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Who Owns World Heritage?

The Effects of Western Based Cultural Heritage Management on the Local Populations of Angkor Wat Archaeological Park

by

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I. Lost to Whom?  
The Historical Development of Angkor

In 1860, a French explorer named Henri Mouhot came across a site that he observed to be lost to time in the jungles of Cambodia. In his journals, he noted the grandeur and romantic beauty of these forgotten, neglected monuments. Little did he know that his discovery of Angkor, the ancient Khmer capital, would be declared a World Heritage Site by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) over one century later in 1992. Mouhot died shortly after his documentation of Angkor, and did not live to see the implementation of French colonial rule over Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam. Further, Mouhot was unable to observe the creation of L'Ecole Française de l'Extrême-Orient, a French school created for the purpose of taking on the cultural heritage management and conservation of Angkor Wat and its surrounding archaeological park. The projects of restoration and conservation led by Western actors have forever impacted and shifted the intangible cultural heritage of the Angkor region and the livelihoods of the local people. The re-discovery of Angkor is just one of the many turning points for Cambodia as it set the course for the modern history of the nation as well as set the social structures the citizens of the Kingdom of Cambodia are still living in today.

Since the re-discovery of Angkor, tourism and international attention has increased rapidly, especially after the World Heritage Site declaration in 1992. According to Cambodia’s Ministry of Tourism (2018), in 1993, Cambodia received 118,183 international tourists. In the years following, tourism rates continued on a steady increase. For example, between 2004 and 2007, the number of international tourists nearly doubled from 1,055,202 to 2,015,128 visitors. More recently, in 2017, the number of international tourists in Cambodia reached 5,602,157 (2018: 2). With this rapid increase in attention, Cambodia has had to make fast plans and
adaptations to accommodate the needs of tourists. This adaptation is especially evident for the most popular tourist destination, Angkor, and its neighboring city, Siem Reap. With 2,457,282 visitors to the region in 2017 (2018: 2), tourism management plans have been working quickly to assist the region in becoming a world-class tourist destination. This rapid development for tourism, combined with the conservation practices of the Angkor complex, has left local Khmer lost in a world of international influence and cultural adaptation. Of course, the economic benefit of the tourism industry deserves to be acknowledged; yet, through diplomacy and international interest, the economic benefit must, too, be further analyzed to understand its legitimate impact on the local people.

This thesis will investigate the extent to which the consequential power structures produced by Western-centric cultural heritage management practices, and the responding tourism industry, of Angkor Wat Archaeological Park, have affected the livelihoods of the local people in Angkor and Siem Reap, Cambodia. Through sociological and anthropological analysis, this thesis is asking what tools and methods of both historical and contemporary practices of heritage management have been effective and beneficial to local people, and which have only furthered inequality in a genocide-recovering state. This research is more important today than ever in a changing, globalized world. With the increasing access to international tourism within wealthy countries, the Angkor region, and the problems associated with it, are a key case study in understanding the roles of tourists, international actors, and the local people in evaluating a sovereign nation’s autonomy. With UNESCO considering implementing similar cultural heritage management practices and organizations to other endangered World Heritage Sites around the globe, it is crucial that anyone interested in global heritage is aware of the complexities and dangers of Western-centered practices on non-Western heritage sites.
Historical Context of Angkor:

In order to analyze the contemporary situation in Angkor, it is necessary to understand the historical background of Angkor and the Khmer people. Freeman and Jacques explain in their 2003 book, *Ancient Angkor*, that before the Kingdom of Angkor was established, the Khmer civilization was made up of multiple communities, mostly spread out around Tonlé Sap in north-western Cambodia because of its aquatic resources and fertile ground. The first king of Angkor was Jayavarman II, who reigned from 790–835 CE, uniting the Khmer people. He and his successors were responsible for leading the building projects of the Angkor region. Much of the religious and cultural traditions of the kingdom were influenced by India, which was connected to Southeast and East Asia through the narrow Isthmus of Kra (the neck of the Malay Peninsula). India brought over Hinduism and Buddhism early in Cambodia’s developmental history. Thus, Angkor was a Hindu state, and the monuments that were built by the various rulers were built as Hindu temples (2003: 8-11).

Suryavarman II’s rule of the Kingdom of Angkor from 1113-1150 CE marks the peak of Angkor’s power and civilization. He was responsible for building the most well-known monument of the region, Angkor Wat, a temple for the Hindu god, Vishnu, and led many military campaigns for the expansion of the Khmer Empire. The Angkor kingdom remained Hindu until Jayavarman VII, a passionate Buddhist, took the throne in 1181 CE. He brought back the stability of the kingdom and set out on the largest building program in Angkor’s history during his 30-year reign. He was responsible for the construction of Ta Prohm, Banteay Kdei and Preak Khan, along with many other monuments, hospitals and temples. When Jayavarman VIII took throne in 1243 CE, he brought back Hinduism with him. He is responsible for the destruction of Buddhist imagery and focused on the conservation and restoration of major Hindu
temples, such as Angkor Wat, Bapuon and the central plaza of Angkor Thom. However, with the rise of Theravada Buddhism in the 13th century (after Jayavarman VIII’s reign), much of the temples built were wooden structures and therefore have not preserved like the majority of temples built during the Angkor period. The empire continued to prosper, as documented by a Chinese emissary. However, during the 14th century, conflict emerged with the ascension of the Siamese Kingdom. Trade with Angkor in Northern Cambodia was not as well suited as the Siamese Kingdom’s capital in Ayutthaya which was located closer to the southern border of Thailand. Despite these weaknesses, Angkor was able to survive until the end of the sixteenth century (Freeman and Jacques 2003: 13). Therefore, Angkor and its monuments were never truly “lost” after the fall of the empire, as Henri Mouhot describes in his journals after re-discovering Angkor Wat. They have been frequented by locals as religious spaces throughout the centuries, maintaining their cultural importance to Cambodia and representative to the religious background of Cambodia and the Khmer people. As explained by Baillie (2006), this religious context is key in understanding the impacts of secular systems of heritage management in Angkor and the distancing of people from their sacred monuments, a subject that will be further dissected in the later portion of this thesis.

The next important period of Cambodian history in regards to the major shifting points of Cambodia’s cultural structure is the French colonial period. Referring back to the French intervention briefly mentioned in the beginning of the paper, Henri Mouhot is credited to discovering the site of Angkor in 1860. His documentation of Angkor includes his sentiment around the romanticized history of the space. Di Giovine (2009) explains that the Khmer ruins were the “ideal, physical embodiment of… [the] Romantic-era colonist narrative” (2009: 357). This is evident in Bouillevaux’s citation in Mouhat’s published diary stating that, “There are few
things than can stir such melancholy feelings as the sight of places that were once the scene of some glorious or pleasurable event, but which are now deserted” (Dagens 1995: 148). It is clear that the French quickly valorized these foreign monuments, and this romanticized narrative was spread across the Western world and is still embedded in the heritage management practices done today at the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Angkor.

France declared its protectorate over the Kingdom of Cambodia shortly after Mouhot’s expedition in 1867, with agreeance from the Cambodian ruler, King Norodom. The French assisted Cambodia in ridding itself of Siam’s suzerainty, which was a step towards Cambodia gaining total independence almost a century later in 1953. However, before independence, France brought Cambodia under its Indochine Union in 1887, along with Vietnam and Laos. This declaration began a long path of misguided oppression of the Khmer people. French nationals took the roles of the highest governmental positions in Cambodia, dismissing previous rulers, such as King Norodom, who were then demoted to unimportant figurehead roles. Even in the lower ranks of governmental positions, Cambodian politicians had a hard time finding employment in the government, as the French preferred to hire Vietnamese for the positions (Seekins 1990: 18). During this time, Cambodia was brought into a new period of international dominance by the French.

