to Udong, Cambodia’s capital. When Mouhot’s party arrived at Udong, he was once again welcomed by the Second King of Cambodia. For both Kampot and Udong, Mouhot meticulously details his interactions with Cambodians and his observations of the social and environmental features. On the 2<sup>nd</sup> July 1859,



Mouhot's expedition departed Udong by elephant, travelling to the village of Pinhalu'. The next part of Mouhot's diary documents his three-month expedition across the Mekong River into Eastern Cambodia to 'visit the savage tribes living to the east of the great river' (p. 164).

Upon return to Pinhalu', Mouhot's next journey would take him to Phnom Penh, which he refers to as 'the great market of Cambodia' (p. 210) and then by boat up the great lake of Cambodia, Tonle Sap, to Battambang and Ongcor (Angkor). Mouhot's diary suggests he may have been aware of the ruins at Angkor before visiting them, perhaps through the writings of a French missionary, Charles-Emile Bouillevaux, who visited Angkor in 1850. Mouhot writes in a previous chapter 'the present state of Cambodia is deplorable, and its future menacing. Formerly, however, it was a powerful and populous country, as is testified by the splendid ruins which are to be met with in the provinces of Battambang and Ongcor, and which I intend visiting' (p. 213). Three chapters in Mouhot's diary are devoted to his observations of temple ruins. The descriptions are rich and colorful, clearly suggesting the profound impact the temples, especially Angkor Wat, had on Mouhot:

In the province still bearing the name of Ongcor, which is situated eastward of the great lake Touli-Sap, towards the 14<sup>th</sup> degree of north lat., and 104° long. East of Greenwich, there are, on the banks of the Mekon, and in the ancient kingdom of Tsiampo (Cochin-China), ruins of such grandeur, remains of structures which must have been raised at such immense cost of labor, that, at first view, one is filled with profound admiration, and cannot but ask what has become of this powerful race, so civilized, so enlightened, the authors of these gigantic works? One of these temples – a rival to that of Solomon, and erected by some ancient Michael Angelo – might take an honorable place beside our most beautiful buildings. It is grander than anything left to us by Greece or Rome, and presents a sad contrast to the state of barbarism in which the nation is now plunged (pp. 217–218).

It is important to note that Mouhot did not 're-discover' the temple ruins at Angkor, as previous European and Asian travelers had recorded their existence. At no stage in Mouhot's writings did he make a statement suggesting he re-discovered the ruins. The popularization of his diary upon publication resulted in an accepted interpretation/misconception by readers that Mouhot had re-discovered lost ruins in Cambodia. When Mouhot's diaries were published after his death in 1863, the writings and accompanying illustrations that had been drawn from sketches provided by Mouhot played a significant role, specifically in France, toward raising the profile of Cambodia for both the scholarly community and potential tourists. Cooper (2001) writes 'the posthumous publication of his travel diary and sketches, *Voyages dans les royaumes de Siam, de cambodge et de Laos*, was a media event and created something of a cult around his name. The diaries were published in 1863, coinciding with the formal establishment of the French protectorate over Cambodia. The diaries had a considerable impact as they were first

published over fourteen weeks in *Le Tour du Monde*, complete with drawings and engravings transformed from Mouhot's sketches' (p. 69).

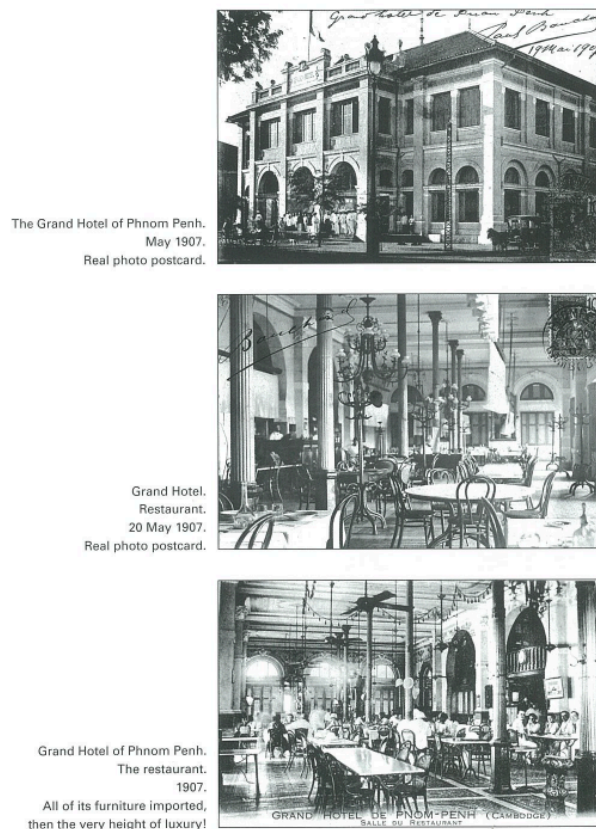


**Figure 6.3:** Temple of Ongcor Wat, North Side (Mouhot, 2000, p. 225)

Louis Deleporte (1874–1944) was another French explorer and artist who indirectly contributed to tourism growth in Cambodia toward the later part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Deleporte's work formed a significant part of the French Expositions that created great public interest in Cambodia. The 1866–1868 expedition to systematically explore the Mekong River was led by Doudard de Lagrée and Francis Garnier. Deleporte, a young naval officer at the time with a particular talent for drawing, was chosen to accompany the expedition. Deleporte's detailed drawings were used to illustrate Garnier's 1870 published account of the voyage. Deleporte returned to Cambodia in 1873 leading his own expedition. Support for the expedition was provided by the Société de Géographie and other French government ministries. The purpose of the expedition was to collect Cambodian art in the form of temple architectural features and return it to France for exhibition. The expedition was successful, cumulating in over seventy pieces of art, mainly statues and temple engravings that were removed from the temples at Angkor and shipped to France (Deleporte, 2017). This expedition was the first of many whose primary purpose was the removal of 'scientific souvenirs' in the form of temple architecture for the purposes of further study and exhibition in France.

I have referred above to the French Expositions of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The purpose of these exhibitions allowed France to showcase the achievements in its Indochina colonies to the masses and legitimize its role in colonial Southeast Asia (Cooper, 2001). The largest and perhaps most significant exhibition, the Exposition Coloniale, was held outside Paris over a six-month period in 1931. The main attraction at the exhibition was a reconstruction of Angkor Wat temple. Other attractions provided the visitor with ‘seductive and picturesque entertainment’ (Cooper, 2001, p. 66) that delivered an insight into culture and lifeways in Vietnam and Cambodia. Visitors were supplied with much information about the colonies, in particular the major cities and activities in these cities. Cambodian traditional dancers and musicians were also flown by aircraft to perform Apsara dances for the exhibition. The roles in Indochina exploration played initially by Mouhot, Deleporte, and Garnier, and later by the *École française d'Extrême-Orient* (EFEO), (the French School of Asian Studies) significantly contributed to the success of the 1931 exhibition. The combination of the exhibitions and scientific voyages to Cambodia provided a wealth of motivation for potential French tourists, many of them photographers and archeologists, to consider Cambodia as a ‘mysterious’, ‘adventurous’ and ‘exotic’ destination worthy of visiting. The resulting surge in visitor numbers from France to Cambodia took Cambodia from a destination in the early stages of tourism development ‘the exploratory stage’, to the establishment of a formalized tourism industry in the early 1900s, ‘the involvement stage’, with the ability to cater for the scholarly traveler, the leisure traveler and ‘arm-chair adventurer’. Accessibility to Cambodia also improved for travelers. A safe road was established between Saigon, Phnom Penh and Angkor (Siem Reap). This was especially convenient for round-the-world cruise passengers disembarking at Saigon. A rail link between Bangkok and the Cambodian border (Aranyaprathet/Poipet) was established. Improved roads, regional airports and the availability of tourist coaches all assisted travel agents to sell Cambodia as an accessible exotic destination with Angkor it’s ‘jewel in the crown’.

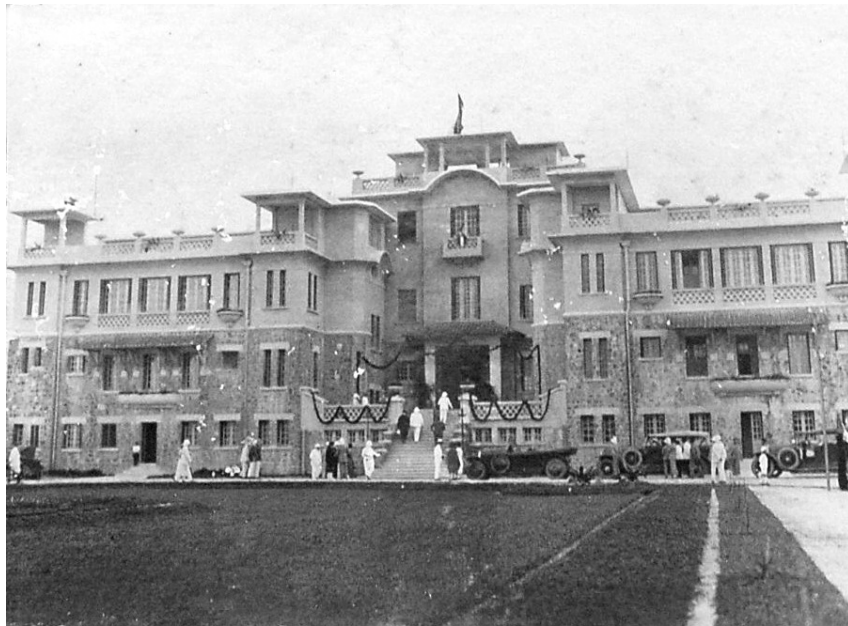
Suitable luxury accommodation became of primary importance to the French in Indochina and by 1903 Phnom Penh had its first luxury (great) hotel, the Grand Hotel of Phnom Penh, complete with international facilities including a large fine-dining French restaurant (see Figure 6.4).



**Figure 6.4:** The Grand Hotel of Phnom Penh 1907 (Montague, 2010)

During the mid-1920s a proposal was developed by the French Administration to construct five luxury hotels in Indochina, three in Vietnam and two in Cambodia. The first of these hotels to open in Cambodia was designed by Ernest Hébrard, an architect based in Hanoi and responsible for the Town Planning Office of Indochina. Hotel Le Royal opened in Phnom Penh during November 1929 and a second forty room hotel of similar design, size and importance was proposed for Siem Reap, specifically to replace the existing bungalow style hotel that could no longer accommodate increasing visitor numbers or offer luxurious amenities. The 65-room Grand Hotel d'Angkor opened in 1932 and immediately attracted a guest list of global celebrities including Charlie Chaplin and Paulette Goddard, Chaplin's co-star. The French administrators in Cambodia also raised funds to build a resort on top of Bokor Mountain in Kampot province. The purpose of the resort was to offer respite and escape for the French officials working and living in Phnom Penh from the oppressive summer heat. The cool mountain air, sea breeze and views over the Gulf of Thailand made Bokor Mountain an attractive location for a resort similar to the hill stations of India. The 38-room hotel, Catholic Church, Post Office and villa for the Superintendent began operation on Valentine's Day, 1925. Bokor Palace Hotel remained in operation until the 1940s, when it was converted to a military hospital during the Indochina War, and thereafter abandoned. The hotel was renovated in the late

1950s, and utilized by French expatriates and wealthy Khmers for predominantly for the same purposes (see Figure 6.5).



**Figure 6.5:** Bokor Palace Hotel 1925 (Kambo, n.d)

Stylized advertising influenced by images and information from the French colonial exhibitions also assisted to promote Cambodia as a mysterious, unique and exciting destination. The combination of the French Exhibitions, establishment of luxury accommodation and targeted advertising resulted in growth from 200 tourists visiting Angkor in 1907 to over 2817 tourists in 1934. One particular travel advertisement depicting a characterized village scene in front of Angkor Wat exemplifies how print media reinforced the outcomes of the colonial exhibitions and drove demand for visitation to Cambodia. The advertisement was originally a painting by George Graslier completed in 1911, the artwork was modified at a later stage to become an advertisement for Angkor, specifically the Hotel des Ruines, built near the entrance of Angkor Wat in 1928. Other advertisements from the 1930s shared similarities with Graslier's work, and were also successful in increasing tourism demand (see Figure 6.6).



**Figure 6.6:** Vintage travel poster from 1935 promoting Angkor Wat (Siem Reap.net, 2017)



**Figure 6.7:** A late 1920s travel poster showing accommodation options in Siem Reap (Pawson, 2013)

Winter (2007) laments on the foundations of the formalized tourism industry in Cambodia as we know it today, specifically at Angkor. Winter notes by the mid-1920s the EFEO had in the majority converted Angkor Wat and the surrounding temples into a visitor/tourist space. This also marked the beginning of tensions between the scholarly community, the local administrators and villagers over the use of what was now referred to as a ‘protected area’. Villagers and monks living near the temples were relocated as the authorities deemed their modernity would spoil the visitor experience. A much-criticized 1924 proposal to remove all

villagers from the protected area resulted in simply creating more tension and disagreements (p. 40). Winter also recognizes the role arts and crafts have played toward the development of tourism in Cambodia and the narration of the country's history. For centuries, tourists have returned home with souvenirs from their travels. On occasion these constituted gifts from their hosts; however, as evidenced during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries in Egypt, most souvenirs were acquired through the removal of antiquities. By early 1920 the Department of Fine Arts, under the directorship of George Groslier, a French polymath, was established in Phnom Penh with a key objective of reviving Cambodia's unique arts and crafts. This included training craftsmen to reproduce temple art, specifically carvings and sculptures. As a result, reproduction artifacts were available for tourists to purchase, which contributed to a reduction of antiquity theft from temples by tourists.

### **6.5 Tourism during Cambodia's Golden Age (1950–1973)**

The next significant leap contributing to the growth and development of tourism in Cambodia began in the 1950s. The Sihanouk period has been extensively discussed in Chapter Five, but it is worth acknowledging Sihanouk's contribution toward creating a national identity through a 'sense of continuity between the modern era and a resplendent past of architectural glories and territorial power' (Winter, 2007, p. 42). Sihanouk's agenda to modernize arts, crafts, music, and architecture while ensuring they remain strongly connected to the grandeur of the Angkorean Kingdom contributed to a substantial boom in international and domestic tourism. Through the 1950s and 1960s, the temples at Angkor remained the principle attraction, although a modernized Phnom Penh and the coastal towns of Sihanoukville and Kep sur Mer provided popular secondary destinations. To provide a comprehensive ethnographic narrative of tourism in Cambodia during the 1950s and 1960s can be somewhat challenging, especially as most internal archival material was destroyed during the 1975–1979 Khmer Rouge period. To describe tourism and associated development during this period, I have relied upon the travel writings of international visitors, surviving photographic images, and tourist guide books. The Country Survey Series and Area Handbooks have also proven useful to my description.

Norman Lewis's 1951 monograph, *A Dragon Apparent: Travels in Indo-China*, offers a richly descriptive and compelling narrative of his experiences travelling through Indo-China. His writings of Phnom Penh, his first introduction to Cambodia, reveal a city in the twilight of the French Protectorate. Lewis writes of his first impressions of Phnom Penh:

there are few pagodas, insubstantial looking and tawdry with gilt, which contrived to remind one of the Far-Eastern section of a colonial exhibition, and many graveyards of bonzes with tombs almost as showy as those of the cemeteries of Northern Italy. The dogs of India are here, one per house; an ugly yellow variety with a petulant expression, and sometimes in a state of utter decrepitude...Refuse is thrown out of a window or pushed through the floor,

collecting in massive mounds for the benefit of the kitchen midden excavators of the future. There is none of the well-bred aloofness of the Vietnamese about these people. The Cambodians stare at whatever interests them and will giggle at the slight provocation (p. 195).

Lewis also provides a clear indication transportation in the early 1950s was still relatively primitive and travelling through the country challenging. He writes that his prospects to travel by boat or road in Cambodia was neither bright or promising, to the extent he travelled from Phnom Penh to Siem Reap on a French military lorry. His first impressions described Siem Reap as ‘another slumbering Shangri-La, perfumed slightly with putrid fish-sauce. In a palm-shaded river meandering through it both sexes bathed all day long, lifting up their garments with extreme modesty as they allowed their bodies to sink below the level of the milk-chocolate-colored water’ (p. 217). Of note, he does record there is only one hotel in Siem Reap, the Grand Hotel, and not one traditional Cambodian restaurant, with the majority of restaurants being Chinese. Lewis also writes of his attempts to see a troupe of traditional Cambodian dancers perform, commenting he had been told this was perhaps more important to see than the temples. Finding it difficult to locate a performance, he and fellow guests of the Grand Hotel persuaded a Chinese business man, described as ‘one of those octopuses of commerce that plant themselves squarely in the centre of the business life of such towns’ (p. 234) to organize five ladies, together with drummers, an orchestra and torch bearers to perform a repertoire in the forecourt of Angkor Wat. Lewis noted of the performance, they gave ‘a sparkling demonstration’ (p. 237). The entire performance cost Lewis and his fellow guests 37 British Pounds (approx. 925 British Pounds in today’s money).

Another young travel writer, Rama Rau, visited Cambodia in the mid-1950s. Rau’s accounts of Southeast Asia including Cambodia were first published in an American magazine entitled *Holiday*, and then subsequently in her 1957 book *View to the Southeast*. She notes ‘I have tried to give, for the casual traveler in Southeast Asia, some idea of the general conditions he can expect, something of the background of the people and places he may see, some of the amusements, activities or short trips that I particularly enjoyed’ (p. 4). Rau’s initial destination in Cambodia was Phnom Penh. She provides a rich and colorful description of the vernacular architecture and formalities of the Royal Family, specifically the royal ballet, ‘when the dancing began I understood why the Cambodian Ballet is considered among the court treasures, as valuable as the fabulous jewelry, as distinctive as the royal insignia’ (p. 77). Like Lewis’s (1951) observations and narrative of the Angkor temples, Rau follows a similar theme by providing a detailed and somewhat embellished account of her experience. She commences ‘for the visitor to Angkor now, this mottled history has left an enthralling legacy – the vast and beautiful ruins, and a haunting mystery’ (p. 81). Rau also comments on the value of visiting a traditional Cambodian village, writing, ‘it is in the villages that you will find the character and appeal of the people’ (p. 86); however, she also provides caution concerning transportation, stating the only



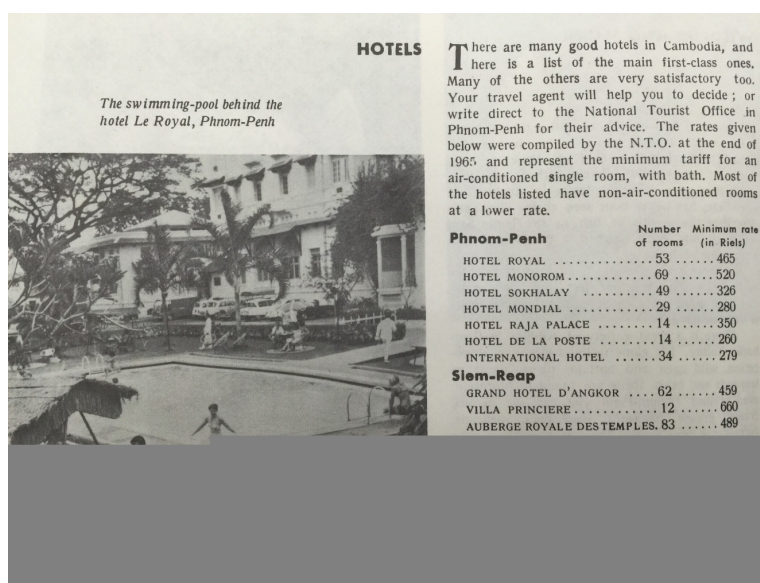
internal transport is either by bus along rough roads or by river boats. Rau concludes her Cambodian chapter by describing what she believes is ‘the pleasantest way to see the Cambodian countryside and visit with its people’ (p. 87). She refers to taking an eight-hour trip on a river boat from Kompong Cham to Phnom Penh, again writing in detail about her observations and experiences along the route. Rau summarizes the experience, stating, ‘by the time you reach Phnom Penh you will feel as though you have been friends all your life with your fellow passengers and you will have learned a lot about Cambodia’ (p. 90). Rau’s chapter on Cambodia does not provide an account of her accommodation or expenses, however her writing does provide the reader with the perception Cambodia is naturally and culturally diverse, with a variety of attractions for the visitor. Of interest, Rau titles her chapter ‘Cambodia: Oriental Utopia’ (p. 67).

Adding to the foreign experiences and subsequent descriptions of Cambodia during the 1950s and 1960s was Tooze’s 1962 publication *Cambodia: Land of Contrasts*. Tooze’s publication is solely devoted to Cambodia and provides a mixture of anthropological, historical, geographical and ethnographic accounts of the country. Her narrative throughout the chapters continues to reveal the growing divide between the modernization of Phnom Penh and more traditional rural areas. Two chapters are devoted to Phnom Penh, providing a detailed explanation of the city’s design and lifeways of its people. From the early 1960s, westernization in Phnom Penh began to selectively flourish. As examples, Tooze comments on western dress mostly adopted by younger people, and food, ‘the best hotel in Phnom Penh, the Rajah, has an excellent restaurant with a charming terrace surrounded by palms, hibiscus, and frangipani. There one may enjoy a cheese soufflé, shrimp, lobster, or pepper steak (green peppercorns cooked and put over broiled steak), and have baked Alaska for dessert. Few Cambodians dine there, however, or would know much about such food. The restaurant chiefly serves foreign guests’ (p. 100). Tooze also observed the value of visiting attractions beyond Phnom Penh and the Angkor temples. She writes of the Cambodian coastline along the Gulf of Siam:

the swimming is good. The fishing is good. At Kep, a favorite small resort on the gulf, you can hire a fisherman to take you to one of the nearby islands, where, although there are no hotels and no modern conveniences, it is a joy to roll out a sleeping mat and sleep under the starry sky. This is the life you might dream it would be on a remote tropic isle. Here are blue waters, white sand, bending coconut palms, and one has nothing to do but enjoy them all (p. 72).

The few surviving travel guides from the 1960s often provided specific and detailed tourist information about Cambodia during this period. For myself, these guides have assisted me to gain a greater understanding of the Cambodian tourism industry, specifically the rapid development of the industry during the 1960s. The *1966 Shell Guide to Cambodia* (Smith, 1966) introduces Cambodia as ‘a modern, forward-looking state with fast developing industries, excellent communications, and first-rate hotel and touring facilities. Yet it has never lost touch

with its great and noble past. The up-to-date buildings, the wide boulevards, and the modern way of life in its cities, gracefully adapt what was best of the old style to the needs of today' (p. 5). The guide notes there are many hotels to choose from in Cambodia. Twelve first-class hotels and their rates were specifically identified in the guide.



**Figure 6.8:** List of First-Class Hotels in Cambodia, Shell Travel Guide 1966 (Smith, 1966)

The 1966 guide also identifies numerous arts and crafts the visitor should consider purchasing, such as silver artifacts, silks, bamboo and rattan products, Pailin precious stones, temple rubbings and engravings. The guide also references the importance of visiting market stalls for the purposes of purchasing unusual tropical fruits, kitchen and household equipment and food sauces. The variety of restaurants and quality of food in Phnom Penh is commented on, concluding 'there are many people who'll tell you that you can eat better in Phnom Penh than in any other capital in the Orient – and you'll find a good deal of evidence to support this claim' (p. 32).

Tooze (1962) had described the seaside resort of Kep sur Mer during the 1950s in its infancy with regard to tourism and associated development. Within ten years the village of Kep had become a vibrant tourist destination for wealthy Khmers and the international visitor (see Figure 6.9).



