CHAPTER 4  THE SCALE OF ANGKOR

4.1 Introduction

In attempting to understand the relationship between heritage and non-heritage, it is appropriate to first define the area of value, or ‘the heritage’ object. In the early stages of the research it become apparent that it was not only the attributes of the surrounding landscape that have the potential to cause conflict in heritage management, but that understandings of what constitutes the heritage itself could be incongruent between stakeholder groups. This chapter investigates the construction of the ‘scale of value’ (section 2.4.1) at Angkor by various stakeholders, by asking the question: “what is Angkor?” The discussion will centre on two key questions which are part of the formal process of defining and listing many heritage sites. Firstly, what spatially (or physically) constitutes the area (or entity) known as ‘Angkor’? Secondly, what is the perceived value of this entity? In answering these two questions from the perspective of heritage professionals, governments and the local community, this chapter will highlight the way that ‘Angkor’ is socially constructed by different stakeholders in a way that may serve particular goals.

4.2 ‘Angkor’

It was apparent from the earliest interviews with members of the local community that the meaning of ‘Angkor’ varied. These differences became more evident following interviews with several APSARA staff, who recognised that their perceptions of ‘Angkor’ did not necessarily align with how other Cambodians defined ‘Angkor’. However, there did not appear to be evidence that this awareness was incorporated into planning and management practices. Thus the first theme addressed in this analysis explores perceptions of the physical characteristics of ‘Angkor’. Textual analysis of the ICC discussions examined physical descriptions and imagery of Angkor, whilst each interviewee was asked how they perceive ‘Angkor’. For example, Angkor may be understood as Angkor Wat, Angkor Park or a larger landscape, though respondents were free to use their own terminology. The questioning was facilitated through the use of an aerial image of the region (see Figure 3-2). Three categories - ‘Angkor Wat’, ‘Angkor Park’ and ‘Angkor landscape’ – were provided as prompts to interviewees to clarify the question, as well as to frame the analysis. ‘Angkor’ as
'Angkor Wat' confined the term ‘Angkor’ to simply mean the main structure of the Angkor World Heritage Area. Angkor Wat was observed, over the study period, as the focus of foreign and local interest. Activity at other monuments has observable ebbs and flows of activity across the day, whereas Angkor Wat is continually utilised from dawn to dusk. Beyond the park, Angkor Wat is displayed on the Cambodian flag, thus it should be recognisable by most, if not all, Cambodians.

An alternative interpretation was ‘Angkor’ as ‘Angkor Park’ (the colloquial name for the Angkor Archaeological Park or the Angkor World Heritage Area). Though following similar boundaries to the original Angkor Archaeological Park, this area is slightly larger than that which was defined by the French in 1904. It is physically delineated by sign posts that mark the boundary of what is legally considered Zone 1 of the Angkor ZEMP. Potentially influencing spatial perceptions of ‘Angkor’ as the Angkor Park are attitudes towards ZEMP Zone 2. This was conceived in the original ZEMP as a buffer zone and was a requirement of the World Heritage inscription (Wager 1995). It is included in APSARA’s mandate and receives considerable attention from the ICC. However, this zone is also a potential source of conflict due to the exclusion of “inappropriate development” (Wager and Englehardt 1994), which raises the question of who decides what is inappropriate, and creates a similar debate to that which exists around definitions of authenticity at heritage sites (Ashworth 1994; Galla 1994; Taylor 2004). One way to mediate and avoid planning and management conflicts is to open dialogue between stakeholders to facilitate understanding of the different spatial perceptions of the Angkor entity.

Another prompt given to interviewees was that of ‘Angkor’ as an ‘Angkor landscape’. The idea of an Angkor cultural landscape was communicated as one that encompassed an area greater than the Angkor Park (see Figure 3-2). When discussing this notion during interviews, no exact definition or limitation was given by the researcher, as the term itself, and its use in the context of Angkor, does not imply strict boundaries. An Angkor Protected Cultural Landscape was proposed in the ZEMP as Zone 3 and defined as “areas preserved for their distinctive traditional physical and cultural features, including historic buildings and land use practices” (Wager and Englehardt 1994). The landscape approach of the ZEMP Zone 3 highlighted certain topographical features (mainly hydrological) rather than human-
environment interactions. In contrast, contemporary heritage discourse considers cultural landscapes as highlighting these interactions (Toupal, Zedeño et al. 2000). A broader spatial understanding of an Angkor landscape appears to be gaining increasing popularity in discussions, research, workshops and training exercises funded by the New Zealand (Howse, Boffa et al. 2007), Australian (Fletcher, Johnson et al. 2007), and Japanese (JICA 2004) governments. A review of environmental and heritage management proposals, plans, and reports by international agencies produced since 1993 (for example, JICA 2004; Mackay and Sullivan 2008; Rabe 2008), suggests that contemporary research supports the facilitation of an Angkor cultural landscape. In order to investigate the diverse ways in which Angkor is scaled by various stakeholder groups, this section will firstly present the results of textual analysis of ICC documents from both international and Cambodian contributors. This analysis was conducted to assess the level of formal credence the notion of a cultural landscape has gained. Results of this analysis will then be compared with interview responses from APSARA staff and the local community regarding their spatial perceptions of Angkor.

4.2.1 International Contributions to the ICC

To determine spatial perceptions of ‘Angkor’ within the ICC documents of 1993 and 2003, all the references to Angkor within the text were collated and arranged for analysis along a spatial axis reflecting the ideological move from perceptions of Angkor as isolated monuments to perceptions of Angkor as a heritage area and a cultural landscape. As a term, ‘Angkor’ is spatially and physically ambiguous, requiring the audience to understand how the author is envisaging the site. However, in both 1993 and 2003, the aspatial ‘Angkor’ was by far the most common description used by international contributors (Table 4-1). Other terms were arranged according to the physical, or spatial, image suggested. In both years (1993 and 2003), the international contributors included a broad range of spatial references, with descriptions centred on the Angkor Park, or World Heritage area. However, descriptions from 1993 were skewed towards a smaller spatial area, with more references that alluded to ‘Angkor’ as Angkor Wat or as individual monuments. “All that remains of that civilisation is its rich heritage of cult structures in brick and stone” (ICOMOS: ICC September 1992). In contrast, the references collected from the 2003 documents suggest ‘Angkor’ at a larger scale, referring more frequently to an Angkor zone, Angkor territory, and Angkor region. “The urgent necessity to protect and preserve the monuments
and the historic zone in their cultural, socio-economic and ecological dimension has been reconfirmed” (Japan: ICC December 2003).

Two important points were revealed from the analysis. Firstly, there appears to be an increasing recognition of the notion of an Angkor cultural landscape, as opposed to just a collection of monuments. Indeed by 2003, documents focus on areas rather than points (monuments) on the landscape. Secondly, a specific spatial extent or limitation is only defined within 50% of references, and many descriptions require communal understandings of specific spatial terms such as ‘region’, ‘territory’, or even ‘landscape’. Earlier discussion (Chapter 2), outlined how these terms can also be considered as malleable social constructions. In particular ‘region’ is utilised by governments around the world to include and exclude certain spaces and people, facilitating economic, political and social agendas (Smith 1988). The notion of a cultural landscape was originally introduced to cross barriers and facilitate representation on the World Heritage list for people that did
not necessarily differentiate between culture and nature (Rössler 2000; Taylor and Altenburg 2006). Such nuances become potentially problematic when considering that the ICC meetings are simultaneously conducted and translated within three languages (English, French, and Khmer). Similar situations have previously arisen in international heritage management circles and continue to escape a simple solution (Byrne, Brayshaw et al. 2003). It could even be argued that the use of the term ‘monuments’ or ‘Angkor monuments’ are similarly controversial, as they raise questions relating to which structures qualify, or are considered, as monuments.

A shift in spatial perceptions of Angkor (Figure 4-1) may be influenced by a number of factors. Between 1993 and 2003, hostility and conflict within Cambodia decreased (Pisith 2004), and thus safety and accessibility increased beyond the core historical areas (France: ICC June 2003). The number of foreign teams working at the site had also increased (Chouléan, Prenowitz et al. 1998), with interest (and finance) extending beyond preserving key monuments (Winter 2008). In addition, international support was directed towards tourism and urban management, as well as environmental monitoring and conservation. Increased interest in a wider spatial area accompanies a growing discussion of sustainable development ideologies in Angkor’s management. This is a discourse that seeks to successfully integrate heritage management with the livelihoods of those who live in and around the World Heritage area (Hubbard 2003). The shift from monuments to landscape may reflect a shift from perceiving Angkor as isolated in the past, to considering a functional Angkor which serves, and has a relationship with, the contemporary population. Thus, perceptions of ‘Angkor’ are slowly stretching beyond the Angkor Park, but the main focus within the international contributions is still the monumental Angkor Park.
Figure 4.1. Between 1993 and 2003, the scale at which Angkor was perceived by the international contributors to the ICC expanded beyond the Angkor Park towards a landscape understanding. In 1993 references to Angkor were focused on Angkor Wat. However, in 2003 there were no references to the single monument, instead discussions focused on the wider Angkor Park and Angkor Landscape.

4.2.2 Cambodian Contributions to the ICC

To explore Cambodian government understandings of Angkor, the analysis applied to examine the perspective of foreign contributions to the ICC was adopted to examine the Cambodian ICC contributions. Firstly, the references to Angkor within each document were collated. Then the spatial characteristics portrayed by each use of ‘Angkor’ were determined.

