

## **CHAPTER 5    ANGKOR IN-SITU**

### **5.1 Introduction**

The creation and management of successful heritage places requires facilitating interpretation through the maintenance of an appropriate physical and psychological environment and atmosphere (Evans 2002; Chermayeff 2005). The process of interpretation (see Section 2.4.2) is the manner in which heritage objects and locations are experienced, represented and utilised (Pocock 2002). It is the process by which sites and objects are spatially, temporally, and socially contextualised by an audience to give them meaning (Jamieson 2001). The influence of a post-positivist dialogue means that it is now recognised by heritage professionals that interpretation of cultural heritage is an individualised process (Fowler 1992). Direct and indirect experiences and memories influence our perception and understanding of heritage places, including both conscious and unconscious decisions of what is, and what is not, classified as heritage (Moscardo 1996; Rose 2002).

‘Angkor’ carries multiple meanings, and it has several physical interpretations. It can be conceptualised as a single temple; as a complex of structures, or; as a region or landscape. ‘Angkor’ similarly fulfils various roles as an economic pillar of post-conflict Cambodia; as a symbol of the past and the future for the population to focus on whilst reconstructing their national culture and national pride; as a social space to draw the contemporary community together; and as a link to humanity’s history. Various local, national and international stakeholders have an image that is conjured up by the word ‘Angkor’. Our subjective attachments to heritage create and manipulate it for social, political and economic purposes (Ennen 2000; Harvey 2003). Within this thesis, the foundation for critiquing the scaling of heritage is an investigation into the manipulation of the spatial boundaries and limits which define heritage management practices.

A strong linkage between the physical characteristics of ‘Angkor’ and the values attached to it by stakeholders was demonstrated in the previous chapter. The definition of Angkor as Angkor Wat was linked to its symbolic importance as the heart and soul of Siem Reap and

Cambodia, whereas its economic significance was spatially represented by the Angkor Park. It will be argued in this chapter that when spatially, temporally and socially contextualising spaces with heritage value, stakeholders will define and construct a 'scale of interpretation'. To facilitate and support the understanding of heritage values and meanings, stakeholders define the geographical features, people and behaviours that support their perception of Angkor. In particular, it is asserted within this chapter that as the Angkor cultural landscape is a tool for interpreting the heritage structures and their relationship with the surrounding people and land, its characteristics will likely be more visible within the spaces of interpretation. Through the inclusion and exclusion of certain land uses and environments, stakeholders define a spatial area whose purpose is to facilitate the creation and interpretation of Angkor's heritage values. A key assumption behind this is that if Angkor's various heritage professionals are defining (and redefining) the limits and boundaries of spaces for interpretation, then it is highly probable that other stakeholders, including the local Siem Reap community are doing the same. To investigate the interpretation of Angkor, this chapter will place attention on perceptions of Angkor's spatial, temporal and social context, presenting an examination into stakeholder understandings of the appropriate geographical 'setting' for Angkor. The chapter will then explore and discuss how Angkor is contextualised spatially and temporally. It will examine the potential influences of memory and experience on interpretation, before finally demonstrating how the scale of interpretation is constructed to suit political, economic and social agendas.

## **5.2 Setting**

Angkor may be a cluster of monuments spread across a landscape of varying sizes, but there has been growing recognition of, and attention given to, the area that lies around and in between these monuments (Winter 2004; Chermayeff, Rousakis et al. 2005; Taylor and Altenburg 2005). When a person ascends Angkor Wat or Phnom Bakheng, it is often done with the purpose of gaining height to take in the immense physical space the temple complex occupies. From the top of Phnom Bakheng (Figure 5-1), the visitor can contextualise Angkor within a spatial region that extends from the Ton Le Sap lake in the south to Phnom Kulen in the north, the large West Baray reservoir shrinks in significance as the visitor's perceptions of the Angkor plain expands to the horizon both east and west.



**Figure 5-1. In the evenings, tourists gather on top of Phnom Bakheng (as seen here) and Angkor Wat to watch the sunset across the Angkor Plain.**

Perched on the upper storeys of Angkor Wat, visitors can be observed staring across the trees and forests which envelope the monuments. The thick forest creates an atmosphere that allows visitors to experience the mystique of a 'lost civilisation' or the "Tomb Raider" (Winter 2002). Thus for many visitors, Angkor's setting is just this: a traditional, forested landscape that leaves modernity behind at the checkpoint. *"Atmospherically surrounded by patches of dense forest and standing proudly above rice paddies, the temples do not feel like sterile museum pieces, but seem still to be part of everyday life – aspects of which continue much as depicted in temple bas-reliefs."* (Palmer and Martin 2005:169) One of the main concerns of APSARA and foreign heritage professionals has been to maintain this image by keeping the rapidly expanding tourist development in Siem Reap town at bay (Krell 1990; Durand 2002). Preliminary research (Butland 2005) suggested that many of the concerns held by APSARA staff were linked to perceptions of what was the appropriate setting for Angkor, and how far it extended. At times this appeared particularly targeted at areas occupied or utilised by local people, rather than foreign tourists, such as the large Phsar Leu market on the east side of Siem Reap town (Butland 2003). The potential for

conflict led to the question: What are the understandings held by various stakeholders about the appropriate setting for Angkor's structures? This question sought to determine how the space 'in-between' the monuments is viewed by the various target groups. In outlining the results, this section will consider perceptions of the aesthetics of the area, in particular the preference for a natural setting. It will then explore the idea of Angkor as a 'peopled space', by investigating attitudes towards people living within and around the Angkor Park, and the connections between Angkor and Siem Reap town. Finally the section will consider the spatial attributes of the settings discussed by the various stakeholder groups.

### **5.2.1 Aesthetics**

Amongst the stakeholder groups investigated for this thesis (the ICC, APSARA staff and the local community), there was a dominant preference for Angkor to be situated within a forested setting. Descriptions of setting within interviews and analysed text were classified as: 'natural', 'traditional' and 'not urban'. The first of these, 'natural', referred to images of Angkor that are embedded within forests, water and gardens. At one extreme, this image of Angkor was devoid of modern human habitation. At the other end of the spectrum, it was possible to have a forested setting for Angkor that acknowledged the presence of people, but did not contain visible housing and economic activities. The second category, 'traditional', continued from here, placing people as an important part of the Angkor landscape. A 'traditional' setting presents Angkor as it was before the rapid urban growth of the recent past, namely as an agricultural economy supporting small wooden villages amongst the forest. In contrast, the third category, 'not urban', allowed for more modernisation, containing responses from those accepting any land use as long as it was not the busy contemporary town landscape. No stakeholder felt that the Angkor structures should be surrounded by an urban environment.

#### **5.2.1.1 ICC Documentation**

Within the ICC documents, perceptions of Angkor's physical context were embedded within the discussion, rather than directly stated. For example, concern with deforestation in the Angkor Park can create support for having a forested landscape around the monuments.

Such discussion creates an image of a limitless setting, which could potentially expand across the landscape until it meets an intrusion or barrier considered unacceptable (such as a hotel). Indirect discussion plays a strong role in reinforcing and naturalising a particular setting through the widespread use of a particular underlying discourse (Stavarakakis 2000; Cameron, Frazer et al. 2006). In comparison, legal or policy (formal) adoption of a particular aesthetic would perhaps open the door for public debate about its appropriateness (Howarth and Stavarakakis 2000).

Descriptions of Angkor's setting within the ICC documents (both international and Cambodian) strongly supported the idea that the Angkor monuments should be located within a 'natural' setting (Table 5-1). In particular, attention was drawn to forests and water: *"The operation for the preservation and restoration of monuments of Angkor, and the natural surroundings which enhance them, will be part of an integrated development strategy for the region as a whole"* (UNESCO: ICC January 1993). In addition to a natural setting, international contributors to the ICC also described elements of a 'traditional' or non-urban context: *"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 November 2003). The inclusion and integration of people in Angkor's setting was particularly noted by foreign contributors, with little mention by Cambodian contributors.