The value placed upon the Angkor complex by the French led to the establishment of L’Ecole Française de l'Extrême-Orient to assist the locals in protecting their tangible heritage in 1908. While at first glance, this may be seen as a noble gesture by the French, Heikllie and Peycame (2010) argue that this project was taken up as an act to self-legitimize their authority in Cambodia (2010: 301). This act assisted in furthering France’s colonial dominance, and displayed to both the domestic and international community the capacity of their power. The
French used this project to not only justify their colonialism, but to convince the locals that they are in need of Western support.

The ideology based on European societies being more advanced, and saviors to the rest of the world, is known as Orientalism. Orientalism is a term coined by Edward Said to explain the power dynamic between the West and the “Orient.” Essentially, Orientalism can be broken down into three categories. The first being a product of academic work done by European and North American scholars. The second is the direct distinction of the “West and the rest” used by many writers, poets, and so on, as a starting point or theoretical grounding for their work. Thirdly, Said explains that Orientalism is the ideology that the West has used for “dominating, restructuring, and having an authority over the Orient” (1978: 3). In other words, Orientalism is the backbone of justifying the colonial endeavor. This paper will mostly be focusing on the third category of Orientalism, as it is key to evaluating the role and theory behind international intervention in Siem Reap and the Angkor complex.

**Before UNESCO - The Khmer Rouge:**

The establishment of Democratic Kampuchea by the communist party known as the Khmer Rouge is an essential period of time in understanding the context leading up to the establishment of Angkor as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, as well as the condition of Cambodia at the time. The Khmer Rouge was a communist based party that formed and trained in the jungles of Eastern Cambodia starting in the 1960’s. They were advised and supported by the North Vietnamese army, and succeeded in capturing Cambodia’s capital, Phnom Penh, from the Khmer Republic, led by the pro-American Marshal Lon Pol, on April 17, 1975. This event concluded the Cambodian Civil War that began in March of 1970. As Donald Seekins (1990)
explains, Mid-April is the start of the Cambodian new year, and thus the fall of Phnom Penh was viewed as a sign of hope and prosperity for the upcoming year by the Cambodian people. Yet, it quickly became evident that the new Democratic Kampuchea, led by Pol Pot, was not an end to the war. Evacuation of Phnom Penh began immediately, pushing residents out to the countryside due to a rumored potential bombing by the United States. This rumor was a lie, yet everyone was ordered to leave. The Khmer Rouge promised that it would only be for two to three days, but this, too, was a lie. Instead, the residents of Phnom Penh, who were referred to as politically unreliable “new people,” were put into forced labor battalions throughout the country. Statistics from Khieu Samphan suggest that this evacuation alone resulted in 2,000 to 3,000 deaths (Seekins 1990: 48-49). This death toll was only the tip of the iceberg of what was to come.

The Khmer Rouge was set out on a nationalistic agenda and a paradigm of cultural purification. The genocide resulted in the deaths of many minority groups, and forced assimilation upon others. In regard to religion, according to Article 20 of the 1976 Constitution of Democratic Kampuchea, religious freedom was guaranteed. However, it also declared that “all reactionary religions that are detrimental to Democratic Kampuchea and the Kampuchean People are strictly forbidden” (Seekins 1990: 55). Even though about 85 percent of the population practiced Theravada Buddhism, the regime declared Buddhist monks as “social parasites, [and] were defrocked and forced into labor brigades” (1990: 55). Additionally, monks were executed, religious spaces were destroyed, such as the monuments in Angkor, and people who were caught praying or participating in any form of religious practices, including Christianity and Islam, were often killed.

After years of genocide under the Khmer Rouge, and conflict with Vietnam, Vietnam made its final advance to overthrow Democratic Kampuchea on December 22, 1978. After days
of aggressive war, Phnom Penh fell to the Vietnamese on January 7, 1979. Pol Pot and the leaders of the Khmer Rouge retreated to the northern border near Thailand to regroup. A new administration under the direction of Hanoi was established in Cambodia, but it competed with the Khmer Rouge on both the domestic and international stage as the legitimate government of Cambodia (Seekins 1990: 69).

The Khmer Rouge set out to change the cultural fabric of, at the time, modern Cambodia. The death tolls are uncertain as various organizations have offered different estimates. Seekins finds that the population estimate reached 7.1 million in 1972. Pol Pot claims that there were about 800,000 deaths total. If this were the case, about 11 percent of the population would have died during the regime. Amnesty International, on the other hand, finds the death rate to be almost 20 percent of the population, or about 1.4 million. With these numbers, Seekins declares that the “revolution was easily, in proportion to the size of the country’s population, the bloodiest in modern Asian history” (1990: 51).

With the number of deaths and the destruction of the country’s culture heritage under the Khmer Rouge, how were the monuments of Angkor able survive this period of turmoil? This question leads to the thought provoking observation made by multiple scholars (Fletcher, Johnson, Bruce, and Khun-Neay 2007 & Heikkila and Peycam 2010), that Angkor Wat has remained centered on the Cambodian National Flag since its independence in 1953. It has survived through “Royalist, Republican and Khmer Rouge governments and the Kingdom of Cambodia that was reconstituted in 1993” (Fletcher et al. 2007: 385-386). Angkor has stayed as the epic symbol of Khmer culture and civilization practically since its construction, as it presents the greatness and legacy of the Khmer people, thus advocating for the importance of the conservation and preservation of the most predominant monument in Cambodia. It is essential to
Cambodia’s national identity that Angkor Wat and its surrounding complex survives the tests of time, but it is equally, if not more essential, that the methods of cultural heritage management simultaneously benefit and enhance the intangible cultural heritage of the local people of Angkor and Siem Reap. Angkor Wat, without the intangible culture surrounding it, is nothing but another ancient monument for outsiders to observe in wonder.

**Cambodia’s Present State:**

Like many countries that have experienced colonialism, Cambodia is presently in a state of defining its national identity. Today, as a rapidly increasing tourist destination, the people of Cambodia must balance their history with their future. Through various political regimes that drastically changed the national identity of Cambodia and with the confrontation of foreign interest and mandatory adaptation, locals are caught in a net of a tangled cultural fabric. Many scholars, such as Luco (2013), Winter (2006), Miura (2018) and Mackay and Palmer (2005), have discussed their fears of the current state of Cambodia, especially Angkor, as heritage commodification to appeal to mass tourism has begun to “archaeologize” (Luco 2013) the locals in a position without agency or upward mobility. It is important to understand the international actors’ roles in the development of cultural heritage management projects for Angkor Wat Archaeological Park, as it is through these international cultural institutions’ acts of neocolonialism that the locals have been positioned, or frozen, in their present state.