**Figure 6.9:** Tooze’s mid-1950s photograph of Kep Beach and the 1966 Shell Guide photo of Kep Beach (Tooze, 1962; Smith, 1966)

The 1966 Shell Guide compares Kep with a Polynesian beach, noting a variety of visitor activities including water skiing, ocean bicycles, fishing, skin diving, tennis, an open air Chinese theatre. The guide also notes of many villas at Kep, but recommends to ‘book a chalet at the Auberge; this is the most comfortable and the restaurant is first-class’ (p. 35). It concludes its description of Kep, ‘there can be few places in the whole of Asia just like Kep-sur-Mer’ (p. 35). The guide also provides information on the ease and value of other regional destinations, specifically Sihanoukville, Kampot, Kirirom, Bokor and Battambang. The final pages of the guide provide further evidence of how westernized and ‘friendly’ Cambodia, specifically Phnom Penh and Siem Reap, had become concerning international tourism. The guide notes the extensive availability of services, multiple shopping options, the ease of transportation and good hospitals, doctors and dentists located in the main cities.

The *1968 Sunset Travel Book of Southeast Asia* written by Benton Smith provides a chapter on travel in Cambodia. The narrative is quite like the *1966 Shell Guide to Cambodia*, but in a more condensed form. The chapter starts by providing a historical and social introduction to

Cambodia and then discusses accessibility. It identifies that travelers are required to fly from a Southeast Asian capital to reach Phnom Penh or Siem as there are currently no ‘round-the-world air services’ (p. 141) into Cambodia. The chapter notes of Phnom Penh the wide tree-lined streets and the modern buildings. It identifies the importance of viewing a performance of the royal dancers and visiting the ‘huge marketplace’ (p. 143) to purchase silver items, silks and replicas of antiques. Of hotels, the chapter recommends the Hotel le Royal and the Hotel Monorom as first-class hotels to stay with. The remainder of the chapter devotes itself to Siem Reap and visiting the Angkor temples. Recommended accommodation choices in Siem Reap are listed as the Auberge Royle des Temples, the Grand Hotel and the Villa Princiere. The chapter notes the Royale Hotel ‘also has half a dozen elephants which guests can use for short rides around the hotel grounds. Longer rides can be arranged, though elephants are not permitted on temple grounds’ (p. 145). This recommendation is curious, as the picture (below) and caption accompanying the above narrative claims ‘hotels at Angkor Wat can make arrangements for elephant-back trip through ruins and to hilltop for view of spectacular sunsets’ (p. 145).



**Figure 6.10:** Exploring by Elephant (Benton Smith, 1968, p. 145)

The 1950s and 1960s, especially the 1960s, are popularly referred to as Cambodia’s Golden Age. The term was initially applied to identify the cultural changes to Cambodian music and cinema, as well as the combination of western rock and roll that was composed and performed with a uniquely Cambodian style. More recently, the term ‘Golden Age’ has become wider-reaching to encompass the rapid modernity of fashion, music, cinema, food, leisure activities, retail and architecture in the 1960s. The photographic archive of Cambodia, specifically Phnom Penh, reveals considerable advancement in modernization. Sihanouk, Cambodia’s king then prime minister was himself a keen photographer. Part of his photographic collection was published in 1984, revealing a modern urbanizing and industrializing country

influenced by its unique culture and history. There are numerous photographs relating to tourism activities, specifically modern hotel and transportation facilities (see Figure 6.11).



**Figure 6.11:** Hotels in Siem Reap (Sihanouk, 1960, p. 114)

The modernization of Cambodia during the 1950s and 1960s played a valuable role in establishing Cambodia as a leading destination in Southeast Asia. Leung, Lam and Wong (1996) state:

in the 1960s, Cambodia was one of the fastest growing tourist destinations in Southeast Asia. It was perceived as a wonderland for Western tourists. During this Golden Age of the Cambodian tourism industry, Phnom Penh with its distinctive cultures, customs, and heritage – the legendary temples near Siem Reap and especially, the Angkor Wat – were considered the major tourist attractions (p. 27).

Chheang (2009) and Lam (1998) both confirm the rapid growth of tourism during this period. Lam (1998) states during the 1960s Cambodia was one of the most popular tourism destinations for the international traveler with annual arrivals of between 50 000 to 70 000 inbound visitors. Lee (2007) writes 'Up to the late 1960s, Cambodia was the shining star of Indo-China, a confluence of intellectuals, traders, artists and bourgeois who lived, played and worked there. Phnom Penh was the jewel of Asia then' (Lee, 2007). The *1966 Shell Guide to Cambodia* provides a holistic summary for 1960s tourism in Cambodia, stating, 'experienced

travelers and travel writers agree that Cambodia provides one of the world's most rewarding tourist attractions' (p. 6).

During the early part of the 1970s as Cambodia become increasingly affected by the Vietnam War, there was a gradual reduction in international tourism arrivals. This trend continued as the threat of civil conflict between the Khmer Republic and the Communist Party of Kampuchea also grew. By 1974 the international community in Cambodia predominantly were journalists, military personnel and expatriates employed by government and private organizations. Inbound leisure markets had, in the majority, ceased due to intensified conflict in regional areas. On April 17<sup>th</sup>, 1975, the Communist Party of Kampuchea (Khmer Rouge) gained control of Cambodia and the period commonly referred to as the Pol Pot/Khmer Rouge Regime began. The party immediately renamed Cambodia 'Democratic Kampuchea' (DK) and closed its borders to the outside world. During the 1975–1979 DK period, leisure and tourism activities were completely abolished. Hotels and tourism infrastructure were abandoned, looted, demolished or fell into a state of complete disrepair. Early reports filed by journalists at the conclusion of DK in 1979 described Cambodia as virtually unrecognizable from the 1960s decade of modernization (see Pilger 1979; 2009).

## **6.6 Contemporary modern tourism in Cambodia (1979–present )**

The period following DK is known as the People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK) 1979–1991. The immediate government agenda during this period was to deal with famine, restore human rights, rebuild the nation, hold free and fair elections and deal with the remaining Khmer Rouge army who had retreated to the north of Cambodia, and continued fighting in regional areas (Chandler, 2008). Tourism and associated development was not a priority during this period, particularly as regional areas, including Siem Reap and the coastal region, were still unsafe due to ongoing conflict. It was not until the 1992 arrival of UNTAC, the UN's substantial intervention toward restoring peace in Cambodia, that tourism in Cambodia began to very slowly recover. Winter (2007) notes during the early 1990s economic growth was limited; export industries were still to be established and the key economic activities were mostly influenced by UNTAC's impact on the services and construction sectors in Phnom Penh. Winter (2007) further cites Shawcross (2002) who commented of Cambodia in the early 1990s as 'still in a semi-feudal country, a place of bargaining, survival and lawlessness ... [with] ... no independent legal system, no central authority, no tolerance, no concept of human rights or of loyal opposition' (p. 6).

Shawcross's (2002) analysis of Cambodia paints quite a different picture of Cambodia to that provided by the 1<sup>st</sup> edition of *Lonely Planet's Travel Survival Guide to Cambodia*, published in September 1992. The introduction to the guide weaves a narrative around the grandeur of Angkor and the more recent civil war. An extract from the opening paragraphs state

‘although the Cambodian civil war is still smoldering, there is great hope the huge UN force moving into the country will be able to restore peace and stability. As the country struggles to rebuild itself, the rest of the world is once again being allowed to visit Cambodia’ (Robinson & Wheeler, p. 7). The introduction concludes by suggesting ‘the people of Cambodia seem a bit stunned by their country’s recent history but are warmly welcoming Western visitors, whose very presence signifies that things are finally getting better for Cambodia’ (p. 7). Of hotels, the guide explains ‘Phnom Penh and Siem Reap have a very limited number of 1 or 2 star hotel rooms but many new or renovated hotels are under construction, including several more luxurious places’ (p. 48). The guide contains very little information regarding safety and security, specifically for travel into regional areas. It notes ‘it is best to follow the advice of local people and UN forces about which areas are safe to visit as the Khmer Rouge is still fighting. There are also mines all over the countryside, so stay on the paths. Because of the fighting it is not safe to go wandering outside towns at night’ (p. 125). The guide also identifies and provides information about visiting attractions in the north of the country including Preah Vihear and Banteay Chhmar, where the Khmer Rouge were still active and fighting until 1998. An article in the *Phnom Penh Post* dated May 1993 reports ‘the Khmer Rouge’s bloody attack in Siem Reap may have sounded the death knell for the tourism trade in Cambodia this year’ (Burslem, 1993). The article reports of a Khmer Rouge offensive in Siem Reap that saw fighting within 500 meters of the Grand Hotel. Economides (2007) explains that even before the 1992 UNTAC deployment ‘the Khmer Rouge had launched a series of unusually well-coordinated offensives in the countryside in an attempt to enlarge their bases in the north of the country and secure strategic roads, National Highways 6 and 12, before the arrival of the UN troops’ (p. 47). In 1993, the *Phnom Penh Post* published an article about continued fighting in the Banteay Meanchey Province that was creating an increase in refugees fleeing the conflict areas (Livingston & Munthit, 1993). The guide presents Cambodia as an adventure waiting to be rediscovered, a country emerging from unrest and embracing the future where the friendly UN soldiers have created a relatively stable environment that the traveler can explore with a cautious freedom. The guide fails to mention the extremely tenuous political situation, the danger of traveling beyond Phnom Penh and the 10 million-plus landmines still scattered across the country. Regardless of whether the early backpacker market was or was not aware of the dangers, they were the first market to reengage with Cambodia in significant numbers. Moreover, the descriptions of Cambodia, its jungles, hidden ruins and an indication of possible danger in the 1992 Cambodia Lonely Planet and similar guide books have played a pivotal role toward creating a cultural identity and narrative for the country, and in influencing the growth of tourism.

A setback for the emerging Cambodian tourism industry was the 1994 kidnapping and death of three backpackers, one Australian (David Wilson) and two Frenchmen (Jean-Michel Braquet and Briton Mark Slater). The three backpackers were travelling on a train from Phnom

Penh to Kampot, influenced by the Cambodian Government's propaganda to visit the new resort destination of Sihanoukville—although the train to Sihanoukville had been frequently attacked by Khmer Rouge soldiers. Despite the apparent danger, the three nominated to catch the train, leaving Phnom Penh on 26<sup>th</sup> July 1994. The train was attacked mid-afternoon and twenty hostages were taken by the Khmer Rouge soldiers including the three backpackers. The Khmer Rouge initially demanded US\$50,000 for each of the hostages, with the amount increasing to US\$150,000 (Channo & Way, 1994). During August, the kidnappers promised to release the hostages if the governments of Australia, Britain and France ceased financial aid to the Royal Cambodian Government. The demand was ignored, and as no formal hostage rescue strategy existed, the government ordered military attacks on the kidnappers' base. In late October 1994, the bodies of the three men were found in a shallow grave not far from the base. The world's media widely publicized the brutality of the hostages' time in captivity and subsequent murder. As a result, the mid- and luxury markets were deterred from considering Cambodia as a preferred destination. The British Coroner's findings noted it would be a shame if the tragedy demotivated the spirit of young people to seek adventure in countries like Cambodia. However, 'the coroner had no need to worry: 1994 was a boom year for tourism in Cambodia, with visits up 50 percent from 1993, despite the hostage crises that filled the local newspapers from April through the end of the year' (Gourevitch, 2004).

During the early 1990s, two other factors indirectly supported the development of tourism in Cambodia. While tourism was not a priority of the Royal Cambodian Government, its 1994 National Development Program outlined six aims that were essential to support the development of Cambodia, and indirectly tourism. These aims revolved round rural development, economic stability, health, education, law and sustainable use of natural resources (Winter, 2007). The government's focus on sustainable resources was perhaps the commencement point for its later initiatives involving sustainable tourism practices. The second, and more influential factor indirectly influencing the growth of tourism was the 1992 UNESCO listing of Angkor as a World Heritage Site. The Angkor temples was the only attraction Cambodia could effectively rely upon to entice inbound visitation beyond the backpacker market and remain competitive within the Southeast Asian region. An accurate example illustrating the poor tourism infrastructure in the remainder of the country was provided by the 1992 Lonely Planet's description of Kep: 'under the Khmer Rouge, the town and its many villas were completely destroyed – not neglected and left to decay, but intentionally turned into utter ruins. The Khmer Rouge also turned the underground petrol tank of the old Shell station into a mass grave. By 1979 not a single building remained intact in Kep. Although there are plans to rebuild Kep and re-establish it as a beach resort, at present it is a ghost town with no hotels or other tourist facilities' (p. 117). Regardless of the poor tourism infrastructure in the rest of the country, Siem Reap immediately began to benefit from the renewed global interest in Angkor attributed to its World Heritage status. Winter (2007) records in 1993 approximately 9000 international



tourists visited Angkor, which increased to 900 000 by 2003, however in regional Cambodia, international visitation only grew by a few thousand tourists. Between 1994 and 1996, several articles in the *Phnom Penh Post* also confirm the significant growth in tourism numbers (Nariddh, 1994; Chheng, 1995; Munthit, 1996). Two further articles draw attention to the requirement of hotel rooms in Siem Reap to adequately cater for the growing visitation to Angkor, despite new hotels being under construction (Postlewaite, 1995; ‘Siem Reap Room Crunch’, 1996).

Leung, Lam and Wong (1996) argue that during the 1990s the Cambodian Government, despite its rehabilitation agenda for the country, was very enthusiastic to increase the inbound visitor numbers. This was hindered by a ‘lack of infrastructure, especially sewage facilities, inadequate accommodations and facilities, personal security issues, and accessibility to secondary destinations’ (p. 27). Of note, Leung, Lam and Wong’s article does draw attention to two barriers that remain a constant challenge for tourism in Cambodia: the lack of quality tourism education and training, and the conservation of tourism spaces, specifically temple sites beyond Angkor. Despite these challenges, in the 1990s inbound arrivals from primarily Europe and North America dominated Cambodian tourism. Dwyer and Thomas (2012) explain that ‘following the end of the Asian financial crises in 1999, a significant shift took place, with an increasing proportion of tourists coming from within Asia itself. Initially led by Japan, this pattern has continued to gain momentum with ever-increasing numbers arriving from Taiwan, Korea and China’ (p. 308).

### **6.7 Tourism, politics and the development of a sustainable tourism agenda**

As Cambodia moved into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the government became more aware of tourism’s importance in economic development, poverty reduction and nationalism. Angkor, as Winter (2007) illustrates, through its newly found global heritage and tourism status also played a key role in re-establishing a sense of nationalism and cultural identity. The filming at Angkor of the Hollywood movie *Tomb Raider* substantially contributed to increasing both domestic and international visitation, and as Winter (2002) suggests, was perhaps the beginning of mass tourism at Angkor. The discourse from the Cambodian Government also suggested they understood the benefits of tourism and were supportive toward developing the industry. The Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen in a 2001 speech indicated tourism was ‘to become an important engine for economic growth and poverty reduction through job creation, increased income, and improving standard of living’ (Chheang, 2009, p. 92). In 2002 Hun Sen further added ‘tourism opens up borders and economies, yet enables opportunities to develop internal markets for a wide variety of high value-added production activities, employment and services’ (Chheang, 2009, p. 92). Despite the continuing growth of inbound arrivals, the increasing investment in the hotel sector and the positive government discourse, tourism and associated development in Cambodia still lacked a government strategy or masterplan that concerned

developing, managing and promoting tourism. The 2005 World Bank report on Corporate Responsibility and the Tourism Sector in Cambodia identified numerous barriers toward sustainable tourism growth: firstly, the over-reliance on Siem Reap (Angkor) as the primary attraction and the negative impact increased tourism numbers was having on existing infrastructure; secondly, the decline of visitor numbers in Phnom Penh; thirdly, the lack of infrastructure and diversification in regional areas to support tourism development; and lastly, the economic leakage due to imported goods and labor (hotel managers and guest house operators), which in turn impacted the capacity for growth in the local economy (Epler Wood & Leray, 2005).

The first real steps toward a formalized national tourism strategy was the 2002 publication of the Cambodian Government's *National Poverty Reduction Strategy 2003–2005* (2002). This document identifies tourism as an essential component of poverty reduction for Cambodia. It notes the Government's policy will be to promote 'cultural and natural tourism development in Cambodia' (p. 61). To complement this strategy, the document further identifies the 'enlargement of natural forest conservation areas for eco-tourism' (p. 75). Section 4.2.3 of the document devotes a lengthy narrative toward tourism development. It notes tourism contributes US\$200 million per year to the economy and provides 100 000 jobs. A clear direction for tourism development is offered through stating 'with Cambodia's enormous cultural and natural heritage, tourism policy will be geared towards cultural and ecotourism. It will ensure the sustainable development of cultural and natural environment as well as the protection of the environmental without becoming an impediment to development' (p. 90). The section also discusses the importance of moving tourists beyond Angkor, specifically to sites in regional areas including the temples at Koh Ker, Preah Vihear, the Kulen Mountains and Tonle Sap for ecotourism activities. The document proposes six key strategies to maximize tourism outcomes for the purposes of alleviating poverty. The first strategy promotes the establishment of a working group to better understand the relationship between tourism and poverty reduction. The second strategy was to establish poverty reduction development zones and use tourism to contribute to economic growth in those areas. The third strategy focused on establishing public private partnerships to develop tourism businesses where the poor have access to employment opportunities. The fourth strategy identifies the government adopting policies regarding new or existing tourism development that ensures the development contributes toward poverty reduction. The fifth strategy promotes the creation of demonstration or best practice tourism and poverty reduction projects, so others may learn from these projects. Lastly, the sixth strategy identifies the importance of developing the domestic and backpacker markets, as both are strong economic contributors.

Influenced by the National Poverty Reduction Strategy 2003–2005, the next milestone and major policy document toward tourism development was the *2006–2010 National Strategic*

*Development Plan* (Royal Government of Cambodia, 2006). The plan initially identifies the success of tourism growth in Cambodia, citing an increase from 286 524 visitor arrivals in 1998 to 1.055 million in 2004, contributing US\$600 million in foreign exchange earnings (p. 46). The plan also identifies the importance of using tourism as a mechanism for rural development. Section 4.77 of the plan directly concerns tourism. It identifies that tourism policy and development in Cambodia are based upon three principles:

- (a) the development of tourism should be sustainable, anchored in the rich cultural heritage, history, and the exquisite nature of Cambodia's terrain, but more importantly, development that contributes to poverty reduction;
- (b) active and creative promotion of tourism to make Cambodia a preferred 'culture and nature' tourist destination in the region and the rest of the world; and
- (c) apart from increased tourist arrivals, increase the number of days tourists stay, and the amount they spend, in the country and diversify their destinations. In addition, conscious efforts will be made to ensure that appropriate benefits of tourism go to people living in the vicinity of tourist destinations, both to reduce poverty and improve their livelihoods (Royal Government of Cambodia, 2006, p. 87).

In addition to these three principles the plan went further to identify the need to create an open skies policy, improve visa issuing and checkpoint processing, strengthen intra-regional tourism potential, better manage sex tourism, create a Cambodia tourism marketing and promotions board, improve tourist information centers specifically at borders, increase visitor facilities (hotels, guest houses, restaurants, transport and retail) and further develop tourism products in four prioritized areas—Siem Reap, Phnom Penh, the Coastal Zone and regional Northeast. The plan also placed priority on developing human capital in the services sector, particularly tourism.

Despite the Global Economic Crisis in the later part of the 2000s, tourism inbound arrivals to Cambodia continued to steadily increase. The Minister of Tourism Thong Khon in a national broadcast at the conclusion of 2009 stated 2.18 million people visited Cambodia in 2009 (Sophal, 2010). The official statistics published by the Ministry of Tourism reveal 2.16 million visitors for 2009 and a 16.04% increase for 2010, identifying 2.50 million and 2.88 million visitors arriving in 2011 (Ministry of Tourism, 2011). Contributing toward the continuing growth was the sealing of the 149 kilometers of road between Poipet (the border with Thailand) and Siem Reap. Up until 2009 the road was unsealed and in a state of disrepair, in some cases taking travelers up to fourteen hours to reach Siem Reap from the border. The second contributing factor was Bangkok Airways ending their monopoly on the air route between Bangkok and Siem Reap held since the early 1990s. The agreement came to an end in 2011, allowing Cambodia Angkor Air to also fly the route.

While inbound tourism numbers and associated development continued to grow rapidly from 2008, particularly at Angkor, significant stress on existing tourism infrastructure and

human resources became increasingly apparent. Esposito and Nam (2008) identified the necessity of improvements concerning cleanliness in tourist and general urban areas, better protection of heritage assets in the town of Siem Reap, developing a better understanding of the substantial private capital from overseas tourism operators with operations in Cambodia, particularly Chinese and Korean investors, and a better understanding of domestic and regional tourism, and developing a better understanding of the economic impacts of tourism in Cambodia. Further concerns included: that tourism development, specifically in Siem Reap, was causing the commodification and loss of traditional culture and ecological values; tension between tourism, tourism development and profits, and land usage; and the need for tourism revenue to better contribute toward pro-poor development. Adding to the increasing challenges for sustainable tourism development was the lack of capacity to successfully implement the numerous tourism plans that had been previously created, the lack of overall tourism knowledge and management skills attributed to minimal tourism management education and research occurring at universities, the lack of good government regulation within the tourism sector, and the lack of workable policies concerning conservation and sustainable tourism. Carter, Thok, O'Rourke and Pearce (2015) argued that tourism in Cambodia played an important role in recovery from the aftermath of the civil war, but progress was slow chiefly due to the limitations of capital. They note that 30% of employed people were living on less than US\$1.25 per day and 53% of the population were living on less than USD 2.00 per day (p. 800).

The 2009 Law on Tourism (Ministry of Tourism, 2009) and the 2010 National Tourism Policy (Ministry of Tourism, 2010) were directed toward various aspects of tourism development. The focus of the 2009 Law on Tourism was to provide the Ministry of Tourism with the necessary powers to manage tourism policy and planning both at a national and regional level. The Law on Tourism also identifies its role as being to address quality and standards of tourism services, implement tourism licensing, improve tourism promotion, and monitor international cooperation and the dissemination of tourism information. The 2010 National Tourism Policy stems from the Law on Tourism—it further identified the requirement to develop and diversify the tourism product, specifically destinations, rather than over-reliance on the temples at Angkor. Through diversifying the tourism product, the policy suggested an opportunity would be created to expand into different tourist markets. The policy also focused on the importance of tourism products and services that allowed for Cambodians to participate and directly benefit from outcomes. Of importance are the references concerning sustainable tourism. The policy states that Cambodia will (1) embrace the five fundamental values of sustainable tourism as outlined by the United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development (2) create a balance between economic development and the conservation of cultural and natural heritage (3) base tourism development upon Cambodia's cultural and natural resources, with an objective to diversify the tourism product (4) develop sports tourism as a

mechanism to diversify into a special interest market (5) specifically relate to the ongoing development of CBT, stating:

villages and indigenous communities particularly in the context of poverty alleviation the Government in partnership with appropriate national bodies and international agencies will provide small to medium enterprises with business counseling and planning services related to feasibility of proposals, potential source of finance, marketing and raining. Pro-poor and community-based tourism development projects will be actively supported by the Ministry of Tourism (King, Basiuk, Serey & Yem, 2009, pp. 27–28).