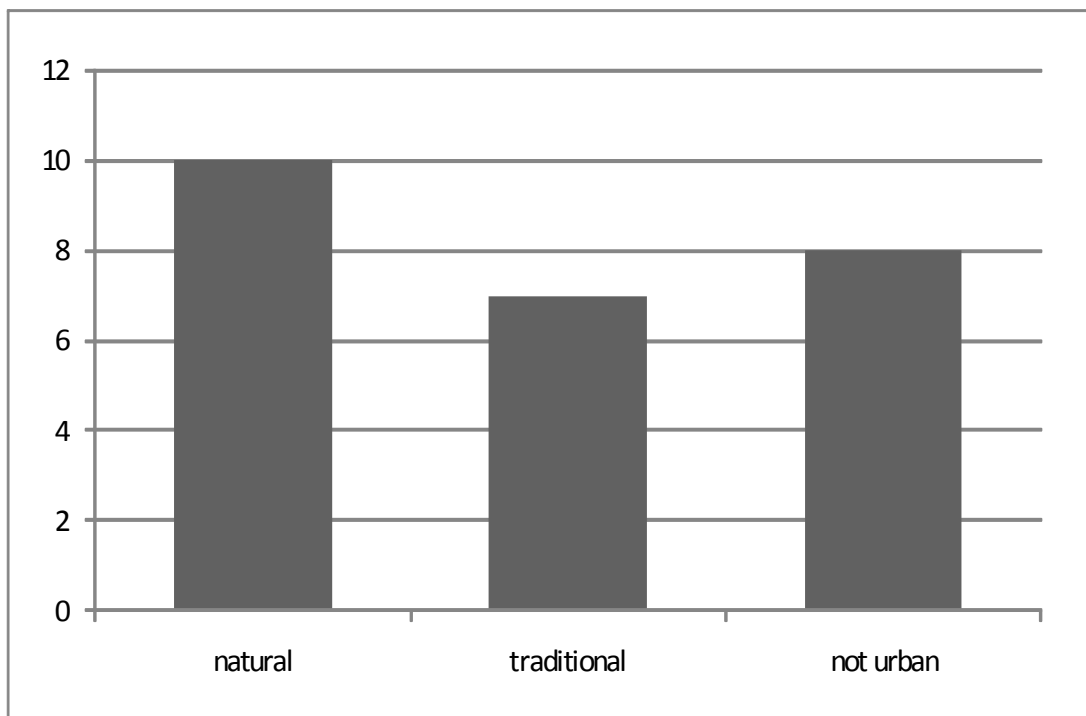
| Setting Category       | Aesthetics of Setting  | ICC (Cambodia)<br>% Of 18 Documents | ICC (international)<br>% Of 109 Documents | ALL ICC Documents<br>% of 127 Documents |
|------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|---|
| Not Urban              | not urban              | 6%                                  | 2%  | 2%                                      |
|                        | controlled building    | 11%                                 | 3%  | 4%                                      |
|                        | <b>Total</b>           | 17%                                 | 5%  | 6%                                      |
| Traditional            | traditional landuse    | 6%                                  | 3%  | 3%                                      |
|                        | Local people           | 6%                                  | 6%  | 6%                                      |
|                        | <b>Total</b>           | 11%                                 | 8%  | 9%                                      |
| Natural                | natural environment    | 17%                                 | 19%                                       | 19%                                     |
|                        | water                  | 17%                                 | 8%  | 9%                                      |
|                        | rural                  | 6%                                  | 3%  | 3%                                      |
|                        | forest                 | 17%                                 | 6%  | 8%                                      |
|                        | controlled vegetation  | 0%                                  | 5%  | 4%                                      |
|                        | <b>Total</b>           | 56%                                 | 41%                                       | 43%                                     |
| Multitude of monuments | multitude of monuments | 6%                                  | 5%  | 5%                                      |
|                        | <b>Total</b>           | 6%                                  | 5%  | 5%                                      |

**Table 5-1. The results of textual analysis on descriptions of setting within the Cambodian and international contributions to the ICC indicate strong preference for a natural setting consisting of forests and water.**

In addition to the three main categories, a fourth category of descriptions was evident within several of the foreign contributions, which portrayed the setting of Angkor’s monuments as amongst a multitude of other monuments: *“Treat each monument as an integral part of an overall monument site or complex”* (UNESCO: ICC November 2003). Such a statement may imply that the best setting for a monument is the presence of other monuments – it is the complex, not the individual monument, which has value. The structures gain meaning through understanding the relationships between monuments within the Angkor complex, blurring the bounds and limits between spaces of interpretation and spaces of value.

### 5.2.1.2 APSARA

As day-to-day managers of Angkor's ZEMP Zones 1 and 2 (Section 3.3.2.2), members of APSARA staff have responsibility for facilitating 'appropriate' interpretations of the heritage area. This means that they potentially possess significant influence over what is considered 'appropriate'. During interviews, APSARA staff were questioned about their preference for the type of landscape that should be permitted around the temples. This was phrased more colloquially, as: *"If you stand at the top of Angkor Wat, and look out, what would you prefer to see?"* Whilst interviewees were not asked the spatial extent of their view, responses suggested that APSARA staff referred to a broad landscape and not the immediate temple surrounds or approaches: *"When I stand at the top of Angkor, I want to see the tree, the flower, and the rice, not want to see the village or the top of building in the town, just be nature out to far, all the way to the mountains"* (APSARA Interviewee 11). The majority of APSARA interviewees wanted to see a natural vista surrounding the temples (Figure 5-2). Mostly this was expressed as a desire for forest cover, but some simply wanted a 'green space' (Swanwick, Dunnett et al. 2003) devoid of people: *"The view from the top of Angkor Wat should be forest because during the French colony Angkor was full of forest. If now see house and rice field it's not Angkor. In Cambodian mind, Angkor is forest. King Sihanouk said Angkor is inside the forest"* (APSARA Interviewee 3).



**Figure 5-2. Interviews with APSARA staff revealed that they had a preference for situating Angkor in a natural setting incorporating forests and water (10 of 13 respondents). However, whilst many felt that it was acceptable for people to be present in a 'traditional' sense around the temples, the landscape should remain non-urban.**

Water was another important element for APSARA interviewees. *"Angkor Temples should have the forest and have the water, because the Angkor Wat because the building on top the sand, sand foundation. So the sand need the water, sand with water is a good foundation for the temple"* (APSARA Interviewee 8). The moats of Angkor Wat were linked to their important visual and historical role, and a wide-spread scientific concern with groundwater levels under the temples (JICA 2004). Motivating these responses appeared to be a desire to keep Angkor as a special place. For some it was linked to the religious and spiritual elements of the site, for others it was linked to an atmosphere which contrasted with the busy modern landscape to the south. Many of the APSARA staff responses portrayed their professional (or departmental) interests, with those from the Department of Water and Forests (DWF) giving strong support to a 'natural' Angkor devoid of human habitation.

Whilst some respondents (predominantly from DWF) preferred an Angkor devoid of signs of people and occupation, most APSARA staff felt people did play a role in the interpretation of the site. Responses classified as 'traditional' usually involved a perception of some kind of synergy between the population, the forest, and the monuments. *"Should be a jungle and a little bit of people living with the jungle, with the temple. I mean old people who are doing forest things"* (APSARA Interviewee 2). It was felt that such a balance had to be found and maintained, not only to protect the old structures, but also the contemporary inhabitants. For most APSARA interviewees it was not appropriate for Angkor to be surrounded by the new architecture, the density or size of buildings found in Siem Reap town. They felt that it was very important not only for tourism, but also for their own experiences, that Angkor was in a non-urban setting. The 'traditional' villagers, who utilised their old rice fields and created handicrafts, added to the Angkor atmosphere and enhanced the image of a 'living site': *"I think forest is good for temple, and field is good for people... City or town around the temple would be bad, very bad... because we...bring the pollution and something that have the impact to the temple we have a lot of waste and air*



*pollution and something else. If we have town around the temple not beautiful, it....made the temple....go down from the culture” (APSARA Interviewee 9).*

The APSARA interviewees appeared to hold two key attitudes that potentially influence the spatial limitations of the scale of interpretation. The first is that they envisage Angkor not only as a natural site, but also as a living site. In other words, APSARA staff interviewed considered Angkor as integrally connected with the surrounding landscape. Their image of Angkor (see section 4.3.5) has the closest match with the UNESCO definition of a cultural landscape (Fowler 2003), with the scale of value (either the Angkor Landscape or the Angkor Park) blending with the scale of interpretation. The second observation from this discussion of Angkor’s setting is that the source of conflict for APSARA staff is not people *per se*, but new arrivals, who bring with them a desire for an urban landscape. *“I think that if people live in archaeology park it mean the old-comer, it mean they live for very long time there, and just can build houses in old Khmer style, you know. But they should not be increased”* (APSARA Interviewee 7). In perceiving Angkor as a living site, APSARA interviewees often expressed a perception of ‘traditional’ villagers as having a key atmospheric and aesthetic role. It was the ‘new people’, either migrants from other provinces or urban people, who were criticised for creating modern intrusions into the scale of interpretation. Thus the boundaries of interpretative space were where the modern became too dominant

With many of the early decisions being ‘top down’, a key concern with the management of Angkor has been the lack of community involvement (Hubbard 2003; Muira 2004; Sullivan 2004). Since the early 1990s, the local community have been accused of endangering Angkor through illegal development, land speculation, deforestation, changing their housing styles and employment activities. *“I wish that we will have villages in the Angkor Wat site, but unfortunately the people of my country they are not, they don’t have enough education to respect the authenticity of the site’s environment. We want them to live there, but when they become rich and to development, they don’t want to stay in the wooden house or in the leaf house, they want more concrete.”* (APSARA Interviewee 6) They are seen as creating an environment that potentially threatens the atmosphere that tourists come to see: *“Khmer people come to live illegal and they know that they are illegal but*

*when the government or some community want that place to keep or develop development and they need that people illegal to go from there they don't go. They stay and they say they want money.*" (APSARA Interviewee 2) It is only recently that Cambodian and foreign heritage professionals have sought to understand the role of Angkor in the lives of the local population. However, this has often been a restricted understanding, with 'local' equating to those who reside in the Angkor Park and excluding those who live within Siem Reap town. Such a definition may be driven by the fact that APSARA and other heritage professionals have had a perception that Angkor should be located within a 'not urban' or 'traditional' landscape: therefore 'local people' are not urban people. The APSARA interpretation of Angkor as a living site highlights the juxtaposition between contemporary and traditional populations, with the latter considered acceptable and the former viewed as potentially threatening heritage values and needing 'education' to ensure they interpret the value of the site properly.