Today, there are a few organizations that play a major role in the conservation of Angkor. These are the “International Coordinating Committee for the Safeguarding and Development of the Historic Site of Angkor” (ICC), the “Authority for the Protection of the Site and Management of the Region of Angkor” (APSARA), and UNESCO. The largest problem with each of these
institutions is the lack of acknowledgement of the locals of the area being the largest stakeholders in the conducted cultural heritage management projects. The ICC was established at the Tokyo Conference of 1993, and Japan and France became the co-chairs of the committee. The ICC began its work focusing on aiding Cambodia with safeguarding the monuments as the biggest issues involved architecture conservation, the prevention of looting and vandalism, and the clearing of landmines left behind from the Khmer Rouge period. Tourism was not the focal point in the early years of the committee. The ICC created APSARA as a national committee to promote the agency of Cambodian authority in 1995. Yet, the organization is heavily influenced and structured by the ICC and UNESCO and therefore is simply a subversive method of neocolonialism (Di Giovine 2009). On the other hand, Cavalier and Lemaistre (2002) advocate that an influence of international organizations over APSARA is essential, as they provide insight and professional training that APSARA could not obtain itself (2002: 20). While international partnership is indeed beneficial, what other scholars suggest, such as Di Giovine (2009) and Gillespie (2013), is to give more agency to APSARA as a domestic organization, and support a focus on the needs of the local people.

The act of conservation by the guidance of Western powers is a continuation of the colonial legacy of France. The valorization that originally commenced the Western fascination of Angkor is contingent to the conservation currently in practice today. Heikkila and Peycam (2010) bring Said’s Orientalism back into this conversation as they express that the valorization of Khmer artifacts and monuments found at Angkor is produced by the underlying “othering” of the culture (2010: 301). The majority of scholars such as Luco (2013), Chermayeff (2013), Winter (2006), and Dunard (2002), agree that it is this continued “othering” that has made the tourism industry in Angkor and Siem Reap so attractive for international tourists. Winter
discusses the issues of international interest in Angkor as he finds that the dominant representations of Cambodia are largely non-Cambodian. The authorities of Cambodia, indeed, do their own work in establishing what tourism in Angkor and Siem Reap should look like, and what cultural narrative they would like to be seen, yet it is primarily the work of international actors, including the tourists themselves, that have curated the Angkor identity to be consumed by the international community. This issue is further explained by Urry (2011) and his theory of the Tourist Gaze.

Urry and Larsen (2011) have contributed to the conversation of international tourism by reflecting on and producing theories concerning current practices of tourism in their book, *The Tourist Gaze* (2011). When it comes to the concept of the Tourist Gaze, as coined by Urry, the authors explain that people in general “gaze upon the world through a particular filter of ideas, skills, desires and expectations, framed by social class, gender, nationality, age and education. Gazing is a performance that orders, shapes and classifies, rather than reflects the world” (Urry and Larsen 2011: 14). This concept is the foundation to how tourists move throughout their travelling experience. The “gaze” is not inherently destructive, but it does, indeed, limit the perception and understanding of unfamiliar settings and cultures. The authors call upon MacCannell, who explains in a 1973 work that “tourist spaces” are produced from the idea of “staged authenticity” to comply to the tourists’ imagined realities of Angkor and their knowledge, or lack thereof, on the history of the site. This directly applies to the situation in Angkor, as the locals are forced to work under the stress of the gaze. For example, when it comes to cultural performances, such as dances or other forms of expressive art, the performers themselves must take on the responsibility of being the creators and ambassadors of their culture. Rarely do performances undergo a nuanced thought process by the tourist, as they consume what they are
given and claim it as authentic, and therefore each solid example of culture, or each portrayal of culture, is added to the tourist’s understanding of what the culture of Angkor, or even Cambodia at large, is (Urry and Larsen 2011: 74-74). This, of course, is burdensome to locals and could potentially not only simplify their culture, but create a “museumification” (Winter and Ollier 2006) of their heritage, thus ceasing their natural cultural development.

The narrative produced by the Orientalist-based Tourist Gaze is well reflected among the locals perception of their own cultural heritage. The Cambodian government must be analyzed as well, as they contribute to this top-down approach to defining Cambodia’s cultural heritage. For example, the original director of APSARA focused on the conservation of Angkor and Siem Reap and was wary of the idea of a rise in mass tourism. In 2001, he was denounced of his position by the prime minister, and in 2004, the vice prime minister became director. He stated that “‘cultural tourism and the expansion thereof in the Siem Reap region are first and foremost based on the romantic appeal of Angkor and its thousand-year-old temples’ (UNESCO 2004, 13)” (Miura 2018: 48). The concentration on tourism is coincided with the economic appeal that the industry brings along with it. The economic appeal to the local people living in Angkor and Siem Reap is a false dream that has not been totally fulfilled, again, due to the lack of valuing the locals as the largest stakeholders.

The rhetoric of socio-economic enhancement told to locals of the Angkor and Siem Reap area by both national and international officials is where scholars have found themselves debating against each other. Some are stating that even small amounts of economic mobility offered through tourism is beneficial for the local people in the Angkor area, despite the impact on their intangible cultural heritage. Fletcher et al. (2007) declare that the employment opportunities generated by the current developments of tourism led by the Cambodian
government are essential for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of the nation (2007: 387). Yet, the employment opportunities and economic impact are minimal for the local people. De Lopez et al.’s 2006 research on the sustainable development in Angkor claims that the tourism industry has made little to no improvements on their daily lives (2006: 33). If this is the case, then initiatives need to be made to make the claimed “economic opportunities” actually beneficial to the local people. MacKay and Palmer (2015) present their observations that the possibility of economic mobility through the tourism industry has effects on the intangible cultural heritage of Angkor. Many people, especially the younger generations, have left their local villages to pursue opportunities in tourism (2015: 276). While the agency of individuals must be accounted for and validated, to what extent do the locals actually have legitimate agency over their lives when they are trapped in a power structure that forces them into these actions and displacements? This question stems from the neocolonialism found in Angkor, and Cambodia at large, today.

Currently, the majority of research, including that of Gillespie (2013), Heikkila and Peycam (2005), Fletcher et al. (2007), and De Lopez et al. (2006), has been focusing on what is not working when it comes to the tourism industry and the heritage management of Angkor. There needs to be a shift in scholarship and research on what can work or what is currently working for the local people. As previously mentioned, De Lopez et al. (2006) have conducted field research on what the needs of the local communities are in regards to tourism and heritage management. A large part of the issues is the lack of communication between the developers and the locals. This problem is also addressed by Gillespie (2013), who conducted field research on the effects of the Zoning and Environmental Management Plan (ZEMP) emplaced in 1994 on locals who live within the most critically protected areas, as determined by ZEMP. She agrees with De Lopez et al. (2006) in that there is a lack of communication, and locals often do not
know the restrictions they are placed under. Again, the research has focused on what needs to be changed, but little has been offered on what needs to stay the same for ethical development in Angkor. This thesis’s goal is to synthesize the methods and hopes of current scholars and actors working on the cultural heritage management projects of Angkor, as a more ethical solution must be initiated. This solution is needed not only for its impacts on the local people of Angkor, but for the other global communities living near endangered heritage sites that are under the control of international organizations.

The historical context of Cambodia is crucial in understanding the current national narrative represented within Angkor Archaeological Park. With a never-ending story of international involvement, it is clear as to why Angkor will continuously be living up to an image that it has hardly had the opportunity to develop on its own. Through investigating the historical and contemporary ways that conservation programs and international actors have influenced the lives of the local people, it will be clear that options are available to promote more ethical and locally-beneficial programs regarding conservation and tourism, namely a paradigm shift from the concentration of tangible cultural heritage to the intangible cultural heritage of the region. At the heart of this issue is the need for local voices to be legitimized and the local people to be recognized as the most important stakeholders of the programs affecting their home and their nation. Said’s Orientalism, Urry’s Tourist Gaze, and neocolonialism will be key theories and topics moving forward in the discussion and analysis of the effects of the Western-based cultural heritage management projects, along with the increase of mass tourism, on the local people of Siem Reap and Angkor.
II. From Physical to Personal: The Development of Western-Based Cultural Heritage Management Practices in Angkor

The region of Angkor, Cambodia today is in a state of adjustment. For just under three decades, the Angkor Wat Archaeological Park has been accommodating to the changing needs of tourists determined by international organizations. This thesis has thus far laid out the historical context of the site of Angkor, including the ancient history, the period of colonization, and the Khmer Rouge era. All three of these major sections of Cambodian history will aid in better understanding the findings of empirical research previously mentioned. Through using the contextual background and the theoretical frameworks already offered, this section of the thesis will further explore the empirical research surrounding the question at the heart of this work: to what extent have the Western-centric cultural heritage management programs, their guiding international organizations, and the responding mass tourism industry affected the daily livelihoods of the local people in the Angkor region?