Many of the references to ‘Angkor’ within the Cambodian ICC contributions were the spatially and physically ambiguous ‘Angkor’. “Angkor as the enduring symbol of Khmer cultural heritage, is an invaluable asset to be preserved and developed for the benefit of all Cambodians” (Cambodia: ICC 1993 October). This quote suggests that perhaps Angkor is not even a physical space, but is instead described within many Cambodian contributions to the
ICC as an idea. ‘Angkor’ could, therefore, be a place that is created to fit a perceived purpose, rather than a defined location. This idea will be explored in later sections where Angkor’s importance and use is discussed (section 4.3). Less ambiguous responses were arranged for interpretation along a spectrum from those only concerned with Angkor Wat (or other specific monuments) through to those references which indicated a wider Angkor landscape (Table 4-2). Cambodian government references to Angkor, in both the 1993 and 2003 ICC documents, were predominantly descriptions of the Angkor Archaeological Park, such as ‘Angkor Park’ or ‘Angkor site’. Such a result was not unexpected as Cambodian and foreign relationships observed at the ICC are focused on the Angkor Park, or the World Heritage Area. Whilst the Cambodian national government plays a significant role at the ICC, there has been little or no inclusion of other Cambodian stakeholders from the region. Even the provincial governor of Siem Reap is not mandated to participate. References to the involvement by other stakeholders in the management of Angkor-Siem Reap usually comes from reports given by foreign teams on their internationally-funded development projects, such as the German AsiaUrbs project (Mund, Symann et al. 2005), and the JICA Integrated Master Plan for Sustainable Development of Siem Reap / Angkor Town (JICA 2004).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GROUPED REFERENCE</th>
<th>SPATIAL REFERENCE</th>
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<th>2003 (8 docs)</th>
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<tr>
<td>‘Angkor’</td>
<td>‘ANGKOR’</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single Monument</td>
<td>Angkor Wat</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple Monuments</td>
<td>Monuments</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>37.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Monuments In Immediate Setting</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>12.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angkor Park</td>
<td>Historic Site Of Angkor</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>World Heritage Area</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>12.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Angkor Archaeological Park</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Angkor Park And Associated Sites</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>12.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Landscape</td>
<td>Angkor City</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Angkor Area</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Angkor Zone</td>
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</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Cultural Landscapes</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>75%</td>
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</tbody>
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Table 4-2. Spatial understandings of Angkor by Cambodian contributors to the ICC as a percentage of contributions featuring each spatial reference. Contributors often used more than one description within a document, in such cases the document is counted under more than one reference.
In 1993, the Cambodian contributions to the ICC indicated a slight bias towards spatial conceptualisation and portrayal of Angkor as monuments. This is perhaps reflects a focus within the ICC on ensuring the immediate safeguarding, conservation, and research of the major structures (i.e. Angkor Wat, Angkor Thom, Bayon, Ta Prohm) in the early years following inscription. The newly instated World Heritage inscription only protected the monuments of the site (Wager and Englehardt 1994), and, probably as a result of this, there was minimal international funding distributed to conservation projects outside the park. Indeed, analysis of the ICC agendas for the last 15 years revealed that it was not until 2000 that projects, and therefore agenda items, start to consider smaller or more remote temples. In the 1993 documentation, this extends further as the descriptions and language used in 1993 highlights particular monuments, or clusters of monuments, for example ‘Angkor Park and associated sites’. However, by 2003 this has shifted to a discussion of areas, zones, and regions. Such language is more consistent with a landscape idea of heritage. Thus the Cambodian contributions to the ICC describe a dual image of Angkor, as both monuments and a cultural landscape.

The analysis of the Cambodian contributions to the ICC suggests that whilst the Cambodian understandings of Angkor have been focused on the monuments or the defined World Heritage area (Figure 4-2), there has also been a sustained interest in the idea of an Angkor landscape, unlike the international community who have only recently adopted interest in the idea. However, as shall be discussed later, the Cambodian government do not necessarily make strong connections between the monuments and the aesthetic landscape. After all, ‘region of Angkor’, merely implies an area predominantly focused on the Angkor monuments. It does not have to equate to a cultural landscape (as discussed in section 2.5). The Cambodian contributions do demonstrate a shift from monumental heritage to landscape perspectives. But unlike the international heritage professionals, this has not resulted in an expansion of the spatial areas considered as ‘Angkor’.
Figure 4-2. Representation of the scale at which Angkor was perceived by Cambodian contributors to the ICC, based on analysis of ICC minutes. In both 1993 and 2003, the Cambodian contributors perceived Angkor as either the Angkor Archaeological Park and or as an Angkor Landscape. Angkor Wat was mentioned occasionally in contributions in 1993, it was rarely mentioned in 2003.

### 4.2.3 APSARA Staff

Unlike the government and foreign teams, many APSARA staff interviewed possessed dual perspectives as both heritage professionals and as residents of the local community. Thus it may be that they have developed two spatial images of Angkor, one professional and one personal. All APSARA interviewees were queried about the spatial characteristics of Angkor. In addition to these questions, consistency and complexity of ideas were tested by collating any other spatial references or definitions of Angkor within the interviews. Of the thirteen APSARA respondents, three presented two or more spatial images of ‘Angkor’ in the course of their interview. The descriptor ‘Angkor Park’ was the most common direct reference to the heritage area (Table 4-3). However when responses were collated under the three categories of Angkor Wat, Angkor Park, and Angkor Landscape, a spatial image of ‘Angkor’ as a landscape was prevalent.
Table 4-3. APSARA staff interviewed were questioned on their perception of the spatial extent of ‘Angkor’. Most interviewees considered Angkor as either equating to the Angkor Archaeological Park, or as extending across a wider cultural landscape. Three interviewees gave two responses.

A possible explanation for the different responses may be whether respondents come from Siem Reap, or from another province. Few of the APSARA respondents considered ‘Angkor’ as only Angkor Wat. Whilst these people also tended to be in a subordinate employment position, serving as administrative staff rather than field staff, the idea was held only by those originally from Siem Reap. This pattern will be explored further through the analysis of the local community interviews (Section 4.2.4). However, if such a correlation is present then it may suggest that personal experience influences APSARA staff and their spatial perceptions of Angkor.

An argument supporting the development of a professional image of Angkor for APSARA staff can be found in the analysis of responses perceiving ‘Angkor’ as Angkor Park. This was the most common direct description of Angkor and is the second most common spatial image of Angkor used by APSARA staff. Whilst no specific reasons were given for why interviewees perceived Angkor in this manner, further contextual analysis of transcripts suggests that this image developed by considering the land or space APSARA was formally responsible for managing. “[the definition] depend on the sentence or the context. For the population when we say Angkor that the temple. But for the staff of APSARA Authority,
when we say Angkor, it’s the archaeology site, the World Heritage site. It means 401km squared” (APSARA Interviewee 6). ‘Angkor’ is Angkor Park because APSARA looks after Angkor and its area of responsibility is primarily the Angkor Park. Respondents in this group also recognised that their (and/or APSARA’s) definition of Angkor did not necessarily match that of the local population. Two interviewees even acknowledged that, before they came to work for APSARA, they themselves had also considered Angkor as merely Angkor Wat. This provides further evidence that the roles and responsibilities of APSARA had influenced the personal spatial images of Angkor held by APSARA staff, and produced professional interpretations of the heritage object.

As APSARA staff had developed a spatial understanding of the site beyond that held by the local Siem Reap community, it was also necessary to examine whether this difference was the result of foreign influences or simply a consequence of their professional responsibilities. While a majority of APSARA interviewees perceived Angkor as a landscape, there was evidence that APSARA responses aligned more closely with the foreign teams with which they work, rather than with the official Cambodian government discourse. Having been involved with and observed some of the international research and capacity building projects currently underway at Angkor, the researcher was able to identify language, such as ‘Greater Angkor’ (see interview extract below) – a term identified in the University of Sydney’s Greater Angkor and Living With Heritage research projects – which suggested an influence from international teams, particularly in rallying support for the creation and management of an Angkor cultural landscape. “Angkor means Greater Angkor….because it mean, I know yes, most of peoples when we talk about Angkor maybe they think to Angkor Wat. But for me I think Angkor well large, yes, very large area. We call Greater Angkor, because this area maybe can tell us or foreigner to…back to our past, yes, that times that Khmer is very, as you know, in history is very well-known especially in Asia, and also in the whole world.” (APSARA Interviewee 7)

An important consideration when reflecting on the respondents who acknowledged an Angkor landscape was the departments within which these staff worked. The 'landscape' that APSARA staff discuss is not the same landscape described in the ICC documentation. APSARA staff perceived the monuments as intrinsically linked with the people and
environment surrounding them: “I think it is necessary for me Angkor is all Siem Reap. I think it is necessary for Cambodia. Not only Angkor Wat or Angkor Park, I think it’s all province in Angkor, in Siem Reap, because it relate with city and temple, and temple with the people living in Siem Reap” (APSARA Interviewee 10). The idea of an Angkor landscape came only from those staff (Figure 4-3) that worked for the Department of Monuments and Archaeology 2 (DMA2) and Department of Water and Forests (DWF), not the Department of Urban Development (DUD). This suggests that the responsibilities of these departments influence spatial perceptions of Angkor. The mandates of DMA2 and DWF focus on the broader aspects of the management of ‘Angkor’, such as liaising with the population of Zones 1 and 2, and environmental conservation. In contrast, those who work at DUD are responsible for managing the relationship between the Angkor Park and Siem Reap town. On a daily basis, this latter department works to protect Angkor from modern urban development. The broader (spatial and aesthetic) interests of DMA2 and DWF mean that the existence of these departments is the result of an understanding of Angkor that is intrinsically linked to a populated landscape, and not isolated monuments.

Figure 4-3. Considering the APSARA Department in which the interviewee was employed, when analysing the spatial perceptions of Angkor, revealed that those from the Department of Monuments and Archaeology 2 and the Department of Water and Forests were focused on the Angkor Landscape.
A second, more subtle, observation is that in recent times many of the international aid and research teams (including those from France, Australia, Germany, New Zealand, and Japan) have worked with DMA2 and DWF to activate ‘landscape-centred’ projects. Managing the physical approaches to monuments, forestry, hydrological work, rural livelihoods, and urban development and planning, these are all projects whose rhetoric demonstrates support for the idea of an ‘Angkor’ that is socially, culturally, and environmentally more than just stone monuments. Thus this could suggest that the APSARA staff are being ‘educated’ (Byrne, Brayshaw et al. 2003:74) by their jobs and/or foreign experts (see Section 2.4.1.2), to view ‘Angkor’ as a landscape, and not just as Angkor Park or Angkor Wat (Figure 4-4).

Figure 4-4. APSARA staff interviewed demonstrated a strong perception of Angkor as a cultural landscape, and placed little emphasis on it only being Angkor Wat.
4.2.4 Local community

When asked the question “What is Angkor?”, responses were obtained from two-thirds of local interviewees (Figure 4-5). For the other third, only the spatially ambiguous ‘Angkor’ was used throughout the interview, thus posing the same problems with spatial ambiguity discussed in section 4.2.1. Within the more defined responses, ‘Angkor’ was primarily conveyed as meaning Angkor Wat. This was followed by understandings of ‘Angkor’ as the Angkor Park. There was little local support for the spatial notion of ‘Angkor’ as a landscape.

Figure 4-5. Perceptions of the spatial extent of ‘Angkor’ were collected through direct questioning and indirectly in other parts of interviews conducted with 61 members of the local community. Most interviewees utilised only the spatially ambiguous term ‘Angkor’. If they were spatially specific, they conceptualised ‘Angkor’ as Angkor Wat or the Angkor Archaeological Park.