As a consequence of the Royal Government of Cambodia's attempts to develop effective tourism policy and plans to address tourism development, the first comprehensive report on sustainable tourism development in Cambodia was commissioned and published by the Asian Development Bank in 2009 (King, Basiuk, Serey & Yem, 2009). The report utilized a strategic environmental assessment tool to assess Cambodia's natural resources, the protection of these resources and related draft tourism policies, specifically the draft Tourism Law, the draft national ecotourism policy and strategy and development plans for the northeast and coastal regions. The report contributed numerous findings and recommendations to address the current threats of unsustainable tourism development that had been occurring predominantly from the early 2000s. Examples of these findings included:

- Proposed improvements for the draft tourism law included inter-ministry agreements for tourism in or near protected areas, identifying in cooperation with the Ministry of the Environment environmental standards and criteria, defining 'serious potential risk to the environment' for the purposes of cancelling or suspending tourism operating licenses, establish an environmental guarantee fund for the purposes of environmental rehabilitation or emergencies.
- Proposed improvements for the draft ecotourism policy and national strategy included basing the national eco-label on existing global certification and independent assessment, the inclusion of global ecotourism operators for the purposes of existing and future CBT operators having quality benchmarks to aspire to, establish a multi stakeholder advisory group and provide them with a mandate to deal with conflicts that may occur with other sectors, for example, mining and logging.
- The report found serious environmental impacts concerning tourism development in the northeast region of Cambodia, specifically continuing threats to the endangered Irrawaddy Dolphin, the construction of roads through forests and protected areas, proposed tourism developments within identified protected areas, regional airport improvements, waste and sewerage disposal in sensitive areas. The report also highlighted threats from other sectors including logging, mining and fishing.

- The report highlighted similar concerns in the Southern Coastal region, specifically fragile coastal environment, attributed to existing or proposed tourism development, these included developments on the Vietnam and Thailand borders, particularly casinos, rapid urban growth in towns without suitable infrastructure to support the growth, tourism development of coastal islands exceeding their carrying capacity, new beach resort development with exclusive beach access for guests, and highway development between Vietnam and Thailand with feeder roads to tourism sites. The report also raises concerns about offshore oil and gas development and expansion of associated coastal ports.
- Ecotourism-oriented accommodation was recommended as preferable over mass tourism accommodation developments. The reported identified ecotourism accommodation should commence with aiming to achieve a zero-carbon footprint, construction has minimal impacts, accommodation operations should be carried out in an environmental friendly manner, the building itself should be recyclable when it is no longer required.
- Capacity strengthening was identified as a priority, specifically a better understanding of alternative policy and strategic choices concerning sustainable and ecotourism, matching appropriate tourism marketing with relevant attractions, developing standards and criteria for ecotourism, revenue from tourism operations to be channeled toward environmental management and protection, improved monitoring and research of tourism development.

Prior to this report, previous Cambodian Government documents had made minimal reference to CBT. The report identifies CBT as an essential component of sustainable tourism development for Cambodia, specifically as tourism development had moved beyond Siem Reap, Phnom Penh and Sihanoukville and spread to other provinces. Because of the growth of tourism in regional areas, the report recommended CBT development as a suitable mechanism to address poverty alleviation. The report also identified the potential for the 2006–2010 National Strategic Development Plan to expand the importance of backward and forward linkages in tourism, and the opportunity for these linkages to provide opportunities for poorer communities, specifically through initiatives such as CBT ventures.

Continuing to build upon policies for sustainable tourism development, the *2009–2013 National Strategic Development Plan Update* (Royal Government of Cambodia, 2010) emphasized the importance of specific aspects of tourism planning and management. The urgent need to improve tourism infrastructure, diversify into new destinations and market attractive tour packages were identified as priorities. The plan also cited the necessity to better manage its cultural and heritage resources, and utilize them to promote the uniqueness of Cambodia. Similar to the Asian Development Bank’s *Strengthening Sustainable Tourism Report*, the National

Strategic Development Plan Update identified existing barriers to tourism development: the quality of tourist accommodation, facilities and associated services; the increasing tourism development in urban areas detracting from the poor in regional areas benefiting; poor tourism infrastructure specifically roads, electricity, water and waste management; significantly high economic leakage attributed to the import of goods required for tourism consumption; unskilled and untrained human resources; and private sector projects slow to be completed. Moreover, the lack of effective governance was identified as a major inhibitor to sustainable tourism development, specifically (1) the absence of a National Tourism Board to coordinate stakeholder approaches to sustainable tourism development, (2) lack of synergy between government mechanisms at national and provincial levels, and (3) the continuing absence of a National Tourism Institute to support government planning and management of tourism development.

The most recent policy document concerning tourism planning, development and management is the *Tourism Development Strategic Plan 2012–2020* (Royal Government of Cambodia, 2012). This policy document, through the identification of a framework, clearly demonstrates the government's commitment to sustainable tourism development and acknowledges tourism's potential to improve socio-economic issues in the country. The plan's opening narrative confirms the importance of sustainable tourism in Cambodia, stating:

the tourism sector plays an important role in contributing to socio-economic development, job creation, revenue generation, the improvement of people's livelihood and poverty alleviation. Tourism is essentially considered to be green gold, a major element of green economic development, since the sector revenue is instantly inducted into the national economy, thus enhancing Cambodia's gross domestic product. In this way, the development of sustainable and responsible tourism actively contributes to national development: the preservation, protection and conservation of cultural, historical, and natural resources, and mitigation against climate change (p. 1).

Moreover, the plan reconfirms its commitment to sustainable tourism development through identifying its 2012–2020 vision as 'to encourage nature and cultural tourism development in a responsible and sustainable manner, in a way that tourism benefits socio-economic development, job creation and poverty alleviation' (p. 3). The plan's objective is to achieve 7 million international visitor arrivals by 2020, earning USD5 billion in revenue. To ensure tourism is developed sustainably for the purpose of reaching these targets, the plan further identifies five core principles for tourism development summarized as:

1. Tourism businesses will be able to operate in a competitive open market economy
2. Comprehensive and clear policies will guide tourism development
3. Improved cooperation between government and private sector to enhance tourism development

4. Better opportunities for local communities through community-based tourism, to participate in tourism development in-turn encouraging sustainable tourism development, asset protection, employment opportunities, and poverty alleviation
5. Legal improvements to ensure laws can be enforced effectively to protect legitimate tourism operations, sustainable and responsible tourism practices, and to ensure quality within the sector

As specific barriers to sustainable tourism development the plan identifies the following: the importance of matching product to respective markets; the decline in the quality of tourism product, specifically attractions; the lack of holistic tourism quality standards; the limited capacity of human resources in the sector both in vocational and management tourism occupations; the high cost of airfares compared to other Southeast Asian destinations; the lack of quality tourism research to guide decision-making, specifically research related to tourism marketing; and effective tourism promotion infrastructure. The plan further identifies obstacles concerning accessibility and connectivity to Cambodia by air, tourism safety issues concerning food and water, prostitution and human trafficking, drugs, and economic leakage (imported goods and services required for tourism consumption and payments made abroad for the same reasons).

Carter et al. (2015) were able to establish the current key themes of sustainable tourism development in Cambodia and associated challenges through the examination of 77 related documents. These themes and challenges were identified as the imbalance between existing eco and nature-based tourism products and growing tourism numbers. Secondly, greater community engagement to achieve sustainable outcomes and the current community capacity based upon Cambodia's recent history to achieve this. Thirdly, stakeholder perceptions and values as mechanisms of tourism success, particularly the differences between the initial perceptions gained through guidebooks and other sources of information that tend to frame Cambodian culture in a colonial context, to the actual experience of the Cambodian tourism product. Fourthly, cultural heritage becoming Cambodia's key tourism attraction and the challenges of the existing narrow focus on the Angkorean period, the colonial period and the civil war, and neglecting pre-Angkorean or contemporary culture. This narrows socio-cultural meaning therefore placing sustainability at risk. Lastly, the increasing foreign investment influencing tourism outcomes, specifically the damage of economic leakage and being unable to grow local community investment, control and ownership of tourism businesses, in turn prohibiting the achievement of sustainable tourism. Carter et al.'s research concludes by arguing the need to better understand the national, regional and local context, as they are all crucial toward achieving Cambodia's vision and outcomes for sustainable tourism. Moreover, the last two decades of government policy (as identified in examples earlier in this chapter) have tended to



focus on idealistic visions and broad statements concerning sustainable tourism development. Policy and associated plans have lacked the detail to ‘convert to on-ground action’ (p. 812). To achieve a viable policy and planning framework, a deeper analysis of the ‘Cambodian context and consideration of its needs, recent history, poverty levels and current power structures’ (p. 812) is required.

In both Chapters Three and Four of this thesis, I have discussed CBT and made numerous references to CBT Cambodia, specifically certain CBT ventures. This chapter has identified the emphasis placed on ecotourism and CBT by the government in recent years, specifically through its policy documents. Identifying the development of CBT in Cambodia is somewhat more problematic due to the existing limited information. Reimer and Walter (2013) comment that international non-governmental organizations have chiefly been responsible for providing resources and expertise to establish, finance and manage ecotourism and CBT ventures in Cambodia. The first CBT project was established in 1988, at Yeak Laom Lake, located in Ratanakiri Province. The project, which is now managed by the local community, markets its lake and associated swimming activities, the nearby jungle, trekking, and the opportunity to learn about the local indigenous culture. As more CBT projects emerged in Cambodia, specifically in national parks and conservation areas, in 2002 the Cambodian Community Based Ecotourism Network (CCBEN) was established through support from a private sector partnership. The primary purpose of the CCBEN was to promote and support the development, and ongoing management of CBT projects for the purposes of conserving natural and cultural resources, and improving local livelihoods (Khanal & Babar, 2007). The CCBEN members consisted of travel agencies, educational institutions and at the Network’s peak in 2012, fourteen CBT projects. The Network established a website sharing information about its member’s projects, contact details, and the importance of CBT in Cambodia. As of 2016, the Network appears to be inactive; however, they have maintained a Facebook page with updates of recent activity. The Ministry of Tourism official tourist website, Tourism Cambodia, maintains a webpage dedicated to CBT in Cambodia (Tourism Cambodia, 2017). The webpage contains a narrative explaining what CBT is and the importance of CBT to Cambodia. Further links access current CBT projects, and how to behave/what to expect for tourists wishing to experience CBT. It is important to note all CBT projects in Cambodia to date have been established with the support of the private sector, mainly NGOs. While the government’s policy appears extremely supportive of CBT, in reality CBT in Cambodia would not be possible without the continued support from the private sector. As identified by King, Basiuk, Serey and Yem (2009), there is a consequence from private sector partnerships that has a direct impact on the overall sustainability of a CBT. It is evident the private sector, specifically tour companies, participate in CBT through assisting the NGO to promote the NGO’s poverty alleviation initiatives, and have little, if anything, to do with the everyday management and sustainable initiatives of the project. International and local tour companies remain an attractive revenue source for CBT

operators; however, given the size of the tour operator, there is the continued risk of the tour operator negatively influencing CBT operations and sustainable strategies. A recent example of this is an international tour operator given permission to offer a luxury tented experience in a protected zone of Banteay Chhmar Temple. Local human capacity has also proved a barrier to CBT sustainability, with a continued reliance on external support for more advanced operational skills. An example of this is located on the Chi Phat Community-based Ecotourism page advertising for skilled volunteers (Figure 6.12).



**Figure 6.12:** Heros, Visit Chi Phat And Help Us Save The Forest (n.d)

At the conclusion of 2016, according to the Ministry of Tourism's official figures there was a 4.9% increase to 66 349 for the number of inbound tourists visiting ecotourism sites throughout Cambodia (Ministry of Tourism, 2016). The international press has also been supportive of Cambodia's CBT efforts. Examples of this include a 2016 article in *The Diplomat* entitled 'Cambodia's Experiment with Responsible Tourism' (Hsieh, 2016) and a 2017 article in *The Guardian* entitled 'The Angkor Wat Alternative: Exploring Cambodia's Forgotten Ruins' (Baker, 2017). The greatest challenge for CBT in Cambodia will be the continuing precarious balance between mass tourism and alternative tourism, and the ability for CBT projects to achieve their sustainability goals while remaining true to the purpose and functions of CBT. External CBT certification and accreditation has the opportunity to play a valuable role toward the competitiveness, quality and sustainability of existing and proposed projects.

## 6.8 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to provide a narrative that revealed a continuum of tourism and associated tourism development from Iron Age times (500 BC–800 AD) to contemporary modern tourism post-1979. The importance of this chapter was to demonstrate the significant societal and political changes that have occurred in Cambodia, and the continued adaptability of tourism. Moreover, the chapter identifies the complexities, specifically in the political arena, of establishing a sustainable tourism agenda. I have argued that to appreciate and

understand the complexities existing in the 21<sup>st</sup> century Cambodian tourism industry, and the challenges surrounding developing, managing and achieving sustainable tourism outcomes, it is essential to critically examine tourism activities from previous periods. It is also important to appreciate that elements of Cambodian heritage and culture have played major roles in shaping the modern tourism industry, and contributing to nationalistic movements. Tourism in Cambodia is not a new phenomenon that developed from the end of the civil war. I have suggested there exists evidence, based upon definitional concepts of what constitutes a tourist and tourism-related activity, that forms of tourist behavior were present from Iron Age Cambodia onwards, specifically trading activities. The literature also suggests the trading network that existed between Southeast Asia, China and India was responsible for influencing the sociopolitical complexity and development of the first identifiable state, the Chenla period. I further argue that along with the establishment of the first state, there was an identifiable 'wealthy class', suggesting discretionary time for leisure pursuits. Carvings on temple walls throughout Cambodia dating from the Chenla period onwards show music, sport and games were popular leisure activities. Unfortunately, the existing literature pertaining to prehistoric Cambodia pursues either archaeological or anthropological studies and does not explore leisure and tourism-related concepts. For the tourism scholar, an understanding and interpretation of the literature through a theoretical tourism lens becomes essential.

The first well documented, or historical period in Cambodia was the Angkorean Period. I have devoted an extended discussion toward the Chinese Official Zhou Daguan's monograph of his observations while in the Angkorean Kingdom. Zhou's monograph is important for two reasons: it is the first recorded account of lifeways in the Kingdom by a traveler; and secondly, Zhou's account provides further evidence of the types of leisure and tourism-related activities that were occurring. Critically interpreting Zhou's observations concerning the Khmer's utilization of water, pools and bathing, I argue a fundamental aspect of hotel design in Cambodia today, specifically luxury hotels, have been influenced from this component of Cambodian culture dating from the 12<sup>th</sup> century.

I have suggested early modern tourism in Cambodia commenced with the arrival of the French Protectorate in 1864. Tourism development that took place from this point onwards is more identifiable with the concepts of tourism and a tourism industry. I have proposed the 19<sup>th</sup> century French scientific explorations in Cambodia, specifically those of Mouhot and Deleporte, were responsible, through their writings and illustrations, for disseminating considerable knowledge about Cambodia to the outside world. This, coupled with the French Colonial Exhibitions, significantly increased the inbound scientific and leisure market for Cambodia, predominantly from European countries. By the early 1900s a formalized tourism industry had begun to appear, including luxury hotels, restaurants and tourist transportation. I have supported Winter's (2007) concerns of social negative impacts occurring in the 1920s between the local

community and tourism industry attributed to the contested space of the Angkor temples. This perhaps was the beginning of an issue that still remains unresolved today, the contested space and subsequent usage of protected areas.

I have acknowledged how the 1950s and 1960s is popularly referred to as the 'Golden Age' for Cambodia. Under the leadership of King, then Prime Minister, Norodom Sihanouk, Cambodia prospered especially in arts and culture, building, industry and infrastructure. Sihanouk's development policies also influenced tourism. Airports and railways were improved, hotels in Phnom Penh and regional areas were modernized and the variety of destinations and attractions increased. I have utilized both the narratives from travelers' published accounts of their experiences in Cambodia and information from 1960s travel guide books of Cambodia to demonstrate the extent of 'westernization' in a uniquely Cambodian way to attract the international visitor to Cambodia. The 1950s and 1960s as an important historical period in the development of Cambodia, specifically in the modernization of the tourism industry, has been chiefly ignored in contemporary tourist guides and associated material. Through my experiences, both as a researcher and visitor to Cambodia, I feel that modern travel guides have created their own discursive discourses and representations of Cambodia, and have tended to ignore what they have perceived as the less interesting elements of the Cambodian historical timeline. The more I critically examined tourism in Cambodia during the 1950s and 1960s, the greater appreciation I gained between the significant differences in tourism, compared to tourism in Cambodia post-2010. The tourism industry in Cambodia during the 1960s was considerably advanced, and provided prospective tourists with stronger motivations to visit rather than the contemporary reliance on the temples.

Following the conclusion of Cambodia's civil war, and subsequent UNTAC intervention, I have argued the period of contemporary modern, or mass tourism commenced from the early 2000s. Tourism activities between 1990 and 1999 were primarily limited to people working for the UNTAC, associated NGOs and a growing backpacker market, eager for an adventure. The growth of tourism in the 1990s was also hampered by the continued hostilities between the UNTAC soldiers and the Khmer Rouge soldiers, specifically in regional areas. The threat of kidnapping and landmines also had a negative impact on the growth of tourism, especially from the luxury markets. I have relied upon the 1994 kidnapping and subsequent death of David Wilson and his two travelling companions to illustrate the dangers for tourists during the 1990s. I have also highlighted the discursive nature of the narrative from Lonely Planet's 1992 guide book for Cambodia. The guide in the majority created a perception of a backpacker's utopian adventure, far removed from the realities of a country in transition.

This chapter has also addressed the myriad of government policies and plans for tourism development in Cambodia. I have identified all the major Royal Government of Cambodia's policy and planning documents related to national tourism development from 1994 until the

most recent policy document, the Tourism Development Strategic Plan, 2012–2020. I provide evidence suggesting since the early 1990s the government has been aware of, and identified, through the prime minister's speeches and policy documents, the importance of sustainable tourism development, specifically tourism's potential to contribute to the country's social and economic development. The government's tourism policy and plans, specifically the National Poverty Reduction Strategy 2003–2005, the National Strategic Development Plan 2006–2010, the Law on Tourism 2009, the National Tourism Policy 2010, the National Strategic Plan Update 2009–2013 and the Tourism Development Strategic Plan 2012–2020, have all identified ecotourism and CBT as essential contributors toward sustainable tourism development. I have also discussed CCBEN's contribution toward the development of CBT in Cambodia, and the important role the private sector and NGO's have played toward the sustainable tourism agenda.

I conclude this chapter by proposing two themes. Firstly, the Royal Cambodian Government has continued to be an active and supportive proponent of sustainable tourism development, and from 2000 onwards, promoted the importance of ecotourism and CBT. The government's belief is that through sustainable tourism social and economic advancement is achievable, specifically in regional areas. Moreover, sustainable tourism has the potential to contribute toward the protection of heritage and the environment, and retain Cambodia's unique cultural practices. The second theme is the implementation and operationalization of the government's policies and plans that has been seriously constrained by the lack of capital, resources and expertise. The government's plans provide a broad agenda and framework for sustainable tourism development, but fail to address strategic implementation plans at regional and community levels. In reality, tourism development in Cambodia has concentrated on attracting overseas investment for mid-market to luxury market development in Siem Reap, Phnom Penh and Sihanoukville in the hotel and tour company sectors. The growth and ongoing support, including funding for ecotourism and CBT projects, have been in the majority through NGOs. The actual development of sustainable tourism in regional areas and communities has been a lot slower than the desired outcomes as indicated through government policy. Local contribution to regional and national tourism policy is, in the majority, non-existent. The future success of sustainable tourism initiatives will depend on the attitude of stakeholders involved, the government, local communities, NGOs, tourists, and the private sector. If there is mutual agreement and cooperation to address the current weaknesses inhibiting sustainable tourism development, there exists a far greater opportunity to realize government policy.

## Chapter Seven

### The Citadel of Cats: An ethnographic inquiry of community-based tourism at Banteay Chhmar

*We stayed at the CBT homestay for 2 nights. We have 3 young children and it was a great experience showing them rural Cambodia. Temples were fantastic and did not see another tourist whole time we were there. Our guide took time to show us other sites, like how they fish in the local lake and also picked fruit off the trees for the kids to taste. He also took us to a festival which was an amazing experience in itself. The villagers were all incredibly friendly and the homestay was clean and comfortable. If you like 5 star comfort, then a homestay maybe isn't for you; but this is will remain a highlight of our visit to Cambodia (Tripadvisor review, Sally K, 2016).*

#### 7.1 Introduction

This chapter seeks to address themes raised by Goodwin (2006), Spenceley (2008), Goodwin and Santilli (2009), and Armstrong (2012) chiefly where their work has collectively argued that to date very few CBT projects have been successful in the context of producing outcomes that significantly contribute toward a sustainable ecotourism agenda, beneficial community development, and poverty reduction. Moreover, of primary concern is Armstrong's (2012) comments that 'many community based tourism enterprises do not succeed, fail to produce significant benefits, or do not last beyond initial external funding' (p. 2). The criteria identified successful CBT projects as being economically viable for a minimum of two years, did not require external funding, and delivered benefits to the community. Building from Armstrong's (2012) work, Choi and Sirakaya (2006), Spenceley (2008) and the AESAN Community Based Tourism Standard (2016) have identified specific criteria to determine what constitutes a CBT project, and therefore if the criteria are achieved, the CBT project could be deemed 'successful'. I have also considered the work of Kontogeorgopoulos, Churyen and Duangsaeng (2014), who argued if these previously identified measures of success, for example financial viability and poverty elimination, were applied to CBT projects in Thailand, then very few would be deemed 'successful'. The authors argue if a more realistic and practical approach is taken 'wherein net gains in community benefits and significant community participation in tourism determine the achievement of success', this will allow for 'members of communities to make judgements about their own success, and to define success on their own terms' (p. 107). This raises a further question concerning CBT projects and identifying 'success', mainly how

the role of self-determination in a community context, specifically a mechanism to allow the community to determine measures of success, has been established through the project inception and ongoing management.

In Chapter One, I justified my reasons to select the CBT Project at Banteay Chhmar for inclusion within this thesis. The Project has met the majority of criteria proposed by Choi and Sirakaya (2006), Matutano (2012) and Spenceley (2008) that identifies CBT, and has been discussed in Chapters Three and Four. I consider the Project at Banteay Chhmar as an exemplary example of CBT that contributes to sustaining elements of community capital and enhancing lifeways beyond just economic outcomes and poverty reduction within the community. The longevity of the Project (the second-oldest CBT project in Cambodia) and the Project's positive influence on social, human and environmental capital provides further evidence to support initial studies such as Kontogeorgopoulos et al.'s (2014) study that proposed CBT measures of success should be considered beyond just financial sustainability and poverty elimination. The purpose of this chapter was to document and discuss my fieldwork at Banteay Chhmar between 2012 and 2016. To achieve this, I applied an ethnographic approach using two main instruments, observation and in-depth interviews with Banteay Chhmar's CBT Project stakeholders. The approach culminating in the narrative of this chapter will contribute to the existing body of knowledge concerning CBT, and more importantly identify the merits and failings of CBT in a regional Cambodian community context as critiqued by its primary stakeholders. Moreover, the findings clearly identify how the development and retention of community social capital has been fundamental to the success of CBT at Banteay Chhmar, and therefore can be considered the predominant contributing asset to the Project's longevity and success to date.

## **7.2 Banteay Chhmar and Community-Based Tourism**

The community (*khum*) of Banteay Chhmar, Cambodia (latitude 14° 04' 16' and longitude 103° 05' 59') or 'Citadel of Cats' in modern Khmer, is located in the Thma Puok district of Banteay Meanchey province, 100 kilometers north-west of Siem Reap (162 km by road) and approximately 20 kilometers east of the Thai border.



**Figure 7.1:** Map of Banteay Chhmar (produced with the permission of CartoGIS Services, College of Asia and the Pacific, The Australian National University)

As a province, Banteay Meanchey is extremely dry, to the extent of sustaining an extended dry/hot season from November to March. Limited access to water is an ongoing concern for villagers and their crops throughout the province. In 2004, Banteay Meanchey's percentage of poor (based on thirteen indicators used to identify the poverty rate) was identified at 39.9%, Thuma Puok at 42.1% and Banteay Chhmar at 44.8% (RCG, 2012). All percentages improved in 2012 to 25.5%, 30.5% and 35% respectively. Regardless of poverty reduction progress, Banteay Meanchey remains one of the poorest provinces in Cambodia. The ADB (2014) noted while income poverty had fallen dramatically in Cambodia, many families remain on or just above the poverty line. A large percentage of the population are still at the lower end of income distribution. They identify in 2011:



41% of the population still lived on less than \$2 per day, and 72% lived on less than \$3 per day. Demonstrating the growing vulnerability in Cambodia, in 2007, 28.5% of the population fell between the \$1.25 and \$2.00 per day poverty lines. By 2011, this had grown to 31.2% of the population, or about 4 million people (ADB, 2014, p. xi).