To better understand the effects of the cultural heritage management practices, this paper will move in a chronological order of program implementations which will be broken down into three sections. The first will be analyzing the initial practices put in place during the declaration of Angkor as a World Heritage Site through 2002. The second section will be addressing the heritage management paradigm shift that occurred in response to the growing tourism industry in 2002 to 2012. The final section will be looking at the more recent developments and actions taken place since the implementation of sustainable, ethical tourism and heritage management from 2012 to today. These three sections will be put into conversation with the theories of Said’s Orientalism, Urry’s Tourist Gaze, and neocolonialism.
The First Decade of Heritage Management (1992-2002):

The establishment of Angkor as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1992 was the major turning point in the international interest of Angkor, as well as Cambodia at large. As previously explored in this paper, there has always been some form of international intervention within the region of the Khmer Civilization, whether it was the Siamese, Chinese, or Vietnamese in earlier history or the French protectorate during the mid-nineteenth to mid-twentieth century. Yet, the concrete presentation of Angkor to the World Heritage stage gave it its loudest recognition to the global audience. The founding document for Angkor as a World Heritage Site was written in 1993, and failed to address some of the most important factors that would affect the livelihoods of the local people. Jane Chermayeff explains in her 2013 article, “Angkor: Preserving World Heritage and the Role of Interpretation,” that the document contained fifty five pages, forty four of which were designated to the physical conservation of the site, and only one pertained to the future challenge of tourism (2013: 202). With that said, it is clear that the believed to be most crucial part of Angkor becoming a World Heritage Site was the protection and conservation of the monuments, and the future major issues that an impoverished region of Cambodia would soon face was viewed as a secondary problem.

Said explains in his work on Orientalism (1978), that through the ideology that the West is superior to the Orient, it is the believed duty of the West to care for and protect heritage around the world, especially in non-Western nations. It is through this direct power structure that the lack of acknowledgement of the needs of a country and its individuals is far less accounted for than the tangible heritage. Additionally, Baillie (2006) presents that the idea of heritage management and conservation “are concepts that sprang from Western ideologies rooted in objectification and rationalism” (123). Warrack (2011) uses this observation of Baillie to address
that the beginning acts of conservation are due to a colonial, Western gaze of exotification on the foreign architecture of Angkor (37). With this in mind, Di Giovine (2009) finds that it is this exact attention and maintenance given to the tangible heritage of Angkor that the power dynamic between Western actors and Cambodian officials is upheld. He ties in the work of Bourdieu stating that “architecture can be read as a materialization of social relationships” (Di Giovine 2009: 350). This would then allude to the argument that Western-based cultural institutions do not need to focus on the aspects that may be important to the local people, as their authority of being recognized as global leaders in World Heritage is established through the physical safeguarding of the archaeological park.

In the beginning phases of conservation of the archaeological park, Angkor underwent a Western-based zoning effort that resulted in a destruction and limitation of the locals’ daily lives and intangible cultural heritage. This program is called the Zoning and Environmental Management Plan (ZEMP), and it is this plan that determined the most critically endangered areas of the park, and thus the most protected. Many scholars such as Winter (2007), Miura (2011), Gillespie (2013), and Fletcher et al. (2007), have criticized and evaluated the social impacts of ZEMP on the local populations. Gillespie explains in her research that ZEMP was drafted in the early 1990’s and was implemented in 1994. There are five zones that have been established, with Zone 1 being the most critically endangered, and Zone 5 containing the entire provincial territory. Gillespie finds that Zones 1 and 2 alone contain over 100 villages, each with a varying amount of native villagers. She conducted interviews with these locals to better understand their perceptions of ZEMP. She found that almost 80% of the interviewed locals did not have a great understanding of where the border lines are, and also had a lack of knowledge on what their limitations entailed (2013: 197).
The lack of understanding and confusion of local people is also found in the work of Miura (2011) who additionally argues that ZEMP is an example of Angkor being a “testing ground” for the conservation practices of large, archaeological World Heritage Sites. Gillespie additionally finds that the limitations that locals are supposed to follow often interfere with the cultural norms and traditional practices of the communities, thus causing a disruption to the intangible heritage of Angkor park (2013: 297). Gillespie (2013) explores the issue regarding the idea of giving meaning and entitlements to places through spatial regulation is more of a Western idea, and not necessarily recognized in different cultures, such as the Cambodian cultural norms. Ultimately, Gillespie’s work presents the failure of ZEMP at accommodating to the needs of the local people as it, instead, focuses on the needs of what UNESCO deems to be worthy of conservation. Thus, this physical implementation of Western ideals on Angkor’s territory highlights the practice of neocolonialism and subversive imperialism placed upon the local people and both their tangible and intangible cultural heritage.

While the locals of Angkor endure the physical and cultural restrictions placed upon them through UNESCO’s planning efforts, the inhabitants have also experienced the impact of international attention regarding economic interests in Cambodia starting after Angkor’s World Heritage Site establishment. Hall and Ringer (2000) explain that along with the rise of tourism and international actors involved with the Angkor region is the growing interest in Cambodia’s natural resources. They quote Taylor et al. (1996) as they explain that “virtually all of Cambodia's primary resources [are now] under some kind of unaccountable foreign control” (Taylor et al. 1996: 24). This includes the lumber and mining industry. While it can be argued that this investment of resources is beneficial for the local economy, Hall and Ringer state that 90% of Cambodia’s population is in rural and impoverished locations (2000: 179). With that
being said, Cambodia’s per capita income is greater than Vietnam and Laos, yet the majority of Cambodians do not receive an economic benefit, as the government is still paying off war debts. Additionally, while there are focus points that need to be developed to bring in a larger profit, such as the tourism industry, the funds are lacking. Yet, a large sum of money from foreign actors has been invested in tourism projects, but, again, this money has not been given out for the critical needs of the Cambodian people, especially the 90% that live outside of urban centers. Thus, there has been an increasing inequality between the rural and the urban. This alludes to the actual motivations and interests of the international community: the economic profit of their individual investing operations (Hall and Ringer 2000: 179). While these issues have arose outside of the establishments of UNESCO, the promotion of Angkor by UNESCO’s interference is directly connected to the attention and exploitation of Cambodia’s resources.

The ideology that has been followed by international actors regarding their investments in the Angkor region is very similar to the practice of colonization. In the case of Angkor, a foreign nation is not necessarily establishing a government to take control of Cambodia, but instead, it is through subversive efforts that Cambodia is once again at a lack of self-produced agency while under the influence of neocolonialism. The people of Cambodia, and specifically the people that live on the site of Angkor, are not directly being controlled by a foreign power, but the Cambodian government and local institutions are complicit to the implementations of foreign authority over the nation. When it comes to the management of the park, as declared previously, there are three major organizations that take charge over the majority of projects and developments of safeguarding the site. As a reminder, these are the “International Coordinating Committee for the Safeguarding and Development of the Historic Site of Angkor” (ICC) co-
chaired by the French and Japanese, the “Authority for the Protection of the Site and Management of the Region of Angkor” (APSARA), and UNESCO.