Many local community interviewees, whose spatial images suggested that they understood ‘Angkor’ as Angkor Wat, were people who discussed visiting or interacting only with this main monument. Most of these interviewees made no other reference to any other
monuments in the course of their interview. For the few who did mention other structures, they also emphasised that Angkor Wat was the most valuable or important place in Siem Reap. Responses within the ‘Angkor’ as Angkor Wat category, gave a sense that there was no other interpretation: “Angkor Wat because it’s Cambodian cultural heritage. I have visited only once and only Angkor Wat” (Local Community Interviewee 49).

Those local community responses categorised as referring to Angkor Park or the Angkor landscape, suggested that ‘Angkor’ was seen as a series of temples, or monuments, spread across land of differing spatial extents. Many of the responses that are classified as viewing ‘Angkor’ as Angkor Park involved often exhaustive lists of temples, for example: “Angkor is Angkor Wat, Angkor Thom, Banteay Srei, Bayon, Takeo, Preak Khan” (Local Community Interviewee 35). The respondents often demonstrated, through their body language and speech, a certain pride in having the knowledge of more than the one temple of Angkor Wat. Their ‘knowledge’ went beyond just naming temples, as many of these respondents also talked about visiting and interacting with other temples. It was evident from their language that it was the temples spread across the park or a wider area that were considered ‘Angkor’, and not the trees, people, or land in between. The language used is often centred on the built structures, such as: “all the temples in Siem Reap” (Local Community Interviewee 59). Responses do not mention forests, rivers, villages, or other non-stone elements. The impression that was gained from these interviews was that while most local interviewees only saw ‘Angkor’ as Angkor Wat, it was those ‘in-the-know’ who recognised that ‘Angkor’ could also be the Angkor Park or Angkor Landscape. This perspective reflected the awareness of APSARA staff of a shift in their own thinking as a result of the responsibilities and ‘knowledge’ that their job entails. This rhetoric is often duplicated in the cultural heritage discourse at Angkor, and more broadly (see Section 2.4.1.2), where heritage professionals work to ensure that local stakeholders are ‘educated’ about the significance of their heritage (Mackay and Sullivan 2008). Cultural heritage education often focuses on making stakeholders realise the intrinsic values of sites (see Section 2.4.1.2). Remembering criticisms of the notion of intrinsic value (Byrne, Brayshaw et al. 2003), which argued that all value is potentially extrinsic as heritage is only created through meanings and values that are temporally and geographically contextual (see Section 2.4.1.2), the only space at Angkor that could be said to possess intrinsic value is Angkor Wat. Both the APSARA staff and the local community interviews suggest that
appreciation of the other sites and spaces comes from learning their value (historical, economic, archaeological, artistic, etc.): “I tell you the first time I come here, when I see Angkor Wat, when I don’t know, when I’m not archaeologist. I think Angkor is the temple that has five towers like this” (APSARA Interviewee 4). Valuing the Angkor Park or Angkor landscape is not automatic, but can instead be considered an extrinsic value, requiring some kind of external influence, or prompt.

As post-positivist heritage management ideologies often have an underlying argument that our spatial relationships with heritage objects and sites affect our perception of them (Peleggi 1996; Light 2000; Memmott and Long 2002), it was important to examine some of the key spatial attributes (see Section 3.2.1.1) of interviewees for evidence of variation. The two which were anticipated to create the biggest differences were homeland (Siem Reap or elsewhere), and current residential location (in park versus outside of park). Given the potential amongst the APSARA staff interviewed for variation between those born in Siem Reap, and those from other provinces, this was the first comparison undertaken. However, analysis revealed that there was no noticeable variation in the perceptions of those from Siem Reap and those from elsewhere. As Figure 4-6 illustrates, Angkor was understood as being either Angkor Wat or Angkor Park by both homeland categories. This would suggest then that the variation observed amongst the APSARA staff may have been influenced by their professional position, rather than by those from Phnom Penh moving closer to the site.
Figure 4-6. Spatial perceptions of Angkor by the local community, comparing those from Siem Reap province with those from other provinces. While both groups primarily define ‘Angkor’ as Angkor Wat, those from Siem Reap also gave strong consideration to the idea of ‘Angkor’ as Angkor Park.

The second spatial attribute with the potential to influence different perceptions was the distinction between those living within the Angkor Park and those living outside. It was thought that if a person was exposed to a variety of temples (i.e. more than Angkor Wat) on a daily basis, then they would recognise the term ‘Angkor’ as meaning more than just Angkor Wat. Also given the increasing mentions from APSARA and international teams about the relationship between monuments, their landscape, and the people inhabiting the Angkor Park (and beyond), it was felt that it was more likely that park residents would recognise an Angkor landscape. Figure 4-7 illustrates that there was indeed variation between those living inside and those from outside of the Angkor Park. However, it was not the expected trend, with those who recognised Angkor as a landscape coming from outside the Angkor Park. In fact, a higher percentage of those from within the Angkor Park perceived ‘Angkor’ as only Angkor Wat, than for those living outside the Angkor Park, perhaps suggesting that being slightly removed from the site enabled one to see differing connections across space.
Figure 4-7. Perceptions of Angkor were compared for those who lived inside the Angkor Park with those who lived outside of the Angkor Park. This analysis revealed that those who lived inside the Angkor Park primarily described 'Angkor' as Angkor Wat. In contrast those who lived outside the Angkor Park perceived 'Angkor' as Angkor Park or as a cultural landscape.

The results of the local community interview analysis (Figure 4-8) illustrated that for the local population there was little recognition of an Angkor that spreads beyond the Angkor Park. Furthermore, it appeared that any recognition of the Angkor Park (or beyond) was of the temples (monuments) and not the spaces joining them.
4.2.5 Angkor defined

It would appear that there is little consensus in the way that different stakeholders define the spatial entity of ‘Angkor’. The local community interviewees considered Angkor as representing monuments. Their vision is predominantly focused on Angkor Wat, but for those who defined Angkor as Angkor Park, they were describing monuments, not parkland. In addition, there was little recognition of an Angkor (cultural) landscape by the local residents. In contrast, there is little acknowledgement from the ICC or APSARA for an Angkor that is only Angkor Wat. The analysis of the three professional groups revealed support for an Angkor that extends beyond the bounds of the World Heritage site. International support, through the ICC, for an Angkor that is understood (and thus must be managed) at a landscape scale has recently increased, with foreign academic and aid interests (for example, Parry 1996; Winter 2005; Taylor and Altenburg 2006; Evans, Pottier et al. 2007; Mackay and Sullivan 2008; Rabe 2008; Winter 2008). The results of this international support may be seen in the perceptions of APSARA interviewees, whose...
responses reflect the international perspective more than those of the Cambodian government or the local community. The Cambodian government interests at the ICC are concentrated on the Angkor Park, and the descriptions obtainable within their contributions reflect this by primarily recognising the area defined as World Heritage. However, it is worth noting that more recently (July 2008), the Governments of Thailand and Cambodia intensified their stand-off over ownership of the remote Preah Vihear temple (Figure 4-9) when the site was granted World Heritage status (Hughes 2009). Preah Vihear lies on the border of the two countries, and in an attempt to strengthen claims of ownership, the Cambodian government may increasingly produce a landscape-based discourse. Affirming linkages between the remote site and Angkor (and thus supporting Cambodia’s claim over the site) would require conceiving Angkor at a landscape scale, illustrating the way that political interests have the potential to influence perceptions of the scale of heritage.

Figure 4-9. The Angkorean temple of Preah Vihear lies on the disputed border between Thailand and Cambodia. The July 2008 World Heritage Inscription of the site intensified the border dispute. Background Image: Landsat Image NASA 2000.
Despite working for an autonomous agency of the Cambodian government, the perceptions of APSARA staff stand in contrast with those found within the Cambodian contributions to the ICC. Appearing to be influenced by their responsibilities in managing a landscape rather than just monuments, APSARA interviewees had the strongest support of all stakeholders for the idea of Angkor as a landscape. Their landscape was not one of monuments, but one where the spaces and objects between monuments contribute to their value, an idea which will be examined further in Chapter 5. There appears to be evidence of international influences within APSARA staff’s perceptions of space. The workshops, meetings, documents, and plans proposed by international teams, in cooperation with APSARA, have potentially resulted in a re-construction of the scale at which Angkor is understood by APSARA staff. Part of this realisation comes from an understanding that their image does not match with the more spatially-limited image held by the ‘ordinary’ Cambodian.

Understanding Angkor is not just about knowing where it is, because as many of the descriptions in the ICC documents and discussions with interviewees suggest, Angkor is not just a location. It is not just the past versus the present, or heritage versus non-heritage. Angkor is a symbol for the wider population. It is a used space and a lived space. It has a role to play in contemporary social and economic life, and it is the author’s belief that this role assists with the construction of the scales of Angkor. It is not only the perception of the physical limits of ‘Angkor’, but also the value assigned to ‘Angkor’ that helps to construct the relationship with other scales therefore defining the scale itself.

4.3 The value of ‘Angkor’

The main argument of this thesis is that cultural heritage management involves the construction of various scales to frame the subjects of interest. Beyond the obvious scales of local, national, and global stakeholders, this thesis argues that heritage management constructs differently scaled spaces of importance. Each scale involves different expectations, rules, and behaviours. “After Bakheng, you see in the moat in the side with no water, and they play volleyball there... Because there is no more place [outside the park]... I don’t want that there these kinds of activity in the Angkor park...Not for the sacred place. You go there for meditation. You go there for praying” (APSARA Interviewee 1). Language
such as this illustrates how our perceptions of space dictate how we view the occurrence of certain behaviours within the space (Lorimer 2003; Noussia 2003; Krevs 2004). By defining limits and levels of behaviour, we define the different scales of heritage. As was argued extensively in Chapter 2, heritage has undergone a re-construction of scale. We have transformed and rescaled our ideas from the notion of heritage as isolated objects and locations fending off hostile modernity, towards recognising and valuing heritage places and cultural landscapes. Aesthetics and contemporary usage are part of the creation of a sense of place (Porteous 1996; Pocock 2002; Powell, Selman et al. 2002), and play an important role in construction of these new scales.