### **5.2.1.3 Local Community**

Local community respondents provided a breadth of qualitative descriptions in response to interview questions concerning the appropriate setting for Angkor (Figure 5-3). The most common response was a 'natural' setting, with local interviewees stressing the importance of the forest. *"It is better that the temples are in the forest because at home there are lots of houses, so the different atmosphere from home makes it better/happier."* (Local Community Interviewee 9) The most common description of the envisaged natural setting was the forest. Behind this often lay a desire that the experience of 'Angkor' should be different from that of the town, with the forest being an integral part of that alternative. Others felt that forests offered important protection for the temples. *"Standing at the top [of Angkor Wat] I want to see trees. The government should grow trees. If no trees the stone will fall down, more trees protects Angkor Wat."* (Local Community Interviewee 58)

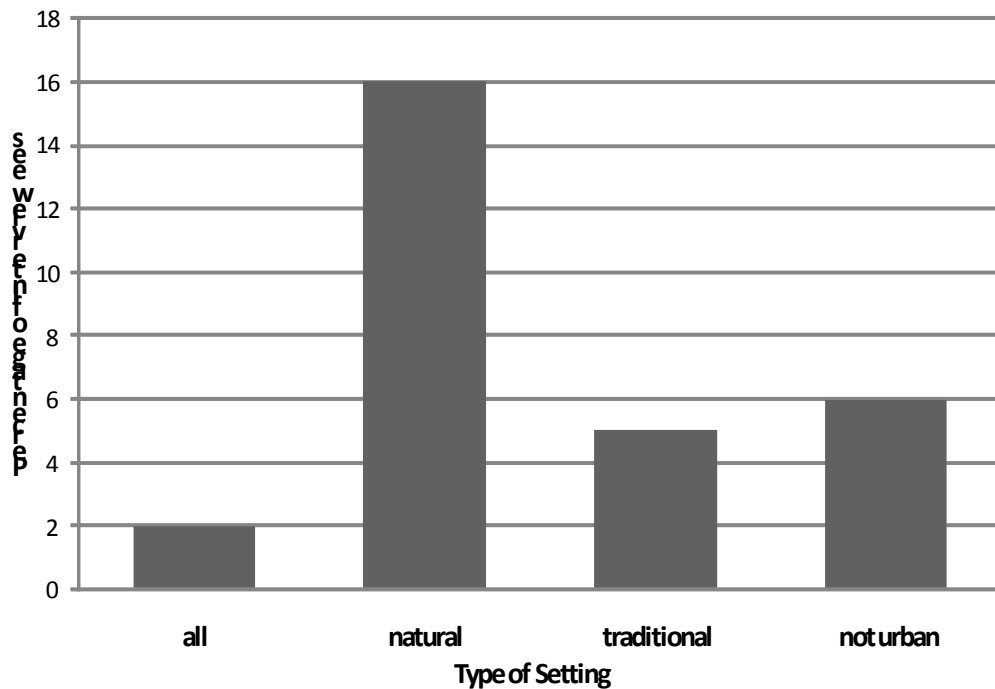
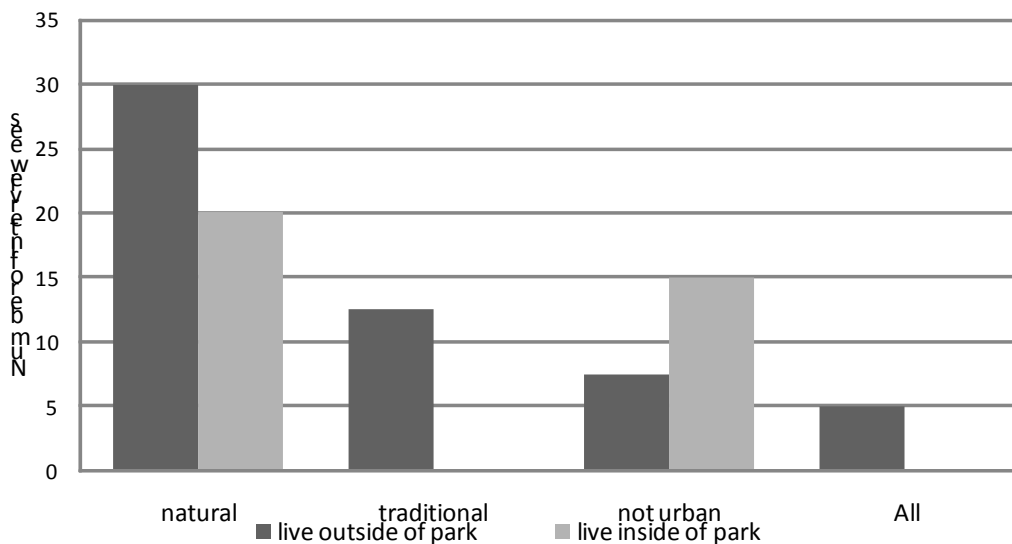


Figure 5-3. Analysis of interviews with the local community emphasised a preference for a setting consisting of natural characteristics, such as forests and water.

Many local community interviewees felt that that signs of human use, either agriculture or houses, should be limited in the immediate space surrounding the temples. This idea was predominantly expressed by people living outside the Angkor Park: *“If build along the Angkor road then Angkor will not be old cultural heritage. If build they will destroy the forest so would lose natural resources and Angkor would look not nice if hotels and restaurants there, then Angkor and the town would look the same so tourists would not need to visit only would go to the town”* (Local Community Interviewee 50). This quote reveals the sentiments of some of the Siem Reap interviewees who felt that if the contemporary activities of people were visible from the top of Angkor Wat, or allowed amongst the forest between the temples, then Angkor would feel like the town and tourists wouldn’t visit. The views of other interviewees were more open, recognising that gardens around houses were part of the ‘natural’ setting of Angkor, decorating the monuments. Other local interviewees accepted people as an appropriate element in the geographical context of Angkor. ‘Traditional’ and ‘non-urban’ settings were seen as allowing for lower density human activity without the atmosphere and aesthetic of a busy dense urban environment.

A comparison of the responses from those local community interviewees who lived inside the Angkor Park and with those living outside the Angkor Park (Figure 5-4), revealed that no resident of the Angkor Park, who was interviewed, felt that Angkor needed to be in a ‘traditional’ setting. It is understandable, and unsurprising, that they wished to be able to modernise their lives. Those who lived inside the Park valued the natural elements, such as the forests, but felt that as long as the areas surrounding the temples did not become urban, then it was acceptable to have some newer houses, or signs of economic improvement. This latter perception could be driven by their own desire for socio-economic development, coupled with a general dislike of the town and urban environments: *“Here is countryside. I don’t like the town. I could never stay there”* (Local Community Interviewee 31: Angkor Park resident). Respondents often felt the town was too busy, noisy, crowded, and dirty. It was these elements that they did not want around the temples. In contrast, those who came from outside the Angkor Park supported having a ‘traditional’ setting, which was similar to the interpretation of interviewed APSARA staff: low-density villages, with wooden houses and agriculture.



**Figure 5-4. A comparison of the responses of those local community interviewees who lived inside the Angkor Park and those living outside the Angkor Park, concerning the appropriate setting for Angkor, revealed that the former group wished for a natural or non-urban setting, rather than a ‘traditional’ setting.**

## **5.2.2 Angkor as a peopled space**

One of the more divisive aspects of Angkor's management has been the presence or absence of people around the Angkor structures (Barré 2002; JICA 2004; Rabe 2008). The previous section revealed how many stakeholders supported the idea of Angkor as a 'living site' surrounded by a traditional population that lives in harmony with the monuments (UNESCO: ICC November 2003). This section will directly explore attitudes towards people living around the temples.

### ***5.2.2.1 Local Community***

All interviewees were asked for their opinion on whether people should be permitted to live in the Angkor Park. A response was given by twenty-seven of the local community interviewees, with the remainder indicating that they had no opinion, or didn't wish to answer the question (Figure 5-5). Half of those who responded to this question stated that the government did not allow people to live inside the Angkor Park specifically that it was forbidden for people to live in the vicinity of Angkor Wat. *"People live along the Angkor Wat moat and the authorities don't want them here. This [is a bad change]. I think it's good that people live here. I was born in Siem Reap, I saw people living here until the Lon Nol Coup, until 1975."* (Local Community Interviewee 22) Those local community interviewees living within the park had a strong awareness of the government not wanting them to live too close, or too permanently, around the monuments. There was division amongst local community interviewees as to whether they felt people should live around the temples. Seven local interviewees agreed with the government position, viewing residents of the Park as potentially destructive to the heritage environment.