While APSARA is a domestic organization, it is deeply influenced by both UNESCO and the ICC. Miura (2018) expands upon this authority in her work as she finds APSARA using the French model of managing Angkor by making restrictions upon the local people through the authority of the Heritage Police, established in 1997. These restrictions are even more tightly regulated as there is a threat that “without restrictions UNESCO might remove Angkor from the World Heritage List” (2018: 49). These acts of indirect authoritarianism by UNESCO over Angkor exemplify the implementations of neocolonialism both historically and currently underway at the site. Some of the restrictions monitored by the heritage police, starting in the early 2000’s, involve charging stall owners and vendors for being present on the sites and placing a ban on some of the traditional practices of locals (Miura 2018: 49). These restrictions have only become a theoretical incubator for tension between locals and the governing authorities, both domestic and international.

As seen thus far, the first decade of implementing cultural heritage management practices on Angkor Wat Archaeological Park, commencing with its declaration as a World Heritage Site in 1992, has proven to be Western-centric and focused on the physical condition of the site. There has been little to no attention on the needs of the local people, and the restrictions placed have been detrimental to the intangible heritage of Angkor during the first decade. The products of internalized Orientalism, and the responding acts of neocolonialism, are seen clearly in the early works of international organizations involved with Angkor. In 2002, however, there was a shift in prioritized practices within the heritage management of the park. The focus on safeguarding and conserving the physical structures shifted to the developments of infrastructure
in Angkor, and neighboring Siem Reap, to accommodate the growing number of tourists. Like the territorial and cultural limitations placed on the local communities in the first decade, the people were once again forced to adapt under an outside dominating power, this time with what Urry (2011) calls: the Tourist Gaze.

**The Second Decade of Heritage Management (2002-2012):**

In the decade of 2002 to 2012, the Royal Government of Cambodia declared an “Angkor Development Decade” that would focus on poverty, stable economic growth, and the quality of life of the locals. Yet, the beginning phases of this decade did not necessarily reflect these primary goals. Instead, the goals were planned to be met by the growing infrastructure intended to accommodate and draw in the growing tourist population, once again, putting the actual needs and voices of local people on hold. While the prospect of helping foster a tourist industry would seem to be economically and socially beneficial to local people, it will later be discussed how, despite some economic improvements, the projects catered for the tourism industry have disrupted the cultural fabric of the Cambodian people living on the heritage site.

In 2000, two years before the “Angkor Decade of Development,” the World Tourism Organization held a conference in Siem Reap to determine the future of the World Heritage Site. Winter (2007) explains that the conclusion from the conference made for Angkor was to help it become a place of high quality cultural tourism. The director of APSARA’s tourism department at the time, Chau Sun Kérya, who was wary of the idea of a rapid increase in tourism in fear of the protection and conservation efforts of Angkor Wat Archaeological Park, announced that the development must be equally beneficial to locals, the tangible heritage, and the tourists. Winter found that the “language of cultural tourism being advanced in the conference reflected an
attempt to bring together Cambodia’s cultural assets with the socioeconomic benefits of tourism in a mutually beneficial relationship” (2007: 35). However, Chau Sun Kérya later revealed in an interview that the larger focus of tourism was the “high quality” aspect over the “cultural tourism” aspect; the hotels and tourist accommodations were planned to take more of a priority than the preservation of the culture itself (Winter 2007: 35-36).

APSARA, along with the locals, had to adjust and accommodate to the ideas and plans made at the World Heritage Tourism conference in 2000. The director of APSARA was dismissed in 2001 by the Prime Minister of Cambodia, as he was seen unfit to accomplish the tasks of tourism development due to his anxieties around the effects of mass tourism on the stability and safeguarding of the physical monuments (Miura 2018). In 2004, the Vice-Minister took the role as the director of APSARA and stated that “‘cultural tourism and the expansion thereof in the Siem Reap region are first and foremost based on the romantic appeal of Angkor and its thousand-year-old temples’ (UNESOC 2004, 13)” (Miura 2018: 48). The Vice-Minister has been influenced by the Orientalist view of the French colonizers who, in the nineteenth and twentieth century, made the same claims regarding the romanticizing of Angkor Wat. This continuation of the colonial legacy is damaging to the local communities as APSARA pursues the French ideology of conservation, finding locals to be “threats” to the original “romantic” landscapes of the site. Laws were then set in place to forbid newly formed local couples from building houses within specific zones determined by ZEMP, forcing displacement of locals for the sake of “sustainable tourism” (Miura 2018: 49).

The colonial narrative stretches deep into the foundations of the development projects for mass tourism. The ICC, as usual, guided APSARA in its tourism development efforts. However, the development was ill-advised as the various projects were designed to accommodate to
Western tourists. As Winter explains, by 2003, “nearly 60% of all tourists entering Cambodia originated from Asia” (2007: 38). The hotels that were created for the Asian tourists were built further away from the city, along the highway connecting Siem Reap to the airport. This issue shows a direct result of the prevalent issue of Angkor and Siem Reap being under the neocolonial rule of Western influencers. Said’s theory of Orientalism extends far past the Western perception of singular, specific regions. Orientalism can be found saturated in the view of the Westerner upon the “other,” advocating that non-Westerners are not only incapable of being caretakers of their cultural heritage, but are also incapable of being consumers of cultural heritage.

Regardless of who is visiting the Angkor region, the local people are in a place of jeopardy regarding their territorial rights over both their tangible and intangible cultural heritage, and thus their regional narrative. Winter and Ollier (2006) find that the national identity of Cambodia at large is becoming fixed and transformed by a plethora of actors. They explain that the “contours of Cambodia’s cultural ‘revival’ are being molded by a socio-political matrix comprised of networks of international aid, localized and transnational capitalism, and an internally embattled state” (2006: 13). This intrusion of various “networks” within Cambodia, and especially within the Angkor region, is stripping away the nationals’ right to formulate their own identity. With an initiation of having the foreign cultural professionals teach locals the tools they need to work on conserving and interpreting their own cultural heritage, this powerlessness over their identity could subside if done correctly. Lemaistre and Cavalier (2002) believe that this implementation of schooling by the ICC and APSARA are imperative to the conservation of the World Heritage Site. They argue that the ICC and UNESCO can provide the best cultural heritage professionals to aid and teach locals in preserving the Archaeological Park. While these
initiatives may seem ideal to the agency and economic mobility of the local population, the play out is not all that successful, at least not during its early stages. In their own article, they claim that the issues at the heart of the ICC, in 2002, were the development of tourist facilities and urban development, building infrastructure, and commercial licensing inside the park. Notice that none of the issues highlighted are to directly assist in the socio-economic status of local people. As always, there may be economic benefit caused by the need of employees to assist with these developments, but, reiterating the research done by De Lopez et al. (2006), tourism related activities “accounted on average for less than 10% of household income in local communities” (De Lopez et al., 2006:33). Additionally, Gillespie (2013) reports in her research that many locals feel trapped in a cycle of poverty from the regulations on where they can live due to the tourism industry and conservation projects. The percentage of household income from the tourism industry reported by De Lopez et al. (2006) is miniscule compared to all of the supposed opportunities for local employment promoted by APSARA, the ICC, and UNESCO, and the lack of mobility found by Gillespie (2013) further promotes that the tourism industry is simply not benefiting the local populations of Angkor.