Moreover, the ADB confirmed the majority of poverty continues to occur in regional areas with a growing gap between urban and rural areas becoming clearly evident. These statistics contribute toward supporting the importance of utilizing tourism, specifically localized, community tourism for socio-economic development in Cambodia's rural provinces including Banteay Meanchey.

The community of Banteay Chhmar is located around a 12<sup>th</sup> century temple. Historians and archeologists date the temple at Banteay Chhmar to the reign of King Jayavarman VII (1181–1218). It is proposed Banteay Chhmar was both the second city of Jayavarman VII and an important military and hospital center for conquests into Champa (modern central and southern Vietnam) (Evans, 2016; Sharrock, 2015). Compared to the temples at Angkor, archeological studies at Banteay Chhmar have been relatively limited. Both Coedès, the early 20<sup>th</sup> century French historian and archeologist, and Groslier, the French polymath, have documented their interpretations of the temple's history (Briggs, 1999; devata.org, 2010). Recent studies of the temple and surrounding archeology include Sharrock's detailed (2015) monograph concerning the history, inscriptions, rituals and the conservation training project. Sydney University's Angkor Research Program has also conducted preliminary investigations at Banteay Chhmar utilizing LiDAR technology for the purposes of mapping and comparing archeological landscapes (Evans, 2016).

Groslier's 1937 article 'Une Merveilleuse Cite Khmère' published in *L'illustration* magazine provides a detailed description of the temple site, and more importantly an extensive photographic record. Groslier records his observations of the landscape approaching Banteay Chhmar:

Occupying 2 or 3,000 square kilometers, this area is nearly deserted. Consisting of soil made of clay and sand, crossed by some dry rivers six months of the year, it offers nothing to the traveler but uncultivated plains and sparsely wooded forests whose trees remain stunted due to fires that rage in the dry season. In the summer, there is no game and torrid heat; in winter, the area is subjected to violent storms deflected by the mountains. Villages, increasingly rare, finally disappear completely; this place is the most desolate in Cambodia. However, ruins are found there; an imposing array of monuments from an ancient empire (devata.org, 2010).

Groslier may give the impression there was no village at Banteay Chhmar in the early 1900s, and his narratives do not provide an account of the village; however, photographic

records held by the National Museum of Cambodia confirm the existence of a village community (Figures 7.2 and 7.3). Moreover, Collins (2010) has documented an automobile trip to Banteay Chhmar dated March 1924, where he hypothesizes the photographs of the trip, including images of Banteay Chhmar village buildings, were taken by Groslier.



**Figure 7.2:** Banteay Chhmar Government Building 1924 (Collins, 2010)



**Figure 7.3:** Arrival at Banteay Chhmar, the first cars to reach the temple, 9 March 1924 (Collins, 2010)

The majority of written records within Cambodia were lost during the Khmer Rouge period and those remaining provide limited in-depth data on the community at Banteay Chhmar, specifically the historical or demographic features of the community prior to the 1980s. Older villagers who have lived in Banteay Chhmar the majority of their lives are perhaps the most accurate source of information concerning the village and community, its history and lifeways before the 1980s. The majority of older villagers I spoke to narrated a similar response concerning the history of the village and community:

I was born here in the village. We all know one another and most families were involved with farming. We helped a lot in the fields when we were not at school. Even though this was a poor community, we had enough food from the fields.

Not many outsiders came to the village and we only left to visit larger towns for medical treatment or to sell produce. When the Pol Pot soldiers came, we all had to leave the village and go to work on the Khmer Rouge farms. Some of us ran away to refugee camps and the Thailand Cambodia border. The village became overgrown and only the soldiers and a few people were here. After Pol Pot people started to come back, and new people came from the refugee camps to live here. It was not the same as before. For the first few years it was very hard for us, but things became better and the people started to help one another again, especially people were good, honest and trustworthy (BCV7 villager).

Whilst many assume the activities of the Khmer Rouge were in the majority evil, scholars have suggested their relationship with the temples was somewhat different. Lafont (2004) explains during and following the Khmer Rouge period, Banteay Chhmar remained under the control of the Khmer Rouge soldiers, and for the majority of local administration, military and tourists, access to the temple was forbidden. The Khmer Rouge did not actively damage the temple structures, and therefore became the best protectors of the temple. Immediately following the departure of the soldiers, looting of the temple became a frequent occurrence. Antiquities were trafficked across the border into Thailand and sold to private collectors at River City Antique Market in Bangkok. Lafont (2004), Mackenzie and Davis (2014) and Pringle (2014) all document the brazen theft that occurred in 1998 of approximately 30 tons of antiquities stolen from Banteay Chhmar by rogue Cambodian military officials. Mackenzie and Davis (2014) draw attention to the involvement of the villagers:

During this time, local villagers were 'invited' (in the sense of 'instructed') to loot the temple at night by these various armed factions, who effectively functioned as gangmasters for this looting enterprise. Local men were offered 300 Thai Baht (today approximately US\$7, though in the 1990s, it would have been closer to \$12) per night to work on the effort and faced violent intimidation and possibly death if they refused. One source in the village said it was not a difficult choice, if it can be called that, and that he and many of his friends had become looters (p. 730).

My interviews with older members of the community revealed a disconnect from the temple. They did not visit the temple nor could they recall its historical significance. In the majority, they appeared uncomfortable to the point of appearing nervous to discuss the relationship between the temple and the community. The villagers' role in temple looting activities between the 1990s and early 2000s may explain older community members' reluctance to connect with the temple. I also propose the pressure placed on villagers to assist in the theft of antiquities, and the personal economic opportunity was enough justification for their participation.

My first visit to Banteay Chhmar was during September 2012, commonly referred to as the rainy or wet season in Cambodia. Travelers are limited in their options for a journey to Banteay Chhmar. There is no regional airport or regular bus service. The majority of travelers will travel by private taxi, with some hiring dirt motorcycles for the journey. The trip can last between three to five hours depending on the condition of the roads. Departing from Siem Reap, a sealed road (National Highway 6) through villages, rice fields and arid farming land takes one to Sisophon, the capital of Banteay Meanchey Province. In the middle of the city, the traveler then turns right and takes the road to a town called Svay Chek. Passing through the city, the scenery quickly reverts to rice fields, clumps of palm trees and small villages mostly with traditional Cambodian wooden houses. Approximately five kilometers from Sisophon the sealed road becomes dirt. As I have noted, September is wet season, therefore the road in the majority had turned to mud. Road crews along the way were attempting to repair particularly bad or impassable sections (Figure 7.4). The poor condition of the road between Sisophon and Banteay Chhmar considerably slowed vehicle progress. Upon arriving at Svay Chek one continues along to another town called Thma Puok, then proceeds along the road ten kilometers to Banteay Chhmar.



**Figure 7.4:** The road between Sisophon and Banteay Chhmar (Pawson, 2012)

Driving into Banteay Chhmar for the first time, it was initially difficult to identify where the village was. Both sides of the road had small wooden houses, with a small selection of modern houses with a concreted ground floor and wooden first floor. The majority of houses appeared to have some land around them to grow fruit and vegetables. I observed wooden school buildings and a modern house from where a French NGO, Soeries du Mekong, was operating a silk farm. The road eventually comes to an intersection and on the corner is a large sign in the Khmer language and a smaller wooden sign with details about the GHF temple conservation project. If one continues along the road in a straight line, it becomes a track

leading to some more small wooden houses. The main road veers sharp right and continues in an easterly direction toward a group of larger wooden buildings and a small market. Houses lined the right-hand side of the road and the temple moat along the other. The moat was full of water and lotus flowers. At the intersection on the right-hand side of the road was the community health center, a small wooden building set back from the road approximately 50 meters. Halfway between the intersection and the village markets was the stone causeway to the temple, but thick jungle obscured any view of the temple. Continuing along the road for 400 meters, one arrives at the central village market. The market is comprised of a collection of outdoor sellers, with further sellers housed in a wooden construction behind the outdoor sellers. Mostly produce is sold; however, clothes and household goods are also available (Figure 7.5). At the corner of the market is a small restaurant that appears popular most mornings with locals consuming Kuy Teav (noodle soup). Dividing the restaurant and the markets was a smaller road leading to one of the villages.



**Figure 7.5:** Banteay Chhmar fruit seller at village market (Pawson, 2012)

During this first visit in 2012, my objective was to orientate myself with the villages, understand the social units, and learn about the origins, and current status of the CBT Project. The community of Banteay Chhmar has a population of some 14 500 residents (RCG, 2012). There are four satellite villages positioned around the overgrown and forested Angkorian temple, accounting for the majority of the population. The satellite villages or hamlets are identified as Phum Lech (West Village), Phum Sras Chrey (South West Village), Phum Tboundg (South Village) and Phum Chhaeng (North Village). The temple is under the protection of the Cambodian Government's Ministry of Fine Arts and Culture, and in recent years has undergone several conservation projects. The CBT Project considers the temple as the primary tourism resource and attraction. Banteay Chhmar's main buildings consist of a primary and secondary

school, a Buddhist temple located near the main village markets, a Chief of Commune office, health center, and a small community center.



**Figure 7.6:** The villages of Banteay Chhmar (Map produced with the permission of CartoGIS Services, College of Asia and the Pacific, The Australian National University)

Banteay Chhmar is predominantly a farming community cultivating rice and cassava. Poverty is the main socio-economic concern. There is little diversification of industry, resulting in either unemployment, or villagers, especially younger adults, required to leave the community in search of employment in Sisophon, Poipet, Siem Reap or opportunities in Thailand's clothing factories. Housing is typical of a regional Cambodian village, chiefly consisting of dwellings with wood or concrete walls and a thatched or zinc roof. Properties are separated (if at all) by small wooden fences. A small amount of newer modern brick houses had larger brick fences around them. Kitchens and bathrooms are located beside or under houses. Even though Banteay Chhmar was connected to the Cambodian Electricity Grid in late 2015, electricity remains unreliable and of limited supply. Poorer villages still remain without electricity. I observed over 50% of the houses in the four villages still rely on car batteries to power lights, radio, television and to charge mobile phones and similar appliances, although with access to mains electricity this estimate was lower in 2016. Cooking is usually performed using a portable gas burner or *cha nang dey* (traditional clay cooking stove). Ninety-six percent

of the population use water from unsafe sources, specifically water pumped from the moat around the temple. A small number of people drink filtered or bottled water. As identified above, there is one health center (clinic) with a senior nurse and two associate nurses. Serious illness is treated at the provincial hospital located in Sisophon, provided the villager has access to transportation and funds to pay the hospital. Even though Cambodia has a public health system, corruption is widespread and health workers often solicit money from public patients to facilitate treatment. Transportation around the villages in the majority is by motorbike, bicycle, *kuyon* or foot. A small number of villagers owned motor vehicles, with some using their car as a taxi service between Banteay Chhmar, Sisophon and Siem Reap. During my 2014 fieldwork, I had the opportunity to interview a commune official to ask about current and future challenges and opportunities that were repeated by villagers in later interviews. I also found it surprising the official was able to clearly identify health and education as essential community needs requiring development and improvement, yet was not aware that the CBT contributed to supporting these needs.

Recently there has been more changes happening here, specifically about development and tourism. There has been more development of roads around the province and here. More people are involved with improving farming. Health and education are also two things that have started to improve for the villagers. What we have as the current problem here is that produce is sold very cheaply and sometimes hard to make money from and the products we need for farming are still very expensive, for example fertilizer. The reason for this is most farming products are imported from outside. There are also many health issues here for the villagers. The level of health care is poor and expensive. We only have a health center that is under-equipped, has no good medicine, and cannot deal with bad illness. Very sick people have to go to the referral hospital in the next town. If they have money they can get treatment. A good thing about this village is that it is a safe place for people to live here. Everybody knows one another and everybody helps one another if they have a problem. A lot of villagers have been here for a long time. The local police always work closely with the community. Most violence issues have been stopped very quickly, it's peaceful to live here. I am concerned about rumors I have heard that the government will ask people to move from around the temple and stop farming. It will cost a lot for these people to move and create a lot of tension. The villagers are now trying to get a certificate of ownership for their land. You also asked me about the CBT Project. I think the CBT role is good as it has brought visitors into this community and these visitors also bring income for the villagers. The whole community can benefit from the CBT. I hope they are able to bring more visitors here so they can experience our village and help the villagers. I don't know exactly what they plan or what they want to do in the future, just as long as it does not cause the problem for the community (BC20 commune office bearer).

Throughout my fieldwork a consistent trait, both discussed by respondents and observed by myself, was that of social connectedness, or social bonds. Importantly this trait supports Ebihara's (1971) and Ledgerwood's (1998) findings that highlighted genuine intravillage cooperation and bonds of kinship were still fundamental to the fabric of Khmer village life. Ebihara (1971) writes of her observations in Svay, 'Svay is a clear entity to those who name it as their place of residence. Although there are relatively few communal lands, the inhabitants nonetheless feel a loyalty to and identification with their village as opposed to other settlements, as well as deep attachment to the place where their kinsmen and friends reside and where their property is located' (p. 80). During my initial 2012, and subsequent fieldwork in Banteay Chhmar, I found all villagers I spoke with, both for the purposes of this investigation and socially, had the same connection to Banteay Chhmar as Ebihara wrote of the Svay villagers and the social bonds within their community. Despite the general perception of inferiority, community members spoke highly of the bonds and friendships that exist in their community. They exhibited a sense of pride the community has survived the hardships of the civil war and the general harsh living conditions. The strength of attachment, loyalty, pride, family and social networks were all common themes to the Banteay Chhmar villagers and as I discuss later in this chapter, paramount to the success of CBT. Many examples of social connectedness to the community of Banteay Chhmar was provided by the villagers I interviewed. The responses were all similar to this villager's narrative:

I have lived in the village since the end of Pol Pot. It is very safe living here, we all look after one another. Rice fields are profitable, everyone is friendly and helps one another. I know most of the people who live in my village and we have known each other for years. I see them every day and we always talk. Families help each other when there is a crisis or someone is in trouble. I don't have much to worry about here, except money if the crop fails (BCV2 villager).

During my 2016 fieldwork, I interviewed a group of three teenagers for the purposes of better understanding village life and tourism activity from a younger person's perspective. I had not planned to interview teenagers; however, while I was conducting interviews in west village, they had just returned from the morning school session and were escaping the midday heat by sitting under their house. I took the opportunity to sit down and ask them to tell me their attitudes and opinions about village life. Their narrative also reflected key themes of loyalty, pride, social networks and community challenges:

*Sophat*: There are lots of things to do here, everyone is really friendly and we all know one another, especially in this village. It's really safe to live here unlike the bigger towns and cities. Nothing bad really happens. *Sokoeun*: Yeah, we all help one another on the farm and around the house doing the housework. I like living here because there are good people who care about us. Sometimes it can be a bit quiet and boring though. *Sopheas*: My friends are right, this is a good village. I am



worried when I finish school there won't be many jobs for us except farming. At school we learn about a lot of different jobs and I really want to try and work in a company. I know I'll have to leave Banteay Chhmar to do that and it will be a really hard decision. *Sokoeun*: I have travelled to other places in Cambodia, and I can see there are plenty more job opportunities outside here. *Sophat*: A lot of us worry about our future and the future of the village. We see some outsiders come to this area, they cut down trees and we see the big trucks go past with the forest they destroyed. I also don't think our school or teachers are getting better. My friends say in Siem Reap and Phnom Penh the schools and teachers are much better. The teachers are not from here and they don't understand this village. *Sopheha*: I really want to be able to go and study at the university before I start my job. I know education is important for young people. I want to study business at Build Bright University in Siem Reap. *Sophat*: I hope I can go overseas one day, I want to work in New York. *Sokoeun*: We have also met tourists from other countries that visit here. It's really nice to see they come to here, it makes us feel really proud they come to our village. Our friends do the homestay, that's how we know about the tourist project in this village. It's good they (the CBT) do this way for our village because we can meet and learn more from other people that come from different countries. I have visited Angkor temples and saw so many tourists, I hope that does not happen here because the official people might force us to leave this village. I have heard important people take land away from some villages and give it to the business people who do the tourism business (BCV17 three village teenagers).

Whilst I was able to establish that social connectedness throughout the villages was an important asset, there was one exception. Throughout my 2012–2016 fieldwork I observed the very poor (*kra*) within the community appeared to be isolated and marginalised from the majority of existing social networks. When villagers spoke of these families they often contextualized the families similar to being socially diasporic:

I have lived here since 1991. I have a road side shop and I farm cassava and rice. My income is enough to survive, so I have nothing to complain about. I'm not rich but I'm not poor. The community is becoming wealthier, and this is creating a bigger gap between rich and poor. The poor families are not that closely connected with the villages anymore and most of them live on the outskirts. The poor families are now excluded from social groups. Before 2013 people were much more willing to share and help the poor people, not so much anymore (BCV1 villager).

In general conversation with poorer families, the majority did not own land but had been given permission to stay on people's land. Income was derived through employment on cassava or rice farms. Children of poorer families did not attend school and were required to help their parents either around their lodgings or on the farms. Food was provided through basic

subsistence farming, living conditions, general sanitation and hygiene was in the majority poor (Figure 7.7). Clean water sources were not available for poorer families and there was minimal understanding of basic safe and hygienic food preparation. Minimal to no access to healthcare was available. The poorer families had little knowledge of the outside world, and in some cases other parts of the community.



**Figure 7.7:** Drinking and washing area for a poor family at Banteay Chhmar (Pawson, 2016)

In 2016, the road between Sisophon and Banteay Chhmar was sealed, therefore providing a safer and faster way to commute between Banteay Chhmar and larger cities. Both the new road and the connection to the provincial electricity grid had contributed toward the improvement of certain social aspects for the majority of families in the four villages. During my February 2016 fieldwork, this was evidenced through my observation of the significant increase in ownership of whitegoods and entertainment appliances, specifically refrigerators, electric fans and televisions. I also noted an increase of electric lighting used in houses compared to my initial visit in 2012 when most families relied on the use of car batteries to power household lighting. There were mixed opinions about the benefits of the improved accessibility to Banteay Chhmar and the social changes to families as a consequence of electricity and media entertainment:

The new road and electricity has meant more people coming here and building houses. These newcomers are not so much trusted. They will start businesses and make it difficult for the local people to earn money. This is now a safe community, there is no bad people, but the outsiders and new road may attract bad people to come here. The people who make up this community are all very caring and they always help each other (BCV04 villager).

Living in this community is very safe, people are trustworthy and there is no need for big fences like in the cities. The new road may bring bad people here and if

bad people come the community may not be able to deal with these people (BCV12 villager).

Others were not so fearful of the new road and more exposure to the outside world through internet, media and entertainment:

This new road has shown us lots of benefits. Now if they fix the roads around the villages it may help us with better accessibility to water, toilet and bathroom facilities. All these recent changes will mean more people will know about Banteay Chhmar and more tourists will come here. I think that will be very good for the community (BCV10 villager).

The new road will bring better access to water and more jobs for the villagers. I think this is a very good development. If people get very sick they have to go to the city or to Thailand to get help. This can be very expensive. Hopefully the new road will mean better access to medical facilities. Now we have electricity we can boil water and make it safe to drink and when it's very hot we can have electric fans to keep cool (BCV06 villager).

During 2007, a French NGO, Agir Pour Le Cambodge (APLC) in partnership with a group of local villagers initiated a CBT Project at Banteay Chhmar, with a primary objective to 'help conserve natural beauty and local culture while improving rural livelihoods' (Cambodia Community-Based Ecotourism Network, 2014). Sharrock (2015) notes the project was designed to 'create long term, sustainable and low impact economic growth via tourism that could directly improve the livelihood of the community' (p. 194). Within the first two years, APLC for financial reasons made the decision to withdraw from the CBT Project. Heritage Watch, an NGO operating to save Cambodia's cultural assets, was also conducting a project in Banteay Chhmar focused on educating the local population about the protection of the temple and sustainable heritage tourism. In 2009 Heritage Watch received a grant from the American Institute of Archeology that was used to fund an English language program for CBT members who had indicated they wished to become a temple and village guide. This initiative was extended in 2012 to a guide training program for the villagers who had completed the English language program. The Global Heritage Fund (GHF), a NGO dedicated to the preservation of global heritage sites that have been identified at risk, began in 2007 and in collaboration with the Royal Cambodian Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts a conservation and preservation project at Banteay Chhmar Temple. GHF was able to identify synergies between the work Heritage Watch was engaged in and the impact of tourism for the temple and community. In 2009, GHF began to play an active role in the support of the CBT Project, specifically financial support for a local CBT Coordinator, and the establishment of a basic sanitation and solid waste management project. From its commencement, the CBT Project developed a range of tourist products, with benefits distributed directly to members and indirectly to the broader community (Table 7.1). With funding from GHF and directly from the CBT Project, during 2013 an

example of these benefits included sanitation day, improvements to homestays, volunteer work, water filter project, school latrines, establishment of a library project, and the solid waste management project continued. At its peak, involvement and benefits from the Project included 1278 families, with 74 families receiving direct benefits from CBT (Marino, 2013).

The CBT Project aims to provide an ‘authentic village experience’ for visitors. This is achieved through offering homestay accommodation in traditional Cambodian wooden houses (Figure 7.8), and with local families. Facilities are basic, a mattress, bottom sheet, blankets, towels, mosquito net and a fan are provided. All homestays have a western toilet and shower room with cold water available (Figure 7.9). All meals are taken at the CBT restaurant, where the cooking group prepares traditional and simple Cambodian dishes for visitors. Visitors are given the opportunity to walk or bicycle freely around the four villages or take a guided tour. All other activities are organized through the CBT homestay hosts, or the CBT office (Table 7.1). The CBT Project has also hosted selected small tour groups, specifically groups from Travelers Map, Operation Groundswell (an American voluntourism tour company), Asian Trails, Insider Journeys, and Khiri Travel. The CBT Project offers specialized activities for these small tour groups, for example daytime picnics at the nearby *baray* or a dinner and traditional music in the temple.