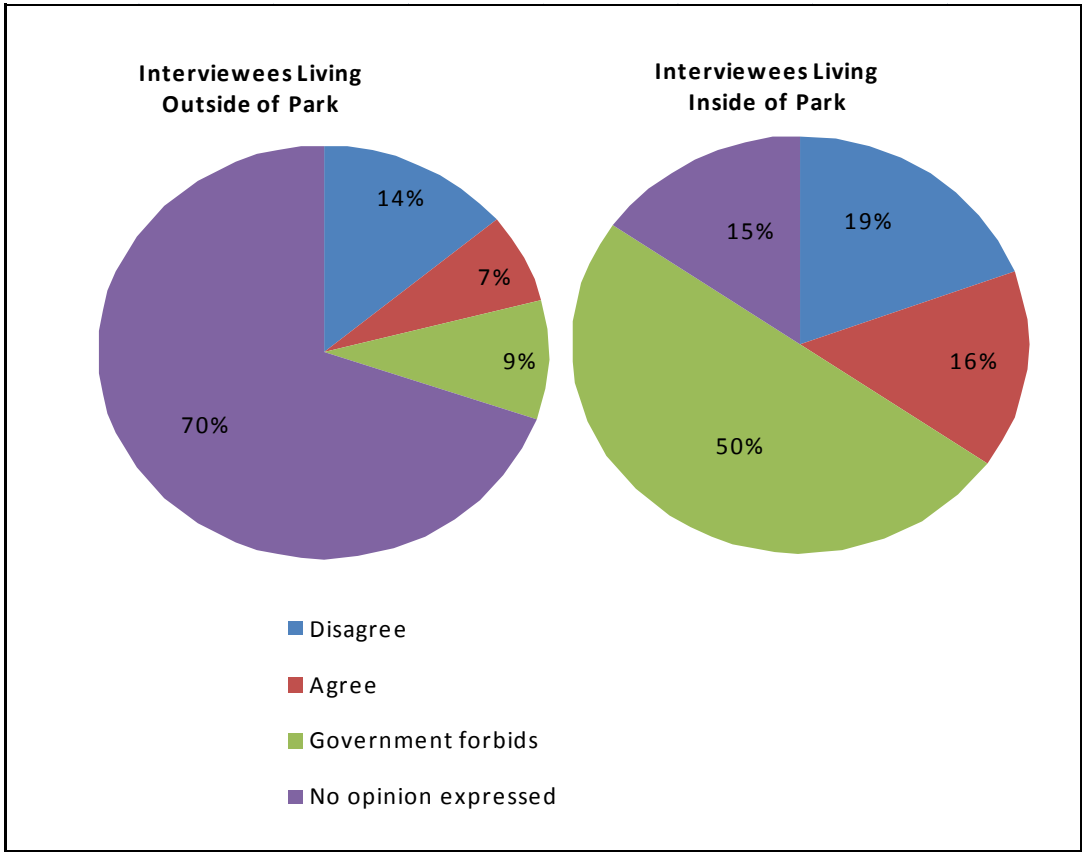
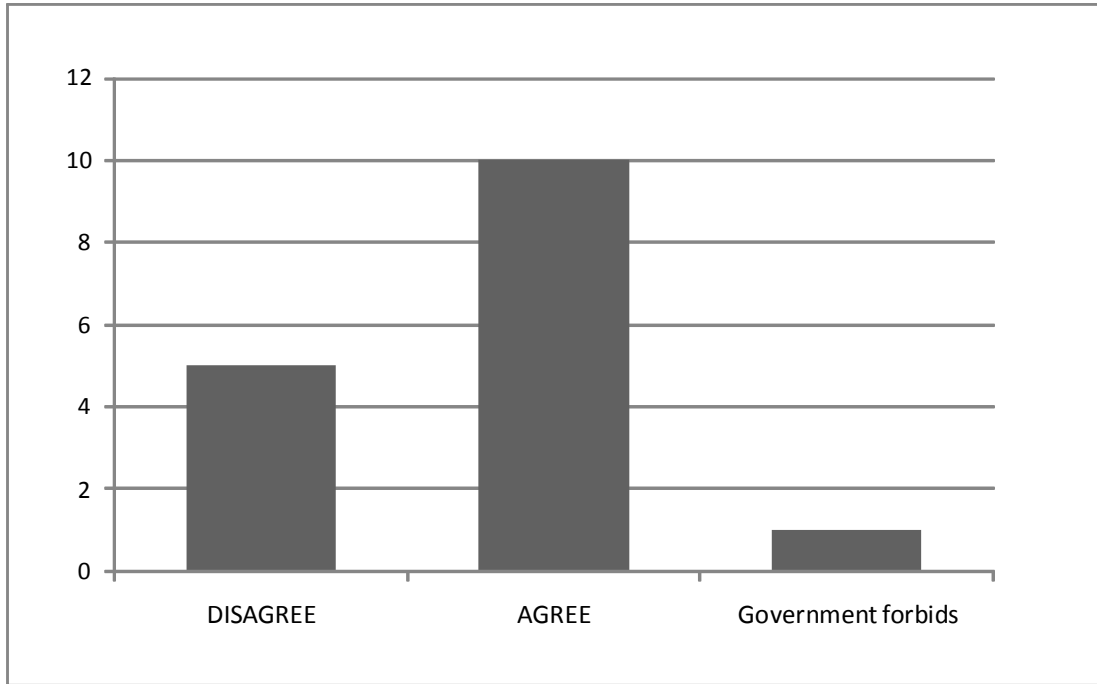


Figure 5-5. Discussion with local community interviewees on whether they thought people should live inside the Angkor Park demonstrated knowledge that the government did not allow such settlements.

Those who expressed a positive opinion of human occupation in the Angkor Park felt that it was good for the temples in a number of ways. *“People should live there because else too quiet and nobody would protect them”* (Local Community Interviewee 61) Many felt that it was a good economic decision (to live within the Angkor Park) as daily tourist visitation enabled people living and working within the Angkor Park to generate an income. Other interviewees strongly recognised the long-term habitation of Angkor and felt that current urban growth patterns were going to improve the lifestyles of those who lived around the temples. Finally, there were also several local community interviewees who felt that an occupied Angkor was important for the protection of the monuments. The presence of people meant that the structures were being watched and, consequently, more protected from destruction and theft of artefacts.

### 5.2.2.2 APSARA

Having already expressed their recognition of the importance of Angkor as a 'living site', it is unsurprising that many interviewed APSARA staff felt that people should be allowed to live around the Angkor temples (Figure 5-6). Those who disagreed felt that people were potentially destructive to both the temples and the forests surrounding them. *"If the Angkor have people live around it's not good, the environment...if the people live close to the Angkor, to the temple, maybe it's not good for the people like environment, maybe destroy temple, or destroy the forest."* (APSARA Interviewee 11) All interviewed APSARA staff accepted the fact that people living within the Angkor Park had been living there for a long time, and thus they should be permitted to stay. It was also recognised that if APSARA did try to move people from within the Angkor Park, they would just come back to the land as their connections with the landscape were strong and had been established over a long period of time. *"I think the people in the park who used to live in this area, I think they should live in their former place, because those people... the next generation of people who built Angkor or something like that... it very good for them to live next to what their ancestors built, what their ancestors give them yeah ... but those people, the old people, not live in the temple they live outside in around that area, because sometimes those people they have the belief, they use to pray or they use to at that place where they live, if we take them away, far from their place so they can't go there, those people will always come back to their old place"* (APSARA Interviewee 4). Some APSARA interviewees also embraced the contribution of a contemporary population to the creation of meaning at Angkor. It was felt, by many APSARA interviewees, that as long as Angkor people did not visibly modernise their behaviours, or landscape, then they were an important asset. The general view held by these interviewees was that Angkor villagers could contribute to the tourism industry by reproducing traditional lifestyles and handicrafts, thus providing extra activities to keep tourists around for longer.



**Figure 5-6. APSARA staff were questioned on whether they felt it was appropriate for people to live inside the Angkor Park. Most interviewees felt that it was acceptable for people to live inside but not for new people to move into the Park.**

### **5.2.2.3 ICC Documentation**

The analysis of support (or lack of) for people living around the temples and monuments of Angkor within the ICC documents, involved determining how people living in the park were referenced within the documents. It was then determined if the presence of these people was seen in a positive or negative light (i.e. supported or not supported, respectively). Within the 127 ICC documents, the people of Angkor were described in only 17 documents (Table 5-2). The most common reference was ‘population’ (of Angkor), which was used by both foreigners and Cambodians. In lesser numbers, ‘communities’, ‘villagers’ (or ‘villages’), ‘local residents’, and ‘population in Siem Reap area’ were utilised. Apart from the last, all these terms suggest that the people of Angkor are seen as rural and that ‘local’ equated to those who lived within the Angkor Park.



| Description of Population within Document Text | Cambodian Contributors (18 documents) | International Contributors (110 documents) | All documents (128 documents) |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|-------------------------------|
| Villagers                                      | 6%                                    | 2%   | 2%                            |
| Population                                     | 11%                                   | 3%   | 4%                            |
| Local Residents                                | 11%                                   | 0%   | 2%                            |
| Population in the Siem Reap area               | 6%                                    | 2%   | 2%                            |
| Communities                                    | 11%                                   | 2%   | 3%                            |
| No reference to people inside the Angkor Park  | 78%                                   | 94%  | 91%                           |

**Table 5-2. References to people living around the Angkor monuments recorded within the ICC minutes (as a percentage of contributions) demonstrated that the populations of Angkor-Siem Reap were only mentioned in less than 10% of documents.**

It was found that within the ICC documents there was strong support for the continuation of populations in residence around the monuments, with no contributor suggesting that people did not belong around the Angkor monuments. *“The delegation recommends, to complement the studies of environmental management, the launching of exhaustive socio-economic investigations of the populations residing within the archaeological parks. Certain villages, with their temples and schools, have been there for generations, it is necessary to delimit precisely their territory, to institute therein very strict rules for construction and land utilisation and to establish for their benefit a programme of community development, in particular, to promote among them traditional arts and handicraft activities.”* (Cambodia: ICC October 1992) Support was given to rural communities and for participatory development and heritage management, implying a desire for an involved population. Similarly there was support for people living in the Angkor Park as long as they did not demonstrate visible economic development and modernisation, and as long as their occupation of the park was authorised. Thus it appears that the discourse of the ICC also supports the idea of Angkor as a living site through its continued occupation, viewing people as an asset as they enhanced and protected the site. *“The final substantial issue involves the communities. One of the assets of the Angkor region archaeological site is its inhabited, living character. Exclusion of this parameter is liable to result in an unbalancing effect, a major risk for socio-economic development.”* (Cambodia: ICC June 2003)

### **5.2.3 Angkor delimited**

To scale spaces of interpretation, boundaries or spatial limits are established through stakeholder perceptions of appropriate and inappropriate aesthetics and behaviours (Rose 1996; Anschuetz, Wilhusen et al. 2001). Within the previous discussions of the aesthetic context of Angkor, it was apparent that there were at least two different spatial views, or definition of the scale of interpretation. The first defined the immediate context of the structure or place. For example, the view a visitor has of Angkor Wat from the steps of the causeway is confined to a 'photographic', or grounded field of vision (scale of interpretation), framed by one's peripheral vision, or the focus of a camera lens. The second scale of interpretation relied upon an elevated vision, with those interpreting the site contextualising it within a larger landscape. These scales were constructed by stakeholders in varying magnitudes.