At this point, it must be asked that with all of these various programs initiated, how are none of them meeting the needs of the locals? Fletcher et al. (2007), argue that Angkor Wat and its surrounding park is essential to the “rehabilitation and reconstruction” of Cambodia post-conflict period through the employment and opportunities of upward mobility for local people caught in the web of both international and national chaos. However, De Lopez et al. (2006) have found and provided suggestions made by local people, but it appears that no larger institution of power is listening. According to their research, vendors have made suggestions on how to better their careers and income as local people living on the Heritage Site. For example,
they would like a credit system so that they can build better stalls that are more attractive to tourists, have authorities encourage visitors to buy from local vendors rather than souvenir shops, and provide foreign language training to better communicate with their customers (2006: 33). With the amount of money coming in from the tourism industry, these requests are not necessarily impossible to meet.

In response to the issues faced by local people in the Angkor region that have been discussed throughout this paper, APSARA, UNESCO, and the University of Sydney initiated a new program in 2005 that would directly deal with the challenges faced by locals and both their tangible and intangible heritage. The program is titled the “Living with Heritage” project. The program, unlike the failed attempts before, seeks a holistic practice in cultural heritage management that looks more aggressively towards the negative impacts of previous practices of heritage management on the locals. Mackay and Sullivan (2008) discuss the three most prevalent impacts on which the project focuses in their article, “Living with Heritage at Angkor.” The first concern is that the locals who live within the most critical zones determined by ZEMP are required to manage their daily lives in a way that does not cause physical damage to archaeological features, including the ones that are still in the ground. This makes farming, a traditional source of income for many people in Cambodia, extremely difficult. The second issue tackled by the project is that in order to appeal to tourists, the locals have been forced to display and simplify their cultural traditions while at the same time are restricted from other cultural practices. For example, the locals are prevented from building homes with modern techniques and technology, and must use traditional methods to help “preserve” the culture to be consumed by the Tourist Gaze (Urry 2011). Finally, the last concern is that the number of visitors in the region have caused the locals to modify traditional activities. This ranges from religious
ceremonies to walks through the parks near the river (Mackay and Sullivan 2008: 3-4). This is especially devastating to the Khmer people as cultural practices and general freedoms of life were also controlled during the Khmer Rouge regime, and engaging with these activities post Khmer Rouge was a type of cultural healing that once again is being suppressed by external powers (Mackay and Sullivan 2008).

The three main concerns addressed by Mackay and Sullivan (2008) are planned to be met by the “Living with Heritage” project through three central objectives. The objectives are to identify: 1) key elements of cultural significance in Angkor; 2) Problems and threats that endanger the conservation of Angkor; and 3) the kinds of policies and databases that can be used to help protect the identified cultural values. Mackay and Sullivan explain that with these objectives, the project forces traditional experts to take a back seat, and instead take on the roles of stakeholders, consultants, and facilitators, and bring locals in as the experts that will produce the key needs of the area (2008:4-5). This concept is revolutionary in Angkor Wat Archaeological Park’s cultural heritage management history. These actions disrupt the practices of neocolonialism traditionally used within the park, and also directly confronts Urry’s concept of the Tourist Gaze (2011).

With the promotion of projects like that of “Living with Heritage,” the ending of the second decade of cultural heritage management in Angkor has taken a hopeful turn towards the ethical practices of heritage management. By identifying the main issues of the local people and unpacking the theories directly applied to them, primarily Orientalism, neocolonialism, and the Tourist Gaze, the international organizations spearheading the management projects are arguably set for a more productive development of cultural heritage management that benefits both the physical conservation of the park and the personal lives of the people living with it. However, the
concerns and acts of harm have not been completely eradicated from the region, as will be explored in the years following 2012.

**Cultural Heritage Management Practices in Angkor Today (2012 to the Present):**

While the second decade of cultural heritage management started to turn its eye towards sustainable and ethical developments, there is still a long way to go. Scholars such as Mackay and Palmer (2015), Peycam (2016), and Miura (2018) are adamant in their works that the international organizations, namely the ICC and UNESCO, are still not taking the voices of the local people seriously enough, and need to reevaluate their philosophies of heritage management practices. Mackay and Palmer (2015) have promoted the need for international stakeholders to promote and respond to local voices in management plans of the park. They reiterate the teachings of a workshop by the International Work Group of Indigenous Affairs, held in Copenhagen in 2012, that the native people of a specific land must be recognized as “right-holders and not merely stakeholders in any decision affecting them” (2015: 172). This ideology has not been in practice as exemplified by Peycam in his 2016 article. He finds that the ICC has been historically, and continues to be, absent in many controversial decisions when French or Japanese interests are not at stake. This has resulted in issues such as the Thai-promoted construction of the Siem Reap National Museum, which Peycam argues offers an oversimplified history of the Khmer Civilization, and takes up land use of the local people. Additionally, a fifty-hectare land concession has been built by the Sou Ching Group, a Korean company, which has displaced over three hundred fishing families and taken control over the tourist circuits that were previously managed by local villagers (Peycam 2016: 765-766). While these issues were faced in
2007, Peycam argues that the ICC has persisted in its ignorant leadership in Angkor’s heritage management projects.

In recent developments, the promotion of “sustainable cultural tourism” has taken on a new form under the Tourist Gaze. Similarly to Peycam, Miura (2018) advocates that the people living in the park are at the will of the international organizations and profit-driven Cambodian authorities that prioritize their interests before the locals’. She argues that the promotion of “cultural tourism” was created by marketing and governmental agencies to appeal to the wealthy, Western tourists who are interested in seeing the authentic lifestyles of the Khmer people. This would include visiting the eco-villages where Khmer people are expected to practice traditional styles of living and are discouraged from using modern technology (Luco 2013: 261). This form of tourism is just as dangerous as previous forms, as the Khmer people are still becoming “archaeologized” (Luco 2013) under the Tourist’s Gaze. Miura finds that there needs to be a larger movement from international organizations dictating the interpretation of Khmer history to the local people holding the authority over how their history will be presented to the world (2018: 40).

While the majority of cultural heritage management projects represented in this thesis could be viewed pessimistically, there are still programs being developed that could be the future of ethical tourism and heritage management. Mackay and Palmer (2015) discuss the rise of the Tourism Management Plan (TMP), which commenced in 2012. This plan seeks, among a few things, to provide new and different opportunities to visitors, while addressing rural poverty, by implementing community-based tourism projects (2015: 177). These projects are tourism opportunities that are created and ran by local communities, thus redirecting the economic profit of the tourism industry from large organization to specific communities of local people. Further,
the TMP is a response to APSARA’s policy of ‘Sustainably Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage at Angkor,’ with a particular interest in its note on recognizing “‘the rights of villagers to their intangible heritage and their obligation to respect, protect and receive benefits from their heritage’ (Hor 2011, policy 9 (ii))” (Mackay and Palmer 2015: 180). This form of tourism may answer the question of how mass tourism can benefit the locals of the region, and give them the agency to promote, practice, and develop their own, unfiltered, cultural heritage.