**Figure 7.8:** Traditional homestay accommodation at Banteay Chhmar (Pawson, 2015)

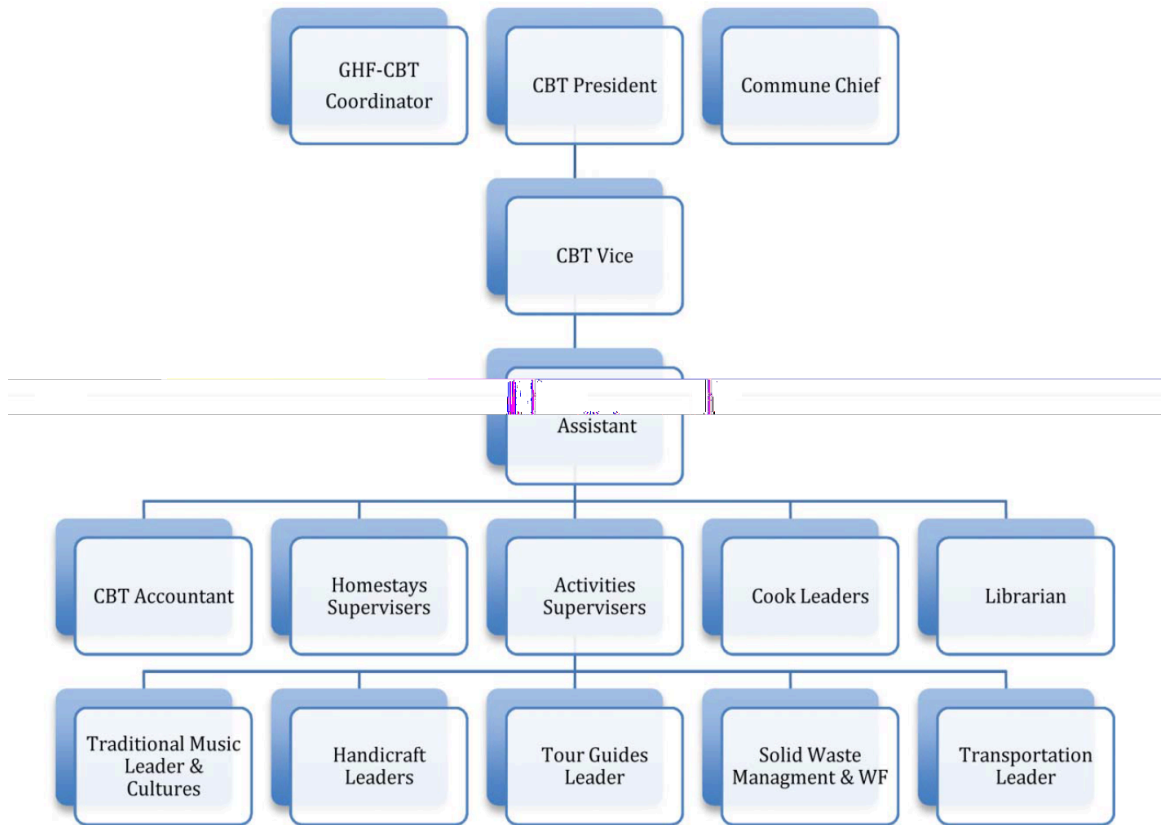


**Figure 7.9:** Homestay bathroom facilities (Pawson, 2015)

Since its inception, the CBT Project's vision and goals have remained relatively unchanged, constructed from some of the more urgent social and economic concerns, specifically clean water, waste management, income generation opportunities and education. According to the CBT Project's Annual Report 2013 (Tath, 2013), the document emphasizes the importance of stakeholder involvement with regard to sustainable sociocultural, economic and environmental community development. The identified project goals included:

- 1) managing tourism in Banteay Chhmar and helping villagers to benefit from it;
- 2) providing supplementary income for villagers through community activities;
- 3) benefitting from tourism benefits as a means of developing involvement with community projects;
- 4) participating in tourism development in Banteay Chhmar;
- 5) improving the knowledge of CBT members; and
- 6) sharing all incomes from tourism among the villagers of Banteay Chhmar (Tath, 2013).

The CBT Project is managed democratically in terms of structure; the only salaried position is the CBT Project co-ordinator. This position continues to be funded by the GHF. Members elect the leadership committee once every two years (Figure 7.10).



**Figure 7.10:** CBT Project organizational structure (Tath, 2013)

Revenue is generated from the CBT Project fund, with money contributed to the fund as a percentage of profit generated by all CBT activities. For example, a tour guide earns US\$10 per day; the guide then contributes US\$1 to the fund. A percentage of the fund is used for operating expenses and identified community projects. Only CBT Project members receive direct financial benefits from the activities. CBT-funded projects, chiefly a waste management program and a water purification scheme, generate indirect benefits for the broader community. The number of visitors to Banteay Chhmar CBT Project has averaged 600 per year (2009–2013), with a peak of 882 in 2013. A further example of CBT activities and associated revenues for 2012 is identified in Table 7.1. Marino (2013) records an increase staying one night or more; 83% stayed overnight during the first six months of 2013; their spending per head increased from US\$12 (2009) to US\$20.83 (2013).

**Table 7.1: CBT Activities and Associated Revenue**

<b>Activities</b>	<b>Pricing</b>	<b>Revenue (2012)</b>	<b>% of Total Revenue</b>
Tour Guides – official hosts for tourists. Tours of community and temple.	\$10 per group of 5 people	\$1300	9%
Homestays (9 houses / 27 rooms) – traditional accommodation in Khmer style wooden houses.	\$7 per room	\$2784	20%
Cooking Group – local persons who cook meals or prepare picnics for tourists.	\$4 per meal	\$1000	7%
Transportation Services – taxi services to and from the community.	\$20 - \$50	Taxi services do not contribute to CBT revenue	
Traditional Music Performance – traditional music performed by the villagers, usually for groups having a picnic dinner in the temple grounds.	\$15 per group	\$250	3%
Kuyon Tour – motorized tractors with a cart.	\$10 per group of 10 people	\$400	5%
Ox Cart Tour of the Village – one-hour tour of the community.	\$7 per group of 4 people	\$100	2%
Rice Flattening – observing / participating in the traditional way of preparing rice	\$10 per group	\$50	1%

\*Prices are recorded in United States Dollars

Source: Marino, 2013

Between 2013 and 2016, the CBT Project identified three of its major ongoing operating costs as (1) communications, marketing and capacity-building; (2) managing tourism activities; and (3) the co-ordinator’s salary. The average operating cost (2009 to June 2013) was US\$15 335 per year, the largest being the salary of the co-ordinator (US\$7740). These costs have remained relatively unchanged. The project has also continued to receive yearly financial support from its principal funder, the GHF. Without this financial support, the project could not continue to viably operate. During my 2016 fieldwork, CBT project members suggested the future of funding from GHF was tenuous. I was informed by CBT members that GHF would continue to fund the CBT Project for another year, but it may then be reduced or terminated. It

was also suggested by CBT Project members that GHF were considering building a twenty-room field school/eco lodge at Banteay Chhmar, and therefore a connection with the CBT Project would most likely remain for the immediate future. A senior CBT member summarized the Project's involvement in the community, operations and challenges:

The CBT Project has been successful because of the support received from NGOs and the villagers. It is not totally sustainable as yet, and once we are financial viable we will become sustainable. The GHF now only pays for the Co-ordinators salary, all other costs are funded through the CBT Project. Most of the members work very well together, however the villagers are not really thinking too much about the CBT Project as yet. Training for CBT members, and specifically management training for those who run the project is now required and we may need external support for this training. For the CBT members who deliver services, hygiene, health, menu knowledge, running homestays and tour guiding are all areas that require more training. Currently we have limited internal quality controls, so this also needs to be improved. At the beginning of 2016 we have nine homestays, however there are only currently seven available, so we may require more villagers to consider becoming homestays. I think the main reason people come to visit Banteay Chhmar is because they have heard about the temple. Interestingly, the Korean visitors who come here are not really interested in the temple, they want to learn more about the village and they spend a lot of time walking around our four villages. We have made connections with a few tour companies like Asian Trails and Kirri Travel, and for us it is better to work closer with the tour operators. As we grow, we do need a better booking system. For 2016 onwards we must focus on growing our visitation, ideally to increase visitation to 5000 per year. We also need to earn more money so we can begin other community projects. So far, we have established the water purification scheme, the waste disposal operation and repairs to the primary school. We can do more for the community. We also need to build a new information center for both tourists and the community to use. Education will be very important for the CBT project to grow and achieve these goals, and this will also depend on developing our human capacity (BC01 CBT Project member).

Over the five years of visiting Banteay Chhmar, I was able to identify through observations and discussions that the majority of villagers consider themselves as uneducated and ignorant of life beyond the community. I argue the villagers' low opinion of their educational status acts as a barrier that discourages them from seeing value in becoming involved in the CBT project. While they are informed through media sources and domestic Cambodian visitors of regional and national events, they remain relatively untouched and unaffected by the majority of national or global events. Most of the older people in the community lived through the 1975–1979 Khmer Rouge period and still are affected by its impacts, specifically an overall feeling of disempowerment:



We are only a poor farming community. We need the experts from outside to show us how to do things. Most families are poor, but some are really poor. They have children who cannot go to school because they have to help their parents earn money working in the fields. Maybe other people can come here and help. People tell us that in the city, people are really rich now, maybe they will come here and start some businesses. Most people know about the CBT Project but think they cannot become involved because they do not know how to do it (BCV16 market shop owner).

During the course of my fieldwork I attempted to determine what role the Angkor temple at Banteay Chhmar played in the villagers' life, specifically as GHF had identified the temple as an important component of heritage tourism for the community. The temple is positioned in the center of the four villages and is considered by CBT members as a primary attraction; did the temple therefore contribute to improving the community's social capital and attitudes toward the CBT Project? While community members did not appear closely connected to the Angkor temple, they recognized the significance of the temple and its links to the ancient empire of Cambodia:

We only go to the temple on special occasions, but we know it's important for the tourists. Sometimes we walk through the temple to get to the other villages. We are lucky to live around the temple. Some people go to other villages because they are on a committee or they go to a meeting. People in our village work hard because they are proud to live here and they know if they work hard the community will get benefits (BCV12 villager).

Other respondents were more critical concerning the community's relationship with the temple. They commented they visit the temple only for *Chaul Chnam Thmey* (Cambodian New Year) as that was the only reason to go there. In the main respondents knew little of the temple's history and significance in the Angkor Period (9<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> centuries). This may contribute towards explaining the temple's ongoing and rapid deterioration, theft, litter and general naivety regarding the temple's significance. I was able to determine the temple plays a minor role toward improving social capital and virtually contributes no connectivity between the villagers and the CBT project, apart from CBT members who are tour guides. This theme is somewhat in contrast to villages situated in the Angkor temple complex, who have a greater engagement with its temples through cultural practices.

Year on year, the majority of respondents constantly remarked on the longevity of tenure and sense of community in Banteay Chhmar. As I have previously discussed in Chapters Two and Three, these are important factors governing the success of CBT projects, and demonstrate a source of social capital that has contributed to the long-term viability of this particular CBT Project. Respondents said most families have lived locally for over ten years and

have good relationships with others in the community. These villagers made an important connection between community relationships and the CBT Project:

I have seen changes that are because of the CBT Project, such as the way the village and main temple is now better-looked-after. The population has increased; newcomers from elsewhere have settled locally and more tourists and business people now arrive on a regular basis. Villagers have stronger relations with one another and with the CBT office holders. They are experiencing a stronger sense of safety and security now (BCV07 villager).

The CBT Project does a good job for our community, the villagers often talk about the tourists coming here and what the CBT is doing in the village. The CBT project has brought extra income for us, my mother is a member and is very proud of her contribution. She is a rice flattener and tourists come to see how she does this the traditional way. I hope the CBT Project can grow tourism here and provide us with more opportunities (BCV04 villager).

I paid particular attention to the discourses of participants who provided a commentary to me concerning the CBT Project. They show mixed feelings on a number of the attributes listed in Chapter Three as essential criteria of CBT enterprises. Several respondents from my fieldwork prior to the road being sealed drew attention to the project's objectives, remarking that they were unrealistic, given the remote location and poor accessibility of Banteay Chhmar, and then coupled with the community's limited human capacity. Others commented on communication, inclusion and transparency:

The objectives seem to have been created by people with little knowledge of what this community is capable of and the skills available in the community to manage the project. The project's initial goals were totally unrealistic. Getting here perhaps is one of the biggest challenges for tourists, the road especially during rainy season is really bad and there is little chance a tourist coach would make it through (BC02 CBT Project member).

I know a little about the CBT because my sister was a cook for them. She left because she could not earn enough money and went to look for a job in Thailand. I don't think the CBT has been very good for the community so far. The Silk Farm gives more back to the community than the CBT. I don't know what the CBT does for this community, if they do something then it's not well communicated to us so you can't expect me to know. I would really like to know where the money goes they get from the tourists. Others around here feel the same as well. Perhaps if they shared more information with us, we may be more interested to be involved (BCV09).

A reoccurring theme in the majority of stakeholder responses was accessibility to the village; prior to 2016, the poor condition of the unsealed road they believed deterred visits, thus inhibiting the Project's growth. Respondents also noted that within their community opinion

was divided about the sealing of the road. Some felt it would bring unwanted development and outsiders; others felt it was a necessity with respect to development and further opportunities for tourism:

The road is really bad, especially in the monsoon. Sometimes we are totally cut off for a few days at a time. The road is important for tourism and it can make more business for us. We worry if the road is fixed and more tourists come, then so will people from the city wanting to make business here. We might not be happy anymore if this happens (BCV10 villager).

Once they have fixed the road it will hopefully mean more tourists can come here quickly and easily. More tourists mean more people who will spend money here. I hope other villagers will benefit from this also. I think many people here would be happy to see and welcome more tourists. We need money to get things done here. The school needs improvements, we need better teachers, and if more tourists are coming to see the village and nature, people might stop cutting down the forests (BCV03).

During my 2016 fieldwork, and the completion of the road sealing, respondent's attitudes toward accessibility had only marginally changed. This suggested a continuing underlying concern about inappropriate development, outsiders and established trust within the community remaining at risk:

The new road they have fixed is good for this village as more people have access to things they have in bigger towns, like electricity. My daughter has a shop and also runs a homestay. Before she had a battery to power the lights, now she has electricity and this is good for people who stay at her house. The house is very hot, so people might not like to stay there, but with electricity my daughter can make it cooler for the people. Before the road was fixed we have a good community here, we all know one another. I am worried this will change, more outsiders will come and do things that will not be good. The village will change and the villagers might also change. I hope it does not happen here, but I have friends in other villages and they tell me outsiders bring unwanted change. I don't think the tourists will do this, it will be other people coming here to try and make money from the tourists (BCV11).

As discussed in Chapter Three, effective CBT relies upon the identification of fundamental community needs, and creating synergy between the project and its contribution toward these needs. It remains essential for the community to be able to identify how the project contributes toward these needs. Throughout my fieldwork, villagers who were CBT Project members were able to identify broadly how the project helped the community. Villagers who were not CBT Project members or indirectly contributed to the project, in the majority had no knowledge of how the Project contributed toward community needs. Villagers who were respondents were able to identify that health, employment and education were all considered

essential developmental needs for Banteay Chhmar. I was able to conclude from the village's narratives an imbalance between essential needs for effective community development and the alignment of CBT Project objectives:

The way in which the CBT Project is structured and managed limits its capacity to address effectively more serious development needs, such as those related to health, housing, education and hygiene. There needs to be better communication between local authorities, the CBT Project Committee and the villagers. While the Project has helped with a few projects, there needs to be a better connection between their goals and village needs (BC23 village office bearer).

In contrast, another respondent who was a CBT Project member commented on the successes of the CBT Project, noting that it holds a position of authority and respect in the community. They thought the CBT Committee is trusted and worked hard to ensure tourism grew and the community benefited:

The Committee are very trustworthy and all want to see tourism really help this community. All the members work hard to support tourism. It's not our first job, but when we need to do it, we know we are helping the community, so we do it. While the CBT Project still uses the temple for promoting Banteay Chhmar, recently tourists are interested in exploring and experiencing our daily life, rather than spending most of their time at the temple. We smile and try and talk with them as they walk around the village. I think our village has things tourists are interested to see. (BC29 CBT member)

Surprisingly, narratives from numerous respondents were similar to the above comment concerning tourist activities. CBT Committee members were of the belief tourists' foremost reason for visiting Banteay Chhmar was because of the temple. Villagers I interviewed differed in belief from CBT Project members concerning what attracted visitors to Banteay Chhmar. Villagers were of the opinion tourists came to Banteay Chhmar to experience a homestay and daily village life. During my four fieldwork visits I had the opportunity to also interview visiting tourists. The following two respondents provide a good example of repeated visitor themes concerning their opinions and beliefs toward CBT at Banteay Chhmar. The responses suggested the temple is not the primary reason for visitation and the importance of resisting inappropriate development:

I just googled homestay and this place came up, it was exactly what I was looking for. They had a really professional website. I got in a taxi from the Thai border and they brought me here no problem. There are amazing people here, I really like just walking about and meeting the people, and the country life here is so nice. This really is it, it's not like Siem Reap and a Hollywood set. Even if the temple was not here I would still come. The Cambodian people are so friendly. I feel very safe here and a good sense of community spirit. I have a really different

impression here compared to cities in Southeast Asia. The people here are genuine and it's not put on for tourists. I like the fact they have not changed their ways and houses to cater for western tourists. I lived in a hut in Ethiopia for two days without a shower, so traditional houses and bathrooms here don't bother me. I would never want this place to change because of tourism. If people are coming here expecting a nice shower and other facilities, they have come to the wrong place. I've been walking around this morning thinking if they use the temple to attract more tourists, it will just become like Siem Reap. It's idyllic here now, and even though the grass is always greener, in this case it would totally ruin this place. There is plenty of things to do here now, I've come for relaxation and homestay, so it's perfect for me. They've got everything here now. England has changed in my lifetime, I don't want to come back in twenty years and find these people have been moved on because the land has become profitable for some Chinese development. What also attracted me to also come here was it seemed they wanted to preserve their way of life. When I was shown the homestay room, the first thing I thought was this is fantastic, open windows, farm life and so peaceful (BCT07 British visitor).

This is the second time we have come here. We love the village so much. Our kids get to meet and play with other kids and people are so friendly. It's very nice to walk around and see no pollution. We all like to see the farm. We have gone to the temple but we like the village better. It's also good we can all eat the traditional foods here. We visit the school and even though we don't understand the lessons, we all like to experience it. It's very safe here for our children and good for them to learn more about another people. We will come back again next year again and we hope that everything is the same. Our homestay family said because the road is fixed, things are changing. We hope this happens not too much (BCT02 Korean family).

My respondents, specifically members of the CBT Project, the GHF and tourists, acknowledged the contribution made by the Project to the community. They agreed the Project benefitted certain aspects of community development through its funding of specific projects, and its capacity to attract volunteer organizations to visit and work in the community:

They have done some good work in the village over the past few years. I know they have helped fix the primary school and they also provide rubbish bins around the village. I see them when I walk to the market. I also see their cart picking rubbish up sometimes. My friend told me they have also given some families new water filters, and that's really good. I think they help keep the village clean for the tourists, and that's good also. I hope one day I can get some benefit too, but for everyone it's good they do this project. I saw some tourists fixing a poor family's house, and that's really kind. Maybe they can do more of that for the really poor families who live here (BC03 villager).

I found comments from villagers concerning transparency and knowledge sharing worthy of recording, as transparency is critical toward establishing trust between a CBT project and the community. Most respondents not directly connected with the Project said that though aware of the Project, they knew little about it and believed they would not have an opportunity to become involved. Several villagers said they were waiting to be asked to participate and until they were, the CBT Project was not their business. Others felt they had nothing to contribute, specifically in terms of knowledge and labor expertise; therefore, they believed it was highly unlikely they would be asked to participate:

We feel the CBT Project is relatively insular, with only certain, more involved or connected villagers invited to participate. It seems if you are related or friends with them they will ask you. If not, you do not get approached and they don't speak to you about it. We and our friends who live in this village have never been involved in any planning, management or decisions of the CBT Project (BC11 village family).

Before 2013 and more tourists started to come, people in this village were more willing to share and were more generous. It seems that some people are now making extra money from farming or the tourists and are doing well. I have seen the tourists and some signs about the CBT, but I'm not involved and do not know anything about it. They don't really tell many people what they are doing. I'm happy to see more tourists in the community, but I worry that the people who are involved with the tourists are not helping everyone here (BCV01 villager).

Related to themes of transparency and knowledge sharing were recurring themes throughout my fieldwork interviews concerning financial sustainability and human capital. These themes mirror the work of Goodwin and Santilli (2009) regarding the importance of project financial management and human capital, and their critical contribution towards the success and overall sustainability of CBT enterprises:

The CBT Project has become over-reliant on funds from the GHF, and has failed to develop a strong, long-term plan with respect to financial management. A significant weakness that prohibits project members from doing this is the lack of training support and available skill base, especially regarding hospitality and business management. Despite the numerous number of CBT Project office holders, only three members actively facilitate operations day-to-day. They are the only ones that actually really do anything. The others are just in it for the title, they do nothing. The funding will soon dry up and unless the project finds another way to be financial sustainable, it will cease to operate (BC17 CBT project advisor).

Within tourism literature and practice there has been a long debate over the theory of social realities, authenticity and the extent to which a tourism product or experience is staged/contrived (Cohen, 1979; Hall, 2003; MacCannell, 1976; Urry, 2002). MacCannell (1976)

argues the modern tourist while in the destination encounters 'tourism spaces', where the experience has been deliberately constructed to meet the needs of the tourist and industry. Cohen (1979) identifies the concepts related to authenticity as firstly, authentic tourism being experiences that are accepted by tourists as 'objectively real' and that usually occur in places where tourism is yet to develop. Secondly, 'staged authenticity' is a scene or performance created specifically for tourist consumption that is accepted by the tourist as real or genuine. Thirdly, 'denial of authenticity', in which the tourist, based upon previous experiences of staged authenticity, doubts or denies authentic experiences. Fourthly, Cohen suggests 'contrived' refers to a situation that has been staged specifically for tourists and tourists are aware or educated on the reasons why it has been contrived, therefore accepting they are experiencing a tourist space that has been staged. The reason I raise the subject of authenticity and CBT is two-fold. Firstly, an objective of CBT is to provide the visitor with an educational authentic experience, and secondly the willingness of the visitor to accept the experience as authentic, specifically an experience that may be substantially different from what they may be familiar with in their home environment.

The CBT Project at Banteay Chhmar provides visitors with products and experiences that have a minimal amount of staging. This was also clearly reflected through interviews I held with visitors. Accommodation is provided in traditional Cambodian wooden houses in which western toilets have been installed, but the bathrooms are used by both visitor and homestay owners. Whilst meals are taken at the CBT restaurant, the food is prepared by the CBT members and the menu is Cambodian village fare. Visitors are free to walk around the villages and experience daily life that is not staged for the visitor. This also may include religious festivals and local weddings, specifically *Bon Om Tuok*, the annual water festival held every November at the time of the full moon. The only activity specifically staged/contrived for visitors is mainly utilized by tour groups. A dinner with local musicians only performing for the tour group is regularly hosted at the main entrance of the temple. I argue there are considerations for the CBT Project concerning the theory of authenticity. These considerations are attributed to respondents' commentary concerning authenticity themes:

I am worried my guests will think my house is too hot and will not want to stay here. I don't have air conditioning and can't afford to put it in. If I could afford it then maybe I could install it and make other improvements in my house (BC22 homestay owner).

Respondents, specifically homestay owners, believed the quality and range of attractions must be improved if tourists are to stay more than one night. Most homestay owners relayed to me their visitors only stayed one night, and some visitors actually commented to them once they have walked around the village and seen the temple there was little else to do. Other homestay owners were concerned about meeting the requirements of western guests and

their comfort, hygiene and dietary requirements. Knowledge and training around hospitality were identified as lacking for those involved with homestays, guiding or other types of interaction with visitors:

Homestays are cause for concern, given that most of us doing the homestays cannot provide acceptable Western standards of accommodation. How should we maintain a balance between authentic Cambodian accommodations and the basic hygiene and comforts expected by Westerners? We are not even quite sure what these are and sometimes are confused by some of our guest's behaviour and dislike of our way of living. We have converted our bathrooms to be more western, but our houses and life is still really different. I don't think they like it much to stay a few days with here (BC08 CBT homestay owner).

Homestay owners appeared concerned that their houses and experience of staying in a local house would lead to dissatisfaction from the visitor. Moreover, they were concerned they had not been trained enough to look after visitors, and this may lead to a poor visitor experience. No evidence from visitors currently exists indicating these two concerns are an issue impacting authenticity and visitor satisfaction. The majority of visitor respondents I spoke to were more concerned about Banteay Chhmar becoming similar to other tourism destinations in Cambodia, and losing its authenticity as a rural Cambodian village. Giving consideration to the interview narratives, I argue that authenticity for the CBT Project includes the extent to which the tourist space at Banteay Chhmar is staged for western visitors and more broadly, future appropriate local tourism development. A predominant fear of most villagers and visitors is through development Banteay Chhmar will lose its current 'character' and the community assets that attract visitors to experience CBT, specifically the village's authenticity, the fact it has not become a mass tourism destination, the friendliness and strong sense of community currently existing, and the social bonds between families and neighbors.