#### **5.2.3.1 Interview Analysis**

The responses of both APSARA and local community interviewees indicated an interpretation of Angkor scaled firstly from a 'grounded' perspective, then from an elevated position. APSARA staff discussions of Angkor as situated within a living site were indicative of an elevated scale of interpretation which connected elements across the landscape. *"Angkor is a living heritage so should have some life around Angkor. Around Angkor I want to see some forest, some house, some fields"* (APSARA Interviewee 5). While few APSARA staff mentioned 'settings' that were solely focused on the approaches to temples, several of the local community respondents discussed attributes of their desired Angkor setting in a manner which suggested that they contextualised Angkor within the immediate confines of a temple.

#### **5.2.3.2 ICC Documentation**

Within each ICC document, it was determined how the idea of setting was conveyed (Figure 5-7). Angkor has been envisaged as managed within a particular environment (natural), with the ZEMP contextualising the heritage structures in a particular space (Wager and Englehardt 1994). However, many terms used in the ICC documentation to describe this space were geographically ambiguous, providing no indication of their spatial limits. This

meant that once again the spatial characteristics of the scale of interpretation were based on assessments of land uses, for example: implying Angkor should not be in an urban environment suggested that Angkor’s setting extended to, or was defined by, the borders of the urban spaces. Terms used to reference the spatial context of Angkor in the ICC documents included ‘buffer zone’, ‘setting’, ‘surrounds’, ‘ensemble of area’, ‘landscape’, ‘eco-cultural area’ and ‘environment’. The use of the latter three terms suggested that linkages between the monuments and the surrounding area in an environmental and a cultural sense. “We also support the framework of a comprehensive plan for safeguarding and presentation of the monuments and their historical area together with its eco-cultural environment” (Laos: ICC October 1993). The landscape of Angkor, therefore, had ‘associative values’ (Buggey 2000; Rössler 2000) and was part of the interpretative heritage space, rather than contained within the scale of value.

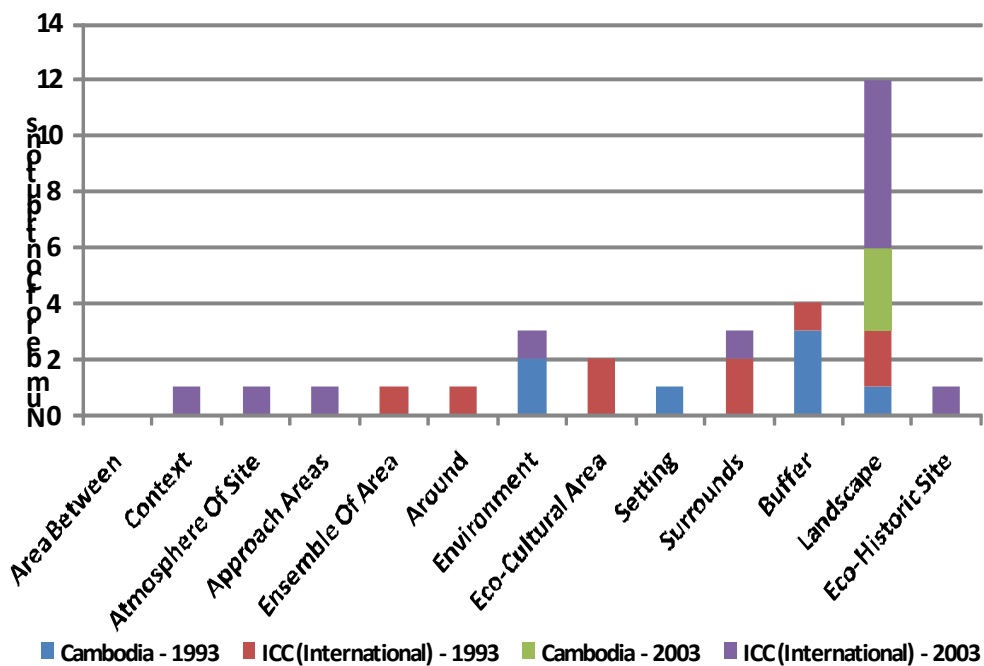


Figure 5-7. Textual analysis was conducted on the ICC Documents to reveal descriptions of the spatial attributes of Angkor's setting. Though less than half the documents mentioned the setting of the site, when discussed it was predominantly referred to as 'landscape'.

The main descriptor of setting within the ICC documentation was ‘buffer zone’. Use of the term came particularly from Cambodian contributions discussing the Angkor ZEMP Zone 2,

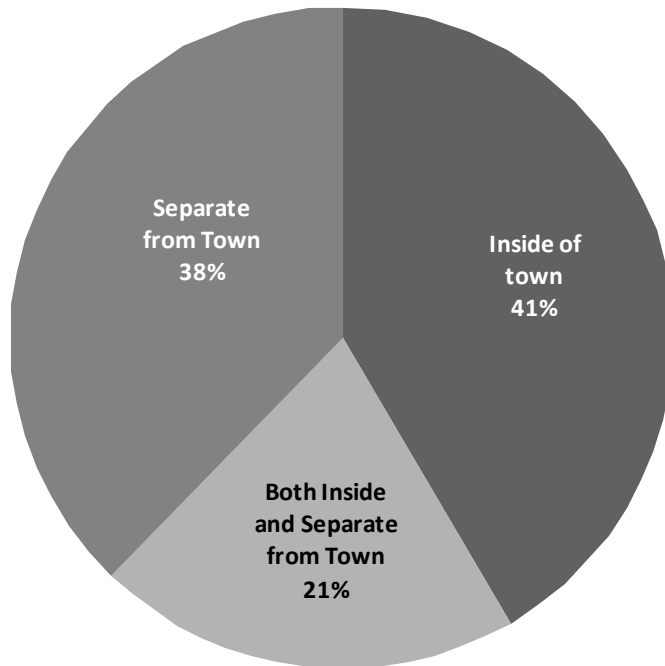
which was conceived as the buffer zone for the Angkor World Heritage site. As many of the understandings of the spatial limits of Angkor for the ICC contributors were Zone 1, or the Angkor Park, it made sense that they would place Zone 2 in the supporting role, contributing to Angkor's setting, particularly as it was the space closest to being an integrated cultural landscape. Within the ZEMP the description of Zone 2 was: "*protected Archaeological Reserves rich in archaeological remains which need to be protected from harmful land use practices and the consequences of inappropriate development*" (Wager and Englehardt 1994). The purpose of this zone was to keep modern development under control, implying that the setting of Angkor should not be an urban one. Thus the scale of interpretation could be defined physically as the boundary between traditional and modern. However, this protective zone has the potential to be contentious amongst stakeholders particularly as there was minimal community consultation regarding the limits and regulations governing it (Chapman 1998; Gillespie 2009). Whereas the Angkor Park encloses the main monuments and tourist routes, Zone 2 is simply a rectangle that is not equidistant from the Zone 1 borders, extending further south towards Siem Reap town, than it does to the north (see Figure 1-4). This could seem reasonable in the face of potential intrusions, or threats, coming from the urban landscape to the south (Wager and Englehardt 1994). But the demarcation of a strict line has the effect of disconnecting Angkor from the modern environment. This is currently an issue for archaeologists and heritage conservators who are concerned about Angkorean materials which lie outside this border. It is also a concern as it formalises a 'true' context for Angkor and blocks potential social and cultural connections between Angkor and spaces further afield.

#### **5.2.4 Angkor City**

The final aspect in examining the setting of Angkor is to examine the linkage between Angkor and Siem Reap town. Throughout the discussion of appropriate settings for Angkor, all stakeholder groups had expressed at some stage a desire not to have an urban environment surrounding the temples and monuments. This suggested that Angkor was dislocated from Siem Reap Town, the major urban environment in the region. Each of the interviewees was asked whether or not they considered Angkor as inside or outside of Siem Reap Town. Similarly, textual analysis was undertaken on the ICC documents to determine how the spatial relationship between Angkor and Siem Reap may have been conceived.

#### **5.2.4.1 Local Community**

Even though there was no endorsement of an urban setting for Angkor, all stakeholder groups demonstrated an awareness of the linkages between Angkor and Siem Reap town. The local community interviewees gave the strongest support for the idea that Angkor was connected to the modern urban environment (Figure 5-8). A number of people also suggested that Angkor was both incorporated within and separated from the town: *“One can say that it is inside because the Angkor complex is close to the town. Also one could say that it is outside because town and Angkor Wat are separate Siem Reap is in the south and Angkor is in the north”* (Local Community Interviewee 57). Those who stated that Angkor was part of the town gave various reasons, including a perception of its close proximity to the Angkor Park: *“The Angkor temples are in the town because they are not so far away”* (Local Community Interviewee 1). Another interviewee considered Angkor as part of the town because there were many people at Angkor: *“The Angkor Complex is inside the town because many people go to visit there everyday and at the weekend it is very crowded”* (Local Community Interviewee 50). Other reasons given by local interviewees included the appearance of the area, the roads and the infrastructure available, or that the Angkor complex was too developed to not be part of the modern town. In addition, several of the interviewees drew attention to the fact that they felt that Angkor was in the town because of the role it played as the spiritual centre of Siem Reap: *“Because pray in the city, Angkor Wat is in the city, like Wat Phnom is in Phnom Penh”* (Local Community Interviewee 23). A couple of interviewees also incorporated the idea of a changing landscape (urban growth) into their responses, stating that: *“Angkor complex is completely inside the town [from] long time ago because the town has spread to the temples”* (Local Community Interviewee 55).