The World Heritage inscription for Angkor formally defined the international significance of the site (Beschaouch 2002). The criteria for which Angkor was listed emphasised the aesthetics of the site, and its historical significance (Vann 2002). Criterion (iii) links the values of the site to people and a civilisation, in this case the Khmer Empire (ICOMOS 1992). When Angkor was inscribed (1992), this World Heritage criterion referred to a culture or civilisation of the past, but has since been revised by the World Heritage Committee so that it can also include living cultures (WHC 2008). This means that Angkor’s value can now be interpreted as either connected to the past or to the present. It also means that the significance of the site is now connected with a particular cultural group (in this case the Khmer). Cultures are open to interpretation, with potential variation between those within, and those looking in, on the heritage site (Ashworth 1994; Chang, Milne et al. 1996; Harvey 2001). Those visiting, utilising and managing a heritage area may attempt to define the appropriate culture to associate with the site (Nuryanti 1996; Richards 1996; Nuryanti 1997; Chang 1999; Garrod and Fyall 2001). As discussed in Chapter 2, culture is understood as the behaviours, traditions, and values of a group of people (Bird, Curtis et al. 1993; Anderson 1997; Low and Lawrence-Zuniga 2003; Dredge 2004; Head 2004). The problem with linking people, and thus culture, with a group of structures from the past, is that contemporary users must decide how they view the connections and continuity between present and past cultures (Vines 2001; Harvey 2003; Taylor and Altenburg 2006). This is a significant issue highlighted in David Lowenthal’s The Past is a Foreign Country (Lowenthal 1985), where he emphasises that the present day gaze can’t be ignored when reading and interpreting the past. Those interpreting a site linked to a past culture will also decide how
that culture is interpreted, and the relationship it will have with the heritage objects (Chapman 2001; Dahles 2001; Powell, Selman et al. 2002).

At Angkor the linkage with past and present cultures has become an important part of the World Heritage listing (Boukhari 2002; Ishizawa 2002; Vann 2002), and thus inadvertently also protected. Though it is widely acknowledged that the Khmers of today are descendents, genetically and culturally, of the Khmer empire of a thousand years ago (Takei 1998; AusHeritage and ASEAN-COCI 2003), the culture described in the inscription belongs to the past. “The Khmer Empire of the 9th-14th centuries encompassed much of south-east Asia and played a formative role in the political and cultural development of the region. All that remains of that civilization is its rich heritage of cult structures in brick and stone.” (ICOMOS 1992:8) When inscribing the site (WHC 1992), there was no mention of present day people and their utilisation of the site. Even today, when contemporary use of the site is discussed, the (static) continuation of cultural practices and tradition is often highlighted (Tainturier 2001; Kammeier 2003). What appears to have been neglected in management strategies at Angkor is an acknowledgement of the natural evolution of culture. Thus this section seeks to define the scale of Angkor beyond just its size, examining how its contemporary role defines the scale of the area of value. Discussions of the use, role and significance of the site create particular images, or senses of place. For example, the repetitive use of the word ‘temple’ within tourism literature (such as the Lonely Planet guides, or freely available Angkor-Siem Reap guide books), creates an image of a religious and spiritual space, in a way that the word ‘monument’ does not. Through the analysis of perceptions of importance and contemporary use of the heritage area, this section explores the value of Angkor for each stakeholder group, illustrating how cultural scales are constructed by dictating acceptable and unacceptable behaviour within certain spaces.

4.3.1 International Contributions to the ICC

Images of Angkor within foreign media and tourism literature tend to highlight the spiritual, traditional, and cultural aspects of Angkor. “Angkor is a living site that is home to a population numbering in the tens of thousands. They give “soul” to the site with their prayers, beliefs and ceremonies, in a unique landscape composed of forests, villages, and rice paddies as far as the eye can see. These people must not be overlooked in the tourism
development equation. Should they ever disappear; gone would be the genius loci of Angkor, the subtle alchemy between the habitats, monuments and green spaces that adds so much charm and interest to the site” (UNESCO: ICC December 2003). With a strong professional interest in cultural heritage, it was anticipated that the International contributors to the ICC would highlight tradition and continuation of culture, and would discourage signs of, or links with, modernity at Angkor. It was also expected that this would be discussed in the ICC forums within a framework that aimed to safeguard and protect World Heritage values above all others. As the Western tourism image for Angkor is one which promotes the spiritual aspects of the site (Palmer and Martin 2005), it was anticipated that this would be a dominant feature of international interpretations of Angkor.

An indifference towards the modern aspects of Angkor by the international community was evident in an analysis of agenda items for all ICC meetings held between 1993 and 2006. The theme (sustainable development, safeguarding or institutional framework) was determined for each item. This analysis (Figure 4-10) indicates that the participation of foreign countries has predominantly been in the presentation of research and safeguarding activities. Whilst sustainable development has been a continual (background) focus of international contributors, it has received increasing interest in recent years.
A second step in the textual analysis of the ICC documents was to explore the use of ‘monument’ and ‘temple’, two words often used to reference Angkor colloquially. Word frequency analysis conducted in Nvivo7 (Figure 4-11) revealed that the frequency of ‘monument’ within international contributions to the ICC far exceeded the use of ‘temple’, with the latter word not even mentioned in over half of the international contributions. Thus Angkor is a site of monuments, projecting an image of static symbolic objects that remind us of the past rather than as an ongoing or contemporary space: monuments of a past people, rather than as temples of a present culture.
Figure 4-11. Results of the word frequency analysis of on the use of 'Monument' and 'Temple' in the International contributions to the ICC revealed that most foreign participants prefer the use of the word 'Monument'.

In-depth textual analysis of the ICC documents for 1993 and 2003 was undertaken to determine perceptions of the importance of Angkor. With the ICC focus being the safeguarding and protection of the World Heritage of Angkor, it was expected that the international contributors would be focused on this and other international aspects of Angkor's significance. Thus, it was firstly determined whether the text referred to local, national, or international significance. The analysis then sought to understand the reasons why Angkor was considered important by international contributors.

The textual analysis (Figure 4-12) demonstrated that contrary to expectations, most frequently mentioned was the importance of Angkor for Cambodia (national level). Angkor was valued as a national symbol, a monument, which formed a pillar of the national identity. "[Angkor is] Ruins - Vestiges , which bear witness to a rich and glorious past, reflect
all those values that are a source for the Khmer people of hope reborn and identity recovered” (UNESCO: ICC January 1993). Another interpretation of Angkor’s significance was as an economic resource. It appeared to be strongly understood by the international community that Angkor has played a significant role in Cambodia’s financial reconstruction through tourism, and also through attracting foreign aid. “With its legitimate reference to the grand periods of Khmer civilisation, the cultural heritage of Angkor has, in the eyes of all, promoted the all-important national reconciliation process. Indeed, once civil peace was decided, the conflicts eventually ended and the country could get back to work. Similarly, the preservation of the exceptional and universal values that characterise this heritage has encouraged visitors back on the “Royal Way” to the temples, thus gradually generating a substantial source of income for the Angkor region and the country as a whole.” (UNESCO: ICC November 2003) Lastly, the text of the foreign ICC contributions extended the value of Angkor as a national resource beyond the economic to include the social, cultural, natural and archaeological. Despite some increase in awareness of the local significance of the site, the significance of Angkor for the international community was the most evident within the foreign contributions to the ICC documentation. The importance of Angkor as discussed within international contributions at the ICC, confirms that foreign teams and governments possess a ‘monumental’ view of Angkor. The local significance of the site, as either a social or economic resource, was rarely mentioned by the international contributors. Angkor is discussed as a monument of universal human achievement. Such interpretations of its significance elevate the heritage area beyond its surrounding population and landscape.
The joint focus on the importance of Angkor as a social symbol, and as a resource, created an interesting duality, where the site was perceived as having both a passive and an active role in contemporary society. On the one hand, it was understood as a monument to a past civilisation and therefore removed from the current population and their daily behaviours. On the other hand, Angkor had an active role as a key to the socioeconomic development of the contemporary population, integral to both the economic and social livelihoods of the Cambodian nation. “Not just restoration of relics of the past, saving Angkor will allow an entire people to regain its pride, its will to live and a renewed vigour with which to rebuild its country” (UNESCO: ICC January 1993). Important to note here is the link to the national scale and not the local area or population. The foreign discussion revolves almost entirely around the socio-economic development of Cambodia, not Siem Reap (the local scale). As will be discussed in Chapter 5, the perceptions of Angkor’s passive and active connections
with its surrounding landscape and population are very different from connections which
the international contributors to the ICC perceive between Angkor and Cambodia.

The results presented in this section have demonstrated that for the international
contributors to the Angkor ICC, the focus was not on the World Heritage listing and
Angkor’s importance under that listing, but on the reconstruction of Cambodia, culturally
and economically. The role of Angkor is to make money, principally through (heritage)
tourism, and this is the only contemporary use of ‘Angkor’ that is widely acknowledged
within the international contributions. This was perhaps a result of the ultimate interests of
international contributors as being foreign aid donors and capacity builders (whether
directly or indirectly). In defining ‘Angkor’ or the scale of value, ‘Angkor’ is the economically
productive space or that area which attracts tourists. The monuments of Angkor provide
the drawcard, creating the image of the past. The present is disconnected from the heritage
space, as there is limited interest demonstrated by the foreign contributors in the
contemporary utilisation of Angkor. Though Angkor tourism literature (for example, Palmer
and Martin 2005) may refer to, and highlight, the spiritual perceptions of Angkor by
foreigners, this does not appear to be the view of some heritage professionals. ‘Angkor’ is
the monuments (the attractions), not the people (Figure 4-13), creating a linkage with the
spatial understanding of Angkor. ‘Angkor’ spatially focuses on the Angkor Park, the
monument space. The apparent shift towards understanding Angkor as a landscape could
perhaps be seen as reflecting an interest in the economics of the tourist experience
(Shackley 1996; McIntosh and Prentice 1999; Pocock 2002; Jamal and Hill 2004). Creating
the complete ‘Angkor experience’ means that ‘Angkor’ is being conceived as more than the
Angkor Park, and therefore it has the potential to influence the relationship between
Angkor and the surrounding area. In other words, the political, social, and economic
interests of the international stakeholders may influence the relationship between the
scales of value and interpretation. The following sections will investigate the influence
international interests have been able to exert over Cambodian stakeholders.
4.3.2 Cambodian Contributions to the ICC

One of the key issues in managing World Heritage sites is balancing the protection and conservation of universal values with the interests of the national government who are integral to the success of cultural heritage management (Logan 1995; Smith 2001; Aplin 2002; Ashworth and van der Aa 2002). It is the national government who must initially nominate the site, define the protection policies, and ensure the continual conflict-free conservation of heritage values (WHC 1999). They must ensure a delicate balance is reached and maintained between modern utilisation and preservation (Grimwade and Carter 2000; Byrne, Brayshaw et al. 2003). At Angkor some of this initial responsibility was abdicated to the international community during the unstable political and economic situation in the early 1990s. In the shadow of this history of international cooperation, this section will explore Angkor’s role in the post-conflict period as defined by the Cambodian government.

One of the key tensions for any (developing) country in today’s globalising society is the balance between socio-economic development and the maintenance of cultural traditions and diversity (Brohman 1996). Global cultural homogenisation is often seen as a negative
side effect of economic globalisation and many less developed countries are currently seeking to counteract it (Chang 1999). Analysis of the agendas of the ICC meetings in 1993 and 2003 (Figure 4-14) suggested that official Cambodian interests have been centred around the sustainable socio-economic development of the Angkor-Siem Reap region, and Cambodia more generally. There has not been a significant participatory interest in Angkor research by the Cambodian contributions within the ICC documents until more recently, as research has largely been foreign-led, with Cambodians tending to play supporting roles in such projects. Thus it is that the most obvious deviation between the international (see Figure 4-10) and Cambodian government stakeholders is that the latter group started from an interest in the value of Angkor for development and have progressed towards considering Angkor’s scientific values. In contrast the international community have always demonstrated an interest in the scientific value of Angkor and have more recently given increased attention to issues of sustainable development.

![Figure 4-14](image)

*Figure 4-14. Results of the textual analysis of ICC agenda items presented by Cambodian contributors to the ICC between 1993 and 2006 suggest that official Cambodian interests have centred on the sustainable socio-economic development of the Angkor-Siem Reap region, and Cambodia more generally.*
Whilst the analysis of agendas indicated an early and continued utilisation of Angkor, in-depth analysis of the 1993 and 2003 Cambodian ICC documentation revealed a more complex picture of the role of Angkor in contemporary Cambodian society. Exploring perceptions of Angkor through the language used by the Cambodian government revealed high utilisation of ‘monuments’ and low usage of ‘temples’ (Figure 4-15). This would suggest that the Cambodian government has had a similar approach to that of the international community, wherein Angkor was spoken of as monument heritage, or as the symbolic past rather than as contemporary spiritual space - ‘a temple’. However, further analysis suggested that this focus on monuments was linked to perceptions of Angkor’s symbolic role and functionality within the economy of a recovering nation.

![Figure 4-15. Comparison of the frequency with which Cambodian and International contributors to ICC minutes used the words ‘monument’ and ‘temple’, revealed that the structures of Angkor were primarily referred to as ‘monuments’.](image)

Angkor’s national significance was stressed within the Cambodian contributions to the ICC (Figure 4-16). In 1993 the emphasis was on the symbolism (historical and identity) of the
monument, rather than the functional importance (such as economic value) of the site. Highlighted was the contribution that Angkor makes to world culture, with descriptions that conveyed a sense of pride in Cambodia’s ownership (and construction) of the site: “The presence of numerous countries underscores the exceptional and universal value of the Angkor site, symbol of the identity of the Khmer Nation and of its unity, and witness beyond the frontiers and the centuries of the creative genius of humankind” (Cambodia: ICC January 1993). Underlying these assertions appears to be an emphasis on reminding international participants that Angkor belongs to Cambodia, “All Cambodian people want to preserve our national heritage, and will spare no effort to attain this noble goal” (Cambodia: ICC October 1993), with the rest of the world enjoying the “jewel in the crown” (Cambodia: ICC November 2003). Such discourse may be a reflection of attitudes towards the entrance of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC 1992-1993), and the role that foreign teams assumed. Many of the key actions in the early years could be interpreted as placing the Cambodian government in a junior role, supervised by foreign experts. For example, the Angkor ZEMP team was foreign led, with Cambodian capacity building involvement (Wager and Englehardt 1994). The intervention by foreign parties was requested and supported by Cambodian leaders due to the annihilation of the educated population by the Khmer Rouge (Kamm 1998). Or the discourse could even be a reflection of the fact that the 1993 (and later the 2003) ICC meetings did not even convene in Cambodia, but instead in Paris (later Tokyo). This latter action continues the abstraction of Angkor out of contemporary Cambodia and into a global arena.
Figure 4-16. Cambodian contributors to the ICC stressed that the importance of Angkor was its national significance, international significance and its role as an economic resource.

Within the 2003 documentation, perceptions of Angkor’s value by the Cambodian contributors had narrowed to a focus on the site’s functional importance in rebuilding the nation. Interest had shifted towards Angkor’s international significance, with particular mention being made of the international visitors who also value the site. The Cambodian contributors highlighted the role of Angkor as an economic resource for the country. Thus by 2003, Angkor’s importance could be seen as embedded in the contribution cultural heritage tourism had made towards Cambodia’s sustainable development: “Angkor, symbol of the great Khmer civilisation and crowning jewel of mankind’s world heritage, is, thanks to tourism and the revenue generated by it, the hope for balanced, sustainable development” (Cambodia: ICC November 2003). Through tourism, Angkor has been understood as an economic resource that will assist in fighting poverty, and lead towards the development and reconstruction of Cambodia, and Siem Reap. There was also discussion of the capacity building and employment benefits that come from international involvement in the site. However, it is worth noting that despite evidence of a transition in values towards an emphasis on the international significance of Angkor (as a source of revenue), the national
symbolic significance of Angkor was still dominant, thus suggesting the Cambodian desire to assert ownership over the site remained strong, and necessary.

Analysis of the importance and role of Angkor as perceived through the Cambodian ICC contributions suggested that the heritage area is seen as playing a pivotal role in the development of post-conflict Cambodia (see Figure 4-16). In addition to an economic role, Angkor also has a role in the social redevelopment of the country, as a national symbol. The Cambodian contributions emphasise the cultural linkages that Cambodian’s have to Angkor. As Angkor is a cultural symbol of Cambodia tied to national identity, they argue that these aspects should not be ignored in the management of the site. Foreign visitors should have “the unique cultural experience of visiting the Angkor monuments and the archaeological park” (Cambodia: ICC October 1993), not just a historical one. There appears to be an awareness that Angkor cannot be disconnected from the surrounding development and population, or its management will fail. It has been acknowledged that Zone 2 of the ZEMP is a source of conflict (Candelaria 2005; Hughes 2008). One reason perhaps being that the justification for its boundaries has not been adequately conveyed to the local population. Or it may be that the proposed ZEMP zones of protection, which were designed to keep the modern population under control and the landscape divided (or scaled) to keep modern and traditional separated, do not reflect the Cambodian view of Angkor.

The Cambodian contributions to the ICC emphasise the Cambodian right to utilise the site as an economic resource, highlighting a functional relationship between Angkor and its surrounding area. The descriptions and definitions of Angkor found within the Cambodian ICC contributions (see Section 4.2.2), implied a landscape (or Angkor Park) dominated by monuments burdened with both symbolic and economic value. The international community also focused on the monuments (particularly within the Angkor Park) dislocating them from the modern population, whereas the Cambodian government saw Angkor through a larger lens, observing more connections between the structures, the landscape and the contemporary population. A spatial focus on the Angkor Park, by the national government, reflects a focus on the income from tourists and the “touristscape” (Edensor 2007:205) that is important economically. Thus it is that Angkor has been scaled as the monumental space that is visible economically. To put it in metaphorical terms,
when one is looking across the county at Angkor from the government buildings in Phnom Penh, distance makes it hard to see the detail. It is the large structures, such as Angkor Wat, Phnom Bakheng, Banteay Srei, that are visible above the forests and floodplain (Figure 4-17). In a similar way, it is these monuments dotted across the landscape that the Cambodian government has focused their attention on. This means that the scale of value, or ‘Angkor’, from the position of the Cambodian ICC contributors, has become a scale of monuments, elevated above, and supporting, a landscape and its social and economic development.

**Figure 4-17.** Angkor Wat, rises above the forests and floodplains of the Siem Reap - Angkor region to dominate the skyline.

### 4.3.3 APSARA Staff

From the descriptions and definitions of Angkor discussed in section 4.2.3, we are aware that APSARA staff, who are responsible for day-to-day management of Angkor, have an image of the site which appears to differ from the Cambodian government’s. The spatial limitations of Angkor, as understood by APSARA staff, were defined as an integrated space including monuments, forests and water. As was concluded in the previous section (section 4.3.2), the Cambodian government appeared to possess a ‘monumental’ understanding of Angkor, highlighting the grandiose and emphasising Angkor’s value as a national symbol and saviour of the national economy. It was proposed in the preceding section that this
understanding was partially the result of distance: that by being physically removed from the site on a day-to-day basis, the intricacies of Angkor’s social value are lost. If this is true, then it could be assumed that many APSARA staff, whose work and life (as residents of Siem Reap) has been entangled in Angkor, would possess an understanding of the value of Angkor that moves beyond nationalistic claims that focus on monumental values. To explore how ASPARA staff perceived the value of Angkor, interviewees were asked two key questions: (1) “why is Angkor important?” and (2) “how do you use Angkor?” If interviewees had simply been asked what is the value of Angkor, responses would probably have been restricted to the formal understandings of the “intrinsic values” of the site. By answering a variety of questions, responses could be analysed to determine how the value of the heritage area was constructed for social, economic, or political purposes, even if unintentionally.

When asked why Angkor is important, the most common initial response from APSARA staff interviewed was linked to the site’s world heritage inscription (Error! Reference source not found.). However, there was often a deeper layer of meaning behind such responses. “...because when the world they know Angkor, they can help Cambodia. Have finance, have tourism they know Angkor, they have technology to help Angkor and have more technology if, I know the world they know the necessary Angkor Wat.” (APSARA Interviewee 10) The international significance of Angkor was not only related to its cultural or social value for the global population, but also to its economic importance as a tourist attraction. Many of the APSARA respondents highlighted the economic importance of Angkor for the local community and Cambodia, suggesting there was no ‘real’ World Heritage value, as such understandings are really concerned with a national economic value. “Angkor is important for Cambodian because we have Angkor Wat and the tourists come to see, and the local people get income, get more money when the people come to visit Angkor. It’s good for us” (APSARA Interviewee 12).
Moving beyond the focus on the international audience and the money such an audience provides, APSARA staff also acknowledged the symbolic role of Angkor, and its linkage with the national psyche. The social value for Cambodia was expressed in four ways (other than the economic benefits of tourism). Angkor was described as Cambodian heritage, as an inheritance from ancestors, as a national symbol, and as the heart and soul of Cambodia. “you know, if we talk about the presentation of Cambodia, we check the image of Angkor, Angkor Wat, on our flag, so it presents our country and also if we talk about the economic, it’s one of the pole of the tourist for Cambodia... so it’s in the centre, the symbol of the Khmer, the country and also the power pole of the economy...” (APSARA Interviewee 13).

Responses such as this emphasised the cultural connections felt by the Cambodian people for Angkor, demonstrating a sense of ownership over Angkor that was similarly expressed within the Cambodian contributions to the ICC. Indeed the visible repetitiveness of Cambodian claims of ownership could raise questions about whether the atmosphere and international involvement has left Cambodians feeling empowered or whether they are fighting to regain control.

The expectation that APSARA staff would perhaps perceive some more intimate connections did not eventuate. Religious significance and the importance of the site to the local community were only mentioned by one person: “I heard the Khmer, the local people
living in Siem Reap when they travel across Angkor Wat they take the cap, the hat off and take the shoe off, and when they pass they put them back on” (APSARA Interviewee 2). This response suggests that a more intimate connection and relationship with Angkor is possible, but the use of the phrase “local people living in Siem Reap” strongly suggests that this spiritual connection is not felt by the country as a whole, and not necessarily by the APSARA staff. Given that almost all the APSARA staff interviewed were not originally from Siem Reap, this may support such a disconnection.

As a final step, interviewees were also asked to rank which of the local, national, or global significance they considered most important (Figure 4-18). These results revealed that in the minds (or voices) of APSARA staff, Angkor’s global value had to be ensured above all others. APSARA staff considered the global significance (or world heritage value) most important because if Angkor is a World Heritage site, then tourists will come, and from their economic input, the national and local values of Angkor can be supported. Whilst no APSARA respondent elevated the local significance, a small number considered Angkor’s national significance as most important. This could be linked to the comments concerning Cambodian identity and Cambodian ownership of the site, discussed above. Thus the importance of Angkor is in ensuring the economic development of Cambodia. Its role as a national symbol serves to unite the population in a post-conflict environment. In a country recovering from social, economic and cultural upheaval, Angkor provides a link to the past, and a path to the future.
Until now discussions of the value as a means of defining ‘Angkor’, have disregarded attitudes towards contemporary use of the heritage area. However, the modern functionality of the site is important in considering the construction of cultural boundaries of behaviour and significance (Pound 2002). With little discussion of contemporary use by non-tourists within the ICC documents (by either Cambodian or foreign contributors), it may appear that there is little understanding of the role of Angkor as a local space or that it is not considered an important concern for the ICC. APSARA staff, when questioned about Angkor’s importance, appeared to be very focused on their professional personas, and disconnected from the associations that potentially form when living in close proximity to a heritage site. It was through exploration of how APSARA staff utilise Angkor for personal reasons, that more intimate connections with, or values of, Angkor were revealed.
Most APSARA staff interviewed had daily vocational contact with the Angkor Park, and thus it could be expected that they seek to avoid their ‘workspace’ during weekends and after hours. However, all of the APSARA interviewees visited Angkor socially on a weekly basis. Their visits usually occurred on the weekends, as their working hours often prevented recreational use of Angkor during the week. Some even commented that when they do make it to Angkor in the evening, they are restricted in the use of the space, as the monument spaces are shut to visitors at dusk. “I want to go inside but... it’s evening, so at evening they stop us [going] into Angkor so we can...sit in front of Angkor” (APSARA Interviewee 10).

APSARA staff described Angkor as a place where one could relax under the trees with friends and eat in the quiet green space (Figure 4-19). “I go around the road and around Bayon temple or something...sometimes by myself; sometimes I go with my friends... Sometime I go, I buy something and I sit on my moto, not on the wall, and eat and look at Angkor or some tributary, at the scenery” (APSARA Interviewee 4). Their responses highlighted a hereto undiscovered side of Angkor - its role as a social space. No longer is Angkor simply a space of monuments, but there also appears to be a social connection to the surrounding landscape - if only the trees along the edges of the moats. In addition to describing their own use of Angkor, APSARA interviewees also described in detail the use of Angkor by the local population. Their descriptions of Siem Reap residents picnicking, using Angkor’s grasslands as sporting arenas, or simply for people-watching, highlighted the increasing role that Angkor is playing as the main public space in the region. It is not necessarily the monuments that are drawing local people to Angkor, but rather development in Siem Reap town, and the decline of green communal space, is forcing local residents to use Angkor for such purposes. Some APSARA staff interviewed were not necessarily happy about such uses, believing contemporary activities inappropriate for the perceived traditional, spiritual atmosphere of Angkor: “that they disturb with the noise or something, the sacred atmosphere of the place” (APSARA Interviewee 1).
Figure 4-19. In the evenings, the Cambodian population of the Angkor-Siem Reap region gather on straw mats beside the moat of Angkor Wat.

Through the analysis of the use of Angkor by APSARA staff, a more detailed image emerges of the value of Angkor as a social space for the local community. It was anticipated at the start of this section that APSARA staff would have a view of Angkor that was less attached to the monuments than that which the ICC documents conveyed, as their spatial understanding of ‘Angkor’ (Section 4.2.3) seemed to suggest a perception that more closely entangled the structures and their environment (landscape view). However, responses by APSARA staff to questions regarding Angkor’s value aligned closely with the foreign and Cambodian contributions to the ICC, emphasising the economic and symbolic value of Angkor for the nation. Like the government, APSARA staff stressed the ‘monument-al’ values, with little interest in the local significance of Angkor. However, APSARA staff possessed a spatial, and aesthetic, perception of Angkor as a (cultural) landscape incorporating more than the temples. It would appear that this idea could have been driven not only by the influence of foreign teams, but also by their own non-vocational use of Angkor.

Not only did APSARA staff work across a wide ‘Angkor space’, but many also mentioned enjoying driving to and visiting temples across the Angkor Park. Their vocational knowledge
means that they have developed a more complex image of the park. Working at APSARA means that, spatially, they are aware of more than Angkor Wat, and socially, as Siem Reap residents they don’t view Angkor as just a monumental tourism space: “when I say Angkor Wat, I mean all – whole – area” (APSARA Interviewee 4). Thus the ‘Angkor’ scaled, or defined, by APSARA staff is one that most closely integrates the economic, the cultural, and to a lesser extent the social aspects of the site, reflecting both their spatial understanding of ‘Angkor’ as a landscape, and the discourse surrounding cultural landscapes (see Section 2.5). If heritage is the contemporary use of the past (Lowenthal 1985; Harvey 2001; Moran 2004; Loulanski 2006), then it would be acceptable to understand the social uses of Angkor as a heritage value that also needs protection.

4.3.4 Local community

International and Cambodian heritage professionals (and governments) have focused on the role Angkor plays for the country as a whole, underplaying the connections between Angkor and the local Siem Reap community. In seeking to understand ‘Angkor’ from the perspective of those living in proximity to the heritage area, this section explores the value of Angkor for the local community. As with the APSARA interviews, local respondents were questioned about why they saw Angkor as important, and how they utilised Angkor, thus exploring the role it played in their daily lives.

Responses from the local community that related to their perception of the importance of Angkor were analysed in two ways. Firstly, the reasons why Angkor was seen as important were determined with no interviewee saying Angkor wasn’t important to them. Responses were grouped for analysis within broad categories: global, regional, national, local, and other. Secondly, it was determined for each interviewee whether their first reference was to importance at the global, national, or local scale, as an indication of which idea was predominant. Based on these interviews, it was apparent that, like the Cambodian government and APSARA, nearly two-thirds of the local community interviewees felt Angkor was important to their national identity (Table 4-4). When explaining the national significance of Angkor, the local interviewees focused on the site being an inheritance from ancestors, a national symbol, and the heart and soul of Cambodia. The responses projected both a sense of longevity and a sense of ongoing attachment. In recognising of Angkor’s
national significance, the local community interviewees portrayed a strong sense that their Cambodian identity was tied to Angkor. This corresponded with the emphasis found within the ICC documents, where the government highlighted Cambodian ownership of the site, recognising its role in economic rebuilding, as well as in social reconstruction and reunification. “Angkor Wat is important because [it is a] cultural legacy from many centuries. It is the soul of Cambodian people” (Local Community Interviewee 35). Another quarter of the local community interviewees mentioned the economic importance of Angkor. This was mostly through recognition of the value of cultural heritage tourism. For many of these respondents, Angkor and tourism have become synonymous. “[Angkor is important] because we can make more tourists and then can Cambodia make more money” (Local Community Interviewee 57).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCALE OF VALUE</th>
<th>IMPORTANCE</th>
<th>Siem Reap Community (61 interviewees)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LOCAL</td>
<td>Siem Reap Heritage</td>
<td>8.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>3.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Looks Beautiful And Fresh</td>
<td>1.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Economic</td>
<td>27.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>41.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NATIONAL</td>
<td>Cambodian Heritage</td>
<td>23.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inheritance From Ancestors</td>
<td>23.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Heart And/Or Soul Of Cambodia</td>
<td>11.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>National Symbol</td>
<td>3.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>60.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WORLD</td>
<td>World Heritage</td>
<td>11.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Famous</td>
<td>3.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>14.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTHER</td>
<td>Unique</td>
<td>6.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTHER</td>
<td>Interesting</td>
<td>3.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTHER</td>
<td>Inscriptions</td>
<td>1.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>11.50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4-4. Local community perceptions of the importance of Angkor were collected throughout the interviews, with many interviewees giving more than one response. Most interviewees felt Angkor was important for their national identity and as an economic resource for the town of Siem Reap.

Unlike the government, or APSARA, the local community interviewees demonstrated a strong personal connection with Angkor. The economic importance of Angkor, mentioned by a third of interviewees, related to their own livelihood or that of Siem Reap, and not
necessarily the national interest. Many interviewees from the local community discussed the importance of foreign visitors for their own businesses with few acknowledging the benefits for Cambodia beyond Siem Reap. For almost all the interviewees, their economic livelihood was dependent (directly or indirectly) on the tourists who visited Angkor. From drivers, guides, and guards who worked at the site, to restaurant workers, bus ticket sellers, and stall holders, each was a link in the ‘commodity chain’ (Chang 1997) of cultural heritage tourism. These personal linkages were also demonstrated through social values, with local interviewees feeling that Angkor was important because their ancestors had built the structures. “Angkor Wat belongs to the grandparents and they build for the people” (Local Community Interviewee 57). One interviewee even expressed a belief that Angkor belonged to Siem Reap - as a way of emphasising how much more important the site was for the region than for the rest of Cambodia.

Other sociological and anthropological research at Angkor has focused on the ongoing spiritual significance of the Angkor site for the local population (for example: Miura 2005). Such material has highlighted various cultural practices that utilise specific parts of the Angkor Park and landscape, usually emphasising the longevity of such practices (Winter 2005; Winter 2008). When the language used in the interviews was examined, comparing the use of ‘temple’ and ‘monument’ in the same manner as within the ICC documents, the word ‘temple’ was overwhelmingly dominant, with no usage of ‘monument’ by the local interviewees. Similarly, this can be observed by any visitor to Angkor or Siem Reap, who will hear the continuous catch cry of the tuk tuk drivers, “you want to see temple?” : ‘monument’ is not a part of the everyday language of heritage tourism at Angkor. When conducting the interviews, the phrase ‘the temples’ became synonymous with Angkor. Some of the more conversational interviewees were queried about the difference between the religious structures of the Angkor Park, and those of Siem Reap town. They informed the researcher that ‘temples’ referred to the structures at Angkor, whereas those in Siem Reap were Wats (Buddhist places of worship) and were referred to as such. One of the APSARA interviewees, in discussing their use of the temples, explained the difference: “The temples are not for Buddhist, they are Brahmanist. The Wats are Buddhist” (APSARA Interviewee 3). The age of the temples was another factor in several interviewees’ use of the language, referring to the Siem Reap-based sites as “modern Wats” (Local community Interviewee 8). Despite these differences, there was a spiritual connection with the site for
some of the local community interviewees. “In my free time, I go to the Angkor Temples where there is a very magic stupor. So if I have any troubles I go to that area. I do pray there, but mostly go to just visit.” (Local community Interviewee 7) There are also two ‘modern’ Wats within the grounds of Angkor Wat. The monks of these monasteries are responsible for leading contemporary Buddhist ceremonies that are held within the grounds of the temple. It is also possible to observe at any time Cambodian’s praying at the foot of various statues of deities across the temples of Angkor, indicating that the temples have been adapted for contemporary religious purposes (Figure 4-20).
Throughout the temples of the Angkor complex it is possible to see many active shrines, often with older members of the community looking after them. Khmer visitors who enter the temples will often stop for a moment of reflection. The importance of Angkor for the local community interviewees was strongly connected with their identity and their economic viability. In this sense, Angkor became a metaphor, or symbol, for being Cambodian and for surviving in Cambodia: “Angkor Wat is the best place because it represents Cambodian culture and many tourists come to visit” (Local community Interviewee 49). The local community had a spatial image of ‘Angkor’ that was dominated by Angkor Wat (section 4.2.4). This temple is the one with which visitors (foreign and Cambodian) can most readily interact, having been repaired and maintained so that one can safely walk, climb (though increasing numbers of visitors make this less safe), and explore the grounds of the structure, in a way that the other temples have not quite achieved (Figure 4-21). There is signage describing stories told in the bas reliefs on the walls. Angkor Wat is the number one site on the ‘to do list’ of guide books for Cambodia (Palmer and Martin 2005). After lunch, most unengaged tuk tuk and moto drivers will plough the streets of Siem Reap for business, asking any passing foreigner if they would like to see sunset at Angkor Wat that day. The Cambodian descriptions of Angkor Wat found within the interviews emphasised its beauty, its fame, and its uniqueness: “people skip some temples, but everybody goes to Angkor Wat... Because it is old heritage, it’s famous in the world, and it is very special heritage. In it is one of the seven wonders. On the walls there is the history of religion and of Cambodia” (Local community interviewee 5). The connections with Angkor are often just about being there, and being a part of it rather than actually actively utilising the temple space. The local community view Angkor as an integral part of their personal lives and identity: “Angkor is a Cambodian temple, when born we see it and say ‘aaaha Angkor Wat’” (Local Community Interviewee 55).
In analysing the local community understandings of the value of Angkor and their definition of ‘Angkor’, there was a strong focus on the economic benefits arising from tourism. It has previously been noted that it appears the international (Section 4.3.1), national (Section 4.3.2), and APSARA (Section 4.3.3) visions of Angkor focus on tourist space and have little, or no, recognition of Angkor as local space. The local focus on tourism also suggests that they do recognise Angkor as tourist space, which would, in turn, see ‘Angkor’ defined as containing the spaces which tourists are interested in. Many respondents gave long lists of temples that they felt that tourists visited, such as: “Tourists visit the Koulen Mountains, Banteay Srei and the Angkor Complex. In the rainy season, they prefer to visit the Tonle Sap. In the dry season, they go to the Baray. I still want to visit those places” (Local Community Interviewee 22). Thus from the ‘gaze’ (Urry 1990; Edensor 2007) of the local community there is recognition that the Angkor of tourists (i.e. the Angkor Park) is perhaps larger than the Angkor of the local community (i.e. Angkor Wat). This idea will be explored in the remainder of this chapter when examining the use of ‘Angkor’ by the local population.

To determine how the local community use the Angkor site, interviewees were asked why they visited, how often visited, what activities they did when there, and, more specifically,
whether they would go inside or only to the outside of temple spaces. The first observation evident from the responses to these questions was that interviewees were aware that Cambodians and foreigners have very different spatial and temporal usage patterns for the Angkor complex. “Some Cambodian go inside [Angkor Wat] but mostly for foreigner go inside, but this is not bad. If we go inside it’s better to know about the heritage, but not enough time to go inside Angkor Wat as it takes maybe one day. To know Khmer history have to spend many days in each temple” (Local Community Interviewee 19). From this quote, and others like it, several subsequent observations can also be made. Local interviewees did not have a sense that they had to go inside Angkor Wat to appreciate it (Figure 4-22). Nor, on the other hand, did they mind others (foreigners) doing this, and no respondent complained of the numbers of visitors (unsurprising given the economic dependence on tourism). Finally, there is a sense that the values of Angkor Wat are not intrinsic, but are historical facts and artistic details that visitors need to learn, or know, to appreciate the temples. Further research would be required to confirm how widespread such a feeling is, but if it were true it could be a worrying implication of the heritage rhetoric that seeks ‘to educate’ (section 2.4.1.2), whereby the local population perceive value as something that has to be learned rather than as something anyone can perceive. It could also be a side effect of the requirement by tourism and heritage authorities at Angkor that guides should have studied and passed exams on the values and history of the site (Durand 2002). This conveys to the ordinary person that the value of the temples (the elements that draw the tourists in), is something that lies in books, not people.
Figure 4-22. To determine how local community interviewees’ utilised the Angkor site, they were asked if they went mostly inside or outside of temple spaces (internal). The results compared those who reside inside of the Angkor Park with those who live outside. The analysis revealed that those who live inside the park were more likely to use the inside and outside of the temples, whereas those who live outside the Park often remained on the outside of the monuments when visiting.

Whilst the local community may feel restricted in visiting the insides of temples, one only needs to journey though the Angkor Park, or travel past Angkor Wat, at dusk to observe the contemporary population utilising Angkor in a variety of ways. The purpose, regularity, and details of this use provides information about the role of Angkor in the lives of the Local community. The occupations of local interviewees required different exposure to Angkor. Thus interest in use of Angkor was focused on free-time - when people choose what to do and where to go. There were a variety of responses to questions concerning frequency of use, some of which were easy to quantify, whilst others were more abstract temporal descriptions. It was clear that there were two distinct groups of people: those who visit Angkor frequently, and those who rarely visit (Figure 4-23). Those in the first group conveyed to the interviewer the sense that they visited as often as possible, be it daily, weekly or in any free time: “I go to visit often, many times, every weekend. When I’m there I
eat at Angkor Wat, chicken and food. Angkor Wat in late afternoon, at sunset, is cold and fresh air” (Local Community Interviewee 57). Those in the second group who visited less frequently were negative about their inability to get to the site, whether due to age or work responsibilities. A number of older respondents felt the site was not accessible for them anymore.

![Graph](image)

**Figure 4.23.** Interviewees from APSARA and the local community were asked about their frequency of visitation to Angkor. Most visited either very frequently (once a week or more), or did not visit at all.

The connection between infrequency of visitation and lack of time suggested that the type of employment might be a cause: “Before I used to go often, but since I started work I haven’t. There is not time, I have no days off” (Local Community Interviewee 1). Due to the wide variety of jobs held by respondents, this could not be judged conclusively. Instead, what was revealed was that those who felt that they had the least time to get to Angkor were predominantly those living in Siem Reap town that had migrated from rural areas in other provinces. These people tended to be single employees or worked menial jobs with long hours. Thus whilst moving to Siem Reap may give a person greater ease of access to the site, jobs in Siem Reap did not necessarily cater for this. One young interviewee, who
had moved to Siem Reap to help her brother a year earlier, spent all her time at their store (mostly on her own). She had not been to Angkor, but had a strong desire to go: “I haven’t been to Angkor, but want to go. I feel I want to go” (Local Community Interviewee 16).

Those interviewees who visited Angkor more frequently said that they did so because going there made them, “feel happy and fresh” (Local Community Interviewee 35). Others expressed a desire for the drop in temperature that the Angkor Park offered. One interviewee in describing Angkor as their favourite place stated: “Angkor is an ancient temple. Very cool place because of many trees.” (Local Community Interviewee 60) A less eloquent, but perhaps an underlying motivation for all visitors was: “it’s close” (Local Community Interviewee 12). The role of Angkor as a social space was highlighted by the many respondents who discussed how going to Angkor is about eating and watching what is happening. “I take my family, buy food, and enjoy sunset in front of Angkor Wat” (Local Community Interviewee 60). They will gather with family or friends in the evening on the banks of the Angkor Wat moat. These attitudes reflect APSARA staff observations that the loss of public space in Siem Reap town is increasingly forcing the townspeople to seek the nearest remaining communal space: within the Angkor Park.

Over the course of the fieldwork (2003-2007), the social use of Angkor appeared to increase, and a supporting economy evolved. In 2003 it was difficult to find food stalls at dusk at Angkor, whereas by 2007 there were stalls that open from lunchtime for the purpose of serving locals coming to Angkor Wat. Several of the interviewees within the park operated such stalls. They were predominantly new arrivals to Siem Reap, and their business was almost solely local. Despite an ever increasing market, they did not feel their livelihood was secure but instead they lived and worked with the threat of closure by the police, APSARA or the government for illegal occupation in the Angkor Park. However, these stalls appeared to have cemented themselves into the mainstream economy of the Angkor Park, with field observation indicating strong businesses servicing not only the local population, but also increasingly foreign visitors.
Whilst some interviewees talk about going into temples as an activity that they did undertake at Angkor, it was not seen as a regular activity. For many of the interviewed local community members, being at Angkor was the important thing. It was a recreational activity, not about making money or understanding particular cultural activities. Indeed, what is more notable about their visitation habits was the unimportance of going into a temple. “I don’t go inside anymore, because there are too many tourists. I have been inside lots of times, so I can wait.” (Local Community Interviewee 5) There appeared to be two modes of behaviours behind this. The first was that the spiritual side of Angkor appears to be concentrated around special festivals or important prayers (Winter 2004), with everyday religious activity reportedly undertaken at the modern Wats in Siem Reap town (Takei 1998). This contrasts with a foreign tourist image of Angkor, where the decorated statues and incense sellers create an image of the Angkor temples as a space of praying or religion (Winter 2008). Tourists can be observed ‘stalking’ monks to capture a religious aspect of Angkor, even though many monks are visitors themselves. The distribution of such photos, and the stories that tourists tell of their experiences, help to perpetuate the image of Angkor as a primarily religious space. Another behaviour possibly influencing the apparent lack of use of internal temple space by Siem Reap residents was that most interviewees worked during hours when the temples were open to the public. There were a variety of reasons half of the respondents said that they only went to the outside of Angkor. The dominant one being that they could only visit after work (after dusk), when the temples are shut to visitors. “I never go inside. I go alone at in the evening at 5pm. I am too busy in the daytime and during the day is hot” (Local Community Interviewee 18). This was a similar experience to that of APSARA staff interviewed (check). Other local interviewees felt they were restricted from accessing the space by APSARA staff, or thought they needed to pay (which is incorrect). The inaccessibility of the structures to the local community was raised by Miura (2005) in her analysis of the relationships between the local community and APSARA staff. Despite actions to ensure that the local community was free to access the site and temples, it appears that there is still a problem, and it may now be an indirect consequence of controlling tourist flow and restricting access in the evening and at night.

The values and usage of Angkor discussed by local interviewees suggested that there are two methods to scale the valuable spaces and define ‘Angkor’. The first is an ‘economic scale of value’. This is the area utilised by tourists (and the Cambodian understanding of
spaces tourists use). It includes Angkor Park, Rolous, and for some Phnom Kulen in the north. This scale correlates with the Cambodian government’s view of Angkor. For the local community this ‘Angkor’ is their livelihood and the reason they are there. “Angkor Wat is important because it attracts tourists, so I can earn money.” (Local Community Interviewee 10) As the economic scale of value essentially abstracts and represents space which belongs to tourists, one must wonder how many changes, management policies and restrictions the local population will accept in the name of tourism. The second scale that defines ‘Angkor’ is a ‘social scale of value’, which is physically represented (and limited) to Angkor Wat. This ‘Angkor’ is the community’s (and Cambodia’s) heart and soul. It draws Cambodian’s together, not just Siem Reap residents, but also those from other provinces. Angkor Wat is the symbol of the nation and is socially viewed as a legacy from past generations. What emerges as different for the local community, compared to the results of the analysis of APSARA interviews or Cambodian government ICC documentation, is that they express their connections and understandings of Angkor with a personal (and individualised) connection. The local community value Angkor as part of their daily (ongoing) lives, not as a symbol of their (concluded) past. Their framings of Angkor reflect the dual role it plays in their lives.

4.4 ‘Angkor’ Framed

This chapter set out to explore how ‘Angkor’ is defined through the construction of a scale of value by various stakeholders for economic, political and/or social purposes. It addressed perceptions of the physical (or spatial) characteristics of ‘Angkor’, revealing that ‘Angkor’ is framed through vastly different lenses (Figure 4-24). It is viewed as a single monument, a 401km² parkland, and as an ever-expanding, limit-less landscape. Most significantly, it is frequently spoken of in a spatially ambiguous manner, raising potential issues with the meanings behind the word. The chapter then considered the different ways that ‘Angkor’ is defined through the values that are placed on it. The concept of heritage revolves around value. Western theoretical and practical understandings of heritage in the modern world can be seen as a dichotomy between the valued and valueless: between heritage and non-heritage (Boniface 2000). This dichotomy is applied by heritage practitioners, and the wider population, to both the tangible (space and objects), and the intangible (cultural behaviours and practices, and meanings). It is increasingly recognised within post-positivist heritage
discourse that individual experiences will influence perceptions of value (see Section 2.4.1.1). As individuals, and as cultural groups, we define the boundaries of valuable space through perceptions of acceptable and authentic behaviours, attitudes, and aesthetics (Byrne, Brayshaw et al. 2003). Thus it is argued here that we similarly delineate, or scale, cultural space through the construction of boundaries involving tangible and intangible attributes of place.

Figure 4-24. A comparison of perceptions by the four stakeholder groups revealed that there were three distinct versions of the spatial limits of valued (heritage) space. The most popular being the economic scale of value - centred on the tourist spaces in the Angkor Park. The second strongest perception was the social scale, Angkor Wat. Finally, there was a scientific scale of value, representing the landscape vision of Angkor.

The ways in which the international contributors to Angkor’s management have perceived Angkor has changed since 1993. In particular, their framing of Angkor has expanded spatially and moved out from the Angkor Park to incorporate the surrounding landscape. This would appear superficially to reflect the wider intellectual shift from protecting lone heritage objects to conserving heritage places and ultimately integrated cultural
landscapes. At Angkor this movement has been facilitated by recent research (Evans, Pottier et al. 2007) that has expanded the knowledge of the potential material components of the heritage landscape. However, analysis of perceptions and discussion of Angkor’s importance and role suggests instead that economic motivations are potentially leading not to an integration of heritage with the modern lives and landscape, but towards a heritage that is disconnected from contemporary non-heritage. Recognition of the (economic) value of tourism means that there is a focus on the tourist experience. The growing consideration of an Angkor landscape by heritage professionals is concerned with defining the behaviours and practices, or the intangible attributes that contribute to the tourist experience. For example, the cultivation of traditional handicrafts in the villages within the Angkor Park is about expanding the ‘authentic’ (see section 2.4.1.3) landscape of heritage (Endo 2002). The divide between heritage and non-heritage is reinforced by the lack of discussion about the contemporary (‘non-traditional’) uses of Angkor (apart from tourism) within the ICC documents. There is minimal discussion within the ICC documentation of ensuring that the local community’s experiences and values of Angkor remain intact or enhanced. Therefore, the definition of the scale of value is driven by the perception of what constitutes heritage and acceptable ‘heritage’ (or traditional) behaviour.

In a similar way, ‘Angkor’ is framed in the Cambodian contributions to the ICC by an economic agenda, as well as a political agenda. A dominant message to emerge from these contributions is that Angkor belongs to Cambodia, and thus it should be framed with nationalistic (not global or local) purposes in mind. The understanding of Angkor’s value portrayed by the Cambodian government (section 4.3.2) is one which burdens Angkor with reconstructing and maintaining both the national economy and the national identity. The predominant understanding of Angkor within the Cambodian contributions to the ICC documents is an ‘Angkor’ delineated (scaled) as the Angkor Park. The strength of this conceptualisation is tied to the role Angkor plays in the reconstruction of the post-conflict economy. Tourists use the Angkor Park, so that is ‘Angkor’. In its role as a pillar of the national identity, the large monuments within the Angkor Park provide a tangible symbol of Cambodia. The international gaze, facilitated by the World Heritage inscription, simply affirms the significance of the monuments, focusing on the large structures that are easily pictured and appreciated for their grandeur, rather than their complexity. For the Cambodian government, Angkor is constructed at a ‘monumental’ (or monument
embedded) scale. It consists of a series of monuments spread across the area of the Angkor Park.

It was anticipated that APSARA staff, as the day-to-day managers of the World Heritage area, would move beyond nationalistic understandings and recognise the more intimate connections between Angkor and the surrounding population and environment. From their interviews, it became apparent that many of the APSARA staff interviewed, as residents and as heritage professionals, had complex images of ‘Angkor’, where science defined the scale of value. Their values for the site, initially, appear to replicate those of the government and foreign experts, recognising the contribution that Angkor makes to the national economy and identity. They recognised the symbolic value that the monuments play, and for this reason their interpretation of ‘Angkor’ was at times tied to the structures with the Angkor Park. However, with their responsibilities in managing a variety of environments and their interactions with foreign scientists, ‘Angkor’ did not start and end at the ticket checkpoints that mark the entrances to the core historical zone, but was an expanding cultural landscape. Most importantly, as residents of Siem Reap, who also have a non-vocational relationship with Angkor, it was not possible for them to truly disconnect and abstract Angkor from its local setting. Many APSARA staff interviewed utilise Angkor in much the same way as other residents of Siem Reap do, recognising the value of Angkor as a social space. Their mental map (Lynch 1960) of Angkor expands beyond the monuments, and increasingly beyond the boundaries of the Angkor Park. ASPARA staff interviewed often had an area-based view of Angkor that was not only a result of their personal awareness of the way that Angkor is entangled in their everyday lives, but also due to their educated and professional knowledge that Angkor extends beyond Angkor Wat and the Angkor Park. Thus the scale of value for APSARA staff is ever-expanding, but unlike those presenting at the ICC, they understand Angkor in terms of an area, rather than just monument structures connected by a spatial boundary.

The scale of value defined by social behaviour is one that is most clearly understood and identifiable within the local community. This group demonstrates, most effectively the way that particular economic, social, or political agendas construct a cultural scale. The local community constructs a scale of value that is spatially (and tangibly) represented by Angkor
Wat. This space is used as public space, where they gather as often as possible. It is not connected to traditional heritage values, nor is the social scale of value separated from the contemporary landscape; instead it is a key part of it, particularly as other green spaces disappear. The local community have also defined (or at least recognised the construction of) a scale of value defined economically. This is the ‘Angkor’ that foreign tourists operate within and an important source of local income. When an economic agenda constructs Angkor, it is spatially defined by the movement of tourists. For the local population, this is seen as the Angkor complex, as well as the spatially removed Banteay Srei, and Roluos. Thus as with the other Cambodian stakeholders analysed, identity and money drive the local construction of ‘Angkor’. Neither the economic nor the social is elevated above the other; rather they are appreciated and connected in different ways. At Angkor, an economic definition of the scale of value is based on a relationship of dependency (based on the importance for livelihoods), whereas constructing a scale of value around its social function concerns a sense of ownership (pride and belonging).

The multiple constructions of a scale of value at Angkor illustrate the different linkages that cultural heritage stakeholders recognise between identity and economy. Whilst the official definition of Angkor (by Royal decree and UNESCO’s endorsement of the World Heritage inscription) is the monuments of the Angkor Park, it is now clear that for many this is an inadequate representation and understanding. These different interpretations have implications for how the relationship between Angkor and its surrounding region is managed. For example, if action is undertaken to enhance the economic values of Angkor, and it impacts on connections involving the social values of Angkor, surely conflict will arise as the local population ask: what’s in it for us?