An example of staged authenticity and tourism development that had created a divide between villagers was a 2014 decision made by the CBT Project Committee to host 'luxury tent camping experiences' in the temple's protected zone. This product was developed in partnership with a tour company, Khiri Travel and the CBT Project. Permission was granted through the Royal Cambodian Government's Ministry of Fine Arts and Culture that allowed for tents to be erected in the temple's protected zone. Khiri Travel's Banteay Chhmar Tented Camp advertising brochure states 'located only 100m from the Banteay Chhmar Angkorean ruins, two spacious tents give an immersive experience of sleeping in the shadow of the temples' (Khiri Travel, n.d.). The brochure also states the luxury tent experience includes en-suite bathrooms, air conditioning, free mini bar, a pillow menu and a choice of Asian or continental breakfast. The imagery for the brochure and Khiri Travel's consumer website (<https://khiri.com/signature/banteay-chhmar-tented-camp-2/>) depicts scenes that depart from Banteay Chhmar's CBT Project webpage (Figure 7.11).





**Figure 7.11:** Glamping to help the Banteay Chhmar community (Khiri Travel, 2014).

The consumer information provided by Khiri Travel does identify that the luxury tents are operated by the CBT Project, which generates employment opportunities, income and also supports the development of capacity and skills for CBT members. During my 2016 fieldwork, I asked villagers and CBT Project members for their opinion of the luxury tent concept. I found opinions remained divided, and reinforced the importance of not deviating from authentic CBT. The CBT members I interviewed confirmed the tents had provided a small amount of extra revenue and more work they had not been adequately trained to complete:

The tents were a lot of hard work to erect and pull down, we had to set things up and do things that were very different to what we do at our homestay. Nobody showed us how. They don't come very often either, so really there is not much more money we can get. I think the tent is very nice and everything is modern. I was excited when it was finished, but here we have homestay for the visitor, they should stay with us and be like the other visitors who come here (BC18 CBT committee member).

This is a bad decision for the Project. Obviously, some deal was done with the Ministry to allow the tents in the protected zone 1 area. This should not be occurring and sets a bad example for the villagers. One rule for the CBT Project and rule for the villagers. I understand it's an opportunity for some to financially benefit from the tents, however the majority of CBT members and broader community have received very little. As for training to adequately offer a five-star luxury service as advertised, non-existent. Of course, the CBT did everything to try and get it right. The heart of CBT here is the homestay experience, immersion into the local community, and the educational benefits, right? You can't even begin to try and justify luxury tents as CBT. It's amazing how much power these tour companies seem to have when deciding how they want the community to cater for their needs (BC17 CBT project advisor).

### 7.3 Conclusion

Reviewing my fieldwork observations and stakeholder interview transcripts from 2012 to 2016, then organizing them into specific themes concerning the merits and failings of the CBT Project, I was able to identify the following critical reoccurring narratives concerning the community and CBT:

(1) Community members have continued to have a low perception of themselves when comparing to Cambodians who live in urban areas. This has acted as a barrier toward their engagement and participation in CBT. I consider this as not necessarily a failing of CBT, but a barrier that is impacting the overall effectiveness of the Project.

(2) There is a strong sense of goodwill, trust and cohesiveness between the residents.

(3) The CBT Project has brought community members together, empowered women, provided a secondary income source for some, and created a sense of pride in the community.

(4) The project requires a more holistic approach as to how it engages with the community and in turn delivers benefits to the community.

(5) The project lacks good economic and business management processes resulting in its ability to become financially sustainable.

(6) The growth of tourism in the community is creating concerns across project stakeholders, specifically concerning the loss of land, authenticity, and the loss of control over development.

(7) There has been a continued suspicion by villagers of people external to Banteay Chhmar, and of the government. This has caused villagers anxiety about land ownership and use, existing bonds and friendships and the strong sense of place that exists.

Considering Cambodia's recent tumultuous past, it is reasonable to accept communities, specifically those in regional and rural areas, will have a perception of disempowerment. These perceptions are also considered common in poor rural areas across Southeast Asia (Suntikul, Bauer, & Song, 2010). While this may be broadly evident in Banteay Chhmar, my fieldwork identified how the community's sense of place, pride, kinship, trust and cohesiveness have all contributed towards beginning to overcome such negativities. As I have discussed in Chapter Two, these existing assets, or ingredients of the community's social capital, should be considered vital for building support, trust and healthy attitudes towards appropriate tourism development in the community. Paxton (1999) notes, 'when social capital is present, it increases the capacity for action and facilitates the production of some good' (p. 93), and for the production of some good to occur other resources or forms of capital (e.g. human, political, physical, etc.) need to be present, utilized and managed. Social capital, therefore, can be

considered an instrument that facilitates other forms of community capital to be developed and utilized to deliver collective community benefits. Grootaert and van Bastelaer's (2001) working paper provides 'strong evidence that social capital is a pervasive ingredient and determinant of progress in many types of development projects, and an important tool in poverty reduction' (p. 11). Ellis and Sheridan (2015) suggest the possibility that CBT may actually advance community cohesion, and therefore assist to develop social capital stocks. The stakeholder narratives from my fieldwork strongly indicate the respondents believe the CBT Project has brought the community closer together and developed a sense of pride amongst the residents of Banteay Chhmar. Considering the increased development in Banteay Chhmar since 2015, the challenge remains as to how the community can protect and grow its existing social capital, specifically to benefit and support the continued operation of the CBT Project.

The CBT Project, given its longevity, has grown to become a predominant organization within the community. It receives support from Commune Officials and senior community leaders. While some villagers expressed concerns about the transparency of the CBT Project, it was evident the work they do and tourism development in general was viewed by the majority of stakeholders, who are villagers, with a positive attitude. The existing social capital within the community has empowered CBT members to participate in the project despite feeling they may lack the skills (human capital) required to look after visitors and provide a service they believe would be of an acceptable standard to 'westerners'. These community outcomes, specifically local support for CBT, have been identified by Ashley and Garland (1994) as potential positive foundational elements of tourism development in similar communal areas. I argue building further capacity of the existing social capital resource within the Banteay Chhmar community will contribute towards a greater level of overall support for the CBT Project. In turn this will create better problem-solving skills, allow more community members to identify developmental needs, and how the project may equally and fairly contribute to those needs and build resilience toward inappropriate tourism development.

The stakeholder narratives have also clearly drawn attention to the business management of the CBT Project. A division between project leaders and the members was identified. Feelings of negativity to those in positions of authority were evident, specifically towards leaders who did not actively participate in the day-to-day operations of the project. This finding demonstrates that communication between the project members and the broader community is essential, especially in regard to developing support for the project's objectives and ongoing activities. Choi and Sirakaya (2006) identified the importance of transparent stakeholder activities as an essential goal for CBT policy and planning. An opportunity, therefore, exists for the CBT Project to improve communication processes between leaders, members and the community, which will then allow greater community awareness and support of the project. While the community demonstrated excellent informal channels of

communication, influenced by its collaborative agricultural practices, these channels appeared to be also allowing unhealthy gossip to spread concerning the CBT Project. I was able to establish that the lack of business and tourism management expertise among members, especially those in leadership positions, had directly contributed toward unsuccessful financial management and a continued reliance on external funding. No CBT Project members possessed any formal training or education in business and tourism management. The project to date has relied on external professional expertise for the development of its business plan, marketing activities and training needs. This has limited the amount of human capital available within the community to effectively move the project towards achieving overall sustainability.

Given the complexities of location, availability of community assets, environmental conditions and feelings of disempowerment, the CBT Project at Banteay Chhmar has now operated relatively successfully for ten years. The project has added value to the community through its membership, support of various community development activities and its ability to grow social capital. The local community initially worked with an NGO to assist establish the project. The project has become been independent and solely managed by community members. The community as a whole is not involved in the management of the project, but through the project's members and also community networks, there is good community representation. As the Banteay Chhmar community is small, the project is able to remain closely connected to the community and specific community developmental needs. During my fieldwork, I was able to ascertain there was an overwhelming feeling of support for the project and appropriate tourism development in the community; however, concerns were raised by numerous stakeholders about the future growth of tourism at Banteay Chhmar. The CBT Project leaders were responsible for identifying specific community projects and how funds should be used towards these projects. As members receive direct financial benefits, I was able to establish this practice was chiefly responsible for causing jealousies and divisions between some of the villagers. These findings clearly support earlier work by Choi and Sirakaya (2006), Harrison and Schipani (2007), Matutano (2012) and Spenceley (2008) regarding the likely outcomes of CBT in localities such as Banteay Chhmar.

This investigation of Banteay Chhmar has provided an insightful, and much needed contribution toward existing limited ethnographic studies concerning CBT Projects in Cambodia, and more broadly within the context of CBT literature. I particularly draw attention toward the importance of financial sustainability, notably with respect to the project, to social and human capital, suspicions and jealousies, and business management capabilities. During the period of my fieldwork I was able to determine that the CBT Project members continued to remain concerned with the ongoing financial viability and business requirements for the project. At the conclusion of my fieldwork in 2016, the GHF had agreed to provide financial support to pay the Project Coordinator's salary for a further six months. In summary, I conclude by

arguing that while the CBT Project has contributed positively to overall community development, specifically through growing social capital, without an effective business and financial plan, and developing further human capital, the project is still some distance from being cited as an ultimate success. Following ten years of operation, the CBT Project is considered a valuable community asset for Banteay Chhmar. The community's continued deployment of social capital will provide enough determination to ensure the Project's survival for the immediate future.

## Chapter Eight

### **The Road to Sustainability: The potential of tourism's contribution toward community development in Cambodia**

*In August, the community signed a two-year memorandum of understanding with the Ministry of Environment to control 70 hectares in the national park as a community conservation area. Members collect entrance fees and income from the ox-cart rides. Money not used for conservation or wages goes into a community fund to benefit the 2,700 residents. CBET proponents say that only such community-based tourism can really alleviate poverty. They claim 'normal' tourism cannot do so, and harms the environment as resources are not managed properly. 'With general tourism, tourist visits are often marketed and organized by private travel companies,' says a Mlup Baitong leaflet. 'The bulk of the profits leave the community, and only a few private individuals may benefit from the enterprise.' The ecotourism network goes further, stating that uncontrolled impacts of tourism are eroding the unity of local communities. 'Tourism in Cambodia is currently contributing to a growing inequity. There is little or no access to the benefits of tourism for poor people,' it states. 'Poor people and communities are also receiving negative impacts from tourism. Cambodia is in an unusual position regarding tourism—it is the one area of the economy that has the potential for stellar growth. So it is not surprising that Minister of Tourism Veng Sereyvuth disagrees. He says the poor are already gaining many benefits from tourism. As for the charge that normal tourism destroys the environment, Sereyvuth says the government is working on sustainable programs. 'Tourism can be very harmful if you don't manage it properly,' he says. 'There are a lot of regulations in place in terms of zoning—not to destroy the architecture of places, the height of the buildings,' he says. 'It is about how we introduce the proper management systems to control the inflow of tourists and cater for hygiene and not pollute' (Green and Nara, 2003, Phnom Penh Post).*

## 8.1 Introduction

The above article dated January 2003 from the *Phnom Penh Post* was the first article to be published in the tabloid directly concerning CBT in Cambodia. It draws attention to the voices of rural communities, who state that the growth in the mass tourism sector has delivered only minor benefits to local communities, and has contributed to a marked inequality in relation to those who benefit from tourism and their poorer neighbours. The current government disagrees with the proponents of CBT, stating instead that policy, as well as the regulation and management of tourism, delivers outcomes that alleviate poverty, claiming instead that the environment is being adequately protected by a multitude of regulations. With respect to my own research, I have taken the liberty of contextualising tourism as a sustainable phenomenon, notably regarding CBT, and in general situating it within the wider sphere of Cambodian tourism and certain communities in particular. In order to achieve this objective, I have examined the traits of Cambodian communities that are characteristically unique, as well as the relationship between community development and tourism, and also the evolution of tourism as a phenomenon in the Cambodian context. The research includes an ethnographic case study of a Cambodian CBT project that might be regarded as exemplifying current practice. The core of the thesis concerns itself with a central proposition that CBT in Cambodia avails itself of the opportunity not only to perform as a viable and also significant means of sustainable development, but for the purpose of functioning as a means of alleviating poverty in rural communities.

This section is summative in purpose, revising previous chapters and also providing a concluding argument that complements the article as cited in the *Phnom Penh Post*. I suggest, furthermore, that since Cambodia's present-day era of mass tourism began in the 1990s, the industry itself continues to experience particular challenges regarding current government policy and the realities generated by the development of tourism. In addition, I suggest that significant benefits are accruing to Cambodia's rural communities, notably regarding the alleviation of poverty, itself achievable as a benefit of CBT, and comprising, therefore, a vital component, not only in relation to the overall success of the tourism industry but also regarding development opportunities for rural communities. In order for CBT to occur on a more effective scale, the RGC will require more investment, more expertise and additional policies of a complementary nature that will in turn support CBT's development and operational aspects. With respect to the challenge to the RGC in advancing sustainable practices in relation to CBT, it is the case that existing and future projects should strive to be less reliant on international funding and on related technical expertise; instead it should employ internal mechanisms if it is to successfully develop and deploy the inherent capacity of human capital.

This chapter also offers certain recommendations that might be of benefit to the community of Banteay Chhmar, as well as to those involved in other CBT projects. In

particular, the recommendations in question include the development and maintenance of community capital and the management/marketing of strategic business initiatives. Both of these components are essential requirements if Cambodia's CBT projects are successfully to deliver sustainable outcomes. I suggest, furthermore, that international agencies involved in the development, support and funding of such projects should prioritize agendas that specifically empower communities, notably for purposes of 'self-managing' their respective projects and also to help them to develop a level of resilience regarding pressure from inappropriate external forces and any further unwarranted development of tourism. The limited nature and extent of the human capital that is characteristic of Cambodia's rural communities, particularly with respect to the management of local business enterprises and tourism, comprises a major barrier regarding access to the market, as well as to the delivery of sustainable outcomes in relation to CBT. In conclusion, the thesis examines the limitations of research overall, especially within the Cambodian context, and proposes a future direction for studies of this kind.

## **8.2 Rural development and tourism in Cambodia**

In this instance a commencement point that suggests itself for those who are either practitioners, or choose to investigate CBT in Cambodia: the necessity of understanding rural development, particularly in places where it is on the increase, and there are existing constraints. Rural development includes issues related to poverty, in view of which it is also essential to understand the relationship between development and poverty, including salient and contributing factors. These factors include the extent to which poverty is experienced by communities, and the consideration that communities might in fact operate to generate better and more informed decision-making regarding the development of tourism at the local level. From the mid-2000s, Cambodia's economic performance has improved dramatically. For many years the country relied on agriculture as the main contributor to economic development; in fact, as of 2017, it continues to remain a cornerstone of the economy. Other industries, especially those related to the manufacture of garments, to tourism and related services, and to construction as well, have begun to play a major role in, for the most part, urban areas. The *Asian Development Bank* (2012) has suggested that the continuation of direct investment from overseas has resulted in Cambodia becoming less dependent on international aid; the growth of its domestic savings, moreover, has contributed substantially to the country becoming better equipped to sustain overall rates of growth. In 2017, the World Bank acknowledged the continuous nature and extent of Cambodia's economic growth. Its update identifies, for 2017 in particular, a rate of growth at 6.9%, attributed to the construction and garment industries, to rice production and to activities generated by tourism; it is a rate that is accompanied by increasing employment in these sectors (World Bank Group, 2017-a). In addition, the Bank has found that rural households are diversifying with respect to livelihoods, notably with respect to pursuing opportunities in the construction, garment and services sectors. In turn, these developments are



contributing to a marked reduction in rural poverty *per se*. In evidence, the Bank cites the change in rural incomes; in 2015, for instance, those derived from non-agricultural activities comprised only a third of those from the sector overall. The Bank compares this rate of growth with the incomes of 2007, when rural incomes from non-agricultural activities comprised less than a fifth of the total. As an addendum, its update of 2017 notes that if Cambodia is to remain competitive, it must generate improvements in the productivity of its labor force, notably regarding the quality and standard of education across all levels. In addition, the Bank calls for improvements in public administration, with particular reference to the delivery of public services throughout Cambodia's urban and rural areas.

There has been a noticeable diversification and increase in opportunities available to those from rural communities. I have chosen, however, to regard with some caution the positivity currently surrounding Cambodia's recent economic growth, particularly regarding the country's ability to take advantage of, and to capitalize on, opportunities for growth. Comprising a case in point, according to the Asian Development Bank (ADB) (2012), 'structural and institutional constraints to agricultural and rural development exist that, unless addressed by appropriate interventions and policies, will result in a slowing of economic growth and poverty reduction' (p. 10). In particular, the ADB refers to constraints imposed as a consequence of ongoing disputes over land tenure, and to the impact on productivity occasioned by low levels of human capital in rural areas, added to which not only have there been recent market failures, but issues related to co-ordination, as well as to accessibility in relation to rural areas. Much as I witnessed in Banteay Chhmar regarding its villagers being able to take advantage of opportunities for economic diversification, in the majority of instances this eventuality necessitates them having to leave their community and move to larger towns, or urban centers, or even across the border to neighbouring countries. At present the nature and extent of opportunities for diversification in Cambodia's rural communities is still relatively limited. As a consequence of its villagers leaving their communities for the sake of employment opportunities elsewhere, there has been, and continues to be, a marked erosion of social capital in the communities they leave behind, including a diminution of family bonds, a phenomenon that has already had an impact on opportunities for the development of tourism in these areas.

In Cambodia, poverty alleviation continues to improve. The national poverty line was recorded at 13.5% in 2014, compared to 47.8% in 2007 (World Bank Group, 2017-b). Whilst economic growth and poverty reduction figures at a national level show improvement over the past decade, there still exists discrepancies between urban and rural areas across Cambodia. The ADP (2012) reported 'in 2004, the living standards of the poorest one-fifth of the population were only 8% higher than they were one decade earlier; over this same period, the living standards of the richest one-fifth rose five times as fast. Similarly, rural living standards rose more slowly than those in Phnom Penh and other urban centres' (p. 4). The ADB has defined,

furthermore, the core problem for rural development which in turn contributes toward continued rural poverty, as stagnant agricultural production that is currently centered upon a limited number of crops, chiefly rice and cassava. This problem is further compounded by low capital investment in the rural sector, low employment in rural areas due to increasing production costs and low sales prices, and lack of marketing expertise to support possible increased production. Of note, while the ADB's (2012) analysis of rural development in Cambodia addressed the key contributors, constraints and recommendations, it specifically focused on the agricultural sector and neglected to address possible economic diversification opportunities for rural communities such as tourism development. As evidenced through the CBT Project at Banteay Chhmar, tourism at the community level provides opportunities for employment, a secondary source of household income, empowerment of women, and human skill development. All of these opportunities can be utilized for poverty reduction and development in Cambodia's rural areas.

The World Bank's most recent Economic Update for Cambodia, April 2017 suggested rural households have had some success since 2015 diversifying their livelihoods, specifically from opportunities provided by non-agricultural economies. The update notes 'by 2015, non-agricultural wage incomes made up more than one-third of rural incomes, compared with less than one-fifth in 2007' (World Bank Group, 2017-a, p. 8). I have noted already that a diversification of income has provided those from rural communities with employment opportunities in predominantly construction or garments companies operating in urban areas, or across the border in Thailand. These opportunities are currently contributing toward sustaining poverty reduction. Many agencies suggest that this trend will continue to reduce poverty and also to expand the shared prosperity of Cambodia's rural population. There is, however, a cautionary element to these recent trends. The World Bank includes, for example, the global phenomenon that is a consequence of continued rises in US interest rates, and to the slow economic recovery of Europe, in addition to which is the element of political instability, with particular reference to elections and their outcomes; these are aspects that may well produce a negative impact in relation to Cambodia's present rate of economic advancement, which will then affect the overall improvement of rural development and any consequent reduction of poverty.

### **8.3 The outlook for the future of tourism in Cambodia**

Both the World Bank Group and the ADB have provided substantial reports on tourism's future in Cambodia (Asian Development Bank, 2017; World Bank Group, 2017-a; World Bank Group, 2017-b). As of 2016, the most important themes for tourism development in Cambodia were: (1) accessibility from regional tourism hubs, (2) effective marketing capabilities, (3) policy and planning, (4) diversification of attractions, (5) tourism expenditure and economic leakage, (6) tourism infrastructure, (7) human capital, (8) balancing supply and demand, and (9) use of protected areas. The World Bank Group (2017-b) argues while

agriculture has been a major contributor to Cambodia's economic growth, the future of long-term economic growth and jobs creation will come from the country's industrialization. The services sector, which also includes tourism, will be responsible for the majority of jobs, with better quality jobs and increased remuneration as key outcomes. For tourism to adequately contribute to the country's economic, social and environmental development, I suggest the following areas require immediate attention:

- *Accessibility from regional tourism hubs*

In terms of geography and with respect to tourism, Cambodia is relatively close to large markets that include China, India and Australia. In relation to visitors from Europe, Cambodia is a closer destination than is Australia or other countries in the Pacific region, which means that the decay effect of distance is reduced accordingly. There are, however, two factors that have an impact of size on accessibility to Cambodia—politics and transportation. A pre-paid tourist visa is required (as of 2017, USD36 for one month). There have been recent improvements, however, in processing visas that have been achieved because of the Royal Cambodian Government introducing an e-visa scheme. For some years ASEAN countries have been exploring the possibility of introducing a single visa policy for all of Southeast Asia; as of 2017, however, the organization is still undertaking discussions with member countries. Cambodia has encouraged the introduction of more direct flights from regional hubs in Vietnam, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore and China; at this point of time, however, there are still no direct flights from European, American or Australian hubs, which means that travellers from these countries require a stopover in either Hong Kong, Singapore, Bangkok, Ho Chi Minh City, Hanoi or Kuala Lumpur. The absence of direct flights continues to reduce Cambodia's attractiveness for visitors from outside Asia.

- *Effective marketing capabilities*

The Royal Cambodian Government's Ministry of Tourism, Marketing and Promotions Department are responsible for marketing Cambodia internationally. The Department has developed a marketing strategy document, Cambodia Tourism Marketing Strategy 2015–2020, that compliments the Tourism Development Strategic Plan 2012–2020. The major themes of these documents focus on a continued increase in the number of international arrivals, most notably those from China, as well as the growth of domestic tourism, in the process generating an increased expenditure that will result from visitors staying for longer periods. The planning documents also emphasise an increase in the diversification of attractions, in the quality of tourism as a marketable product and finally, in the importance of promoting tourism at an international level. Despite having developed these approaches, at present Cambodia does not possess a level of expertise that allows it to expand and otherwise utilize in-depth intelligence in relationship to it successfully exploiting market opportunities, or to develop appealing international promotional campaigns. It cannot take advantage of digital marketing

opportunities or indeed, to move beyond branding that is limited to featuring Angkor Archaeological Park. In order to realise the objectives of its Tourism Development Strategic Plan, and if it is to fully deploy the proposed marketing strategies, Cambodia must develop and retain a range of appropriate human, financial and physical resources.

- *Policy and planning*

As discussed in Chapter Six, Cambodia has made significant progress with respect to the development of appropriate tourism policies, procedures and related plans. This outcome is evidenced in the Tourism Development Strategic Plan 2012–2020. Tourism statistics clearly demonstrate the continued growth of international arrivals, increasing by 50% between 2010 and 2016 (Ministry of Tourism, 2016). As of April 2017, China had provided the highest number of international arrivals, growing by 31.3% from 2016, followed by Vietnam, Korea, Lao and Thailand (Ministry of Tourism, 2017). I argue Cambodia is at risk of becoming over-reliant on the Chinese market, specifically the package tours. This may have a long-term negative impact on Cambodia's international image beyond Asian markets. Between 2013 and 2017 I observed in Siem Reap the significant increase of tourism businesses who were solely catering for this market, such as tour operators, hotels, restaurants and souvenir merchandisers. During casual conversations with residents, business owners and employees of the services sector over this period it became apparent there was increasing hostility to the Chinese package tour market. The hostility from the local community is supported by Doxey's Iridex (1976) that suggested the level of irritation and negative attitudes from the local community increases as a response to unfavourable tourism development. According to points of view shared with me by those who live and work in Siem Reap, their main objectives stems from an intolerance regarding the inappropriate behavior of visitors from China, and the overcrowding created by tour buses in the township and along the roads to the temples. They also resent the level to which China's package-tour sector has become insular, notably in the way it excludes local people and businesses with respect to opportunities for employment and other aspects of economic development. Additionally, the people of Siem Reap have concerns that, given the growth rate of the Chinese sector, theirs is a destination that will become unattractive to international tourists from elsewhere, in the process diminishing the town's image, and causing a decline in visits from other countries. Apart from addressing certain outcomes that are attributable to increases in package-tours from China (discussed already in Chapter Six), the challenge confronting the Royal Cambodian Government's is to develop human and financial capacities that successfully deliver its policies and approaches.

- *Diversification of attractions*

Tourist attractions are central to the overall success of a destination and are considered an essential pull factor for potential tourists. Diversity in attractions with a broad inventory of primary and secondary attractions both natural and cultural is fundamental to a destination

realizing its full potential (Weaver & Lawton, 2010). The World Bank Group (2017-a; 2017-b) identifies Cambodia as having plentiful natural and cultural assets that could be utilized as potential tourist attractions. Tourism in Cambodia, however, continues to remain reliant on Siem Reap and the Angkor Archaeological Park, and to a lesser extent Phnom Penh and the casinos of Sihanoukville. In order for the country as a whole to develop infrastructure, as well as new attractions, the World Bank Group (2017-a) recommends an improved rate of inter-agency co-ordination and an increased level of collaboration with the private sector. The Bank also recommends an increase with respect to the country's investment in travel-related services, as well as in communications and transportation, and in hospitality, for purposes of supporting the development and allure of other attractions (2017-b). Also of note are the Bank's further recommendations, notably with reference to the further development of ecotourism attractions that 'could help create employment opportunities in rural areas, potentially providing households with a complementary income source, and would also help to mitigate environmental degradation' (2017-b, p. 60). With respect to the success of the CBT agenda, this specific recommendation is important, for while CBT is only a relatively small component of Cambodia's tourism industry and its worth as a market for visitors from elsewhere, it nonetheless provides locals with an opportunity to diversify attractions regarding the inventory of cultural and natural attractions, or in some cases, both. It is the case that throughout Cambodia, further investment in support of CBT's continued development will in fact be essential to its success and to the effectiveness of its contribution to sustainable outcomes in relation to tourism, chiefly with respect to rural development and to a reduction of poverty.

- *Tourism expenditure and economic leakage*

Direct and indirect tourism expenditure has the capacity to contribute substantially to a country's gross domestic product (GDP). Tourism also provides countries with opportunity to create backward linkages within the economy through the utilization of local products and services required for tourism consumption. Employment within the tourism sector is fundamental to economic growth. Tourism's total contribution to Cambodia's GDP for 2016 was 28.3% and forecasted to grow by 9.9% in 2017. Employment, both direct and indirect, was at 25.9% of total employment, with a prediction of 33% in 2027 (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2017). These figures may appear encouraging; however, tourism's high percentage of GDP contribution suggests the Cambodian economy has developed an over-reliance on tourism. Should there be a domestic, regional or global issue resulting in declining international arrivals, the Cambodian economy would be extremely vulnerable. Economic leakage attributed to the importation of products and services required by tourism operators remains a major barrier to backward integration. A study of Cambodia's economic multiplier effect was undertaken in 2011. The study identified 63% of direct tourism revenues was retained locally (Dwyer & Thomas, 2011). Significant leakage continues to occur in the food and beverage sector that is attributed to the importation of food items, in package tourism controlled by offshore operators,

in casino tourism again with high percentages of international ownership and salaries/wages of expatriate middle to senior hospitality managers. Dwyer and Thomas (2011) conclude tourism expenditure in Cambodia has further potential for greater distribution to poor people. They propose this can be achieved through stronger policy initiatives and a greater emphasis on ‘adopting a value chain approach to tourism and aligning tourism with wider thinking on value chains and on production, incomes and employment of the poor’ (p. 325). It is estimated women make up approximately half the tourism workforce in Cambodia (World Bank Group, 2017-b). Mirroring similar findings of Dwyer and Thomas (2011), the World Bank Group (2017-b) put forward a view that challenges now exist toward developing tourism as a key contributor to an inclusive economy. They identify that in the last decade, value captured per tourist has seen little movement, USD585 in 2005 to USD630 in 2015. These figures were, and continue to be chiefly attributed to the short length of stay by international visitors, 4.6 days by package tourists and 7 days by free independent travelers. For year-end 2016, the total average length of stay across all market segments was 6.3 nights, a decrease from the previous three years (Ministry of Tourism, 2016). It comprises a result that is attributable to the growth in the number of package tours and the shorter length of stay represented by this segment of the market. At present, we can assume that the current contribution of tourism to economic development might be regarded as relatively healthy, but it is important for those involved in the economic management of tourism to consider long-term implications, especially regarding economic contributions. For Cambodia options include an effort to increasing backward integration, and thus improve the tourism multiplier; there is also the option to work on increasing the average length of stay, as well as on improving accessibility by the poor, particularly so that they might take advantage of the employment opportunities generated by tourism. It is also a matter of balancing market segments in order to reduce an over-reliance on package-tours and finally, on making an effort to limit overseas investment in business related to tourism. These elements contribute to essential strategies regarding any long-term economic resilience and sustainability, as well as the success overall regarding tourism in Cambodia.

- *Tourism infrastructure*

The World Economic Forum (2015) identified Cambodia was somewhat behind Asia-Pacific benchmarks for infrastructure competitiveness (113<sup>th</sup> out of 141 countries), environmental sustainability (118<sup>th</sup>), and health and hygiene (112<sup>th</sup>). Tourism infrastructure—transportation and roads, water and sewerage, medical facilities, banking facilities, communication, and human resources—is essential to a destination’s attractiveness for potential tourists and its competitiveness. The predominant tourism areas of Siem Reap, Phnom Penh and Sihanoukville have developed adequate infrastructure to cater for a diverse range of tourism markets, although adequate signage and pedestrian walkways still remain a challenge for these three centers. The existing problem with tourism infrastructure lies beyond the three main tourism cities. Poor roads and infrastructure to secondary and rural destinations, substandard to non-existent tourism

facilities and the lack of tourism services, for example accommodation, banking, medical, food and beverages, and tourism information services, are all negatively impacting tourism growth and rural development beyond the country's tourism centers. Moreover, the lack of government and private tourism investment is hindering sustainable tourism growth in secondary and rural tourism areas. The World Bank Group (2017-b) has identified that the lack of tourism infrastructure beyond the three tourism centers 'discourages visitors from venturing off the beaten track, which keeps driving the imbalanced growth around Siem Reap and Phnom Penh' (p. 60). This is further illustrated through the ADB's Tourism Assessment Sector Assessment, Strategy and Roadmap (2017) for the region. It states 'Phnom Penh and Siem Reap, with relatively good urban services, account for about 60% of Cambodia's total accommodation stock and half of the country's international visitor arrivals. In comparison, the seaside town of Kep—with good tourism potential but lacking a piped water supply and adequate sanitation—receives only 1.1% of international visitors' (p. 16).

Human resources remain another critical issue impacting tourism development and quality tourist experiences. The World Economic Forum's 2016 Human Capital Report (2016) identified that Cambodia is trailing behind the region despite its strong economic performance. The Report's methodology is based upon measuring levels of education, skills and employment available across a 15 to 65 age group. For 2016, the Report ranked Cambodia's human capital index as 58.88% and 100<sup>th</sup> out of 130 countries. The only country lower in the Southeast Asia/Pacific region was the People's Democratic Republic of Lao. The World Bank Group (2017-b) notes tourism industry stakeholders have reported a substantial lack of skilled workers in an environment where human resources demand is far greater than supply. Only a small percentage of secondary students effect a transition to tertiary studies, and tertiary providers and teaching are of poor quality, added to which is a noticeable absence of sufficient providers in the higher education sector (compared to vocational education, that is), and an underfunded nature of the education sector overall. In combination, these factors their impact on Cambodia's current shortages, especially with respect to human resources. Students who undertake vocational and studies in tourism and hospitality at the level of higher education are currently recruited to hotels and restaurants in Siem Reap, Phnom Penh and Sihanoukville. There remain only a minimal number regarding the availability of skilled human resources in rural areas, a reality that effectively reduces the ability of Cambodia's government to develop and deliver tourism in these areas, in particular ecotourism and CBT.

- *Balancing supply and demand*

There are two important considerations concerning supply and demand. The first is the seasonal nature of the destination. As with all tourism destinations, certain periods or months are considered 'peak season', other months 'shoulder or low season'. Destinations that are unable to balance supply and demand will evidence a large number of empty hotel rooms during

shoulder or low season, and therefore the average annual occupancy rate for total available hotel rooms will be a lower percentage. The second consideration is the amount of tourism development occurring compared to tourism growth rates. More hotel rooms (supply) with not enough guests to fill them (demand) will impact negatively on both financial and employment aspects of the hotel's operation. In 2015, the *Phnom Penh Post* reported that according to hoteliers, the recent growth of boutique hotels in Phnom Penh that had contributed to more available rooms overall had resulted in lower occupancy rates for the majority of hotels. The article also said this trend was occurring throughout Cambodia (Runcie, 2015). Colliers Hotels Insight Digest for 2017, first quarter, has identified Cambodia as an 'enigma to even the bravest of investors' (Singh, 2017). The report gives high political risk in Cambodia as a key component of hotel investors' hesitation to move forward with developments. Despite this risk, recent changes in ownership laws, forecasts of strong economic growth and moves by the Cambodian Government to become more transparent has led to a renewed interest. Both Singh (2017) and the Ministry of Tourism (2016) recorded the 2016 overall hotel occupancy rate at 68%, which is considered relatively low when compared to the growth in international arrivals to Cambodia and other regional destinations; for example, Singapore recorded 85% (Singh, 2017). It is also an important consideration to recognize the continued growth of smaller accommodation providers in Cambodia. New backpacker accommodation, guest houses, airbnb, homestays, etc. have all contributed to the overall room availability in Cambodia, although their room inventories, occupancy and revenues are still to be included in an overall statistical report. If these operators are included toward calculating overall accommodation performance, the total room occupancy would be considerably lower. New hotel accommodation that is not a known brand, part of a chain or has connections or ownership with the Chinese tourist market will continue to find it difficult to compete.

- *Utilization of protected areas*

In Cambodia, CBT possesses the unique potential to encourage and facilitate the protection of natural and cultural sites of importance. The majority of CBT projects in Cambodia rely on these resources for visitor experiences, and the overall success of the project. Since the conclusion of the Khmer Rouge Regime and subsequent onset of peace in Cambodia, resource management of land has been extremely tenuous. Land repossession has become commonplace and widely reported in both the local and international media. Deforestation of protected areas for the purposes of mining, timber and large-scale farming plantations continues to concern human rights watchers, conservationists and local communities who depend on the forests for their livelihoods. It is important to remember the majority of natural resources in Cambodia still remain under the control of, or can be controlled by the government. Under the current government, the majority of land and waterways that were managed by local communities have fallen into government ownership. These activities have resulted in local communities being marginalized and alienated (Neth, Rith & Knerr, 2008; Rith, Williams &



Neth, 2009). I also mention the continued threat from unexploded landmines, that remains a risk for the development of new rural tourist areas. As I have identified in my previous chapters, the Global Witness Reports (2009, 2016) remain extremely critical of Cambodia's natural resource governance, specifically the ease with which the government can obtain concessions or ownership of large areas of land. Neth, Rith and Knerr (2008) make a further valid argument, that in the current climate of rapid economic growth in Cambodia becomes exceedingly relevant for consideration. They state that modern patterns of economic growth and nation building often exhibit traits that are anti-participatory. Moreover, 'the integration of rural communities and local institutions into larger, more complex, urban-centered and global systems often stifles whatever capacity for decision making the local community might have had and renders its traditional knowledge and fragile institutions obsolete' (p. 11). This was represented during my interviews with the villagers in Banteay Chhmar. Numerous villagers, including those involved with the CBT Project, expressed a fear of losing their traditional village lifeways and ability to have a voice in the community. They believed the recent modernization of Banteay Chhmar and outsiders coming to the village to establish new businesses would contribute to this. Some felt it was already occurring with a divide in the community between those who were making more money and those who were not.

Of a significant concern to most is the government itself, and their fear that their land will be subject to repossession, in particular those villagers who farm either close to, or within, a protected zone. There has been recent progress, however, with respect to sustainable tourism in protected areas. Two reports, written for, and submitted to, the RCG, entitled 'Strategic Guidelines for Sustainable Tourism on the Khmer Coast' (2013) and 'Strategic Guidelines for Heritage Tourism in Battambang Province, Cambodia' (2016) provide an extensive narrative that promotes the importance of achieving a balance between the development of tourism and protecting the environment, both natural and built. It cites the historical and natural areas of the Khmer coastal zone and Battambang Province as the core of Cambodia's assets in relation to tourism. Without such assets, the goal of achieving sustainable tourism in these areas would be impossible; their future protection is therefore of critical importance. Also critical to this outcome are the stakeholders involved in tourism in both the private and public sectors, who must work with the agencies responsible for environmental protection, because it is these agencies that are responsible for way in which local tourism assets are utilized and also managed. In summary, CBT projects in Cambodia remain vulnerable to governmental interference, notably regarding any natural or cultural assets a particular project may want to utilize or otherwise rely on. Chapter Six includes an account of recent rhetoric from the RCG, however, that would indicate its readiness to support the development and operations of CBT across rural Cambodia. It is a level of readiness such as this that might result in better governance for any CBT projects operating either in protected areas, or in areas of natural and cultural importance.

#### **8.4 Sustainable and community-based tourism in Cambodia: Futures and recommendations**

Chapter Six provides a critical analysis of sustainable tourism's evolution in Cambodia, specifically the political dialogue identifying the importance of developing sustainable tourism in both urban and rural areas. The opening paragraphs of the RCG's Tourism Development Strategic Plan 2012–2020 (2012) states the importance of tourism toward socio-economic development, employment, livelihood improvement and poverty alleviation. It refers to tourism as 'green gold, a major element of green economic development' (p. 1). The introduction continues by confirming that sustainable and responsible tourism 'actively contributes to national development: the preservation, protection and conservation of cultural, historical, and natural resources, and mitigation against climate change' (p. 1). The tourism vision for Cambodia noted in the plan supports the introductory remarks, specifically the importance of encouraging the development of sustainable nature and cultural tourism. It states cultural tourism must be a development priority, aligned with the development of ecotourism, CBT, recreational and sports tourism. Unfortunately, the weakness of the 2012–2020 Tourism Strategic Plan is how the majority of the narrative pertains to marketing and growth initiatives, and fails to specifically address how the government intends to fund and deliver on the development of sustainable tourism outcomes, such as ecotourism and CBT. Throughout the Plan there are statements that commence 'it should', 'it has to', 'it must push', 'it must solve', 'it is recommended', 'it will develop plans'. What remains not addressed is the 'how to' deliver on these broad initiatives and recommendations. The Plan also fails to adequately address how in coming years sustainable tourism will be better developed in rural areas, and a subsequent strategy to ensure local communities can socially and economically benefit, and moreover their natural and cultural tourism resources remain protected.

Whilst the 2012–2020 Plan acknowledges the importance of developing sustainable tourism, in reality unsustainable mass tourism development, chiefly in Siem Reap and Sihanoukville, continues unabated. In response to the 2012–2020 Plan, the Angkor World Heritage Area Tourism Management Plan, 2012–2020 (TMP), becoming part of the Angkor Heritage Management Framework Project, was developed to address unsustainable growing tourism numbers, the negative impacts of tourism and associated development, and to provide better visitor experiences, and better opportunities for the local community to benefit from tourism. The TMP has contributed to developing suitable and sustainable strategies for managing tourism at Angkor, and remains an important project because, compared to other sites in Cambodia, the Angkor Archeological Park receives the highest proportion of domestic and international tourist visits. Now urgently required, similar plans that are not only created, but also implemented and supported by the government, will serve other regions that are important to tourism, particularly Siem Reap town and province, Phnom Penh, and the coastal region.

There are such plans in existence, though they are yet to be adopted by the government, including the 2012 Strategic Guidelines for Sustainable Tourism on the Khmer Coast and the 2016 Strategic Guidelines for Heritage Tourism in Battambang Province. Both documents provide a conceptual framework for the comprehensive and sustainable development of tourism, one that can be adapted and then utilized with ease in other areas.

An important component of the government's various national and tourism developmental plans, rural tourism, specifically CBT, has been on the government's radar since 2002. Subsequent policy documents as discussed in Chapter Six have continued to argue the importance of ecotourism and CBT in rural areas for the purposes of socio-economic development and poverty alleviation. The amount of CBT projects in Cambodia has grown since the early 2000s. Rith et al. (2009) record twenty-nine projects in operation during 2008. The establishment of the Cambodian Community-based Ecotourism Network (CCBEN) in 2002 through private sector partnerships provided further support for the development, management and marketing of CBT projects. As identified in Chapter One, the CCBEN reported fourteen members for 2014 (CCBEN, 2014). As of 2017, the Ministry of Tourism identifies thirteen CBT sites around Cambodia (Ministry of Tourism, 2017-b). Rith et al. (2009), suggest CBT in Cambodia is viewed as a mechanism for natural resource management, with the objective to empower rural communities to actively participate in the conservation of natural resources that constitute the product for their CBT project. As I have written previously, now more than ever is it important for local communities through CBT to become involved and be empowered to manage their natural resources, especially as the majority of CBT projects in Cambodia occur in or near protected areas. As extensively documented by Winter (2007) and Lloyd and Sokrithy (2013), there continues to be two major concerns with ecotourism, CBT and involved villages. First is the temptation to manage ecotourism through adopting a more classical conservation approach. This type of approach often results in minimal human interaction with the environment and the exclusion of local stakeholders, specifically poor villagers, from using natural resources. The second concern is temptation to commercialize (commodification) the natural or cultural experience to meet the needs of tourists. Bak suggests that it is:

highly likely that the local communities may modify their heritage in the way they think will be more attractive to the tourists...[and] locally relevant and culturally genuine values of heritage may be compromised in the process of making it more palatable to the tastes of the consumers of the cultures (the tourists who are the cultural outsiders) (Bak, 2007 cited in Lloyd & Sokrithy, 2013, p. 243).

Stories related to the natural or cultural significance of a particular location can readily find themselves either simplified, or otherwise modified, by those in the host community during their interactions with visitors. My experience in both the Angkor Archeological Park and at Banteay Chhmar brought me into contact with local guides who frequently provide a discourse

for the benefit of tourists that is either misleading or substantially inaccurate. On occasion, when I sat with local guides in order to discuss their ‘tourist narrative’, it was often the case that they choose to deliver what they believe tourists prefer to hear. They suggest, moreover, that these contrived misrepresentations make tourist ‘feel happy’. As a result of the recent National Certified Tourist Guide Project, the behavior of guides attached to the Angkor Archeological Park reflects a dramatic improvement, but these improvements have had little effect on ecotourism in general or with respect to CBT projects beyond Angkor. There is further evidence of commodification at Banteay Chhmar. Chapter Seven records the way CBT homestay owners are convinced that tourists will not like their traditional accommodation, local foods or day-to-day life overall. In deciding to ‘improve’ matters they have resorted to westernizing their products and services. In contrast, there are the accounts of CBT visitors to Banteay Chhmar, where villagers strongly oppose any attempt to ‘westernize’ the tourist experience. With respect to rural ecotourism and CBT projects, it is critically important for the Cambodians to establish at grass-roots level an approach to tourism that is community-led, for the purpose of creating an operational model that emphasizes and ensures that any and all tourist-driven enterprises contribute to maintaining cultural, social and economic priorities that are in fact locally derived, while at the same time they support the conservation of national attributes and associated approaches to rural development.

Numerous challenges for ecotourism and CBT ventures continue, one of which is their ability to deliver outcomes to livelihoods and conservation. Rith et al. (2009) make the valuable connection between external agencies and community structures. They argue that externalities involved in the support for CBT development more often than not use a traditional institutionalized approach that emphasizes policies, rules and procedures, physical infrastructures and hierarchies as opposed to identifying and building social capital, and then informal community structures that can support the development of CBT. Similar to my discussion in Chapter Five concerning appreciating the uniqueness of Cambodian communities, they state ‘Cambodian people are extremely social and communication is highly based on social networks and relationships. The term community has recently been introduced in the Cambodian context and is sometimes mismatched with the existing informal networks in the community’ (p. 482). Perhaps the most important critical success factor for CBT in Cambodia is the development and deployment of a community’s social capital. Another important challenge for CBT is the development of local human capital/resources that in turn can support business development, networking and marketing strategies. These business-related competencies and capabilities are lacking within the majority of existing CBT projects, and are generally supported through the involvement of external agencies and NGOs. Opportunities now exist for local people involved in CBT to attend business courses at provincial and city-based colleges and universities, or to access online courses. Supporting those at a rural community level to access business education would substantially improve the operations, governance and long-

term sustainability of CBT projects. The challenge remains to identify government funding that could be directed toward supporting business educational development for CBT projects. Suitable and effective marketing, promotional and network strategies for CBT projects are also yet to be achieved. The majority of CBT projects remain excluded from the tourism value chain in Cambodia, due to the influence of mass and package tourism chiefly controlled by large tour operators. Good networking practices that do not solely rely upon NGOs or government agencies, as is often the case, will also be critical for the success of CBT projects. CBT projects require support toward developing good networking practices leading to healthy partnerships with the private sector; they need partner organizations that facilitate or can contribute toward supporting CBT projects establish entrepreneurial practices, business development strategies, education and research opportunities, access specialized tourism market segments, media and journalism opportunities and community development practices.

In summary, CBT in Cambodia has arrived at a juncture. The government, as per its strategies and rhetoric, continues to promote the importance of CBT to its support for the country's sustainable agenda with respect to the development of tourism, to rural development and to the alleviation of poverty. The reality is that CBT exists firstly by virtue of the funding, physical efforts and goodwill of NGOs and donors; secondly it survives because of the tenacity of local community members and their ability to utilize, on a day-to-day level, the social and human capital that is required in order to maintain CBT operations. To date, the Cambodian government has allocated only minimal funds and other resources to supporting CBT; it chooses instead to rely on NGOs in this respect. As a viable approach, and with respect to the overall effectiveness of CBT, the government's approach is in the long-run unsustainable. As I have said already, if it is to support CBT operations in Cambodia, the government must focus on helping its rural communities to develop their capacity to develop and manage CBT effectively. Secondly, the government must ensure that any natural and cultural resources that are called on by CBT projects are in fact protected, and that local people are not excluded from the benefits of such resources because of the way tourism, or other enterprises, might develop. Both the government, and those undertaking CBT projects, must ensure that the benefits of CBT are distributed fairly and equitably throughout the communities involved, particularly as a means of ensuring the empowerment of women and in supporting those most in need. The AESAN CBT Standard, as discussed in Chapter Four, provides a sound opportunity for those involved to achieve these outcomes in CBT in Cambodia. Currently, however, the limited nature of the resources available to support the CBT agenda must be examined in the context of it achieving a widespread replication in relation to ecotourism, to CBT projects, and to similar community initiatives.

## 8.5 Community-based tourism at Banteay Chhmar: Outlook and recommendations

2017 marks the tenth year of operations for Banteay Chhmar's CBT project. The longevity identifies it as one of Cambodia's older and more effective projects. Throughout my exploration of CBT, I found myself referring to the comments of Goodwin and Santilli (2009), who note that, with an average lifespan of two years, very few CBT projects are successful, in the main because of lack of market access and poor governance. Because the Banteay Chhmar project is not yet financially sustainable, we cannot claim that it is an unqualified success. Over the past ten years, however, the project has substantially improved the livelihoods of its villagers, and continues to maintain a strong community orientation, with its goals and objectives reflecting CBT practices. At present the project's most critical challenge is to achieve financial sustainability through the growth of its businesses, while at the same time protecting its authenticity. The purpose of my research is not solely concerned with Banteay Chhmar's CBT project, or to practices related to the management of its business on a day-to-day basis. It is not the purpose of the thesis to provide in-depth recommendations with respect to the project's management and marketing. I am however, able to contribute certain recommendations that might assist in supporting the continued effectiveness of Banteay Chhmar's CBT project and other similar initiatives throughout Cambodia, utilizing knowledge that is a combination of my research and my theoretical knowledge of tourism in relation to its marketing, its operations and its management. I am also able to contribute these recommendations authentically attributed to my familiarity with Cambodian communities and the purpose of CBT, with community development through tourism and Cambodian lifeways.

- *Social capital*

Although at present community members are unable to connect the effectiveness of the CBT project to the utilization of social capital, during my fieldwork I have concluded that a community's social capital is central to the longevity and overall success of the project in question. The unique nature of the connections between Cambodian communities, in particular those in rural areas, provides a strong foundation for developing CBT. The chapter of the thesis that investigates community development and social capital, in addition to the fieldwork conducted at Banteay Chhmar, demonstrates the importance of social capital in establishing and then managing sustainable CBT. I have suggested, furthermore, that those involved in supporting rural communities in developing CBT need firstly to assess the nature and extent of social capital; next they must consider how social capital can be deployed in order to develop the vision related to the project, as well as to its aims and objectives, and to initial strategies. Further developing the social capital of the community should be a priority, in the main because it will support the development of other forms of community capital. Jarett, Sullivan and Watkins (2005) show how this can be achieved by utilizing two initiatives. Firstly, they point out that progress is achieved by supporting and then developing a level of engagement in social

relationships, in particular those that are inter-generational, because these relationships provide an opportunity for participants to contribute to a pool of shared knowledge, resources and community support. Secondly, supporting and encouraging individuals or groups in the community to engage in social interaction can provide them with access to resources that they would not otherwise have access to, or be aware of. The effectiveness of CBT relies on the resources generated by the community; social interaction between those involved in CBT, individual community members and other community groups means they are thus provided with access to a wider pool of resources. With respect to social capital and the CBT initiative at Banteay Chhmar, in my opinion the project should be more inclusive; those involved should try to expand the level of dialogue and engagement by connecting to other villagers, in particular those who may not be aware of the CBT's activities. Additionally, I recommend the CBT committee members invite younger people to become involved, especially those about to finish, or have recently finished, high school. Given their literacy level, these youngsters have the potential to contribute much-needed business skills; their long-term engagement, moreover, in due course will be available to support CBT succession planning.

- *Human capital*

Available human capital is perhaps the current most challenging area for the CBT Project. The discourse of the CBT Project members during their interviews with me clearly reinforced that the community, chiefly because of its remote location, available resources, limited training and access to training and cultural orientation toward work, lacked sufficient human capital to effectively manage and develop the project. Moreover, CBT Project members suggested the project had survived from day to day because of the commitment by a few people, the goodwill of the community and external people or organizations who had occasionally provided technical support. Another important consideration is that the CBT Project is seen as secondary employment/income from main occupations such as farming or market trading, and therefore participants' main employment tends to take first priority and developing skills for CBT is seen as a secondary or less important requirement. The rural livelihoods literature strongly promotes employment diversification beyond agriculture, and in Cambodia's case, opportunities in the services sector, specifically tourism, as a mechanism for supplementary household income. To enable community members to engage more enthusiastically with CBT membership, firstly they need to feel they have the ability to do so, that is, they have a skill to offer the CBT. Secondly, there needs to be the opportunity made available to community members to seek membership, apply their skills and in turn benefit socially, psychologically and financially. Developing ability requires training, therefore the CBT Project in conjunction with external support initially needs to undertake an assessment of the required physical and management skills to effectively operate the Project. Once this assessment is complete, the Project needs to be supported, preferably by the Cambodian Government, to access training programs for community members to further develop skills valued for participation in CBT. It

would be remiss of me to suggest specific skills for the Project until a skills assessment was complete; however, from my interviews, observations and experience at Banteay Chhmar, the broad skill areas requiring development are financial management, marketing and business development, food and beverage operations including hygiene, spoken and written English, housekeeping operations and community guiding.

I also make reference to human capital at Banteay Chhmar that in my opinion is somewhat undervalued and underutilized. It is important for those who are part of its CBT project to remember that the majority of visitors to Banteay Chhmar come to experience authentic community life; they regard the temple as an attraction of secondary importance. Throughout my fieldwork I had the chance to engage in casual conversation with community members, either in English or through an interpreter. The stories I heard from the villagers regarding their myths, the temple, farming, the Khmer Rouge period, village ceremonies and weddings, their everyday life and politics provided an authentic and rewarding experience. Moreover, observing and participating in village activities such as rice flattening, traditional cooking, farming, fishing and weddings provided me and other the visitors I interviewed with a deeply rewarding appreciation of village life. These activities, all requiring skills, are core to CBT at Banteay Chhmar. Setting aside time in order to generate the ways and means to better utilize human capital will encourage the villagers to create other experiences for visitors, as well as providing marketing opportunities; it is an approach that will generate growth with respect to the project, and include the wider community, as well as supporting a higher degree of participation in activities in relation to CBT.

- *Sustainable livelihoods approach to CBT*

In order to encourage improvements in the lives of those in Cambodia's poorer communities, it is essential for us to understand their respective livelihoods. My investigation of human capital at the community level has convinced me that tourism is directly connected to the livelihood of individual villagers. Their livelihood brings together their capabilities and their assets combining social, financial and human capital; their activities require them to live appropriately and in an acceptable manner within the community. Scholars generally agree that members of this community can handle and recover from unexpected or unplanned events; they have the capacity to improve their lives without damaging community resources; the livelihood of each and every villager can be assessed as sustainable (Scoones, 1998; Serrat, 2017). Not only does estimating the sustainability of villagers' livelihoods provide a framework that permits us to consider the elements that improve or restrict their livelihoods, but it also calls to our attention the relationships that exists between these elements. It is a framework that is applicable to proposals related to community development activities, or that allows one to estimate the effectiveness of existing development activities. With respect to the relationship between a villager's livelihood and tourism activities in the rural areas of several countries, it is



an approach that has previously been applied for purposes of examining the impact of ecotourism, or wildlife tourism or CBT. To date the Banteay Chhmar CBT project has not yet undergone a detailed assessment regarding the sustainability of villagers' livelihoods, carried out for purposes of determining the effectiveness of project, especially the impact of CBT on the community's poor. Following its ten years of operation I would recommend an assessment of the project, on grounds that it is always important to estimate accurately the influence of a CBT project upon the community. The outcomes can be constructively utilized in order to evolve a plan for business and marketing that will show how CBT can continue to enhance community development at Banteay Chhmar. Two useful approaches to assessment are provided by Biddulph (2015) and Serrat (2017). Biddulph's research examines an assessment based on livelihoods with respect to the impact of mass tourism on rural villages in Siem Reap at the Angkor Archeological Park. The study has a methodological framework that might readily be adapted to a similar study at Banteay Chhmar.

- *Product development and management* (authenticity, matching markets and product, growth, marketing)

In 2013 a volunteer constructed a draft business and marketing plan for the CBT Project. The document provided a detailed macro environment analysis, financial analysis and SWOT analysis. The plan also examined the existing product, pricing structures and the community development projects to date before proposing marketing strategies, key strategic issues and an action plan. The key marketing strategies included developing an in-country national marketing campaign with a focus on utilizing tour operators. Secondly, it was proposed to implement an international marketing campaign again utilizing tour operators, networking through ecotourism travel forums, and better engaging organizations with links to Southeast Asian culture, history and archaeology. Thirdly, there was a recommendation to improve the current marketing materials and provide a portfolio of materials that included a set of publications that can be self-managed and updated as needed, such as an updated brochure that utilizes more attractive and appealing images, and a PDF brochure that could be emailed to foreign tour operators. The publications could also include an A3 poster for distribution to guesthouses and small hotels in Cambodia's main tourist areas, and a multi-language brochure that taxi drivers could distribute to their customers. Further marketing strategies included better utilization of online marketing, including the Tripadvisor website, Facebook, Youtube, and Wikitravel. It was also proposed to better utilize the distribution of an online newsletter to previous visitors and tour companies.

Of continuing importance to the effectiveness of the CBT project are its business plan's identified strategic issues, summarized as follows; in addition, I provide my own recommendations for these issues that are based upon previous sections of this thesis.

- Government regulations and laws impacting tourism operations often change in Cambodia. While urban centers are generally provided with information about these changes, the dissemination of information in rural areas remains poor. To ensure the CBT Project is complying with the various tourism policies and regulations, it remains essential for the government to consider how changes are communicated then implemented in rural and remote tourism enterprises. Good business planning processes will ensure a political and legal macro analysis is completed, providing adequate information for planning and decision-making.
- There is a question mark over the future management of the temple, despite the fact that in 1992 it was tentatively listed by UNESCO as a world heritage site. At present (in 2017), the temple remains under the control of the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts; it would seem there is no intention by the APSARA Authority to include the temple in their portfolio. As with the majority of archeological sites in Cambodia, however, the management of these sites can change without notice. A case in point, in 2017, concerns the UNESCO World Heritage listing of Sambor Prei Kuk archeological site in Kampong Thom Province. Both the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts and the APSARA Authority have increased management activities on-site. Without an established plan for tourism management, I would think there is a substantial risk that villagers who live nearby will be prevented from undertaking tourism activities as a means of supplementing their livelihoods. Adding to this are concerns related to the usage of land. As noted in Chapter Seven, villagers use protected land around the temple at Banteay Chhmar for the purpose of farming, and other activities that are essential to their livelihoods. They are concerned, however, that with an increase in tourism and changes to the way the temple is managed, they will lose their crops and in future be prohibited from farming.
- Human capacity remains a major barrier toward the overall effectiveness of the CBT Project. Whilst any proposed business plan has the potential to improve operational and financial performance of the project, understanding and implementing the plan's strategies would require specific knowledge and skills. The number of project members or community members possessing these skills has been extremely limited since the commencement of the project. Access to training programs for the purposes of developing business and financial abilities remains the major barrier for the development of human capital. Until a solution is identified that will contribute toward the development of human capital, the CBT Project will not be able to achieve its own sustainability.
- Compared to main tourist destinations in Cambodia, visitor pricing for the CBT Project is relatively low. Although the original projections of US\$50 spend per person is still unrealistic, visitor spend has continued to gradually improve to on average US\$20 per

person. As identified in Chapter Seven, Table 7.1, homestay (accommodation) is currently priced at US\$7.00 per person per night, lunch and dinner at US\$4.00 per person and breakfast at \$US2.00 per person. The value proposition of the CBT Project remains its unique experiences for visitors. This alone could justify an increase in CBT prices, which would increase CBT revenues. The other opportunity is to increase visitor length of stay, therefore increasing visitor expenditure. This could easily be achieved through designing a three- to four-day immersive activities program for visitors, and offering a 'inclusive rate' for the entire stay.

- Funding continues to remain a strategic issue for the Project, firstly as continued funding is inhibiting financial sustainability, secondly because there is limited human capacity to adequately fundraise. As of 2017, the Project is still reliant on the GHF for a percentage of operational funds; however, as I have discussed in Chapter Seven, the longevity of this relationship is tenuous. Should all funding be withdrawn immediately, the Project would be at risk of collapse as the funding has been allocated to pay the Project's coordinator, who, to-date performs the majority of administrative tasks and financial management. There is currently no risk mitigation strategy to address to address the loss of external funding while the Project attempts to achieve overall sustainability.
- If the project is to become sustainable, at the behest of the development and deployment of human capital, it must first do so with respect to aspects of business and financial management. To date, the project has relied on the good will of external agencies, especially the GHF and volunteers, who have helped with business management, including approaches to marketing and finance. As tourism, particularly the newer sustainable kind, claims the attention of governments and universities, there will be more opportunities regarding grants and university projects. A case in point, most historical work undertaken in Cambodia, including training citizens in archeology, restoration and conservation, has been achieved because of internationally funded projects that are university-based. Examples include the University of Sydney's Greater Angkor Project iii, a component of its Angkor Research Program, which received an Australian Research Council Discovery Grant of AUD\$907,493. The project's website (2014) tells us that 'This large, international, multi-disciplinary team will provide a significant new approach to Angkor, the iconic Asia-Pacific flagship World Heritage site, and will actively work with Cambodian agencies responsible for the site in the context of the Australian–Cambodian government collaboration on the "Angkor Heritage Management Framework Project" for Angkor'. I would suggest that for the CBT project to develop in terms of human capital, particularly regarding skills related to business, marketing, finance and hospitality, this outcome is achievable through the auspices of a funded project in collaboration with a university. By utilizing the ASEAN

CBT Standard as a framework for identifying and also developing human capital, it will be possible to then focus on achieving overall sustainability. It will also provide a foundation for partnership with a university project of size that will in time address underlying themes of community development in rural areas, and the challenge of reducing poverty through tourism.

- The final strategic issue for the Project considers appropriate tourism development for Banteay Chhmar. While tourism development in the village as of 2017 is minimal, the new sealed road from Siem Reap continues to bring an increased number of day tourists to visit the temple. This recent development is an example of Butler's (1980) Destination Lifecycle Model. There remains the possibility Banteay Chhmar will continue to progress along Butler's development curve, moving from its current 'involvement' stage into a 'development' stage. It is during the development stage that the community are most likely to lose control of the ability to decide what tourism development occurs. I propose it is now essential for the community to collectively decide what constitutes locally appropriate tourism development. The CBT Project provides the necessary framework to embark on this process. The start is a question around what is legitimate or right for the people who live in the village (Murphy, 1985; Hall, 2003). The question for Banteay Chhmar, specifically in the context of stakeholder narratives concerning the authenticity of the CBT Project and village lifeways, is what would be considered locally appropriate tourism development that enhances the CBT Project, maintains social capital, protects existing community resources, including community empowerment, and improves livelihoods, in particular for the poor? My fieldwork was able to identify there exists a lot of fear and suspicion among village members surrounding 'outsiders' and 'development'. Villagers I spoke to were often aware of land repossession and inappropriate tourism development occurring in other parts of Cambodia. The Cambodian media has reported numerous examples of these activities occurring. For example, as discussed previously in this thesis, a two-page article featured in the *Phnom Penh Post* on the 28<sup>th</sup> February 2015 wrote about inappropriate tourism development that was occurring on Koh Tonsay (Rabbit Island), a small island off the coast of Kep. The report documented the clearing of half the island for a resort and minimal to no compensation paid to seaweed farmers who lived on the island and depended on its waters for their livelihoods. It was also reported that no consultation had taken place with the Kep community concerning the appropriateness of the proposed resort development. The report concludes with a disturbing narrative from a disaffected villager 'this is a company and government plan, so we have to listen to them, as we are the villagers' (Muong & Murray, 2015, p. 11). Fortunately, Banteay Chhmar has witnessed minimal tourism development. However, it has become essential for the CBT Project members to facilitate community consensus and action on factors

that may contribute to appropriate tourism development. I have adapted and recommended certain factors from Cooke (1982) that include, but are not limited to, 1) expanding community consultation in decisions pertaining to proposed tourism development, including the CBT Project; 2) ensuring all tourism planning should represent and contribute toward community development needs as identified by the community; 3) community involvement in the creation, operation and management of themes and events that would be of interest to CBT visitors; 4) the local community should decide and establish guidelines for appropriate visitor behavior while in the community; 5) tourism opportunities created through the CBT Project need to promote and make available wide-scale community participation; 6) the CBT Project needs to continue developing a strong relationship and support from the *sala khum* (commune) office. This relationship is critical for the purposes of ‘official’ support toward appropriate development.

## **8.6 Conclusion, limitations and post-doctoral research**

A chief aim of this thesis asked what we might learn regarding tourism development, communities and particularly community-based tourism as one viable means of sustainable rural development in Cambodia. Again, let me say that the research has examined tourism, specifically CBT in a Cambodian context, which has allowed me to consider the implications of Cambodian politics, society, culture and environment—particularly their influence on sustainable tourism, especially CBT. As I said in Chapter One, the framework of my understanding regarding the development and management of CBT in the Cambodian context includes an exploration of tourism, of community development and of related political concepts. I have also promoted the importance of ‘context’, a deeper understanding of historical and other factors that have contributed to tourism as a phenomenon. Moreover, I have suggested that my research approach has been an essential component, contributing as it does to a more informed, critical and reliable decision-making regarding the planning and management of tourism. Throughout the thesis, I have demonstrated how particular aspects of community development, including the social and political constructs of Cambodian communities, as well as sustainable tourism and its development, have the capacity to generate a greater understanding of CBT at the local level.

My exposure to, and immersion in, the development of tourism in Southeast Asia has influenced the approach I have chosen regarding the research in question. I suggest that tourism, in particular its more sustainable alternative forms, can procure a ‘better production and consumption of tourism ... unleashing human agency and autonomy’ (Tribe, 2008, p. 246). There is also the question that suggests itself with respect to the development of tourism in non-western countries, that is: development on whose terms? Since the era of modern mass tourism began, its development in the Southeast Asian region has primarily been a ‘process whereby

other peoples are dominated and their destinies are shaped according to an essentially Western way of conceiving and perceiving the world' (Tucker, 1999, p. 1). As Winter, Teo and Chang (2009) remind us, from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, tourism's ontology, imagery and actors have been constructed on the basis of European and North American influence. They suggest, furthermore, that we should 'ask unfamiliar and important questions concerning the ongoing growth of tourism around the world today and the rapid socio-cultural changes now occurring within Asia'. It is the responsibility of scholars and those others conducting research to 'address the analytical imbalances that characterize tourism studies today by focusing on domestic and intra-regional tourists in non-Western contexts' (p. 2). Representing a case in point are changes to the status of Cambodia's inbound markets. In 2016, the top inbound markets were Vietnam, China, Thailand, Lao and Korea (Ministry of Tourism, 2016). In addition, and with respect to Cambodia, I have discussed the perils of an over-reliance on mass tourism, venturing instead to promote the importance of sustainable and alternative tourism. Tourism literature (Cohen, 2001; Hall, 2003; Hall and Richards, 2000; Pearce, 1989; Weaver and Lawton, 2010) reports widely regarding the extent to which mass tourism can produce a social and economic imbalance, and as I have shown, in Cambodia it has already caused, much as Doxey's (1976) Irritation Index or Iridex describes, annoyance, antagonism and exclusion experienced by those residing in areas affected by mass tourism activities.

As a sustainable alternative to mass tourism, CBT in Cambodia has the capacity to contribute substantially to rural development, to community empowerment, and to advancing the livelihoods of the poor. At present the status of CBT is inhibited by weak government policy, by a minimal level of human capital in rural communities, by the absence of training opportunities and development programs for those involved in CBT, by complicated accreditation and certification requirements, and finally by an over-reliance on external funding and expertise. Of critical importance to my research has been the opportunity to explore the unique nature and importance of kinship bonds and reciprocity in Cambodian communities; it is a context where social capital plays a significant role in relation to the longevity of these projects. In turn, it has also provided evidence that social capital is essential to the foundation of Cambodia's community-based tourism projects. Considered in its entirety, my thesis contributes toward developing a critical understanding of tourism development with specific reference to the social fabric of communities and potential rural development through community-based tourism in Cambodia.

I have identified three limitations regarding the research. Firstly, there is that imposed by nature of my research approach. The objective of my scholarly contribution, and overall interest in CBT, was to contribute a substantial qualitative examination of tourism development as it relates to the social fabric of communities and community-based tourism in Cambodia. Any decisions regarding CBT's development and management cannot satisfactorily be achieved

by relying on purely economic modelling, on development statistics, and on those findings that are related to poverty. CBT is primarily about people, their relationships to others, and the communities in which they live. For those undertaking research or working co-operatively with a community for purposes of building its capacity, or are involved in governmental policy concerning CBT, then their readiness to embrace ethnographic and anthropological approaches will provide the means for a genuine and deeper understanding of CBT's actors and their lived experiences. In choosing this approach, I have provided a deeper insight overall, and a distinct appreciation of the Cambodian people, who are part of CBT, as well as the visitors, and communities that either operate CBT projects, or have a capacity to initiate them. I am not dismissing the importance of quantitative research in this field of inquiry, and a limitation of this thesis is the minimal application of quantitative data. I would suggest that should this study be pursued, there remains the opportunity to also consider introducing further quantitative data.

The second limitation of the thesis concerns a decision to provide an ethnographic case study for only one Cambodian CBT project. It is a decision that has been influenced by a desire to conduct the fieldwork longitudinally. Focusing attention on a single project over five years (2012–2016) has allowed me to observe how a CBT project evolves, and the related changes that take place at village level. This approach has also meant I have had an opportunity to develop relationships of trust with CBT project members and villagers, with the result that they have been willing to discuss their everyday lives. Whilst my fieldwork has had as its focus only one CBT project, in its entirety, my thesis can be relied upon to suggest a high level of generalization regarding the nature and extent of CBT in Cambodia, and more widely, across Southeast Asia itself. Post-doctoral work will provide an opportunity to analyze similarities and differences regarding Cambodian CBT projects, and to explore the way in which the knowledge of visitors, or what 'has been learnt' at Banteay Chhmar might reasonably be applied to other such projects in Cambodia.

The third limitation concerns the number of recommendations and proposals about managing the development of tourism. My intention has been to question the evolution of CBT projects and their status quo, particularly given that no CBT research of size presently exists in the Cambodian context, notably predating my research. I have chosen not to approach the research comprising the foundation of the thesis from the perspective of the way tourism is managed, nor does it comprise a sociological exploration of any tourism phenomenon in particular. Instead, I suggest that CBT does not exist as a means to justify an end; rather it exists as a prelude for further inquiry of its operational effectiveness in the Cambodian context. In future, the successful management of sustainable tourism, in particular CBT as it occurs in Cambodia, will very much depend on the existence of certain sources of power, that is, the relationship between the government and the tourism sector. As demonstrated by Tribe (2008) progress with respect to an agenda for tourism that is sustainable 'can often be inhibited by

current configurations of power and the operation of dominant ideological practices' (p. 253). In the case of Cambodia, this comprises the government's ongoing approach that is both capitalist and neo-liberalist in orientation. At present, and with respect to Cambodia's government, the ideological and sustainable discourse regarding tourism continues to obscure an underlying need for more profound solutions with respect to social and economic problems at the community level, particularly in rural areas. In order for CBT to succeed, and to survive in Cambodia, research efforts should exercise both a technical approach and one that demonstrates a high level of understanding with respect to the way in which ideology, power and resources, at both state and local levels, might be usefully employed for purposes of better managing CBT and its outcomes.



The work in this thesis has contributed toward two double blind peer review publications:

Article:

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Book Chapter:

Pawson, S., D'Arcy, P., & Richardson, S. (2018). *Temples, Tuk tuks and Orphanages: A contemporary examination of tourism development, management and community-based tourism in Cambodia*. Managing Asian Destinations. Springer Publications.

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