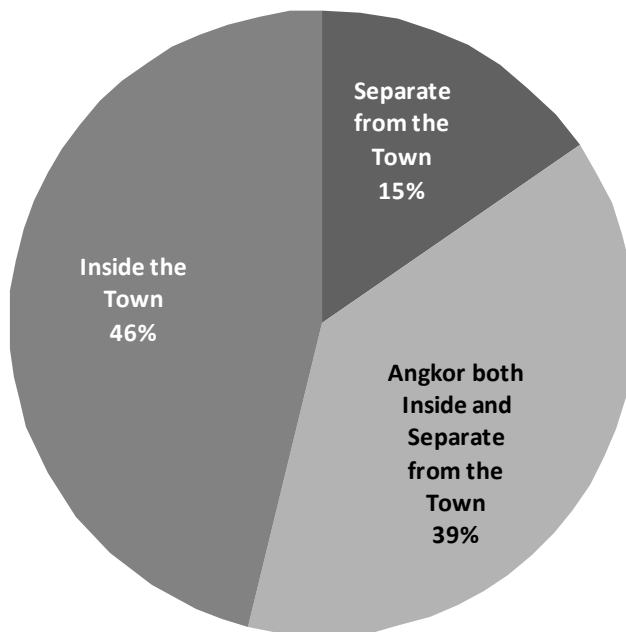


**Figure 5-8. Local community interviewees' perceptions of Angkor as being either inside or separate from Siem Reap Town were collected throughout the interviews. There was an even distribution between those who considered these entities as separate and those who considered them as connected.**

The reasons given by local interviewees who considered Angkor as separated from the town were often contrary to the perceptions of others. Conflicting with those who considered Angkor as within the town because it was close were others who saw Angkor as separate because of the distance. In contrast to those who perceived Angkor as crowded, there were several respondents who saw Angkor as rural because of its lack of people: *"Angkor is outside the town because [there is] not people in that area"* (Local Community Interviewee 41). A number of interviewees commented on the general appearance, and the differences in vegetation as reasons for why they saw Angkor as separate of the town. However, the majority of respondents who considered Angkor as external to the town did so because of the level of progress or development in the surrounding area: *"Angkor Complex is in the countryside. I think it will be in the town one day, maybe in fifteen to twenty years. Then people around Preah Kahn will have good education and jobs so it will have been life and develop so will be in the town"* (Local Community Interviewee 30).

#### 5.2.4.2 APSARA

APSARA interviewees had a strong understanding that Angkor was, and should remain, outside of modern Siem Reap town (Figure 5-9). Most interviewees felt that the buffer zone of the Angkor Park fulfilled its role as a green boundary, keeping the modern urban space separate from the heritage space. *“I think that because we have that we can restrain a little bit the development in town, just imagine without, if we lift the buffer zone, before we know there is front of Angkor all these Chinese flat everywhere.”* (APSARA Interviewee 1) Thus there was a sense that Angkor was removed not because the temples were far away from the town, but that the town was being kept at a distance.



**Figure 5-9. APSARA interviewees' perceptions of Angkor as either inside or separate from Siem Reap Town were divided. Opinions were that it could be both connected and separated from the town.**

In contrast, those APSARA interviewees who saw Angkor as part of the town felt that this was because Siem Reap and the Angkor Park were so close together. This was a similar response as that given by the local interviewees, and was linked to the crowds and people, rather than to the built landscape. One respondent took this a step further by explaining that they saw Angkor as inside Siem Reap because Siem Reap was simply (the modern) Angkor city. Those who saw Angkor as both part of and separate from the town felt that the

pace of movement, people and life at certain Angkor monuments (with the number of people) was closer to an urban than a non-urban environment. Areas such as Angkor Wat were bustling areas of activity and thus were in the town, whereas spaces like Preah Khan or Ta Prohm were quieter and considered not urban. Thus APSARA staff did not deviate much in their perception of the spatial relationship between Angkor and the town from the understandings held by the local community interviewees.

#### **5.2.4.3 ICC Documentation**

Both Cambodian government and foreign contributions to the ICC documents included text that supported Angkor being both part of and separated from the town. However, in the analysis of the ICC documents the existence of an additional perceived spatial relationship between the town and the temples was apparent (Figure 5-10). The discourse of the ICC documents drew attention to the fact that Siem Reap town could be considered as part of Angkor. In this conceptualisation, the language of the ICC documents created an image of a large Angkor, an Angkor region or landscape, of which Siem Reap town occupied a small part, serving as the gateway to Angkor and the service point for tourism. Conceptualising Siem Reap town as a part of Angkor was driven by the idea of a tourist experience, which started and finished at the airport. Recognising Siem Reap's urban area as part of the Angkor region was also seen as important for ensuring the success of heritage management. It was evident in the ICC documents, that various heritage professionals understood that disconnecting the urban population and area from the heritage region would result in uncontrolled growth and development that would be potentially hazardous to the monuments and their green spaces. *"I know the conservation of the Angkor monuments is very important. I consider that harmonization between development and conservation of the temples is very important"* (Japan: ICC June 2003). However, to maintain the ICC discourse which emphasised a desire not to see the monuments immediately surrounded by an urban environment, a stronger divide between town and temples was reinforced in language that created an image of a barrier, such as the role of the Zone 2 buffer zone in protecting the monuments from the town.



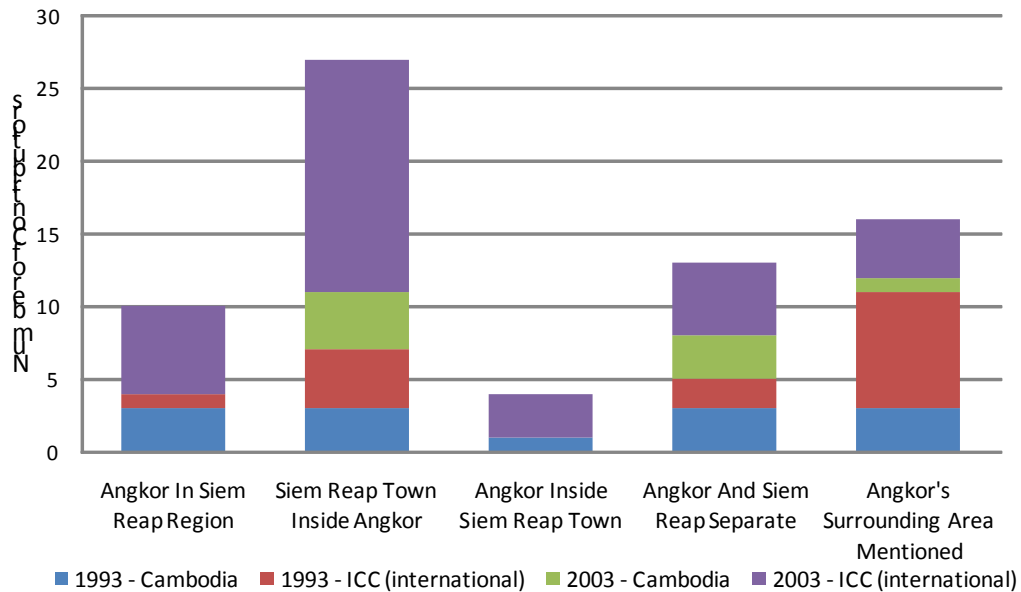


Figure 5-10. Analysis of the spatial relationship between Angkor and Siem Reap as represented in the ICC contributions, demonstrated a sense that Siem Reap Town was a part of the Angkor Park.

### 5.2.5 Synthesising the Image of Angkor

This section set out to determine the appropriate setting for Angkor's structures, as perceived by various stakeholders. The results strongly support an image of Angkor as embedded within a forested landscape, surrounded by people continuing traditional practices and agriculture. Whilst some stakeholders felt that Angkor should be devoid of evidence of human occupation and use, many others had an image of 'a living site', in which people played an important role in creating meaning for the monuments. However, no interviewee or document suggested that people living around the temples should be removed, with some highlighting the failure of previous attempts to do so. It was evident that 'park people' were seen as potentially enhancing the atmosphere of Angkor through the maintenance of traditional housing, lifestyles and the production of traditional handicrafts to sell to visitors. Most stakeholders presented an understanding that Angkor should be located within a landscape dissimilar from modern urban Cambodia, reminding visitors of 'traditional' Cambodia.

No stakeholder directly defined an area of interpretation. Instead setting and spaces of interpretation were scaled, or had their boundaries defined, through the exclusion and inclusion of certain behaviours and the land uses that represent them. This could happen in the immediate temple surrounds or further afield, at a regional landscape distance. Even though almost all stakeholders created an image of Angkor as not urban, many still perceived a spatial connection between town and temples. This chapter will now consider these results within the scope of understanding the process of scaling the spaces of interpretation at Angkor.

### 5.3 Angkor contextualised

Interpreting and conserving sites and objects *in-situ* has been the policy of heritage managers since the 1980s (Evans 2002). Archaeological theorists and practitioners, such as Lewis Binford (1982), felt that better temporal, geographical and social meanings could be given to remnants of the past when they were not abstracted beyond the location where they were found (Anschuetz, Wilhusen et al. 2001; Turner 2006). This idea is also at the core of contemporary heritage theory and practice, where the ultimate aim within the Operational Guidelines of the World Heritage Committee is “*to conserve heritage in-situ*” (WHC 1999), encouraging interpretation to be undertaken by experiencing heritage in context, rather than guided through a reconstructed, or created, museum-like environment. Interest in the contribution of setting towards heritage values has been increasing (Fowler 1992; Arizpe and Beschaouch 2002; Corsane 2006). The focus of the ICOMOS 15<sup>th</sup> General Assembly and Scientific Symposium (Xi’an 2005) was directed at discussing the value and protection of monuments and sites in their settings. This prompted the Xi’an Declaration on the conservation of the setting of heritage structures, sites and areas (ICOMOS 2005), which highlighted the need for heritage managers and governments to acknowledge the contribution of setting to the significance of heritage monuments, sites and areas. International concern for conserving heritage *in-situ* was also demonstrated by the addition of the Köln Cathedral in Germany on the List of World Heritage in Danger (2004 – removed in 2006). This move was not motivated by direct destruction or potential for harm to the heritage object, but because its interpretative space, its setting, was threatened by the construction of two modern high-rise buildings across the Rhine River

from the Cathedral (Nishimura 2007). These were seen as ruining the skyline dominated by the cathedral spires (Scholze 2008).