The implementation of community-based tourism is not necessarily a new idea, but has started to come into practice more commonly across the world. Domestically, cultural heritage tourism is used to stimulate pride and recognition of the imagined cultural narrative of a nation amongst its people, as explored by Salazar (2010). Internationally, world heritage tourism is used as cultural markers that represent a region, nation, or even a continent, in hopes of understanding the “Other” and as a way, some might say, to create world peace and worldly understanding. However, heritage tourism has created a socio-cultural shift within various nations as it has impacted national and regional identities to conform to both the domestic and international goals within the realm of heritage tourism. Yet, heritage tourism can be used as an alternative, or response, to mass tourism, and it can help localize and privatize the tourism industry in hopes of making it more community-based and community-beneficial (Salazar 2010: 130-131). These intentions are fundamental in the development of ethical tourism that sustains heritage while locals are able to sustain their livelihoods.

In recent years, the tourism industry of Angkor has started to lean towards the implementation of community-based tourism. As explained earlier, community-based tourism is a form of tourism that is generated and controlled by the local populations. It allows locals to keep the profit earned instead of only receiving small payments from larger tourist agencies that
locals may work for or work under. Additionally, community-based tourism allows the locals to
determine what the Tourist Gaze, as explained by Urry (2011), is gazing upon. The programs
currently in action are already showing legitimate progress and beneficial results. Mackay and
Palmer (2015) report on a community-based tourism program run by villagers around the North
Baray Lake, or *Baray Reach Dak*, as called by the locals. This program is a tour-based
opportunity for tourists to take a boat ride around the lake and expand their understanding of the
history of the Angkor region. The local people of the Leang Dai and Phlong villages have
benefited from the fact that they work closer to home, receive a direct income and a community
fund, and the younger generations learn new skills in the process (Mackay and Palmer 2015:
178-179). This project specifically has been produced under the Tourist Management Plan
(TMP). Moving forward, it is plans and policies like this one that a more ethical tourism and
cultural heritage management industry may grow into existence.

While there have been initiatives to create a more ethical tourist industry in Angkor, there
is still work to be done before becoming completely sustainable and beneficial to the local
populations. With a lack of scholarship on community-based tourism at Angkor, turning to
academic works on other Southeast Asian countries and their practices of community-based
tourism can supply a better understanding as to what tourism in Angkor could look like.
Research done in Thailand on community-based tourism finds that to be ethically and logistically
successful, it must focus on “environmental sustainability, community participation, equitable
distribution of financial benefits, community empowerment, improvements in standard of living,
and community management, control, and ownership of tourism projects” (Kontogeorgopoulos
*et al.* 2014: 108). A promotion of all of these subjects create a system that is beneficial to all
stakeholders involved with the tourist location and heritage site. While Cambodia has initiated
the TMP, Thailand has created organizations that specifically focus on community-based tourism, such as Responsible, Ecological, Social Tour, or REST’s, Community-Based Tourism Institute (CBT-I) in 2006. This organization has helped over 100 communities throughout Thailand within its first seven years of existence (2014: 109). The research done focused on the community-based tourism practices in Mae Kampong, a village located about 50 kilometers north of Chiang Mai. It was found that the village benefits from being close to a major tourist destination, an advantage that cannot be done with other villages further away from major cities. However, CBT-I works with the Thai government to locate villages that could benefit from community-based tourism programs. Additionally, CBT-I relies on the Thai government for advertising to tourists in the area. With that said, the authors support that it would be difficult, if not impossible, for there to be a completely locally-run community-based tourism program (2014: 115). What this example proves is that community-based tourism is, indeed, beneficial for local communities, but at the same time, there are certain requirements villages need in order for the tourism programs to actually succeed.

The concerns of village location and governmental intervention regarding community-based tourism found in the work of Kontogeorgopoulos et al. (2014) is important to keep in mind in the greater picture of heritage-tourism. Yet, for Angkor, the situation is different as the targeted groups of people are already local to the site of Angkor. Therefore, location does not have to be an issue. Regardless, when it comes to governmental intervention, it is worrisome to predict how the Cambodian government might favor tourism programs that are more economically beneficial to the nation as a state rather than the local people living in it. However, this intervention would, and should, be coming from APSARA, and if APSARA strives to fulfill its supposed commitment to safeguarding intangible heritage at Angkor, then community-based
programs like the ones mentioned by Mackay and Palmer (2015) and Kontogeorgopoulos et al. (2014) will most likely be able to thrive and continue to develop. If community-based tourism programs are not promoted by the main actors at Angkor, there is a huge risk to the cultural heritage and the heritage holders. As Salazar (2010) promotes in his work, the practice of world heritage management needs to be able to be flexible for different perspectives and methods that accommodate to that of the local people. The homogenization of World Heritage management practices is damaging to cultural identities and weakens the prospect of sustainable, ethical tourism (2010: 143). Furthering this point, it is difficult to create policies for effective cultural and sustainable tourism when the international community’s “ideal of protection and preservation [does not] exactly mesh with the host state’s vision of developing a World Heritage Site” (Candelaria 2005: 255). Ultimately, as said before, the local population needs to be allowed to gain more authority over their cultural heritage.

The development of cultural heritage management projects in the Angkor region has been a challenging and trivial road. From the Orientalist-based intervention and neocolonial implementations by international organizations, to the responding increase of mass tourism and the Tourist’s Gaze, the locals of the Angkor region have endured numerous shifts in how they are able to live their daily lives as well as both present and maintain their cultural heritage. The implications of the research presented in this paper will be further evaluated and formulated in the final section to better understand how Western-based cultural heritage management practices have impacted the livelihoods of local people, and to assist in creating suggestions for the projects of cultural heritage management and tourism, specifically community-based tourism, in the years to come.
III. (Re)Localizing World Heritage

Throughout the body of this thesis, the roles of Western-based cultural heritage management, the mass tourism industry, and international actors involved with Angkor Wat Archaeological Park have been deeply analyzed, criticized and debated. Most importantly, this thesis has evaluated various practices that both hinder and help the locals living on and near the park in Angkor and Siem Reap, Cambodia. The previous section left off with the budding aspirations of pursuing community-based tourism as a model to help support and give agency to the local populations who are most affected by the mentioned institutions and practices. This last section will discuss how community-based tourism could be the future of Angkor, how similar locations and heritage sites are approaching their cultural heritage management and tourism industry, the impact of the aforementioned material and ideas, and how this research could and should be implemented and expanded upon in the existing practices of Angkor. With that said, this section suggests a response to the issues raised by the central research question of: “to what extent and in what ways have the consequential power structures produced by Western-centric cultural heritage management practices, and the responding tourism industry, of Angkor Wat Archaeological Park, affected the livelihoods of the local people in Angkor and Siem Reap, Cambodia?” This section will be looking to answer the question of: how can the systems of Western-based power change to help promote the local heritage and voices impacted by the issues associated with Orientalism (Said 1978), neocolonialism, and the Tourist Gaze (Urry 2011) addressed in this thesis?
Reworking Heritage Management:

With the information presented in this thesis, it is clear that the systems currently in place regarding the cultural heritage management and the tourism industry of Angkor are in need of a critical assessment. This thesis proposes that organizations in control of the World Heritage Site of Angkor, namely APSARA and the ICC, must make a major shift away from an international domination rooted in Orientalism to a more localized focus of Angkor’s cultural heritage. This would best be accomplished by the following three objectives: 1) the localization of heritage management; 2) the reevaluation of the Zoning and Environmental Management Plan (ZEMP); and 3) a stronger focus on community-based tourism programs.