The example of the Köln Cathedral highlights two key attributes contributing to the contextualisation of heritage and the construction of a scale of interpretation. Perceptions of the *geographical* and the *temporal* contexts of a heritage object result in the tangible surrounds of heritage being perceived as either a harmonious part of a heritage experience or as a series of contrasts and conflicts that highlight the aesthetic or historical values of heritage sites (Aplin 2007). The link between values and aesthetics does not necessarily have to be a 'traditional values + traditional setting' link, it could also be argued that the value of a heritage object is its ability to resist time and find modern meaning, thus the heritage value of an old church could be enhanced by being unique amongst modern buildings (Edensor 2007). In Boston, USA, the Freedom Trail takes the urban traveller on an adventure discovering historical sites entwined amongst an active twentieth-century landscape (Corkery and Bailey 1994).

At Angkor, observation of ICC meetings and other joint international-Cambodian discussions, suggested a movement from considering and managing a cluster of old structures, towards conservation of a landscape. However, the results of the previous chapter demonstrated that many stakeholders still considered Angkor as a cluster of monuments inscribed with symbolic and economic value, seemingly disconnected from the surrounding area. The perceptions of heritage professionals stand in stark contrast to those of the local community who had an image of Angkor as an integral part of the contemporary community, functioning as public social space for the urban population. The Angkor structures do not stand on a blank canvas; rather their interpretation is linked to particular physical and aesthetic elements that assist with creating a particular atmosphere. This chapter has demonstrated the attachment that stakeholders have had for particular aesthetic images of Angkor, highlighting the role of the forests and the need for the people to harmonise with the temples through traditional lifestyles. It will now argue that the social context of memories, experiences and understandings of the role of heritage in contemporary life, will influence the extent and aesthetics of the scale of interpretation.

This is because the social will affect the 'emotional' response an audience has to heritage (Fallon and Kriwoken 2003).

### **5.3.1 The Role of Memory in Creating a Temporal Context for Heritage**

The analysis of setting in this chapter has focused attention on the physical, or aesthetic, attributes of the surrounding areas. Defining the physical attributes of context does not happen in isolation (Bradley 2003). Decisions about the appropriate aesthetics for a site are linked to social and political constructions of the appropriate geographical and temporal contexts for a site (Hale 1994). Many critics of heritage management now draw attention to the fact that the past is merely an invention of the present to suit contemporary agendas (Lowenthal 1985). Such reasoning links closely with Lefebvre's (1974) argument that spaces are socially produced (and perceived) to meet certain requirements, and thereby ensure the dominance of one group over another. In this investigation into the social construction of heritage scales, it is argued that the manner in which heritage spaces are abstracted, framed and represented is the result of the social construction of a temporal context. It is argued that through memories and experiences we construct the physical representation of the past, to ensure a certain meaning (interpretation) is portrayed when experiencing heritage objects or space. At Angkor, the manipulation of the physical attributes of the geographical context is one of the material consequences of (re-)constructing the scale of interpretation.

Previously in this thesis, consideration has been given to how the language used to describe 'Angkor' creates either an image of symbols separated from contemporary space (monuments) or active spiritual space incorporated into everyday life (temples). This can be expanded beyond a discussion of the scale of value (see Section 4.3) to investigate how similar divisions between passive and active objects, and past and present spaces, are utilised to define the scale of interpretation as a juxtaposition between 'traditional' and 'modern'.

The interpretation of Angkor by all groups appeared to be linked to a natural setting. Whether 'Angkor' is the size of Angkor Wat, the Angkor Park, or an endless landscape, the

forest has been seen as an important element of its spatial context. Much of the reasoning behind this seemed to be aesthetic and atmospheric: dense forests enhance the aesthetics of the stone monuments. The management of Ta Prohm temple has specifically conserved the image of the forest swallowing the remaining ruins (Winter 2002)(Figure 5-11). However, in picturing Angkor as hidden in the forest, rather than as overshadowing villages or rice fields, the monuments and their landscape become memories of the past awaiting discovery (*passive*), rather than presenting themselves (*active*). This is illustrated by a comparison between the presentation of Angkor Wat and other structures in the east of the Park. The latter structures sit quietly amongst the trees, some being consumed, and others just deserted. With the stalls, sellers and bands of local children stopped at the gates by APSARA staff, it does not take long for the heavy quiet of the forest to descend over the ruins, dislocating visitors from modernity. In contrast, Angkor Wat struts prominently, revealing itself to those driving by. It is open, crowded and obvious. The guards may hold back some sellers, but there are more stalls inside (Figure 5-12). Locals picnic along the moat, children use the grounds as a giant adventure playground, and buffalos wade through the mud of the moat. There are signs of active prayer, either from the modern monasteries, or from the clusters of Khmers worshipping at the feet of a deity. Angkor Wat is not just psychologically a part of contemporary space - it looks the part as well.



Figure 5-11. At Ta Prohm, the giant trees of the Angkor forest consume the ruins, whilst at the same time holding the structures together.



**Figure 5-12. Stalls inside Angkor Wat servicing the local community and tourists.**

What is more complex, however, is the role of people in Angkor's setting. For most groups a 'traditional' setting of wooden villages and subsistence agriculture was acceptable. Some of this was reluctant; others recognised the important contribution that people have made in the creation of a meaningful living space. Some APSARA staff and early ICC documents expressed a desire to have no visible human settlement within the Angkor Park. Indeed in the early 1990s, the Cambodian government assumed ownership of all land within Zones 1 and 2, as a means to control development pressures on the World Heritage area (Springer 2009). They attempted to relocate the population from within Zone 1 (Angkor Park), but as with many forced relocations, this failed and they returned to their traditional lands (Gillespie 2009). This was not the first time such actions were undertaken. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, French preservationists moved several *Wats* and a village from within Angkor Wat, creating an old and abandoned space (Rooney 2001; Winter 2008). What is unusual about the contemporary settlements within the Angkor Park (home to over 100,000 residents (Rao, Than et al. 2002)) is that they are hidden. Human settlements across Siem Reap province are often linear in pattern, ribbon development bordering the roads with fields sitting behind them (Butland 2003). However, in the Angkor Park, these human settlements are not on the roads, but are primarily set back amongst the forests (or at least hidden by a wall of vegetation). This creates an atmosphere of a people-less landscape. The presence, or absence, of people once again juxtaposes an active or passive space, in this case creating two images of Angkor. One in which Angkor belongs to a living civilisation, the other in which it is a remnant of a past people.

At the core of heritage interpretation has often been the juxtaposition between old and new, traditional and contemporary (Angelstam, Boresjö-Bronge et al. 2003). Even though it is widely recognised that culture undergoes sometimes dramatic, evolution (Anschuetz, Wilhusen et al. 2001), it is apparent within heritage literature that 'heritage' is one aspect of culture that does not necessarily change, at least not physically (Harvey 2005). Heritage is defined by many as what has been passed down from, and embedded in, the past, not something that is continually reinvented for the satisfaction of present day needs and desires (Prentice 1993). Following from Harvey (2001) and Fisher (2004), this thesis argues that heritage, its interpretation, and the physical spaces it occupies, should also be seen as a social construction of the present to suit political, economic, and social purposes. Interpretation should no longer be seen as static (Loulanski 2006), but through processes of representation, utilisation and experiences, the meanings and values of heritage places are created to help inform our sense of place and sense of identity (Ashworth 1994). Key to a functional definition is the way we view and understand human-environment interactions (Nys 2001; Loulanski 2006).

The perceptions, meanings and interpretations of a place will vary in the eye of each beholder (Lynch 1972; Bradley 2003). Perception involves both direct and indirect experiences (Jutla 2000). As unique individuals, we experience time through observation and participation in events (Tuan 1974; Lorimer 2003). Time creates memories and experiences (Jackson 1994). The level of involvement we have with the progression of time and history will attach us to memories of varying degrees of magnitude (Lowenthal 1985). It is argued here that direct and indirect experiences and memories influence our understanding and interpretation of aesthetic, historic, social and scientific values attached to cultural heritage sites. We develop understandings of places and their significance without visiting them (Chhabra, Healy et al. 2003). Our collective memory of a place is influenced by films, books, stories, and the internet (Pocock 2002). We carry with us the memories of the first images we saw, the first words spoken and read, the first sounds heard, as much as we absorb the tangible experiences of place (Goodey 1974). This does not mean that direct experience is redundant; to the contrary it will greatly influence our sense of place (Lynch 1960), but there is a need to understand how connections to



particular memories have created different interpretations of the Angkor cultural heritage landscape.

This thesis has illustrated that there are potentially conflicting constructions of 'Angkor' which define the role the heritage area played in the past. The scale of interpretation allows space for the lay user to give meaning and value to the heritage space. In the initial years of Angkor's contemporary management discussion focused on the creation of a buffer zone and techniques that could be used to ensure the site's protection. During that period, Cambodia, including the Angkor area, was littered by landmines, unexploded ordinance, and pockets of continuing fighting, increasing the mysticism of the dense forest. As time passed, the forests came to be perceived as both a barrier that would protect heritage and as the 'appropriate' setting for Angkor. This image being influenced by the stories of Henri Mouhot (1864) and his 'discovery' of the ruins of Angkor amongst the forests of northern Cambodia which still resonate within the contemporary global collective memory (Candelaria 2005).

The 'traditional' is the Angkorean landscape of monuments, forests and harmonious subsistence-based villages. Representations of Angkor in the popular media, in movies such as Tomb Raider (West 2001), and guide books like the Lonely Planet (Ray and Robinson 2008), invoke images of ancient ruins watched over by simple people (Winter 2003). The mysticism of the jungle is highlighted and has become an intricate part of the magic of Angkor. The image and spirit of Angkor is not tied solely to the ruins and forests, but also has created aesthetic and emotional linkages with the surrounding landscape, in particular Siem Reap town to the south. Collective memories of 'the colonial explorer' are enhanced by the original and replica colonial architecture which recall times gone past. Some would argue that these atmospheric devices are not heritage and are simply tourism (Hewison 1989; Fowler 1992). However, it is argued here that where interpretation is driven by perception of human-environment interactions which are very much linked to aesthetic and emotional experiences of a place, such activities and landscapes will become an integral part of heritage. This idea is reflected in the desire of Angkor management groups to control the Angkor experience from the moment of arrival at the Siem Reap airport. Objects and locations seen as modern are always set in strong discordant juxtaposition to Angkor

and actively excluded from the interpretative space. The modern is chaotic, noisy, dirty, crowded, ugly and devoid of culture. More importantly, it is seen as destructive – global media reports give their audience tales of the evil modern tourist development tearing at the edges and foundations of the old, whilst at the same time celebrating the neo-colonial explorer experience where tradition harmonises with nature.

An alternative to ‘traditional’ Angkor is ‘contemporary’ Angkor. Angkor was a city (9<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> Centuries AD (Wager and Englehardt 1994)), and for some Khmer it still is. This does not mean a physically (or environmentally) urban Angkor, but it does mean a living, breathing, moving space. For the Cambodian government, Angkor is the soul of the modern Cambodian nation. For the local Siem Reap population, it is at the centre of their everyday. The value of Angkor is scaled with a social agenda as Angkor Wat it functions as the public space of Siem Reap town. It is not seen as removed from Siem Reap town, but is a part of it. This is not a physical connection in the sense of temples surrounded by dense buildings, but rather the scale of value, and thus the scale of interpretation, is defined through its function.

Angkor is the social core of Siem Reap and its population. It is the gathering place for the population, the major public space for the modern population. The aesthetic of a towering monument above a vast space creates a meeting point. The local community recognised the value of the forests of Angkor, primarily for the climatic and atmospheric change they induce. The forests have made Angkor a space they want to use. They make it an active contemporary space. It is the complete integration of Angkor into daily life that is perhaps the most important element of the local understandings of Angkor. In the evenings, Angkor draws the crowds to the moat of Angkor Wat. Whilst some heritage professionals criticise the crowds at Angkor (Durand 2002), many older Siem Reap residents talk enthusiastically of both foreign and local uses: *“It is good that there are lots of tourists. Many tourists make me feel happy. If it is quiet then it’s a bit sad”* (Local Community Interviewee 5).

In interpreting and creating meaning to support the social definition of a scale of value at Angkor, contemporary use can be seen as a continuation of past uses. Angkor was a city,

and Angkor is still a city, it's just that the majority of the residential and service spaces have over time shifted south (a move that happened long before the Angkor Archaeological Park was formed). A city is an economic centre. Angkor is the economic centre of Siem Reap town. A city is a social centre and a power centre. Angkor is the gathering point for the community, and it is also the place which influences all political, economic, and development decisions at all levels of government. Many modern urban centres, such as New York, London, Tokyo, and Paris, have expansive green spaces occupying their centres and bringing their populations together in recreation and relaxation (Jackson 1994). I would argue that Angkor occupies such a position when interpreted as part of the contemporary landscape. For the local community, people are part of the interpretative space, therefore the boundaries formed for the scale of interpretation would extend to the limits of people who are appropriately using the heritage space. Contemporary use was something that APSARA staff interviewed recognised when describing Angkor as a living site. They saw a synergy between the people, forests and stones. They were caught between conflicting temporal constructions of a traditional scale of interpretation and a contemporary scale of, but they recognised that the people are not going anywhere, so the two constructions must be sympathetically aligned. For APSARA, a landscape interpretation of Angkor is perhaps the only way of incorporating these varied perspectives.

### **5.3.2 Social Construction of Setting**

The value of a heritage object lies not in the entity itself, but in the meanings and values that visitors, users and observers, near and far, attach to the object. Heritage itself is a subjective understanding and representation of objects and places, with interpretation the key process in creating (or destroying) heritage (Carter and Bramley 2002). It was argued in this chapter that such perceptions, and therefore interpretations, are socially constructed through direct and indirect memories and experiences. How far an interpreter allows these images to extend across the landscape will govern the extent of the scale of interpretation. The method and the reasons for manipulating this boundary between interpretative space and other non-heritage space can be understood as processes which control the social construction of the scale of interpretation.

Each of the stakeholder groups incorporated in this thesis has constructed a meaning and purpose for Angkor that influences how they spatially conceive the heritage object. As such, their understandings influence the relationship between heritage and non-heritage. While all the stakeholders embed their interpretations of Angkor amongst the forest, it is the relationship with other land uses and land users that reveals how the scale of interpretation is constructed. The relationship revolves around the use and manipulation of the terms ‘traditional’ and ‘modern’.

The ICC documents predominantly proscribe an ‘Angkor’ that is spatially represented by the monuments of the Angkor Park. The interpretation of an appropriate setting for the monuments is a ‘natural’ one with ‘traditional’ land uses, such as subsistence agriculture and village lifestyles, also seen as acceptable. A focus on rural landscapes means that Siem Reap town, with its urban landscape, is deemed too modern and excluded from the scale of interpretation. Examining the spatial relationship between Angkor and Siem Reap, it becomes clear that Angkor, as a place, is interpreted on a larger scale than just the Angkor Park. A scale of interpretation based around ‘traditional’ and ‘modern’ can be expanded and contracted as spaces, behaviours and attitudes shift around these temporal contextual and cultural understandings. Whilst not directly part of the interpretative space, Siem Reap town can be seen as playing a supporting role at Angkor. There is a process of scale reconstruction occurring, with projects such as the French-funded ‘the Gates of Angkor’, seeking to alter the landscape of the modern area to be more sympathetic to the heritage area. This being evidence that the defining of boundaries (or scaling) of interpretative space have been expanding to incorporate parts of the urban landscape by ‘*traditionalising*’ them.

The APSARA staff interviewed illustrated the construction of a scale of value that was defined with a potentially limitless landscape spatial extent. The interpretation of Angkor as a living site supported this broad spatial construction. For APSARA interviewees, the valued spaces of Angkor were inseparable from the ‘traditional’ landscape of forests, rice fields and villages. The local population was seen as contributing to the value of the site. ‘Modern’ was seen as an intrusion that could damage not only the spaces of value, but also the scale of interpretation. APSARA staff considered the spaces of interpretation as a source of protection for the scale of value, indeed many defined it spatially as the ZEMP

Zone 2, or the buffer zone. In this sense, the scale of value is fragile and the scale of interpretation grounded and strong. In contrast, the ICC documents created an image of Angkor as the strong economic and symbolic core, supporting a landscape that was yet to establish and position itself to fully resist modern influences. This demonstrated the manner in which the boundaries between scales are seen and constructed in different ways by these various stakeholders.

The ICC documents constructed an economic and symbolic scale of value for Angkor that was supported by an aesthetic and atmospheric scale of interpretation which reinforced the experiences of those visiting and utilising the heritage space. However, in this case 'Angkor' was also reliant on the urban space that sits apart from it. A space of 'non-heritage', defined or scaled as 'modern' is the source of visitors, and therefore must be respected. But the boundary between modern and traditional is still to be firmly established and therefore can be manipulated. In contrast, the APSARA scales of heritage revolve around balancing scientific and economic agendas with the livelihoods of the population they are charged with managing. Interpretation is part of heritage, with landscapes being more than monuments. APSARA interviewees were confident in their construction of the boundary between modern and traditional. They considered the ZEMP boundaries as providing political weight to their interpretations of Angkor in a way that the ICC documents don't quite suggest.

Finally, the local community possessed two strong images of Angkor operating within both a scale of economic value and within a scale of social value. Like the other stakeholders, their image of Angkor was embedded amongst the forests of Angkor. However, they did not possess elevated images of Angkor. Their contextualisation of Angkor was predominantly from the perspective of what an individual on the ground can physically see. At one level they felt that forests were important to make Angkor look nice for the tourists on whom they depend for financial security. In this way their understanding of the scaled relationships between value and interpretation was similar to that derived from the ICC documents. However, unlike all the other stakeholders, the local community did not perceive the urban environment at the same threat level. Many of those interviewed did not want Angkor to be in an urban landscape, nor did they imply that they needed to fend

off urban development. It is argued that this is because of the influence of having constructed a scale of value based on social function. In seeing and believing 'Angkor' to be the social (public) space of the town, the modern urban landscape becomes part of Angkor's interpretation. Angkor was psychologically embedded within an urban space. In fact over half of the local community respondents felt that the use of Angkor by people meant that they considered Angkor as inside Siem Reap town. The natural setting of Angkor was about providing atmospheric relief from the heat and pressure of urban life, not about temporally distancing visitors and users from contemporary life. Thus a scale of social value is one which is supported by a small scale of interpretation, both of which sit embedded within the modern world, not opposed to it.

The analysis of the social construction of scales of interpretation that was presented in this chapter has revealed how different understandings of 'Angkor' and what role it plays, influences how it is interpreted. By utilising different memories and experiences to support these interpretations, political, economic, and social agendas for 'Angkor' are ensured, or at least supported. The next chapter will explore further the relationship between the different scales of heritage by investigating the spatial processes of inclusion and exclusion at Angkor.