The first objective of localizing the heritage management of Angkor is not necessarily suggesting a complete control of the park by locals alone. Despite recommending a drawback on international intervention, there would still need to be a balance between international aid and local authority. This idea is expanded upon by Candelaria (2005) as she finds that supporters of “cultural nationalism” believe that the cultural heritage of a nation belongs to and should be controlled by the home nation. Supporters also believe that states should be skeptical when other nations suggest “ideal” conservation methods. Essentially, a nation should develop its own practices of cultural heritage management based on their specific aspects of cultural heritage (2005: 267-268). In contrast to cultural nationalism is “cultural internationalism.” This concept follows the idea that heritage is a world-wide responsibility and should be engaged with on an international scale to best preserve and safeguard humankind’s history to better understand international connections and the development of all global societies (2005: 269-270). While this international engagement could easily become another form of neocolonialism in Angkor, if nations can engage together, rather than attempt to dominate each other, it could relieve financial
pressure and create a better interconnected, world-knowledge on conservation and heritage management. With these concepts in mind, Candelaria advocates for cultural nationalism with an international support. This idea would mean international assistance in providing resources and decision making, but while doing so, protecting the nation’s sovereignty (2005: 283). This type of breakdown and balance of international support and domestic authority would be extremely beneficial for Angkor, as well as Cambodia at large.

One of the most predominant examples of Western-based cultural heritage management at Angkor is the 1994 implementation of the Zoning and Environmental Management Plan (ZEMP), as it has caused the most confusion among locals and has disconnected the Cambodian people from their heritage (Gillespie 2013). This is the reason why the second objective suggested in this proposal is calling for a reevaluation of the program. Ultimately, ZEMP is in need of a reform to become more appropriate and accommodating to the cultural heritage of the land and the people it is supposed to be protecting. Not only does ZEMP follow a Western thought of separating monuments and land from people (Gillespie 2013), it also subversively delegitimizes the religious cultural heritage given to the sites from the local perspective. As Baillie (2006) explains in her work, to the Cambodian locals, “heritage is a combination of the physical and spiritual inheritances from their forefathers… the sacred and secular do not exist in a sharp dichotomy, but rather there exists a fluidity between the two categories” (124). This is a reflection of the observations Gillespie (2013) makes on the ignorant planning of ZEMP as it focuses on Western priorities and does not comply with the historical cultural norms of the park. Baillie (2006) adds that the planners of ZEMP failed to seek assistance from a religious authority in the mapping and management of the program (126). Additionally, Baillie (2006) finds that for the local people, “the landscape of Angkor Wat is a place of healing… as well as a symbol of the
glory and pride of the Khmer and of Cambodia” (124). If a reevaluation of ZEMP is to take place, it is imperative that authorities speak with local religious leaders to ensure the continuation of the religious nature of the park.

Finally, the third objective of the proposal would be to implement stronger support systems for developing community-based tourism programs. While there may be a lack of research on community-based tourism, as told by Kontogeorgopoulos et al. (2014) and Harrison and Schipani (2007), there have been several success stories of community-based tourism in various Southeast Asian locations. According to Harrison and Schipani (2007), in Don Det, Laos, locals have seen a positive result from their efforts of community-based tourism. In total, the tourism industry will bring about US $460,000 annually to the economy of Don Det (221). In Thailand, the assistance from the government and the implementation of the Community-Based Tourism Institute (CBT-I), the village of Mae Kampong, Thailand, has been able to build on programs of community-based tourism and help localize the profits made from the tourism industry (Kontogeorgopoulos et al.). Finally, Mackay and Palmer (2015) have provided an example of a successful community-based tourism project surrounding Baray Reach Dak near the Angkor Wat Archaeological Park. While still not perfect, if APSARA and the ICC could implement a stronger support system for community-based tourism, as well as a reevaluation of ZEMP and a shift to a more localized management of the cultural heritage of the park, the future of the tourism industry and the cultural heritage management practices of Angkor could slowly, but surely, become a little more sustainable for the local populations as well as both the tangible and intangible cultural heritage of Angkor Wat Archaeological Park.
Suggested Continued Work:

This literature-review has laid a solid foundation and framework for continued research on the topic of the impacts of Western-based cultural heritage management practices at Angkor, as well as supplied material for other World Heritage Sites in similar situations of Angkor. With that said, if further work were to be done on the topic of the effects of Western-based cultural heritage management and mass tourism in Angkor, it would need field research done today, in 2019, to better understand the current struggles facing the locals living on and near the World Heritage Site. The field work would need to be ethnography-based, focusing on the narratives of the local populations. Ideally, there would also need to be input from representatives of organizations including APSARA, the ICC, and UNESCO. Modeling after other scholars such as De Lopez et al. (2006) and Gillespie (2013), the interviews with locals would focus on their understandings of the cultural heritage management currently practiced, their perceptions of both their personal agency and personal restrictions, and how they feel impacted by larger organizations such as the ICC and APSARA. Additionally, the interviews would need to include questions on economic mobility, employment opportunities, perceived ideas on community-based tourism, and, most importantly, what their needs currently are in regard to safeguarding their cultural heritage. While any scholar, regardless of nationality, well-educated on the history and culture of Cambodia would be able to do justice in this ethnographic investigation, a Cambodian-national would most likely provide better insights and understandings of the needs of the local people. Perhaps this could be accomplished with a team of researchers to help evaluate the responses of locals and assist in the formulation of better policies and practices of the cultural heritage management of Angkor Wat Archaeological Park, such as the proposal suggested in the previous section.
For the Future of Angkor, For the Future of World Heritage:

Angkor Wat Archaeological Park has been in a constant state of flux. From the early Angkorian Civilization, to the French colonization of 1863 to 1953; and from the Khmer Rouge era to the popular tourist destination it is today, the site and the local people of Angkor have been constantly adapting to their ever-changing cultural-landscape. Because of Angkor Wat’s socio-political situation, it has served, while in many ways unfortunately, as a key case study for the management of World Heritage Sites across the globe. However, it is concerning that, because of Angkor acting as case study, cultural and political organizations have found institutions, predominantly like that of the ICC, to be extremely beneficial in its international structure of supporting a heritage site in danger. While the ICC is not necessarily all evil, Peycam (2016) argues that the ICC is extremely flawed in its approaches of cultural heritage management with its lack of local-engagement (769). What is most worrisome is that UNESCO has promoted the model of the ICC in other at-risk heritage sites around the world, such as in Afghanistan, Iraq and Haiti (Peycam 2016: 769). This is why the research promoted in this thesis is imperative to the future of cultural heritage management. It is not just in Cambodia where Western-based actors have disrupted the cultural fabric and the cultural significance of heritage sites, nor is it the last place where these practices of Orientalism will continue to develop. It is therefore the duty of academics and non-academics alike to strive towards promoting ethical changes in heritage management and heritage tourism in order to truly safeguard World Heritage Sites and the people affected by the management of them.

At the heart of the issue being addressed in this thesis is the need for local voices to be heard and local people to be involved with the cultural heritage management practices at Angkor. Time and time again, the local people have been left out of the conversations and decision-
making meetings where they are truly the largest stakeholders. Angkor is their land and their heritage, and the Western-based actors involved with the heritage management of the region have failed the locals in the long run. The populations of the Angkor region have been left to the consequential tourism industry that has been destructive to both their tangible and intangible cultural heritage as they become subject to the Tourist Gaze, neocolonial intervention, and practices rooted in Orientalism. The type of research being done, like those cited in this thesis, are more needed today than ever as heritage is becoming more and more globalized and accessible. All humans will experience being a tourist in some sense of that word at some point in their lives. Whether it is through photographs, visiting a neighboring town, or simply being present in a place that belongs to another group of people, everyone needs to understand the impact of their tourist endeavor, whatever it may be, and what systems of power and inequality are at play in the developments of safeguarding world heritage.
References:


