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The Pursuit of Authenticity in Tourist Experiences

The Case of Siem Reap-Ankgor, Cambodia

A thesis
submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the Degree of Master of Tourism Management

at
Lincoln University

by
Vannsy Kuon

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of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Tourism Management

The Pursuit of Authenticity in Tourist Experiences
The Case of Siem Reap-Angkor

by

Vannsy Kuon

This thesis examined the similarities and differences between the guided and non-guided tourists in their pursuit of authentic experiences at the Angkor World Heritage Site in Siem Reap, Cambodia. Angkor was registered in 1992 as one of the UNESCO’s World Heritage properties. Angkor is currently regarded as a national iconic tourist attraction and the South East Asia’s top tourist destination. More importantly, it was the world’s most recommended UNESCO’s World Heritage Site, according to the TripAdvisor’s (2010) survey. Guided by Wang’s (1999) typology of authenticity, the study explored questions regarding the rationale behind tourists’ decision to opt for guided or non-guided visits or holidays, examined the notions of authenticity viewed by guided and non-guided tourists, and analysed whether the two types of tourists pursued authentic experiences. Insights into these issues enabled analysis of authentic experiences pursued by tourists in the light of Wang’s (1999) typology. In addressing these research questions, the study sought to assess the importance and implications of the long-established concept of authenticity in tourist experiences.

This qualitative study involved in-depth interviews of 30 guided tourists, 27 non-guided tourists, and 12 registered tour guides who were selected based on convenience and purposive samplings. They were also asked to provide demographic information about themselves and their trip characteristics. The findings of the research indicated that although the tourists conjured up similar notions of authenticity, many of them had not heard about the concept as applied to tourism before the interviews. While there were similarities between the guided and non-guided tourists in terms of their experiences, an important difference was that the former chose to be guided due to their desire for knowledge-based authenticity or cool authenticity, which is consistent with Wang’s (1999) objective authenticity, while the latter did not choose to be guided because of their strong determination for freedom and self-regulation. The study found that the tourists’ choice of a particular mode of visit (guided or non-guided) was only partially due to their pursuit of authenticity as there are other, sometimes more compelling, reasons for their decisions which were not relevant to the search of authentic experiences. From the discussion, the study concluded that the typologies of authenticity as developed by Wang (1999) were inadequate in explaining the experiences of guided and non-guided tourists as what tourists finally consume is imaginary authenticity or the representation of imaginary peoples, places, and pasts. The study also identified theoretical implications and proposed possible avenues for future studies.

Keywords: Authenticity, experience, Angkor, guided tourist, non-guided tourist, tour guide
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<tr>
<td>Angkor</td>
<td>Angkor was registered as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1992. It is a vast complex that consists of many temples. Some of the most popular temples are Angkor Wat, Angkor Thom Group (Bayon temple and others), Ta Prohm and Bantey Srey.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APSARA</td>
<td>Authority for the Protection and Management of Angkor and the Region of Siem Reap. APSARA is a government body created by Royal Decree in 1995 in response to a request from the World Heritage Committee. See this link for details. <a href="http://www.autoriteapsara.org/en/apsara.html">http://www.autoriteapsara.org/en/apsara.html</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EFEO</td>
<td>The Ecole Française d’ Extreme Orient, the French institute dedicated to the study of Asian societies with particular focuses on archaeological and monumental study. It established its headquarter in Saigon in 1901 and its office in Phnom Penh in 1908, with the initial purpose of studying the Angkor temples and monuments in Cambodia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICOMOS</td>
<td>International Council for Monuments and Sites provides a pool of professionals working for the conservation and protection of cultural heritage places. Details about the organisation can be obtained from <a href="http://www.international.icomos.org/home.htm">http://www.international.icomos.org/home.htm</a>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOT</td>
<td>Ministry of Tourism of Cambodia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TUK TUK</td>
<td>Tuk Tuk, the term borrowed from Thai language and commonly adopted by tourists, is a form of local transportaton with a decorated trailer pulled by a motocyle. Local Cambodians call this mode of transport as “Reumork Moto”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation is one of the UN bodies endeavouring to create peace and cross-cultural dialogue and understanding among peoples with a focus on sustainable development. For more details about UNESCO and World Heritage, visit the link at <a href="http://whc.unesco.org/">http://whc.unesco.org/</a></td>
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Chapter 1
Introduction

Authenticity in tourist experiences has captured the attention of academia and the tourism industry since Lever’s 1865 seminal writing about the perceived authenticity of tourist experiences found in Thomas Cook’s packaged tours (Sharpley, 2005), the theme of which was later developed in Boorstin’s (1964) pseudo-events. Antithetical to Boorstin’s contrived events, MacCannell (1989) argued that, in fact, tourists are motivated by the quest of authenticity, but eventually caught in “staged authenticity”. Cohen’s (1988) commodification synthesized the Boorstin/MacCannell debate and developed five modes of tourist experiences that are situated on an existential-recreational spectrum. Shifting from object-related or conventional authenticity, Wang (1999) developed three theoretical concepts of authenticity—objective, constructive, and existential. His theoretical notion of existential authenticity purports that it is more applicable to a wider spectrum of tourism experience. This chapter is designed to provide key background to the study of authenticity and its relevance to the context of my present study. Compared with object-related authenticity, existential authenticity is relatively new and has been subject to little empirical testing and investigation. This study examines existential authenticity, together with its conventional forms, in the context of heritage tourism in Cambodia. It explores whether international tourists, with and without tour guides, visiting Angkor, a UNESCO’s World Heritage Site in Siem Reap, search for authentic experiences.

1.1 Background to the study

“The Real Italy”, “The Real Greece”… “The authentic Italian houses” were observed in marketing and promotional materials (Waller & Lea, 1998, p.111). The marketing of travel destinations using the word “authentic”, “real”, and “genuine” by tour operators and tourism businesses (Sharpley, 2005; Timothy & Boyd, 2003) shows the significance of authenticity in the promotion of authentic experiences. Young (1999) also captured the importance of authenticity in his quantitative study of the social construction of tourist places. Citing Go, Lea and Russo, Steiner and Reisinger (2006) noted that packaging, promoting and selling cultural products in various ways, however, point to “harmful commercialisation of destinations, product commodification, and disintegration of local cultures” (p.310). Cole (2007) suggested that research move away from authenticity and commodification as a Western construct (see also Taylor, 2001) to the examination of the
concept from emic perspectives. Intense debates on authenticity grew amidst the growing popularity of, or an “explosion of interest” in (Taylor, 2001, p.8), mass cultural tourism, and “authenticity is central to much of heritage tourism as the products on display are often re-creation of a region”的 past in terms of both the built and cultural landscape” (Timothy & Boyd, 2003, p.237).

In the study of Japanese heritage homeowners by Ehrentraut (1993), touristic authenticity was found to be linked to social constructs—ideology formation and social stratification. Heritage houses are status symbols of Japanese local elites. A Spanish study by Waller and Lea (1998) of two types of samples (undergraduate students from various university faculties and the British general public at a cafeteria of a service station) used four constructed scenarios of varying levels of authenticity of the tourist experience and reported a finding of a positive correlation between predicted enjoyment of each scenario with their perceptions of its authenticity. For the „general public” samples, the higher the social class the more marked was the effect of authenticity identified.

Mcintosh and Prentice’s (1999) survey of domestic British tourists to social-industrial cultural attractions (three British period theme parks) found that authenticity was affirmed in their pursuit of cultural heritage experience. The study of the Flora Macdonald Scottish Highland Games by Chhabra, Healy, and Sills (2003) identified a high level of authenticity perceived by tourists and event organizers, even though the event was staged. Tucker’s (1997) study of the village of Göreme in Turkey discovered that tourists to the village do require to “experience the „real”, even though it is not an idealised real” (p.126). In a comparative study of tourist visits to two Marae (Maori tribal meeting area) which involved traditional Maori performance in New Zealand, Taylor (2001) indicated that true cultural experiences are observed in the encounters between tourists and [Maori] actors; he, consequently, suggested the term „sincere/sincerity” instead of authentic/authenticity.

Tucker (1997) noted in her study of Göreme that tourist perceptions of the village played a vital part in the quest of authentic experience. Fisher (2000) developed a similar line of argument, noting that the search for authenticity depends largely on their needs of fullfilling the experiences that are not available or cannot be consumed at home. The importance of perceptions and expectations in the judgement of authenticity is also advocated by Poria, Reichel, and Biran (2006). Visitors” expectations and motivations to experience authentic elements [by heritage tourists] was also identified by Kerstetter, Confer, and Graefe (2001). Figler’s Travel Motivation Survey, which was later confirmed
by another study by Robie, Bateson, Ellison, and Figler (Robie, Bateson, Ellison, & Figler, 1993), found that anomie or authenticity-seeking is an important construct of tourism.

While past studies provide evidence for the importance of authenticity, scholars have varying views on whether tourists seek authentic experiences. Halewood and Hannan, Moscardo, and Schouten in separate studies advocated that tourists only want to be entertaining and to have enjoyable and memorable holiday experience (Timothy & Boyd, 2006). Although tourists may intend to have authentic experiences, they are often deceived into believing that the fake heritage is authentic/real (Timothy & Boyd, 2003). Moscardo and Pearce noted that authenticity, at least perceived authenticity, creates a condition for satisfaction of the tourist experience (Timothy & Boyd, 2006). Balcar and Pearce’s (1996) study of eight heritage sites on the West Coast of New Zealand discovered that visitors, both domestic and international, were highly satisfied, even in a situation where the place is less authentic. Timothy and Boyd (2003, pp.244-254) classified inauthentic/distorted heritage/pasts into “invented places”, “relative authenticity”, “ethnic intruders”, “the unknown past”, and “sanitized/idealised past”. Ashworth suggested that authenticity is defined by heritage consumers (Balcar & Pearce, 1996). Ashworth provided nine types of authenticity, cited in Howard (2003) as authenticity of:

\[
\text{the creator [hand of the master]; the material [the original material]; the function [the original purpose]; the concept [the idea of the creator]; the history [the history of the artefact]; the ensemble [the integrity of the whole]; the context [the integrity of the location]; the experience [the original emotion]; and the style [It looks right.]} \quad \text{(p.227)}
\]

Bruner differentiated the authentic into its appearance [look], conditions [new/old], date, and authentication by whom (Urry, 2002, p.10), the first three of which are germane to objective authenticity and the last to constructive authenticity.

There is a plethora of literature on touristic authenticity and relatively less in amount on authenticity in relation to guided tours/tour guides. Studies relating to tour-guiding are evident in Schuchat (1983); Fine and Speer (1985); Quiroga (1990); Gena and Goldman (1991); Weiler and Davis (1993); Elmaghraby (1995); Pizam and Jeong (1996); Wang, Hsieh, and Huan (2000); Ap and Wong (2001); Dahles (2002); Zhang and Chow (2004); Leclerc and Martin (2004); Chen, Hwang, and Lee (2006)). In these studies, however, there is little or no evidence of relevance to authenticity or authentic experience, with the
main focus being on the business/service aspects of tour-guiding. This under-explored domain of literature (i.e. the relationship between authenticity, or authentic experience, and guided/non-guided tourists) is reviewed below.

1.1.1 Tour-guiding and authentic experience

Tourists could be classified into different typologies. Cohen’s tourist typology is the mass institutionalised/noninstitutionalised tourist (Sharpley, 2005, Ch.4, p.8). A mass institutionalised tourist (organised/individual) seeks relatively more protection from the external environment than a non-institutionalised counterpart does. The organised mass tourist pursues his/her comforts from “air-conditioned coaches on a pre-arranged, inflexible itinerary, stays in hotels that create the home environment, makes virtually no decisions and at all stages is shielded from any possible contact with the host country’s culture”, while the individual mass tourist relaxes some of these conditions and occasionally escapes from the environmental bubble (Sharpley, 2005, Ch.4, p.7). In other words, the institutionalised tourists, normally having a tour guide included in their holiday package, seek the protection of unfamiliar cultures and places by tour operators and tour guides. Cohen stated that “the modern tourist is not so much abandoning his environment for a new one as he is being transported to foreign soil in an environmental bubble of his native culture” (Holloway, 1981, pp.181-182). This view is also shared by other scholars, such as Rojek (1993a) and Wickens (2000). Quiroga (1990) also developed a similar idea in discussing the pros and cons of European package tours.

In the present study, guided tourists could be, but were not necessarily, characterized by Cohen’s mass institutionalised type. Guided tourists in this research were those who visited the Angkor Archaeological Park. Although they were on a guided visit to Angkor temples, they may have visited a wider Siem Reap with or without a tour guide prior to or after their visits to Angkor. Such combination of guided and non-guided tourist activities was identified in the study.

The exploratory study by Holloway (1981, pp.385-386) found that the “guiding role is not yet institutionalised”. He described guiding roles as “…information-giver and fount of knowledge…teacher or instructor…motivator and initiator into the rites of touristic experience…missionary or ambassador for one”s country…entertainer or catalyst for the group…confidant, shepherd, ministering angel…group leader and disciplinarian” (pp.385-386). Cohen (1985) developed four role components of tour guides that are briefly outlined here: instrumental (leading the way: direction, access and control); social
(cohesive/moral bonding of touring group: tension management, integration, morale, animation); interactional (presentation and organisation); communicative (selection, information, interpretation, and fabrication). Suvantola (2002) illustrated and empirically tested Cohen’s (1985) roles of tour guides and found both positive and negative views of tour-guiding.

The literature provides contrasting views on whether guided tours can provide authentic experiences even if this is an intended outcome of the tours. On the one hand, Enoch (1996), citing Boorstin and Ritzer, indicated that package tourists “hardly experience the real, authentic world in the countries they travel through” (p.600). Holloway (1981) noted that the role of the tour guide, in leading/shepherding and explaining attractions, curtails outward interactions between tourists and locals, in which the latter become the objects of gaze. In other words, a guided tour reduces opportunities for tourist-local interactions, while it promotes inward interactions within a tour group. To relate this to authenticity, guided tourists gain less authentic encounters than non-guided tourists. Guided tourists then consume “standardised attractions and meaning of places” provided by the travel industry, especially when the attractions are local people and their customs; standardisation, however, arguably provides tourists with a sense of control, security, and predictability and with ease in making sense of the attractions (Suvantola, 2002, p.131).

On the other hand, Pearce (1984), citing Schmidt’s work, states:

...a good tour guide, working in the correct context, provides a relatively safe and secure milieu for the tourist to collect...authentic experiences which fulfill the individual’s motivation for travelling (i.e., ready solutions to the problems of how to get there, how to deal with the locals, and what to see) (p.136).

Further, some guided tourists were curious about a chance to obtain access, in Cohen’s terms, to the “back regions” and “get in with the natives by their tour guides” in their tour guide’s choice of local restaurants (Holloway, 1981). Cohen, cited by Silver (1993), reported that tours with flyers promoted trekking tours of remote hill tribes of Thailand as unique and involved tour guides who were natives and possessed authentic acknowledge. In Salazar’s (2005) accounts, he emphasized that tour guides “actively help to (re)construct, folklorize, ethnicize, and exoticize the local, „authentic” distinctiveness and uniqueness of Jogja [Indonesia]” (p.642) by pointing out that most tourists were looking for the authentic Other, as identified in the following quote.
...the human contact, the close encounter with people, which remains strongly etched in tourists’ minds...helping old village women plant rice, standing barefoot in thick mud...is often reported to be one of the highlights of the tour...for tourists, the local usually refers to an often pre-imagined authentic, exotic, traditional (not to say primitive) way of life....The guides facilitate the tourists’s experiential process by themselves blending in with the village life that is displayed...(p.640)

The tour guides of Changdeok Palace in South Korea were reported to provide tourists with the highlight of their visit to the Changdeok Palace, a UNESCO’s World Heritage Site designated in 1997, by describing the attraction as “an authentic and original presentation of a Joseon royal palace relating to the power and legitimacy of the „majestic Royalty” and „Confucious tradition.” (Park, 2010, pp.117-118). Reconceptualizing the role of tour guides in interpretation, Reisinger and Steiner (2006) proposed a „role model” tour guide or “madrich” whose job in authentic tourism is to promote “personal engagement with and reflection on the world being experienced” rather than telling tourists about the meanings of their experiences and how to react to those experiences. By so doing, the madrich tour guide can encourage “authentic experiences with destinations and sights” (p.495).

Holloway (1981) encouraged a closer examination of whether tour guide’s function of mitigating indifferences/antagonism of locals caused by tour groups, as identified in MacCannell, could reduce the “reality” of (p.399), or authentic, experiences for tourists or whether many guided tourists might not obtain as deep an insight of the touristic experience as non-guided tourists.

In summary, that there has been little and only piecemeal literature on tour-guiding relevant to authentic experiences suggests that the present study which compares the experiences of tourists on the guided and non-guided tours is timely. Furthermore, much of the literature identified dates back to the emergence of global mass cultural tourism when tour-guiding was commonly included in tour packages. Of the more recent literature, most is focused on the businesses of tour-guiding. This study then proposes to add to the existing literature on the relationship between tour guiding and authentic experiences.

**1.1.2 Non-guided touring and authentic experience**

Unlike the institutionalised counterpart, Cohen’s noninstitutionalised tourist (the explorer and the drifter), characterized by independency, seeks to avoid tourism establishments (Sharpley, 2005). The explorer, or the off-the-beaten-track tourist, requires only a certain
amount of environmental shield, seeking novelty and largely rejecting the familiar home comforts. The drifter is situated on the opposite spectrum of the organised mass tourist and, therefore, seeks out cultural immersion of the Other (Sharpley, 2005). The organised mass tourist, the individual mass tourist, the explorer, and the drifter supposedly seek different levels of authentic experiences, as similarly outlined in Cohen’s (1988) existential-recreational experience spectrum. There has been no literature on authenticity explicitly related to non-guided tours. The relationship between non-guided touring and authentic experience could be inferred from the discussion of Cohen’s tourist typology (see Sharpley, 2005). The drifter, explorer, or backpackers often travel independently without a tour guide and they are likely to obtain more authentic experience than Cohen’s other types of tourists.

The non-guided tourists in this study were those who visited the Angkor Archaeological Park independently without a tour guide. Although they were on non-guided visits to Angkor Temples, they may have visited different attractions and places in the wider Siem Reap of Cambodia with or without a tour guide prior to, or after, their visits to Angkor. In some cases, the non-guided tourists participating in this study identified themselves as backpackers.

As implicitly stated by Sharpley (2005), he who identifies himself as a traveller or a backpacker, not a tourist, travels for “adventure, authentic experience, taste, individulity and self-discovery”, while a tourist is associated with a shorter trip that is “pre-packaged, pre-paid, comfortable and predictable” (Ch.4,p.3). In this regard, a backpacker seeks authentic experience, as also found in Maoz (2007).

Tourist typologies have been rather blurred; yet another type of tourist is emerging in the so-called postmodern era. For a post tourist, travel and tourism is a way of discovering one’s true self, and he/she does not view authenticity as a problem (Wang, 1999). Neither is cultural commodification a problem for a post tourist. The post tourist regards tourism as an end in itself rather than having to be authentic (Rojek, 1993a).

Little empirical research relating to existential authenticity can be identified. In the light of Wang’s (1999) work, Kim and Jamal (2007), in their study of the Texas Renaissance Festival, found that tourists fulfilled their bodily feelings with “sexual experience” and “alcohol consumption” that were lost or “socially sanctioned fun/play” in the home environment, and that “self-transformation”, “emerging alternative self”, and constructing self-identity were associated with self-making (pp.189-192). With regard to touristic
communitas, Kim and Jamal (2007) noted such findings as “equality”, “acceptance”, “ludic nature of interaction”, and “enduring bonding” (pp.193-194). This area of research on existential authenticity, which is an aspect of the present study, is theoretically and empirically fledgling and under-explored.

1.1.3 Research question and objectives

Authenticity in tourist experience has been extensively debated since the existence of modern tourism (Sharpley, 2005; Timothy & Boyd, 2006). The “authenticity” discourse, however, still generates academic controversy as to its significance for tourist experiences (Buchmann, Moore, & Fisher, 2010). Wang (1999) advocates existential authenticity as a different theoretical framework for an authenticity-seeking model. Yeoman, Brass, and McMahon-Beattie’s (2007) study, in reference to Scotland’s tourism policy, defines “authenti-seeking” as the search for “authenticity in a range of products, services and experiences or looking for it within themselves” (p.1133) and authenticity cornerstones should be “ethical...natural... honest...simple...beautiful...rooted...[and]...human” (p.1137). Authenticity does not only remain controversial in terms of its importance, but has also generated considerable debates about its conceptualisation.

Wang (1999), however, acknowledged that existential authenticity is suggestive only and empirical research is needed to test and confirm his arguments and adds that the distribution and preferences of authenticities among tourists warrants further research. Olsen (2002), on the other hand, has suggested that research should focus on constructive authenticity [tourist role], analysizing how experiences are created as a result of social processes. Quoting Li, Alonso, O’Neill and Kim (2010) stated that authenticity can only be “achieved either through environmental experiences or people-based experiences, or an interaction of the two” (p.36).

Within the context of the previous discussion and especially the need for empirical research on authenticity in tourist experiences and the lack of theoretical reference to tour-guiding and authenticity, this study has the following question and objectives.

1.1.3.1 Research question

To what extent are there similarities and differences between guided tourists and non-guided tourists in their pursuit of authenticity in touristic experiences at Cambodia’s Angkor World Heritage Site?
1.1.3.2 Research objectives

To answer the above research question, the following objectives were identified.

- To examine why tourists have chosen to be on a guided/independent tour;
- To investigate the notions of authenticity viewed by the two types of tourists;
- To explore whether the tourists pursue authenticity in their cultural heritage experiences;
- To analyse authenticity pursued by tourists in terms of Wang’s (1999) typology; and
- To discuss the importance of authenticity pursued by the two types of tourists.

It is important to link this research question and these objectives to the context of the present study. The next chapter contextualises authenticity in tourism to the current location of the study to provide sufficient background understanding.
Chapter 2
Study Context

The Angkor Archaeological Park, a UNESCO's World Heritage Site, in Siem Reap province of Cambodia was the study site for this research. Angkor in Khmer language means „city” and Wat means „temple”, and Angkor Wat is literally used to refer to „the city temple”. Cambodia is located in Southeast Asia, bordering Thailand, Laos, and Vietnam (Figure 2.1), and Siem Reap province is situated in the northwest of Cambodia. Siem Reap-Angkor is an emerging tourist destination in Southeast Asia.

Tourists and foreign experts are sometimes confused between the terms „Cambodia/Cambodian” and „Khmer”. „Cambodia” is the modern name that is used to refer to the country and is a popular name for foreign media. In the modern, post-war era, „Cambodians” is commonly used to refer to the people, both the natives and immigrants, of Cambodia, which was historically called Kampuja. The term „Khmers” was and is used to refer to the natives of Kampuja/Cambodia, distinguishing it from immigrants. „Khmer” is also used to refer to the native language of the Khmers. This chapter, which outlines a brief history and an overview of tourism development in Cambodia in relation to the current study site, provides background context for the present study.

2.1 Brief history of Cambodia

In 100 AD, the arrivals of Indian merchants and holy men marked the beginning of the Indianisation process (Ray & Robinson, 2008). The Khmers were subject to the first foreign influence from India whose culture has later penetrated all aspects of Cambodian/Khmer lives such as language, dress, food, music, family relationships, beliefs, religions, politics, aesthetics, astronomy, and architecture (Chandler, 1992). Under the Indian influence, many temples were constructed, especially during the reign of a new king. Many temples, including Angkor Wat temples, were built at different moments in the Khmer history and are found almost everywhere in the present Cambodia. Consequently, Cambodia’s present cultural heritage which is most significant tourism resource has, to some extent, internalised Indian philosophy. Little is known about the Khmer culture prior to the Indian influence or the arrival of the Indian traders and missionaries.
The development most noted in the early Khmer history is the Angkorian era from 9th - 15th centuries. Angkor Wat was built over the first half of 12th century under the reign of Suryavarman II (1113-1150). The peak of Khmer civilisation, however, was during the reign of Jayavaraman VII (1181-1215), who built many of Angkor temples including the temples of the Angkor Thom and Ta Prohm.

Cambodia also had some historical connections with China in the sixth century and then with Siam (now Thailand) and Vietnam. Cambodia fell under foreign domination, interference, and invasion for centuries, especially from Siam and Vietnam. Cambodia then turned to France for support and was eventually established as a French protectorate in 1863. French influences are still found in some aspects of the present political, economic and social lives of Cambodians (Chandler, 1992; Mabbett & Chandler, 1995).

Cambodia obtained independence from the French in 1953. Post-colonial Cambodia subsequently entered another new decade of political unrest and instability. It became a victim of the Vietnam War, a United States-supported coup, the Pol Pot regime, Vietnam
invasion and civil wars. The United Nations-led peace talks to end Cambodian civil wars began in 1987 and Vietnam announced plans to withdraw its troops from Cambodia in 1989. These dark decades for Cambodia ended in 1992 owing to the peace-keeping effort and interventions from the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) that made the first United Nations-sponsored national election possible in 1993. Since the election, war-torn Cambodia has began its national reconciliation and its new journey to post-conflict reconstruction and rehabilitation.

### 2.2 Overview of tourism in Cambodia

The post-conflict Cambodia began infrastructure restoration and construction projects with the assistance of international development aid in the early 1990s. In the process of opening up the country, tourism was seen as a means of generating foreign exchange and employment for the devastated, post-war nation. Tourism began to develop gradually in a more politically secure environment. Post-genocidal Cambodia attracts tourism to three heavily visited areas—the capital city of Phnom Penh, Siem Reap-Angkor, and Sihanoukville. In 2006, hotel rooms, nationwide, were reported to be 17,914, up from 8,248 in 1998, and rooms in guesthouses reached 9,166 in 2006, up from 1,510 in 1998, according to the Ministry of Tourism of Cambodia (2006). The same source also indicated that travel agencies and tour operators rose from 236 in 2001 to 382 in 2006.

![Figure 2.2: International tourist arrivals to Cambodia 1993-2009 (MOT, 2009)](image-url)
International tourist arrivals, together with other tourism facilities and infrastructure (e.g. restaurants, buses), were also observed to increase markedly in the 1990s and the first decade of this century. Tourist arrivals rose from 118,183 in 1993 to half a million in 2000 and continued to increase to more than one million in 2006 (MOT, 2009) (Figure 2.2). In 2008, international tourist arrivals hit 2.13 millions. The MOT’s 2009 statistic (2.161.577 arrivals) saw a lower growth rate of only 1.70% compared to the previous years (5.48% in 2008, 18.53% in 2007, 19.59 % in 2006). The reduced growth rate was mainly attributed to the recent global economic recession, the H1N1 epidemics, and, more importantly, to the recent political conflict between Cambodia and Thailand over the inscription of Cambodia’s Preah Vihear temple as another UNESCO World Heritage Site in mid-2008.

Tourism generates revenue to the destination. Tourists stay an average of six days in Cambodia. Tourism receipts grew from USD100 million in 1995 to USD 1.6 billion in 2008 (MOT, 2008). The rapid growth of international visitors and tourism receipts provided assurance to the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) that tourism has the potential to increase economic growth and to alleviate poverty. In 1996, the RGC recognised the potential of tourism for poverty reduction in its First Socioeconomic Development Plan (Winter, 2008). In the early 2000s, as tourism became a government-adopted focus for socio-economic development, various activities and events (e.g. tourism workshops, seminars, international forum, and cultural events) were initiated and relevant policies/strategies have been introduced.

Tourism in Cambodia has been widely viewed by the RGC as cultural/historical/heritage tourism. Cambodia’s cultural tourism is mainly made up of heritage temple tourism. Siem Reap-Angkor has been developed and oriented for tourism since early 1900s, but has not achieved its full potential due to conflict and war. Angkor temples began to resume their tourism potential after the first UN-sponsored election. Over time, due to conservation efforts, increasing political stability, gradual infrastructure development, and some promotion and marketing, the heritage-based tourism industry has been revitalised.

Discovered by a French naturalist Henri Mouhot in 1860, Angkor temples received attention and restoration with technical support from France in the first half of the 1900s. Some temples have now been restored and repaired with the assistance from various agencies, especially from the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) while others are currently being restored. Only „Ta Prohm”
temple has been kept close to its original state (relatively untouched or more authentic) as it was first discovered. Authenticity in such sites is an important consideration for UNESCO and the International Concil on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), as evident in a number of ICOMOS Charter documents e.g. the 1964 Venice Charter (ICOMOS, 1964), Article 7 of 1990 Charter (ICOMOS, 1990), the Nara Document on Authenticity (ICOMOS, 1994), the San Antonio Declaration (ICOMOS, 1996), International Cultural Tourism Charter (ICOMOS, 1999), Principles for the Analysis, Conservation and Preservation (ICOMOS, 2003), XI’AN Declaration (ICOMOS, 2005), Cultural Routes Charter (ICOMOS, 2008a), Charter for the Interpretation and Presentation of Cultural Heritage Sites (ICOMOS, 2008b).

The Angkor temples in Siem Reap serve as a cultural/historical complex for tourists to extract heritage tourism experiences and decipher the meanings of the patrimony or cultural attractions. In the context of cultural heritage tourism, Tahana and Oppermann (1998, p.23) define cultural attractions as those ranging from “historical monuments to handicrafts or artefacts, from festivals to music and dance presentations, and from bustling of street life of another culture to the distinct lifestyle of indigenous lifestyles”.

The Angkor temples, such as Ta Prohm and Angkor Wat, were featured in a Hollywood movie “Tomb Raider” shot in November 2000. The filming created new narratives or “action packed fantasy” to achieve “the reality that didn’t actually exist”, which was viewed by a scholar as undermining “the aspirations of developing Angkor as a site for high quality, cultural tourism” (Winter, 2002, p.329). The author referred to the ideological clash between spirits of conservation and provision of authentic tourist experience from the attending international agencies and the Hollywood cinematography.

The literature shows that authenticity is important not only for the demand side, but also for the supply side of tourism, as evident in marketing as stated in Sharpley (2005), Timothy and Boyd (2003), and Waller and Lea (1998). Examining Scotland”s 2015 tourism growth strategy, Yeoman et al. (2007) found that authenticity is the country”s key marketing concept and noted a growing interest among consumers in obtaining “experiences and products that are original and the real things, not contaminated by being fake or impure” (p.1128). Australia, Canada, and China are also promoting authentic experiences, as is New Zealand. The New Zealand Tourism Stategy 2015 commits to deliver visitors with world-class experiences, defined as “authentic, unique, and delivered with super service...and they must stand out as being different from the experiences
available in other countries” (Ministry of Tourism, 2007, p.18). The commitment to provide authentic tourist experiences has also been incorporated into tour operations in New Zealand, as reflected in the following statement by the Taiamai Tours director:

This is not manufactured. It has not been designed for the purpose of making money from tourists. It’s not a theme-park-based Maori cultural activity being palmed off to unsuspecting internationals...It’s an authentic Maori cultural experience that captures the essence of the Nga Puhi tribe and our unique tribal culture and spirituality, thus we have a point of difference when being compared to other Maori cultural tourism products... believe this cultural offering sets a standard and raises the bar by giving effect and breathing into the meaning of ‘authentic Maori cultural tourism experiences’. (Inside Tourism, 2010, p.7)

From hosting tourists on Nga Puhi Marae, the director expects to provide real experiences of Maori culture for tourists and to impart understanding of the Waitangi Day, the day (the 6th of February, 1840) the Treaty of Waitangi was signed, from the insider perspective.

Authenticity has been shown to be important for tourist experiences, and this significance in the context of heritage tourism in Siem Reap, Cambodia, is the subject of this research. Authenticity has been frequently observed both in industry practices and examined in the literature during the last few decades. A formal authenticity discourse has gradually developed. The next chapter critically reviews such development with reference to three theoretical concepts to provide basic theoretical underpinnings for the current study.
Chapter 3
Literature Review

The original usage of authenticity is attributed to Trilling (Wang, 1999). It was used to refer to the verification of a work of art against its claimed value, and subsequently entered formal tourism discourse. MacCannell (1989) developed a thesis that all modern tourists, characterized by the new middle-classes, travel in search for authenticity elsewhere, or in the „Other“, where reality and authenticity are situated. In this regard, reality and authenticity are associated with “other historical periods and cultures, in purer, simpler lifestyles” (MacCannell, 1999, p.3). Pioneers in tourism studies accentuated the dichotomies of tourism experience, such as authenticity vs. inauthenticity (Bowen & Clarke, 2009). Wang (1999) developed three theoretical notions of authenticity. This chapter provides theoretical underpinnings critical to the understanding of authenticity in tourism experiences, with special reference to Wang’s (1999) work.

3.1 Object-related authenticity

In line with Goffman’s interpretation of front/back regions, MacCannell (1989) asserted that the quest is often encountered with “staged authenticity”, as tourists are trapped in their search of the back stage that is made to look real. MacCannell (1989) discussed his thesis in relation to tourist’s conscious quest for authenticity against tourists” delight in contrived attractions or Boorstin’s pseudo-events (Sharpley, 2005). Despite general agreement between Erik Cohen and MacCannell, Cohen argued that not all tourists quest for authenticity. From his identification of four types of touristic situations “authentic, staged authenticity, denial of authenticity and contrived”, Cohen suggests that authenticity may represent “communicative staging where tourist sites have not been transformed but the sites are presented and interpreted as authentic by their guides” (Mowforth & Munt, 1998, p.58). Urry does not deny authenticity as an important component of the tourist gaze, but contends that the gaze is “socially constructed and systematised [in Urry’s words] and in any historical period is constructed in relation to its opposite (non-tourist forms of social experience and consciousness)” (Mowforth & Munt, 1998, p.58). According to Urry, one could classify tourist attractions into “historical/modern, authentic/inauthentic, and romantic/collective” (Mowforth & Munt, 1998, p.58).
In tourism, authenticity is equivocally used. It can be used either to describe something local or to market a destination (Sharpley, 2005). More frequently, “authentic” is used in the descriptions of “products, works of art, cuisine, dress, language, festivals, rituals, architecture, and so on...that are made, produced, or enacted by local people according to custom or tradition (Ch.7, p.2)”. The following sections review both these conventional forms of authenticity.

3.1.1 Objective authenticity

In Wang (1999)’s classification, “objective authenticity” is defined as “the authenticity of the originals. Correspondingly, authentic experiences in tourism are equated to an epistemological experience (e.g. cognition) of the authenticity of the originals”. Wang’s (1999) objective authenticity is associated with the tourist’s cognitive process that could objectively verify if the objects under consumption are real or genuine. The tourist needs to be able to verify the epistemological knowledge. The consumption of these genuine/real objects, which are verifiable by experts, creates an authentic tourist experience.

Authenticity implies that the tangible origin of cultural objects and events is either real, genuine and authentic, or are false, or fake (Sharpley, 2005). In tourism, this application, concerning the attributes of the displayed objects (Uriely, 2005), is related to objective authenticity, as found in traditional/historical sites or artefacts (Jamal & Hill, 2002). For a product to be authentic it must be traditional; that is traditional in the production process (local producers, traditional materials and methods) and for local/traditional use, not intended for the tourist market (Cohen, 1988). In Cohen’s own words, “the absence of commodification...[is]...a crucial consideration in judgements of authenticity”; and therefore, authenticity, analogous to MacCannell”s (1989) view, can [only] be found in pre-modern lifestyles without any Western influence (p.375). Modern tourists are motivated to search for pre-modern culture that is not found in their own countries (MacCannell, 1989).

Objective authenticity is used in relation to tourism “markers (signifier)” and “sights (signified)” (MacCannell, 1989, p.117). In the discussion of semiotics of a tourist attraction, he provided the perspective on the relationship between a sight, marker and tourist. He uses “marker” to refer to “information about a specific sight” (p.110). Tourists, as semioticians, search for signifiers that are familiarized to them by media (Urry, 2002).
Wang (1999) discussed objectivism with reference to the work of Boorstin and that of MacCannell. Both works bear specific references to objective authenticity. In Boorstin’s perspective, mass tourists consumed commodified cultural products that are inauthentic or not real, which is contrasted with MacCannell’s view. Wang (1999) also introduced Tom Selwyn’s concepts of “hot” authenticity and “cool” authenticity. Selwyn’s (1996) hot authenticity is associated with the search for what Brown calls the “authentic Self” (p.21). The authentic Self is the immediate result of the transition from the “authentic Other” in the quest for staged holiday experiences. Brown (1996) viewed this as a quest for the authentic Self or for “a good time” (p.38). “Hot” authenticity is more pertinent to the discussion of existential authenticity. Cool authenticity is related to the tourist’s search for [ethnographic] knowledge (Selwyn, 1996) or “a genuine desire to know”, a type of meta-level consumption (Edwards, 1996, p.199).

After inspecting the traditional/modern paradox, (Sharpley, 2005, Ch. 7, p.5) concluded that authenticity in tourism bears two meanings.

(a) *It is a description of the tangible quality of something (for example, an artefact, a metal, a festival, a building) which is associated with production methods or cultural foundations that are perceived to be pre-modern or traditional.*

(b) *It is a socially constructed, intangible perception of destination societies and cultures, of forms of travel, or of overall tourism experiences that appear to be pre-modern or traditional.*

Wang (1999) argued that authenticity should not be circumscribed to the originals or objective authenticity and further developed his discussion on constructive authenticity.

### 3.1.2 Constructive authenticity

Wang’s (1999) constructive authenticity is based on the subjective projection of the notion by tourists and the authentication of the gazed objects. It is socially constructed under a pluralistic and relativistic framework that is influenced by the constructivist worldview. Tourists and authorized agents construct various versions of authenticities of the gazed objects from their experiential, political, and social worlds. What is real, therefore, is symbolic, subjective or relative. Wang’s (1999) constructive or symbolic authenticity defined here is congruent with Sharpley’s (2005) second meaning of authenticity above.

While objective authenticity bears relevance to objectivism, constructive authenticity is germane to subjectivism, as outlined in Urry (2002). Constructivists emphasize the
participation of people (e.g. tourists, authorized agents) in the social construction of the meanings of cultural objects, which could result in various versions of authenticities from the attractions visited. Wang (1999) discussed this type of authenticity in relation to constructivism, the approach that is based on pluralistic and relativistic views of reality or interpretivist epistemology. In this regard, the consumers of cultural attractions (e.g. the tourists) negotiate meanings of the displayed objects. Bruner rendered four different meanings of authenticity: historical verisimilitude [credible/convincing production]; simulation [flawless, genuine, or historically accurate reproduction]; the original [not a copy/reproduction]; legitimated authenticity (Wang, 1999, p.354). These meanings are confined to the object-related authenticity. Bruner’s first two meanings are relevant to Brown’s (1996) “genuine fakes”.

Bruner’s authentication or legitimated authenticity is more pertinent to the discussion of constructive authenticity. In Sharpley’s (2005) example, the term „authentic” is often used as a tool for marketing holidays, e.g. „real” Africa, „hidden” Asia, or „genuine” travel (Ch.7, p.1). He asserted that in many cases this marketing tool is designed to capture tourist expectations, rather than what really exists in cultural attractions. This is where the tourism industry and suppliers (e.g. tour operators, attraction managers, and public agencies) participate in the social production of authenticity or commoditisation of cultural objects. Also relevant here is Hollinshead’s (1999) discussion of Donald Horne’s „The Intelligent Tourist”. Hollinshead advocated tourism as public culture and identified various themes in Horne’s work. Tourism has the power to “legitimate/ authenticate/ authorise, to sanctify/celebrate/triumphalise, to frame/construct/ conform, to suppress/ subjugate/subordinate, to mainstream/manage/ maintain normal culture, to project reformulated and prefabricated forms of preferential narrative” (see Hollinshead, 1999, Table 2, p.273).

In Wang” (1999) discussion of constructivism, he made references to five pivotal points about authenticity. First, cultures are dynamic and relational (also see Salamone, 1997; Sharpley, 2005), and thus can only be understood in socio-cultural settings (including the tourists) (Salamone, 1997). It follows that there are “no absolute and static originals” (Wang, 1999, p.355). In this way, it rules out objective authenticity, which is based on the epistemological knowledge of the origin. Second, traditions are socially invented and reinvented, in what Hobsbawn and Ranger call the “invention of tradition” (Wang, 1999, p.355). This has high relevancy with Hollinshead‟s (1999) discussion of tourism as public culture. Third, authenticity/inauthenticity is in the eye of the tourists, who possess
pluralistic and relativistic paradigms, as found in the interpretivist epistemology. Subjectivity, for tourists, plays an important role here in creating their views of authentic experiences (Urry, 2002). Fourth, Wang (1999) contends that authenticity is projected through tourist’s own beliefs, expectations, preferences, stereotyped images or Western’s consciousness. Subjectivistic authenticity and Western-typed authenticity as conceptualised here appear to run contradictory to the power of the invention of tradition that bears higher relevancy to the supply side of tourism. Fifth, the inauthentic/artificial/fake at present could become “emergent authenticity” over time (Cohen, 1988, p.380; also see Sharpley, 2005 and Wang, 1999). Staged/contrived cultural events, festivals and products could be later accepted as authentic/local norms/customs, as found in the cases of Inti Raymi festival in Cuzco; Eskimo soapstone carvings; and greenstone carving in Mahabilipuram, India (Cohen, 1988; Sharpley, 2005).

Hughes (1995) condemned the complications of authenticity created by constructivists:

>This thoroughly constructivist perspective complicates the study of authenticity. The authenticity...needs to be considered against a complex global picture of homogenizing and differentiating forces...needs to be assessed against the relative social meaning...By resurrecting a more existential perspective, it is possible to find manifestations of authenticity through individual’s assertion of personal identity.(p.799)

Wang (1999) argued, that both objective authenticity, which relies on the truly genuine/real objects, and constructive authenticity, which could come in various versions depending on individual tourist’s worldview, do not have adequate explanatory power to capture tourism phenomenon (e.g. new forms of tourism). Subsequently, he, consistent with the orientation articulated by Hughes (1995), proposed the consideration of existential authenticity.

### 3.2 Existential authenticity

Wang’s (1999) existential authenticity is a theoretical extension of the conventional concept of authenticity where a tourist “spectator” only gazes at a toured object “spectacle” (p.359). Nature-based tourism activities, for example, have nothing to do with the gazed objects; instead, tourists participate in the consumption process and search for their authentic self. Wang’s existential authenticity is summarized in the following graphical presentation (Figure 3.1).
Unlike its object-related (conventional) form, existential authenticity is germane to “personal or intersubjective feelings activated by the liminal process of tourist activities” (p.351). Whether authentic or not can only be realised within the internal state of Being. Individual tourists internalise their own version of authenticity. Pearce (2005) comments on three stages of liminality:

First...is the regular or normal state, sometimes referred to as the profane state of being, such as the individual’s life and experiences at home...Next...is a liminoid phase...a threshold phase, where the tourist is in a state of transition and life is abnormal, not always comprehensible and often puzzling...sometimes seen as a sacred or spiritual phase where the possibilities of life and existence are expanded...’liminal’ refers to imbuing the transition phase, such as a marriage ceremony, with spiritual or cosmic significance whereas...liminoid is more prosaic and is restricted to the acts and action of people participating in the transition...a third phase...[is]...post-liminoid phase...a return to the ordinary, everyday or profane state... (p.25)
As seen here, existential authenticity is approached from the modern concept of self. Wang (1999) views existential authenticity from two dimensions. The first dimension is “Intra-personal” authenticity, which involves both bodily feelings and self-making (pp.361-364). The second dimension is “inter-personal” authenticity that emphasizes family relationships and touristic communitas (p.364).

Existential authenticity is closely associated with the exploration of self or human attributes, as found in Steiner and Reisinger (2006) and Wang (1999). Steiner and Reisinger (2006) summarize existential authenticity as:

Being in touch with one’s inner self, knowing one’s self, having a sense of one’s own identity...living in accord with one’s sense of one’s self is...being attuned to one’s own experiences rather than interpreting the world through institutionalised concepts and abstractions...[is] being authentic...Meaning is created through experiencing love, through acting creatively, and through suffering. (p.300)

In discussing Heidegger’s concepts of authenticity, Steiner and Reisinger (2006) note that authenticity or inauthenticity is not a permanent state in self or a tourist. They tend to momentarily switch back and forth, given different situations. Hence, there are no authentic or inauthentic tourists. Steiner and Reisinger (2006) further purport that authenticity and inauthenticity are characterized by “mineness”, “resoluteness”, and “the situation” (p.306). Recognition of one’s own possibilities, the capacities to choose, that are not shared with others is embedded in „mineness“. Daring and determination to claim one’s own possibilities typify „resoluteness“. The „situation“ refers to a rare experience peculiar to a unique place or circumstance in relation to the connectedness around them. Heidegger also attributes inauthenticity to seven characteristics: “being-among-one-another”, “distantiality”, “averageness”, “levelled down possibilities”, “disburdening”, and “accommodation” (Steiner & Reisinger, 2006, p.307).

The conceptualisation of existential authenticity, as in Steiner and Reisinger (2006) and Wang (1999), has some relevance to the concept of postmodernism. In Wang”s (1999) view, authenticity is not a problem for tourists in the postmodern society. He illustrates this with special references to Eco’s hyperreality and Baudrillard’s simulacrum. Wang (1999) also discusses Baudrillard’s three orders of simulacra: “counterfeit/representation”, “production”, “simulation” (p.356). The last order is analogous to Brown”s(1996) genuine fakes. Turner and Ash note that the present world is bereft of reality (Smith, 2009).
Harvey (2001) notes that heritage is changing the authentic version of the past and substituting it by simulacra of that past.

Advancing the ideas of Boorstin (1964) and MacCannell (1989), Cohen (1988) uses the notion of depth of experiences or „centre” in developing five modes of tourist experiences: “existential”, “experimental”, “experiential”, “diversionary”, and “recreational” (pp.376-377). The existential tourist, whose „centre” is firmly located in a local, foreign culture and society, is completely alienated from home and completely immersed in the quest of authenticity in the chosen „centre”. The recreational tourist, whose „centre” is situated in the opposite end of the existential tourist, has little or no interests in the „Other”. The other types of tourists are located along the existential-recreational continuum (Cohen, 1988; Sharpley, 2005). Tourists, as conceptualised by Tucker (1997), pursue differing levels of authenticity subject to their perceived authenticity or expectation.

The distinction of home and „Other” is commonly pronounced in the literature, as also in the conceptual development of Cohen’s (1988) modes of touristic experiences. „Other”, as defined by Staszak’s (2010, p.43), refers to a “member of a dominated out-group, whose identity is considered lacking and who may be subject to discrimination by the in-group”. An in-group („Us”, the Self) is “a group, to which the speaker, the person spoken of, etc., belongs”, whereas an out-group („Them”, Other) is “a group to which the speaker, the person spoken of, etc., does not belong” (p.43). “The Other only exists relative to the Self, and vice versa”, he adds (p.43). The Self is constructed in relation to the Other, or vice versa (Galani-Moutafi, 2000; Staszak, 2010). In tourism, the „Other” is frequently referred to as the host or host culture, while the „Self” is referred to as the tourist.

Postmodern tourists are viewed as semioticians, consuming cultural images and landscapes for their experiences and are seen to be “anti-hierarchical” and dedifferentiated (Brown, 1996; Urry, 2002; Wickens, 2000). Tourist experiences are individualistic, although they might be shared (Ryan, 2002), and their experiences are associated with “identity, autonomy, individuality, self-development and self-realisation” (Steiner & Reisinger, 2006, p.301). Hence, their quest for authenticity is self-directed. „Individualistic”, in Douglas’s (1973) grid-group theory, is a cultural type that is governed by individual autonomy, or self-regulation (Wildavsky, 1991).

Literature indicated that academic discourse on authenticity in tourist experiences has been sidetracked from the modern concept, as found in Boorstin (1964) and MacCannell(1989), to a postmodern orientation, as indicated by Urry (2002); thus, from
mass tourists/cultural tourists to post/dedifferentiated tourists. The former type seeks object-related authenticity in cultural experiences and the advancement of self; while the latter, as noted by Smith (2009), treats authenticity as an illusion and treats commodification playfully, thus having little or no interests in the boundaries between reality and phantasy, or “dream reality” (Taylor, 2001, p.11).

As the result of modernism and mass communication, the post tourists are well aware of the fact that cultures, traditions and lifestyles are no longer authentic, or of what Kirchenblatt-Gimblett calls the experience of “the virtual place” (1998, p.9). Globalisation generates homogenisation of tourist consumption, for instance, of hotel chains and standardised package holidays (Hughes, 1995). Hughes (1995) also notes that there is a crisis of representation and authenticity has been driven to the edge of its “reference points of comparison” (p.790). Moreover, he also notes an attempt to differentiate direct and vicarious experience, as described in Lowenthal’s roles of primary/secondary information, Burgess’s situated/generalised knowledge, Park’s acquaintance with/knowledge about, and Robinson’s experiential places/image places (p.791).

Wickens (2000) notes two opposing poles of different literature on tourist experience with varying views in between:

One perceives the touristic experience of the visited host community as: ‘superficial’; ‘inauthentic’; ‘genuine fake’; ‘artifice’; merely a ‘pseudo-event’; a ‘staged event’; ‘staged specimens’; or a series ‘of stage games’ and ‘spectacles’...The other sees the tourist’s experience as: ‘liminal’; ‘hedonistic’; or a ‘recreational’ activity...” (p.457)

Applicability of Wang’s (1999) work to tourism experience provides another option for authenticity discourse, and it requires empirical validation. Ryan (2002) inspected Wang’s (1999) existential authenticity and comments that it has some relevance to Maslow’s self-actualisation. Ryan (2002) further argued that it could be possible that self-actualisation and the state of Being are located in contrived places. Olsen (2002) criticises Wang (1999) for his failure to look at the emic perspective of tourist experiences (tourist roles) that is socially organised, as found in “What disappears with this foray into existentialism is the concept’s ability to clarify how the emic experience of authenticity is aroused in certain social contexts” (p.160).
3.3 Summary of the literature

The theoretical development of authenticity in relation to tourism has shifted from a discourse on object-related authenticity to a discourse on existential authenticity. Despite this more recent conceptualisation, its conventional forms, especially constructive authenticity, are still applicable to the tourism experience.

Objective authenticity is based on the tangible quality of cultural/heritage objects which are the main driver of an authentic experience. This quality can theoretically be validated by experts, such as museum specialists, archaeologists, and tour guides. Constructive authenticity is also object-based, but works at a more personal level. It is the product of social construction. Subjectivism, pluralism, and relativism are its dominant philosophical foundations. The Constructivist tourists actively participate in constructing their own version of authentic experiences that is negotiable with the tourism industry’s authentic version. Existential authenticity in tourist experiences is found in the tourist himself or herself or in the self, not in objects. It involves the search for a true Self or an authentic Self that is found in touristic activities or in participations in social or cultural events. It works at an individual’s emotional level. Therefore, tourists’ emotions (e.g. despair) can strongly affect their experiences. Wang’s (1999) existential authenticity is sub-divided into intra-personal authenticity (bodily feelings and self-making) and inter-personal authenticity (family ties and touristic communitas).

In this study, the three types of authenticity are examined, discussed, and evaluated in relation to tourist experiences because these conceptualisations of authenticity are, in one way or another, relevant to the discussion of tourist authentic experiences. The next chapter outlines the methodology of, and its associated philosophical foundations, underpinning this research project.
Chapter 4
Methodology

This chapter provides the rationale of the study of authenticity from a constructivist perspective and how reality is viewed. Fundamental assumptions of constructivism are explained and the methods and design used in the current study are provided.

4.1 Ontology and epistemology

Research paradigms have developed in the social sciences, and have borrowed heavily from the natural sciences. The main focus of the natural sciences is primarily concerned with finding reality or the existence of natural subjects, whereas the social sciences is primarily involved with the study of human objects. In my study, tourists were the subjects. Therefore, this research was conducted in a social setting that involved human feelings and thoughts and the use of senses (e.g. sight, hearing). In other words, tourists subjectively interpret and interact with the environment around them.

In the practice of qualitative research, investigators make certain philosophical assumptions, revealing their positions towards “the nature of reality (ontology), how the researcher knows what she or he knows (epistemology), the role of values in the research (axiology), the language of research (rhetoric), and the methods used in the process (methodology)” (Creswell, 2007). In qualitative inquiry, „ontology” is characterized by multiple realities of subjects being studied. Inquirers also need to embrace such nature of reality. In practice, they utilise quotes from participants from which themes are derived to provide evidence related to the research. This study adopted a constructivist ontological perspective, which asserts that “social phenomena and their meanings are continually being accomplished by social actors...and are produced through social interaction...in a constant state of revision” (Bryman, 2008, p.19). In this study, the participants were allowed to talk freely about their prior and current experiences and to relate them to the notions of authenticity. Their varied views and interpretations of their experiences were noted.

Interpretivism was an epistemological perspective adopted in this study of authenticity in tourist experiences. Interpretivism, according to Bryman (2008, p.16), is “predicated upon the view that a strategy is required that respects the differences between people and the objects of natural sciences and therefore requires social scientists to grasp the subjective
meaning of social action”. Social constructionism is an approach based on people’s creation of reality and their understanding through the interaction process, taking into consideration structural factors that influence the process (Barbour, 2008). “Reality is socially constructed and can be understood only in context” (Willis, 2007, p.54). Individuals develop subjective understanding of the world and meanings of their experiences. These meanings are “varied and multiple, requiring researchers to look for the complexity of views rather than narrow the meanings into a few categories or ideas” (Creswell, 2007, p.20). In this study, I, the interviewer, did not impose or lead the respondents to different conceptualisations as identified in the literature.

The „axiological” aspect in qualitative research requires that researchers attach values to the study and acknowledge that biases are there. This study sometimes allowed value-judgment in interpreting and discussing the results using the researcher’s knowledge of the study context via the use of personal voices. With regard to methodological assumptions, Creswell (2007) notes its characteristics as “inductive, emerging, and shaped by the researcher’s experience in collecting and analysing data” (p.19). To this end, I revisited their research problem in the research process. This study identified some problems that were consistent to Barbour (2008). Those were associated with relative truth and multiple realities.

I had considered these epistemological, ontological and axiological issues and realised the strengths and limitations of this study before it was conducted. The rhetorical aspect used in this thesis is the use of “I”, which refers to the researcher who carried out the investigation and wrote up the findings and who sometimes subjectively interpreted the „authenticity-seeking” phenomenon by tourists or subjects.

This methodology section provides insights into what, why, and how my research was conducted in the way it was, and to what extent the results can be generalised to a broader context. It provides detailed methods and at the same time addresses the issues of trustworthiness for this research.

4.2 Method and design

In this study, I used in-person qualitative interviews of individual respondents and groups. Tourists travelled alone or in groups with or without a tour guide. Both individual and group interviews were necessary, as in my research and in many tour contexts, tourists either travelled independently, alone or in couples, often with their friends and relatives or
in the same group tour with other travellers. In a new, unfamiliar environment like Cambodia, tourists tended to cluster together and arranging group interviews was not difficult.

4.2.1 Study area

The site selected for this study was Siem Reap-Angkor, the most popular destination in Cambodia and the hub of heritage experience. UNESCO’s webpage of the World Heritage List briefly describes Angkor as:

Angkor is one of the most important archaeological sites in South-East Asia. Stretching over some 400 km2, including forested area, Angkor Archaeological Park contains the magnificent remains of the different capitals of the Khmer Empire, from the 9th to the 15th century. They include the famous Temple of Angkor Wat and, at Angkor Thom, the Bayon Temple with its countless sculptural decorations. UNESCO has set up a wide-ranging programme to safeguard this symbolic site and its surroundings. (See http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/668)

This quote illustrates the significance of the property as heritage for humanity and tourism, not only to Cambodia and its people, but also to the world. The opening paragraphs about the Temples of Angkor by the Lonely Planet described Angkor as the most important attraction within Cambodia.

... The temples of Angkor are a source of inspiration and national pride to all Khmers as they struggle to rebuild their lives after years of terror and trauma... [The temples] are a point of pilgrimage for all Cambodians, and traveller[s] to the region... (Ray & Robinson, 2008, p.140)

Ray and Robinson (2008) provide visitors to Cambodia with promotional insight into Angkor arguing that it is a „must-visit“ attraction, especially highlighting the most significant temples of Angkor. The nearest temple (Angkor Wat) is 7 kilometres from the Siem Reap town. Temples are situated throughout the Angkor Archaeological Park with some temples clustered together and others dispersed (see Figure 4.1).

Tourists aged 12 years and older visiting Angkor are required to purchase an entry pass and present it to authorized agents at each temple visited. Some of the most important temples in the area include Angkor Wat, Bayon (one of the Angkor Thom Temples), Ta Prohm temple, and Bantey Srey temple. A recent survey of 244, 690 tourists conducted by a TripAdvisor (2010) in cooperation with the UNESCO showed that Angkor was on the top
list of the most-recommended World Heritage Sites. The number of Angkor temples visited by guided and non-guided tourists varied depending on their trip plans and time availability.

I chose this study site as a case study for the following reasons. First, it is anticipated that the cultural objects/heritage and the interactions between those objects and the tourists consuming them had some connection with authenticity, including possibility that tourists can also seek existential authenticity after Wang (1999), who suggested that this type of authenticity is frequently associated with nature-based tourist activity. Second, nature-based tourist attractions are situated particularly in North-eastern and coastal provinces of Cambodia, so this type of attraction was rejected due to my time and financial constraints associated with the length and distance to travel between the two sites.

The study allowed the respondents” views on both object-related authenticity and existential authenticity. In this in-depth, qualitative research, the respondents were allowed to talk freely about their experiences elsewhere, including in various parts of Cambodia and from their previous travel experiences to other destinations. Third, the case study of the Angkor Archaeological Park, Siem Reap, provided better focus on tourists and the study of authenticity of a heritage attraction than on the combination of both heritage sites.
and nature-based attractions and this focus allowed more in-depth knowledge of the tourists’ pursuit of authenticity.

4.2.2 Study instrument

In adopting qualitative interviewing as my main approach to gathering data, I developed three sets of questions or interview schedules (Appendix A): one set each for guided tourists, non-guided tourists and tour guides. I also developed basic profile forms (Appendix B) for all types of respondents to fill in prior to the interviews. The tourists and tour guides involved in this study are frequently referred to as respondents or interview participants in this thesis. The questions for these tourist respondents were designed around three foci.

First, some initial questions explored the intention and motivation of tourists who visited Siem Reap-Angkor/Cambodia, with specific questions concerning their reasons for visiting Angkor, their tourism interests, and prior knowledge of Angkor/Cambodia. These questions provided me with a connection between the respondents’ prior interests, their current interests, and why they did what they did on the trip to Cambodia. Second, the interview guide for tourists focused on the concept of authenticity, by asking tourists to talk about their prior travel experience, the experience of what they did, saw, and felt during their visit or holiday to Siem Reap/Cambodia. This part of the interview was central to the main focus of this thesis relating to the discussion of authenticity in the light of Wang’s (1999) typology and the importance of authenticity in tourist experiences. The third focus was concerned with asking questions about tourists’ reflections, at least recent reflections, of their views on their visit, throwing light on the value of their experiences.

The questions for the tour guides were organised in a somewhat different manner from those used for the tourists. These questions covered aspects related to tourists’ perspectives on their tours, tourist activities and reasons behind the choice of mode of visit, especially with reference to the tour guides’ and tourists’ views of authenticity.

After obtaining a formal, signed consent from the respondents, I used a recording device to tape the interviews. For those respondents who objected to recording, I made a formal request to take notes of the interview. Only one of the respondents for this study did not permit taping of the interview, but agreed to note-taking for the purpose of data analysis.
4.2.3 Respondents and data collection

This qualitative study was based mainly on purposive sampling (e.g. in terms of gender balance, the number of guided and non-guided tourists) and convenience sampling (e.g. in terms of intercepting the tourists for interviews; selecting the tour guides). With ethical considerations, respondents were invited to participate voluntarily in the study and they were asked to sign an informed consent (Appendix D) prior to the interviews. In choosing respondents, the researcher intercepted potential respondents at temple sites or/and in restaurants/cafes in Siem Reap town, introduced himself and provided them with the reason for the interception, followed by questions about the purpose of their visit and how long they had been in Cambodia.

I selected these respondents based on the following criteria. “Tourists” to be included in this study are those visitors of any nationality, males and females aged at least 18 years, who stay at least one night in the destination (Siem Reap). The participants were interviewed during the second day of their visits. If tourists fitted the criteria, they were formally invited to participate and given the research information sheet (Appendix C).

Two general types of tourists were selected in the study: guided and non-guided. Thirty guided tourists and twenty-six non-guided tourists were interviewed. All the guided tourists were accompanied to the Angkor World Heritage Site by a professional „tour guide“. A professional tour guide in Angkor is required to have received formal training and obtained a tour guide licence from the Cambodian Ministry of Tourism. Tourists booked guided tours through either hotels, tour companies, or on recommendation of friends and relatives. The non-guided tourists included those who travelled independently either alone or with family or friends, without a tour guide.

I also interviewed tour guides, both male and female aged 18 or over. All the tour guides interviewed were Cambodian professional tour guides. I used Khmer language to interview 12 Cambodian/Khmer tour guides and English to interview tourists. I planned one-hour interviews for all respondents, but the actual interviews varied from 45 minutes to 2 hours, depending on the responses provided. I asked for permission from the respondent to continue if an interview had not been completed within one hour.

One way to maximize the representation of the dimensions of authentic experiences was to incorporate both types of tourists, guided/non-guided and independently alone or independently with others. In this study, I conducted 15 small group interviews with 2-3
people in each group and 35 one-to-one interviews with a total of 68 respondents between 1 April and 30 July 2010. This exceeded the number of interviews originally planned (40 interviews involving 40 respondents) to capture saturation and better representation of the data. A detailed description of demographics and trip characteristics of the respondents (guided/non-guided tourists and tour guides) can be found in the beginning of the Results Chapter. The respondents in this study were coded continuously from one interview to the next. R#01-R#30 were used for guided tourists, R#31-R#56 for the non-guided tourists, and R#57-R#68 for the tour guides.

4.2.4 Data analysis

The analysis was framed within the interpretivist approach which views research as “a nonlinear, recursive (iterative) process in which data collection, data analysis, and interpretation occur throughout the study and influence each other” (Willis, 2007, p.202). For analytical purposes, all interviews that were recorded were transcribed in the language used in the interviews, categorized, coded, and summarized for patterns and themes. Interviews of the tour guides were transcribed in Khmer language and translated only for the purpose of citations and analysis. After coding, transcripts were kept securely and separated from other documents (such as consent forms) which would reveal the identity of respondents.

Three different files were kept both electronically and in hard copies. The first file contained coded transcripts. The second file was a preliminary analysis of each interview, containing three columns: one column for research objectives and other key concepts in interview questions, another for quotes from transcripts, and the other for preliminary analysis. The third file contained the same columns as in the second file, but the file was organised under only one heading/research objectives where quotes and analyses from all respondents were collated. From the third file I did a second analysis (coding of key concepts, categorizing, summarizing) of the data before writing up the results. Although I had pre-knowledge of the study topic, I conducted the analysis of the empirical data collected before relating it to existing theoretical knowledge.

In this chapter, the methodology, research instrument, and data gathering procedures were discussed. The study was conducted with awareness of ontological, epistemological, axiological, and methodological issues, particularly relevant to qualitative research. Strengths and limitations of this methodological approach to qualitative research were analysed and addressed before data collection commenced. Efforts were made to minimize
the limitations and maximize the strengths, thereby increasing the quality of the project. Examples of such actions were increasing the number of respondents, triangulation of data, and giving detailed attention of the design of interview questions. The following chapter presents the findings of this research. These findings are concerned with the demographic profiles of the respondents (tourists), tourists’ rationale for undertaking guided or non-guided tours, the notions of authenticity viewed by guided and non-guided tourists, and an examination of the nature and importance of authenticity in the pursuit of tourist experiences by these two types of tourists.
Chapter 5
Findings

This chapter provides key findings of more than three months of fieldwork in Siem Reap, with a special focus on those tourists visiting the Angkor Archaeological Park, one of the UNESCO’s World Heritage Sites in Cambodia. The chapter is structured into different sections in the same order of the study objectives outlined on page 9. Section 5.1 provides demographic descriptions of the respondents—the guided tourists, the non-guided tourists, and the tour guides. Section 2 elucidates the participating tourists’ rationale behind their choice of a particular mode of visit (guided versus non-guided). Section 5.3 entails the respondents’ notions of authenticity as applied to tourism, and section 5.4 illustrates the tourists’ pursuit of experiences in relation to Wang’s (1999) object-related authenticity and existential authenticity.

5.1 The respondents

Among the tourists voluntarily participating in the interviews, thirty were guided and twenty-six were not guided. In addition, twelve tour guides were interviewed. The demographics and trip characteristics of the respondents were gathered by using basic profile forms and are described below.

5.1.1 Guided tourists

Among the 30 guided tourists partaking in this research project, 17 were female (Table 5.1). A majority of them (18) were single. Six were married, in which four travelled as couples. The number of the US/Canadian tourists (11) equals about one third of all respondents and 6 were Australians.

Table 5.1 Summary of basic profile (guided tourists)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country/region</th>
<th>Sample size</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Average age</th>
<th>Average stay in Cambodia (days)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>America/Canada</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>F=6</td>
<td>41.48</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>F=3</td>
<td>35.75</td>
<td>13.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>F=3</td>
<td>31.33</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia/New Zealand</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>F=3</td>
<td>48.63</td>
<td>6.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>F=2</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>F=17; M=13</td>
<td>36.64</td>
<td>6.48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
All the participants were, or in the process of being, university educated (both undergraduate and post-graduate levels). With regard to occupation, the study found that 4 of the guided tourists were students, 8 worked in business or economic sectors, and 7 worked as teachers. The occupations of the remaining participants were varied and included health and engineering. The mean age of the respondents was 36.64 years old, ranging from 19-20 years to the oldest of 68 years old. Those in the youngest group were all students with two participants from Norway and the other two from the United Kingdom (UK). The group in their 60’s consisted of a male banker from New Zealand, a female librarian from Holland, a male medical practitioner from Australia, a female Australian lecturer and a male UK engineer; the last two were staying and working in Singapore.

When asked about their trip characteristics, all the respondents stated that they had visited Cambodia for a holiday. The guided tourists spent three days on average in Siem Reap (mode = 2 days) and six days in Cambodia. One of the tourists spent a total of 30 days in Cambodia on holiday and another spent 3 months in Siem Reap and 6 months in Cambodia. The latter worked as a volunteer in social work posted with a UN organisation in Phnom Penh.

With regard to travel composition, most of the guided tourists participating in the interviews travelled at least with a partner/friend and five travelled alone. The biggest travel tour group consisted of 4 tourists. There were tourists travelling in larger groups that were not captured in the study, especially those from Asia such as Koreans, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Thais.

In reference to countries visited, the study found that two guided tourists also visited non-Asian countries on the same trip to Cambodia. Most of the Asian countries visited on the same trip to Cambodia were those in the Greater Mekong sub-region, such as Vietnam, Laos, and Thailand. Asian countries such as Singapore, Malaysia, and China were also visited. Most of the guided tourists visited two or three countries, including Cambodia, on the same trip. Seven of the guided tourists had Cambodia as the only destination.

5.1.2 Non-guided tourists

Among the 27 non-guided tourists in the study, eleven were females, and two were married. Nineteen of these tourists were single and the remainder held other marital status (e.g. divorced). Nine European and UK tourists participated in the interviews, with seven
from Asian countries, eight from the US and Canada, two from Australia, and one from Israel (Table 5.2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country/region</th>
<th>Sample size</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Average age</th>
<th>Average stay in Cambodia (days)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>America/Canada</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>F=2</td>
<td>31.80</td>
<td>12.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>F=1</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>8.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>F=2</td>
<td>48.40</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>F=1</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>F=0</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>F=5</td>
<td>25.86</td>
<td>3.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>F=11; M=16</td>
<td>35.68</td>
<td>6.78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As with the guided tourists, most of the non-guided counterparts were, or in the process of being, university educated. Two of the participants in this group were still at high school. With respect to occupation, the majority of the non-guided (10) were students and seven had jobs in the area of business and economics. Six non-guided tourists who participated in the study either worked in information technology, education, or the health sector. The others worked in other occupations including legal services and design.

The mean age of the non-guided tourists was about the same as that of the guided tourists. The former group”s age ranged from 19 to 70 years old. The youngest age group of the non-guided respondents (19-21) were all students and some of them also worked part-time in the service industry while at school. The oldest age category (60-70) formed a small sub-group of three: a 60-year-old, non-guided French tourist who worked as a legal advisor in Paris and the other two retired respondents—one from the US and the other from Australia. The Australian retired tourist reported that she was on holiday while, at the same time, working as a volunteer teacher with a local non-governmental organisation (NGO).

With reference to trip characteristics, most non-guided tourists stayed a little longer than the guided tourists (mode = 3 and 4 days) in Siem Reap and 10 days in Cambodia, although on average they stayed as long as their guided counterpart. Nine respondents reported that they stayed at least 7 days in Siem Reap, with most staying from 11-15 days. A respondent from Austria revealed that she had just stayed for three months in Cambodia and was extending her visa for another three months. She indicated that she was very interested in Cambodia, shocked with the current social issues, and was looking for a job in social work or in education with local NGOs. The non-guided tourists and guided
tourists generally had similar travel compositions, with more of the non-guided tourists (9 in total) having travelled independently alone.

The countries toured on the same trip by the non-guided respondents were not much different from those visited by the guided ones. However, the average length of the whole trip was longer for the former as some of them toured more countries on the same trip. For instance, 3 non-guided British students who travelled independently together on the whole journey stated that they spent about two months of the whole trip visiting other countries such as Laos, Thailand, Vietnam, Malaysia, and India. They planned to spend 3 days in Siem Reap and a couple of days in Phnom Penh; a total of 7 days in Cambodia. An Israeli tourist, who visited Siem Reap for three days, said that he was travelling for more than 1 year, visiting other countries including Thailand, India, Singapore, China (including mainland China, Hong Kong and Macau), Japan, Australia, and New Zealand. One respondent from Japan who had time constraint visited only Siem Reap on his trip. The study revealed that more of the non-guided (11 of 27) than the guided (5 of 30) participating in the interviews visited four countries or more, including Cambodia, on the same trip.

In addition, all — except one non-guided tourist — participating in this research project, had most of the characteristics of Cohen’s non-institutionalised tourists concerning the length of stay, itinerary, return date, low spending preference (for eating, transport, accommodation) as discussed in Uriely, Yonay, & Simchai (2002).

5.1.3 Tour guides

Like the participating tourists, the 12 tour guides voluntarily participating in this research project were asked to complete a basic profile form concerning their demographic characteristics and tour-guiding experience. All of them were registered, freelance tour guides with varying levels of experience.

With respect to languages spoken, among the four female tour guides interviewed, two spoke English, another spoke German, and the other used both English and Chinese. Of the male tour guides, one spoke French, another conversed in Japanese, one used Thai, and the remaining others spoke English. Their ages ranged from 22 to 35 years; most of them were in their 30’s, and they had at least completed high school education that was the minimum educational level required for all registered tour guides. Their guiding experience varied from 2 to 12 years, with an average of 6.25 years. Most of the
participating tour guides had at least 4 years of experience. Only 4 of them were married, while the rest were all single.

In summary, the gender aspect of the respondents participating in the interviews did not appear to be a concern and the educational level of the two groups of tourists was also similar. Moreover, the travel compositions between the guided and non-guided tourists did not vary. There were, however, some differences between the two groups of tourists with regard to both occupation and the length of the trips including travel in Siem Reap/Cambodia. All, except 4, of the guided tourists were employed. The four unemployed guided tourists were students (i.e. two Norwegians and two Britons) and they accounted for a ratio of 1:8 against the employed of the same group. Most of the employed worked in business/economics and education sectors. The ratio is much lower than that of the non-guided group because 12 out of 27 interviewed were unemployed (student or retired). Moreover, the number of countries visited on the same trip undertaken by the guided tourists, which could be used as a proxy of length of the whole trip, was also noted to be shorter than that undertaken by the non-guided tourists.

These differences could contribute to the reasons why some tourists would prefer a particular mode of visit (e.g. guided or non-guided) and these reasons are explored in the next section.

5.2 The rationale: guided tours and non-guided tours

The first objective of the study was to examine the reasons behind visitors’ choice of modes of visit, especially in relation to the pursuit of an authentic experience at the Angkor Archaeological Park. Both the guided and non-guided tourists provided similar reasons for their choice of the mode of visits. For example, this commonality includes the issues relating to “spending ability” and “time availability”. In illustrating the reasons of an option for a specific mode of visits, this section will indicate at the same time that the participating tourists were pursuing authenticity or authentic experiences.

The interrelated sets of reasons for both guided tourists (Figure 5.1, in 5.2.1) and non-guided tourists (Figure 5.2, in 5.2.2) are provided below. Not all the reasons for choosing a guided or non-guided tour identified here are actually related to the pursuit of an authentic experience. However, they are all provided in Figures 5.1 and 5.2 so that a broader perspective could be obtained. Only those reasons relating to authentic experiences are presented in further details. Most of the rationale was not actually related
to the quest of an authentic experience because they had not thought of an authentic experience or authenticity in tourism prior to their visits and interviews.

The rationale identified to be pertinent to the search of an authentic experience by the guided tourists was the desire for an in-depth knowledge, while the non-guided tourists placed a high value on freedom of navigation or independence of decisions about their activities and time.

5.2.1 Guided tourists: the desire for knowledge

The most important reason, in the context of the pursuit of authenticity, of choosing a guided tour was related to the tourists’ desire for expert knowledge that comes from both their attitudes to guiding/tour guide and related characteristics of the site (see the italicised, figure 5.1), which are mainly concerned with the desire to acquire new knowledge and to interact with someone local (i.e. the local tour guide).

Figure 5.1 Tourists’ considerations for a guided tour

Angkorian history, culture, architecture, and styles involve a lot of symbolic significance, representations, and orientations that create sophistication indiscernible without the
assistance of an expert or a tour guide. In this regard, a guided visit was important for these (guided) tourists in acquiring rich, good, or knowledge-based experiences, which normally connote authentic ones for them.

A respondent highlighted that a tourist experience was heavily dependent on a tour guide. In other words, the qualities of the tour guide could affect the experience either in a positive or negative way. “So yesterday, we intentionally hired a guide because we wanted more information. We wanted a richer experience” (R#17). The tour guides (e.g. R#60, R#61) also shared the same view by saying that tourists wanted a guide because they needed detailed information about the place/destination. Without a guide, the tourists failed to obtain in-depth knowledge of the place. When asked about his experience of Angkor, a US respondent said he relied on his tour guide to provide him authentic experiences and acknowledged that his tour guide was rather authentic in his narrations of the past and modern history of Cambodia.

Well, since we don’t know much. We kind of rely on our guide...He was pretty authentic in terms of the kings, the buildings, you know, the conversion into Hinduism, and the melting of cultures, some of marking and displaying war. ...He, he was very honest about the Khmer Rouge, surprisingly. You know we got enough details about this. (R#02)

Respondent #02 implicitly stated that authenticity in his experience was to do with the [real] knowledge he could gain from the tour guide. Such knowledge, as stated by R#17, R#60, R#61, and R#02 above, is referred to as authenticity with knowledge or “cool authenticity” (Selwyn, 1996, p.25).

On a guided holiday in Cambodia, a middle-aged Canadian tourist (R#10), who lived and taught in Singapore, expressed her attitude towards a group tour as an opportunity for learning and sharing knowledge and said that being a solo woman traveller tended to limit her comfort level. A guided tour enabled her to “learn as much as we can about what we come to see” (R#12) because the tour guide could help “point out what the story is” (R#21) and give them “a lot more meaning” (R#06 & R#07), so that they could “appreciate it more” (R#18). A tour guide participating in the interview provided an instance of the importance of being guided.

There was once a group of tourists (of Vietnamese origins) from Australia who didn’t hire a tour guide. They approached me, obtained the permission from my guests and asked why Ta Prohm temple was so ruined. I told them the reasons...So if tourists don’t
have a tour guide, they cannot ask questions and get the answers. (R#57)

Another tour guide asserted “Some tourists are not concerned much about spending 25-30US$. We [tour guides] are the hosts. If they want good photographs and knowledge, they need us” (R#65).

Some guided tourists also believed that a tour guide could answer the sort of questions that were not answered in books. A tour guide who took a group of eight French tourists on the tour to Angkor added that “When I was explaining them, sometimes they said that they didn’t know that information in a book before. They said that was why I needed you, the tour guide” (R#61).

A US tourist pointed out that “I knew that this is really big. Especially when you got there, there was just more than one temple. And I knew that there was a lot of history...that I wouldn’t understand” (R#24). He therefore decided to hire his tour guide for another day. Without a tour guide, if someone was just looking at the temples, they would not get the whole picture, said the respondents from Norway (R#04 & R#05). A tour guide did help tourists to move through the places and set them in the right direction as the temple structures are usually colossal. “If it were small, maybe I wouldn’t take a guide”, explained one of the tourists (R#18).

Moreover, some respondents viewed that the local tour guide was able to provide better perspectives on local history and culture (R#8 & R#15). S/he was kind of “induced into the culture” or “Google Cambodia” (R#22). “To learn, we can read a book. Sure! But it is great coming from the actual Cambodian”, said a tourist (R#20). A tour guide was perceived to possess expert knowledge of the attraction/destination, and the tourists might feel that they “didn’t have the knowledge the tour guide gives” them (R#26). A 31-year-old tour guide, with 9-year experience, also stressed that the guided tourists felt the importance of local expert knowledge.

They [tourists] want first local knowledge. No one is much better than the local people. That means they value local experts who were born here, who live here, and who know the geographical location here. Second, they hire us because they want us to show them around in the temple sites, tell them the history and culture/traditions...(R#58)

He added that a tour guide [himself] possessed the expert knowledge that has accumulated from reading so many materials/books, from trainings, and experiences; and he
summarized the most fundamental information for tourists. The tour guides generally argued that non-guided tourists would not have in-depth knowledge of the place/temples (e.g. R#58; R#61). In this way, the tour guides, playing his “communicative” role (Suvantola, 2002, p.141), assisted their clients in the quest of cool authenticity.

Some tourists did not only expect information about the history of the attraction/temples from their tour guide, but also hoped to hear about the tour guide’s personal/family life/history. Such storytelling of personal experiences was considered to be authentic, an additional experience valued by the guided tourists. There were instances in interviews where the tour guide’s personal life/history was very much appreciated information. A tourist said, “So a lot more interesting, something personal to him [the tour guide]” (R#19). Without a tour guide, the tourist would miss “local interpretation, the informal chit-chat between looking at the sites...talking about his growing-up...a little bit about the family...” (R#27).

As seen earlier, the authenticity of knowledge provides an important reason for the tourists to opt for a guided visit to Angkor as identified in the guided tourists’ attitude towards guiding, while the non-guided tourists provide a different side of the story.

5.2.2 Non-guided tourists: the value of freedom

The value of freedom was a well-articulated reason behind the option for a non-guided visit. The idea of having one’s own time to navigate the Angkor attraction sites with their own pace and a free choice of attraction (the italicised, Figure 5.2) is explicitly stated by all of the non-guided tourists interviewed ranging from old, experienced tourists to younger, less experienced ones.

A 60-year-old French tourist, who worked as a legal advisor in Paris and who was on 8-day holiday alone in Siem Reap, told the researcher that he had travelled alone for 10 years. Travelling alone and without a tour guide gave him a sense of freedom in both movement and decision on what to do and where to go, as stated in “And I am free. I free my life. I think I like to feel free. If you are with somebody else, you tried to discuss where to go” (R#31). Non-guided tourists preferred taking their own time at the attraction and experiencing the place at their own pace. A married young couple from the US expressed their option of a non-guided visit to Angkor, as found in the following statement.
...we each had to have our own time, just have an experience, like just walked to something whether it was like imagining in Angkor Wat, the big open space, the sky on the top level...You have time to stop at the things that affect you and think about them. (R#33)

Such desire for freedom in touring attraction sites was similarly expressed by other respondents (e.g. R#32; R#35; R#47; R#48; R#49). A 20-year-old Canadian student who visited Angkor temples for two days during his 13-day holiday with two other friends in Cambodia explicitly stated that “I don’t like to be on somebody else’s schedule. I like to have the freedom to explore myself. If I want to take pictures of Angkor Wat, I spend a long time doing it...”(R#40). His travel companions (R#38 & R#39) also expressed a similar reason for having chosen not to be guided. Another group of three travellers in their late 20’s from Vietnam, the Philippines, and China also stressed on the flexibility of their travel time as opposed to the expected rigid schedule of a guided visit.

Well, it is easier to travel without a tour guide because regarding the schedule you can come here anytime you want. You can rest anytime you want (R#52)...we don’t want to rush, you know, from place to place. You don’t have to stick to a schedule... (R#50)

Respondents #50 & #51, who viewed themselves as an adventurous type of tourists, added that it was a trend for young people to go on a holiday without a tour guide and that group tour was becoming a „cliché” [original word]. A similar statement, regarding travel freedom and independency, was also found in the interview of a 27-year-old Japanese
tourist who acknowledged the trend of young Japanese travellers to undertake independent holiday abroad, suggesting that he was also one of them. He stated:

...travelling independently is a special thing to do for me and there are some anxious things but also I don’t really like some tour guides taking me to destinations and places in a hurry because maybe I just wanted to have some freedom...I feel kind of freedom travelling by myself. And in Japan...some young people like independent travel...Those kinds of people are increasing...I think it is interesting... (R#53)

Likewise, a 19-year-old British student who also travelled with two other friends on their 7-day holiday in Cambodia said:

I think we are quite like independent, going around at our own pace. Sometimes it is going to get information on...but sometimes we just wanted to spend some times to get to do things at our own pace. (R#43)

An English-speaking tour guide implicitly shared that perspective on non-guided tourists, stating that “...for non-guided tourists, they can spend as much time as they want to at a place” (R#63). Another English-speaking tour guide also opinionated that “in reality, tourists do not want to have a guide because they want freedom” (R#60), but tour companies have to include this service so that tour guides could take care of their customers. Tour companies do not want to get involved in covering insurance for the tourists in case something happens, he added.

Being free and independent from a tour guide’s scheduling and directions and the desire to pursue their own interests in touring Angkor temple sites were the important reasons, relating to the quest of authenticity as found in the interviews of the non-guided tourists. Another important attribute in their decision for this mode of visit was found to be linked to their attitude towards guiding and preference for such mode.

Apart from freedom, the non-guided tourists illustrated their personal preference for non-guided/independent visit to the Angkor temples. Their attitudes towards guiding were found to be different from the guided tourists”.

Such preference was explicitly found in a number of interviews and that was highly related to travel experiences of the tourists. For instance, the 60-year-old French tourist (R#31) from Paris, who had special, long-term interests in Asian countries, its history and culture, had been to Southeast Asian countries such as Laos, Thailand, and Vietnam before. His 10-year travel experience was not limited to Asia and he had also travelled
widely in Europe. When asked why he decided to travel independently without a tour
guide, he explained:

[I travel] alone in Cambodia, in Thailand. I’ve always travelled
alone for 10 years [now]. Before that, I didn’t travel. Since I
divorced, I began to travel. I like to travel alone for many reasons.
One of the reasons is I can meet some people. When you are two,
you don’t meet any people. You stay together. (R#31)

He compared a tour guide with a „sub-title” [original word] in a movie—the one that could
show and explain him in details, but he didn’t need that sub-title and didn’t want to be
always directed to what to look at. He claimed that he could read by himself about what he
wanted to see. The above quote also reveals his emphasis on interacting with others, both
tourists and locals. In the interview, he reiterated his interest in seeking and developing
contacts with local people, saying that travelling independently alone and establishing
such contacts is a way for him to acquire an authentic experience.

...but [I] try to go by the side, expecting to meet authenticity, but
for me authenticity is the relation between people. I told you that I
travelled alone. I think it is the best way to find authenticity in the
relationship...When you travelled alone, many people talked to
you...Sometimes I meet people, two or three times, we become
friends because something happens, something authentic, but I
cannot say...you cannot plan, you cannot say when or where, but
when it happens you must catch it...(R#31)

Another respondent in his mid-50’s from Melbourne, Australia, who also travelled alone
on his holiday in Siem Reap-Angkor, also talked about his broad experiences of different
places, with special reference to World Heritage Sites such as the Great Wall of China and
the Taj Mahal of India. Like the French tourist, he had a long-term interest in Southeast
Asia since he was 20 years old. He stressed that:

I never have had a guided tour, you know. I don’t know it is just
the personal preference. I prefer not to be part of a group...I just
prefer to be on my own to actually, I guess, draw my own map of
where I wanted to go. (R#44)

This Australian tourist added that he didn’t like a guided tour/holiday because there would
be too much information from the tour guide for him to take all of it in at the same time.
The following quote shows his attitude towards a tour guide.

So another thing that I think about a guide, that’s why I don’t take
a guide anywhere, is that too much information. There is only so
much you can take it and you can forget. You might remember 4 or
5 things they say during the day. So 96% of those things are gone,
you know. So at a conscious level, usually there is very little that
you can remember from those experiences, but at that time it was
good they are telling you things that are important in terms of the context of the temples. I have nothing against guides, but I prefer not to have one myself. And it is just always been the case. (R#44)

While describing his experience, he said he did not like group tours and didn’t like to follow the tacks taken by the guided tourists and the tour guides either.

...there were too many people there at the one time and there were big tourist groups. You know bus loads of middle-aged Japanese women, going click, click, click...It was just driving me mad. I did find some places inside where I sat down. It was quite dark and the tour guide didn’t take the groups in there. (R#44)

A German tourist in his mid-50’s who had had travelled widely in Europe and who had been to Thailand and Laos on the same trip to Cambodia voiced that he decided to opt for a non-guided holiday in Cambodia because he normally travelled without a tour guide and felt more comfortable reading about the places he was going to visit or read after his visit. Similarly, he said that a tour guide would give too much information that could be easily forgotten within a short time. He emphasized that:

...the difference is normally I travel without [a tour guide] so I think the difference is that a guide can give me more information sometimes. But I know most information one month or two months I forget because it is too much. So really important information I can read about. I can go by myself, on my own. (R#45)

Another tourist in her 50’s from the US, who travelled with a friend and who had visited Vietnam and was going to visit Laos, Thailand, Indonesia, and Australia on the same trip to Cambodia, also expressed her preference for her travelling independently alone. When asked why she didn’t take a guided tour, she said:

I don’t like going with groups. I don’t like being dependent on some other people. Some people irritate me and I’d like to do my own things. If I travelled with a group, you know, I wouldn’t get this experience. Everybody would be off to the next temple...(R#46)

A 42-year-old Dutch tourist also expressed that solo independent travel or non-guided holiday was a normal mode of his travel. He had been travelling for almost one year to different countries such as Australia, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Vietnam, and Laos and then continued to Cambodia on the same trip. He viewed himself as an adventurer/explorer type of travellers, explaining that:
...I was also a backpacker. So compare with all the other backpackers, most backpackers travel with a Lonely Planet [guidebook] and they follow exactly what is in the Lonely Planet. I had also the Lonely Planet the first few days and then ask the local people and other tourists. So I did all the things than the normal tourists and backpackers. I don’t want to follow all the same tracks. I want to go off the tracks, so, for example, when I saw in the guidebook half a page about Ratanakiri, talking about the waterfall, jungle and hill tribes. It was only half a page and most tourists say oh we don’t go there because in the guidebook there is only half a page. They think there is nothing to do. For me, it was a reason to go there...I went there because I wanted to see with my own eyes, interesting or not. (R#37)

The interview revealed that, in addition to Angkor temples in Siem Reap and important destinations such as Phnom Penh and Sihanouk Ville (the beaches), this tourist has travelled widely to other remote parts of Cambodia. His travel experience may have enabled him to feel comfortable travel without a tour guide. Other respondents (e.g. R#38 & #39) also explicitly expressed the desire for „off-the-beaten tracks“, as also indicated by Wang (1999), getting away from the normal paths of the guided tourists.

As having shown earlier, the aforementioned difference in the choice of having/not having a guided visit that is relevant to authenticity is mainly attributed to the guided tourists” longing for local expert knowledge and an interaction with the local tour guides and the non-guided tourists” desire for freedom/independence and intention to go off the mass tourists” tracks.

5.3 Empirical conceptualisation of authenticity

The second objective of this research is to investigate the notions of authenticity and examine the similarities and differences as empirically conceptualised by the guided and non-guided tourists. The study found overwhelming similarities in their conceptualisation of the authentic, which are summarised in Table 5.3, below.

Asked whether they had heard the term „authentic‘ used in tourism before, few of them answered „yes“; while none of the tour guides had heard of the concept. However, it was evident during the interviews that most of the tourists, especially those with English as a mother tongue, reckoned the term and managed to reasonably relate the concept to tourism. Overall, the tourist perspectives on authenticity shared obvious conceptual commonality.
The explicit use of the term „real”, „true”, and „genuine” was attempted in their conceptualisation of authenticity by the tourists, relating it to their current travel experience. They talked about what they have experienced in relation to many aspects such as objects, history/culture/daily life, interpretation, and the personality of the people in contacts. Supporting statements could be identified in various interviews. The tourists, both guided and non-guided, associated the term authentic with something real/true/original/genuine/honest, old/traditional, and/or rural/local/non-touristy. More non-guided tourists, however, attributed the concept to honesty/sincerity in social contacts than the guided tourists did. The tourists also cited additional examples from their previous travel experiences to illustrate the concept.

Table 5.3: Authenticity empirically defined

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Notions of authenticity</th>
<th>Guided tourist</th>
<th>Non-guided tourist</th>
<th>Tour guide*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>real; special; unique; not fake; true; original; old/ancient/traditional; tasteful; plain simple; unsterile</td>
<td>real; not fake/artificial; original; traditional; unique; special, ancient</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>not-for-business; not overcharging (charging more than locals); genuine; honest/social; interactive; non-political</td>
<td>rich (e.g. conversation); not-for-business; not overcharging (charging more than locals); human-human (e.g. interaction/ connection); honest/social; true to one’s root</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>non-touristy; rural/countryside/ non-westernised; local; ordinary/daily (e.g. people not working in tourism; life/history / culture); non-sanitized (e.g. experience); natural (left by nature)</td>
<td>non-touristy; local; ordinary (e.g. people/back streets); off-the-beaten-track; natural (left by nature)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*None of the participating tour guides were able to provide their notions of authenticity.

The key concepts used by the respondents to define authenticity are presented in Table 5.3. Some of these words are sometimes used with overlapping meanings and are at the same time referred to objects, people and/or places depending on the contexts of the tourists’ talks.

Some tourists interviewed cited their experiences of local life as „authentic”. These tourists framed authenticity with respect to something „rural/local” and, sometimes, associated an authentic experience with a long-term visit.

Two of the respondents from the UK who travelled together cited their volunteering experience in Jakarta as „authentic” because they were posted as teachers in the countryside with no tourists’ presence. They ate local foods, learned the local language,
and were surrounded by local people only. One of them defined “authentic” as “having the same experience as [the] people [who] live in that country” (R#07). Moreover, a Canadian tourist defined “authentic” as “[the] original, the true, the real”, meaning that “the experience that would be as close possible what daily life of the people would be” (R#10). A 20-year-old British respondent reckoned the concept as “having a real experience of Cambodia...experiencing real life...but that won’t be authentic unless you have lived with the family” (R#13). Other respondents exemplified an authentic experience as that obtained by consuming the local way of life, and they associated the experience with something “rural/local/non-touristy”.

Other tourists put „authentic“ in the perspective of being „old/ancient/traditional“ as opposed to „new/modern”. A Dutch tourist viewed authentic as something “very old but special” and “unique” (R#11). She related this to Angkor temples/buildings, which could not be found elsewhere. „Authentic“ was defined as “real, tasteful” by a 68-year-old British engineer (R#28), who lived and worked in Singapore. “Tasteful” was referred to something that is not cheap or modern. According to him, the temples were “100% solid” or authentic. The hotel they were staying in was not authentic, explained some tourists (e.g. R#14; R#28). Another Australian tourist said „authenticity“ was about “experiencing the real country, instead of something that is a westernised version” of another people’s culture (R#19). That was experiencing what an average person in that culture would experience, her travel companion added (R#20). The latter (R#20) extended the concept to incorporate local ownership and management of tourist facilities.

The tourists conjured up the notions of authenticity and, to certain extent, established some basic conceptual formation. Some respondents, however, extended their arguments to a more complex level; that is, how and by whom „authenticity“ should be determined. This is where confusions arise and the concepts of authenticity/originality/reality, for example, are questioned.

A British tourist admitted that „authenticity“ is complicated in itself, „naive’ [in her own word] to many people. She murmured, “I don’t know. [Silence] I think it comes up quite complex in itself. How can you say that something is truly authentic?”(R#13). Another tourist from Peru who was on a two-day guided holiday with his girlfriend in Siem Reap expressed his inability to know the authentic in the example of the food he had eaten, as found in “I don’t know it is really Cambodian [food] because I ate in the hotel... I had
lunch yesterday and they said Khmer food. I don’t know how really authentic that is, but it was good” (R#18).

Some tourists acknowledged the difficulty of acquiring an authentic experience because tourists needed to have prior knowledge of the local history, tradition, culture, food, and other relevant knowledge and compare those with what they were consuming. They didn’t really know what was real or true and what was local to the destination they were visiting. “…Things like artworks, paintings, sculptures and handicrafts, again, it is hard. I don’t have the skills or qualifications to fully say yes or no [whether authentic or not]…” (R#21), said a 26-year-old respondent of Vietnamese origin from Australia who was on a guided visit to Angkor.

Moreover, given the nature of tourist visits such as the length of stay, it is unlikely for them to make a clear distinction between authentic and non-authentic consumption of the experience. To be able to evaluate if an experience is authentic, a UK tourist who visited Cambodia with a colleague, argued that she had to possess prior knowledge of the place, as stated in “I guess I can never judge that [authentic experience] we have never been here before....I don’t know coming to Siem Reap, like being in town represents authentic Cambodian culture…”(R#06). This respondent and her travel companion appeared to correlate truly authentic experience with longer length of stay or living or working in the places visited or with a visit to non-touristy places. They cited their experience in Jakarta as truly authentic. One of them said:

You are not going to get that [authentic experience] unless you know you are going to be there for a long period of time or you live in a community...in Jakarta we were living in a place we didn’t see any tourists at all and I’d say that was authentic in terms of you lived exactly as people lived in that area. (R#07)

These tourists were entangled in the concept of “authenticity” itself. They found that such concept was hard to define and a truly authentic experience was hard to realise. The study discovered that there was an absence of prior awareness of the term “authentic”, even in a non-tourism context, among the tour guides and the three non-guided tourists from Southeast Asia. This could be the constraint of language ability among non-native speakers.

Few Asian non-guided tourists had heard or seen it used before. As presented earlier, the majority of the non-guided tourists managed to project similar concepts as their
counterparts (guided tourists). A non-guided tourist viewed authenticity is a complicated concept in itself. He said, “Maybe authenticity in tourism is difficult to find...I don’t know exactly what authenticity is. Authenticity is reality, but what is the reality?”

A striking difference in the conceptualisation of authenticity is that the notion defined as something that is done off the beaten tracks was silent among the guided tourists, while it is commonly pronounced among the non-guided.

Ashworth asserted that “if heritage is consumer-defined, so is its authenticity” (1993, p.18). In this study, the tourists have been a certain level of obscurity in the projection of their understanding of authenticity. Even though few had heard of the term used in tourism before, they were trapped in the concept at some later stage of the interviews. This could lead to the question of how certain the other tourists were when they viewed something as true/original/authentic or somebody as true/honest.

The next section provides a sense of authentic/inauthentic tourist experience viewed from the history and interpretation of the place they visited. Section 5.4 addresses the third research objective in the study. As in the preceeding section, the study discovers more similarities than differences in the pursuits of authentic experiences by both types of tourists.

5.4 Pursuits of authentic experiences

Objective 3 of the study seeks to understand if the participating tourists were pursuing authentic experiences for their holiday or visit, especially to the Angkor World Heritage Site. Reflections on the experiences from their visits during the interviews allowed them to support their claims of what experiences they considered to be authentic. Generally, the guided and non-guided tourists, with very similar/the same notions of authenticity as illustrated in 5.3, obtained or pursued very similar authentic experiences (see Table 5.4).

Attempts to discretely classify the experiences into objective authenticity and constructive authenticity failed. The latter proved to be more suitable for the discussion (next chapter) than for this chapter. Thus, this chapter does not differentiate the experiences related to objective authenticity from those related to constructive authenticity. The main differences between these two types are discussed in the next chapter. Section 5.4.1 thus combines the illustrations of objective and constructive authenticity together and 5.4.2 provides evidence of existential authenticity.
5.4.1 Objective-related authenticity

5.4.1.1 Angkor heritage consumption as an authentic experience

The physical aspects of cultural/historical/heritage objects include buildings, structures, their locations, and places/surrounding environments of the visit. Because of the physical appearance, some respondents claimed that they were able to perceive if the temples or places they visited were authentic; that is ‘real/true/genuine/original’ from their judgement of the conditions of the structures and the materials.

Table 5.4 Authentic experiences/consumptions identified from tourist visits to Siem Reap-Angkor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of consumption</th>
<th>Guided tourist</th>
<th>Non-guided tourist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Heritage (Angkor)</td>
<td>• visiting to real/genuine/ancient/unique/non-relocated...temples (i.e. Angkor temples)</td>
<td>• visiting to real/genuine/ancient/unique...temples (e.g. Angkor temples)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• seeing depiction of real life stories on temple galleries</td>
<td>• seeing depictions of real life stories on temple galleries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• setting of the temples (forested area and locals living there)</td>
<td>• setting of the temples (forested area and locals living there)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• seeing temples reclaimed by nature</td>
<td>• seeing temples reclaimed by nature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• obtaining expert knowledge/perspective (tour guides’ accurate? narratives of history/culture/ temples) — „in-depth knowledge” experience</td>
<td>• imagining/meditating back into the past</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• going off the guided tourists’ tracks/paths</td>
<td>• going off the guided tourists’ tracks/paths</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily/real life (or lifestyles)</td>
<td>• watching/observing how local people going about their daily life (e.g. fishing, farming, sugar palm production, traditional housing)</td>
<td>• watching/observing how local people going about their daily life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• being taken backstreets</td>
<td>• going backstreets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• participating in cooking class</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social relation</td>
<td>• interacting with locals (e.g. tour guides—listening to their life story; drivers)</td>
<td>• interacting with locals (e.g. children selling souvenirs at the site, people on the streets )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• spending time with a friend/ friends</td>
<td>• visiting an orphanage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• visiting an orphanage</td>
<td>• having an adopted child</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A 60-year-old, French tourist (R#31) reiterated his genuine desire for authentic experiences and defined authentic as „real”. He firmly stated that “I am looking for real things…real temples, real ruins, real antiques, and so on.” He cited the consumption of his experience at Angkor as authentic. He said, “When I went to Angkor Wat, [it is] authentic…I think Angkor Wat and Angkor Thom are authentic” and added:

...there are many different styles [of Angkor temples], of course, from the beginning to, also the bas-reliefs, the sculptures and they show history...I saw some bas-reliefs very interesting [about] pregnant ladies, other things...very interesting because as I said it is real life. The real life is there [displayed through bas-reliefs at temple galleries]. (R#31)
From his guided visit to Angkor, a respondent noted that “the buildings, the wats [temples], are very authentic. They are real....the shops over the road...that are selling the rubies and the sapphires are rubbish. Glass” (R#03). Conservation and preservation of various parts of the temples had been going on during the fieldwork and an Australian tourist indicated that the temples they visited were authentic, as quoted in “the monuments, the temples, I think it is being made more authentic...the setting is authentic” (R#16).

A UK tourist was confident from his consumption of the heritage experience that the atmosphere, the setting, and the place [Angkor temples] were left authentic or natural or were intended to provide authentic experience, as found in the following quote:

*It has to be authentic. It has to be. It is not like any buildings that have been made with new stones, or it is not like there have been lots of huts built for restaurants and stuff like that. No. It kept its authenticity. They kept it as they could. They leave some trees there and the roots growing over the buildings. If you were to take all down and build sort of places where you can get food and drinks in the middle of it, it wouldn’t be authentic. They left it as real as you can get it.* (R#55)

A 70-year-old tourist (R#36) from the US also revealed that the physicality of the Angkor temples was authentic, meaning „real” or „not fake”. Another US tourist stated that authenticity is something that was “not phony or fake” (R#24). They both perceived authenticity in the Angkor temples they had visited. Another participant (R#50) explained the concept of authenticity in relation to Angkor temples, saying “For me, authenticity is uniqueness. That is the only thing, not other things like it. So I like that about Angkor Wat. It is very unique.”

An Australian tourist (R#44), among many others, was very impressed by Ta Prohm temple that was reclaimed by nature/big trees for almost three hundred years when he was describing his [authentic] experience at Angkor. The tourists, in this case, observed and experienced objective authenticity (Wang, 1999). Authentic experience presented in this section is closely associated with the physical objects/attractions and their characteristics. The tour guides also played a vital role in facilitation of an authentic experience.

An English-speaking tour guide (R#57) felt that some of the reproduction of the statues in the temple site and restoration did not negatively affect visitors” experience. However, the tourists (the US couple he last guided) would prefer to see the original state of the ruins. The tourists did not like the way that the French archaeologists had, some time ago, used
cement and iron to repair some of the temples, but felt better that the present archaeologists were using traditional methods (e.g. reuse of old temple stones or use of stone of the same type in restoration). This is described as the authenticity of the material by Ashworth (Howard, 2003). This aspect was commonly highlighted in the tour guides’ interpretation of the temples site.

Similarly, a Thai-speaking tour guide (R#61) said that the Danish tourists whom he last guided were looking for the ‘originality’ of the Angkor temples.

They compared new parts and original parts of restored temples. They said that restoration degrade the originality [authenticity] of temples. When seeing the newly restored section of a temple, they were interested in how the original would look like. (R#61)

The tour guide’s account shows that these Danish tourists were very much interested in gazing the original or real heritage objects, not the renovated/invented ones. The renovation or reproduction of heritage objects that were placed among other originally ancient pieces, to a certain degree, devalued the historical/cultural experience to some consumers/tourists.

Overall, the tourists did not project the high level of an authentic experience perceived from their visit to the Angkor Archaeological Park. Some, however, are critical of some restoration projects that have altered the originality of the heritage. The consumption of the reproduced elements of heritage could slightly, but not to a large extent, affect the tourist experience. Sometimes, the tourists cited that it was their preference to consume the authenticity of historical/cultural objects/narratives. When asked about tourists’ reaction towards restoration of Angkor temples, a tour guide explained:

The tourists [the last tourists he guided] reacted to the restoration. They said they don’t like restoration as that will lose the originality of the temple. They wanted to see its ancientness and reality in the ruins. (R#64)

He commented that such a perspective was especially shared by the tourists from Europe, while Asian tourists (especially, Vietnamese, Koreans and Chinese) were not much concerned. Some European tourists, however, didn’t object to the restoration of temples, particularly when traditional methods were used.

The views on the impacts of the restoration on tourist experiences was also shared by other tour guides (e.g. R#63; R#64; R#65) and restoration project teams. Using the
traditional methods of restoration, the old/new stones would look the same as time passed by.

A US tourist provided some aspects to look at in assessing physical authenticity, stating that:

“When I talked about physical, I mean, for instance, when I looked at a structure. What condition is the structure in? Is it how it becomes over time? Has it been restored? How much work has been done on it? Is it 100% authentic in terms of, in the restoration or 40% of it was made five years ago?” (R#2)

These criteria indicate that restoration degrades the physical authenticity of temples. His firm tone suggested that he objected to the reproduction of heritage elements within the Angkor Complex, but the reproduction of a few to represent the originals would not matter to him. Another respondent provided an example of statues of Giants and Goddesses (Figure 5.3) at the South Entrance of Angkor Thom, saying that the reproduction of the heads of those figures eroded not only the physical authenticity but also diverted original narratives/history.

*That was good I think but if you put a new head on the statue. That is not authentic to me...because the destruction of the heads of the statues is as important as the history of the original...*” (R#09)
The reproduction of some objects was found to affect the experience of the tourists, only slightly and occasionally, but not significantly (e.g. R#01; R#02; R08; R#09; R#10) although some others were very critical in the reflection of authenticity in their experience. Tourists did not only want to see the physical ancientness of the objects, but also wanted to hear the true narratives associated with them.

A guided tourist observed from her previous travel experience in Egypt that, “[a monument] was repainted all over...not restored to the original condition...I mean leave it as it was” (R#01) and her travel companion added that some of the statues at the Angkor Archaeological Park stuck out [looking new and different] due to reproduction (R#02).

The physical original location of object attractions was also viewed to be associated with authenticity. A respondent stated that “they actually moved the entire monument in Egypt because it was going to be flooded because the dam they created there...it was not in the original location” (R#01). Her statement is congruent with Ashworth’s authenticity of context (Howard, 2003). Such relocation of the ancient temple could somehow affect the level of authentic experiences.

With respect to Angkor temples, they were built almost a thousand years ago; as a result, various parts of the structures have fallen into a state of dilapidation. Some of the dilapidated parts of the temples have been and are being restored. In relation to this, some non-guided tourists and tour guides felt that it was necessary to restore those collapsed structures to their original forms, analogous to Ashworth’s authenticity of concept (Howard, 2003). Others, however, preferred to leave them to the naturally ruptured states, but with protection against the naturally decaying process. This is the issue of balancing restoration or up-keep with ancientness/originality/authenticity, as also noted by Timothy and Boyd (2003).

These tourists (e.g. R#1 & R#2) were very critical of “noticeable” changes made to the physical appearance of the Angkor temples and asserted that their experiences were slightly disturbed by such alterations to the original pieces of heritage. They also noticed a tendency for renovation projects going on at various temples in the Angkor Complex. To them, renovations of a few statues or objects to represent the original missing parts were acceptable and attempts to renovate each and every piece were not, claiming that the missing parts of the statues/temple due to different causes such as wars, looting, or even natural process, represent history in itself. Such views were shared by other tourists (e.g. R#09).
At some certain moments of visits, restoration could establish a sense of inauthentic experience among the tourists who visited Angkor temples. Some visitors observed the reproduction of some/parts of statues within the Angkor complex, conceptualizing inauthenticity as something that is rebuilt or newly made and compared such things found in an imaginary Disneyland (R#45). A US respondent (R#36) also noted that “Disneyland-like is unauthentic”. The tourists not only established the concept of authenticity or authentic experience within the physicality of objects/places, but also most of the time associated authenticity with people.

In addition, when asked about the reaction of tourists to the restoration of Angkor temples, a tour guide (R#60) acknowledged that some tourists sought the ancientness of the ruins. He cited that his Malaysian tourists (the last tourists he guided) as saying that if the big trees at Ta Prohm were to cut off, the temple would become less attractive, losing its ancientness. Obviously, these tourists also adhered „authenticity“ to the naturalness and alterations to it would make the temple less authentic.

Other tour guides (e.g. R#58; R#65) provided similar observations about tourists looking for objective originality. Another tour guide provided a case where tourists (the ones whom he last guided, one from the UK and the other from South Africa) were interested in the originality of ruins.

Tourists wanted to see what is truly original and naturally ruined... Ta Prohm is a temple most attracted by big trees. When it is now being restored by the [APSARA] Authority, it may affect tourist experience.... Those two tourists appeared to love nature too much. They knew that Angkor Wat was left 200 years ago, so they thought that there should have been a lot of trees reclaiming the temples like those at Ta Prohm... They wanted to see trees growing there like those at Ta Prohm... (R#58)

This case provides evidence of how expectation played its role in tourist experience. The tourist perception of authenticity was related to natural reclamation (because the temple was abandoned for 200 years), and therefore they hoped to see the temples (e.g. Angkor Wat) totally situated in the jungle, like Ta Prohm temple—also known as the Jungle Temple (Figure 5.4).

A 35-year-old tour guide who has been on the job for 12 years explained that in guiding he focused very much on the history/architecture/styles of the temples and local culture, indicating his understanding of tourists” prime interests. He said:
We [tour guides] emphasize the timelines of the buildings, the history, the religions and the influence of Indian culture in the 6th century on Angkor... [in our interpretation] we also talked, first, about history [and] second [about] Khmer culture/traditions, ways of life, religious [Buddhist] ceremonies/rituals. (R#57)

The interviews of the tour guides revealed that the areas of emphasis for the interpretation of temples and places were similar for all tour guides. Another tour guide (R#58) also stressed the provision of knowledge, or cool authenticity (Selwyn, 1996), about high culture and local lifestyles/low culture to his clients. Although this tour guide, as all other tour guides, had never heard of the term „authentic“ before the interview, the way he presented and interpreted the place provided a sense of authentic experience.

We [tour guides] told tourists about our history of Angkor, allowing tourists to create a picture and imagine what was happening in the past, 1000 years ago. We talked about relevant
history, religions, and traditions in Angkor period while we [tourists and the guide] are standing in front of the temples. We [tour guides] create tourists’ imagination. For example, in Angkor Thom period reigned by Jayavarman VII, there were about 1 million people while at the same time there were about 50 000 people in London... (R#58)

With a tour guide, he claimed, tourists could obtain up to 90% of good (authentic) experience. In this regard, the interpretation/narration of history by the tour guides could play a vital role in assisting an authentic experience. The tourists perceived the experience of Angkor to be authentic because they were accompanied by a person [tour guide] who was very knowledgeable about the place they were visiting and “didn’t feel like being sold in the experience of what was being told” (R#06). Not only temples but also the local people and their lifestyles are also important for gaze.

In addition to authenticity of the temples, tourists also mentioned that it could be used to relate to „food“ (R#08 & R#09) and „clothes“ sold in a tourist market (R#21). For instance, authenticity could be found “when you have dinner in a traditional restaurant” (R#15). Conjuring up the concept of authenticity, a US tourist in his 20’s stated “It depends on what aspect of tourism you are talking about. Because if you are going to…have a meal, I mean, authentic meal…” Respondent #45 explained “I like to eat, especially food. People like to eat American styles, chips, things like that. I don’t like it. This is also a feeling of authenticity.” The term „authentic“ was used by some respondents to refer to food (e.g. R#34; R#45), tourism products (e.g. R#32), and temples/antiques (e.g. R#54; R#34).

Both tourist consumption of their experience and tour guide’s narration/interpretation were closely linked to the sites/elements/characteristics of tangible heritage visited. Objective authenticity was related and evaluated against various cultural/historical objects, people, and places in their encounters by the tourists. As noted earlier, while discussing about the heritage objects as a subject of authenticity, the tourists (guided and non-guided) often turned to people-based authenticity.

5.4.1.2 ‘Local lifestyle’ consumption as an authentic experience

Lifestyles could be used in reference to material objects (e.g. modern cars, housing, clothes) that present a particular way of life, people’s daily conducts, and/or livelihoods. Respondent #54 indicated that authenticity was used to describe local culture. Speaking from his experience of Cambodia, another respondent added that authenticity could be found in people, in local villages outside Siem Reap town, and in the countryside of Cambodia. He elaborated the importance of authenticity, as saying:
If you go 5 kilometres from Siem Reap [town], the local villages are still the same as before...So for the country like Cambodia [it] is very important that it continues to be original...every country will change with or without tourists....but the culture and tradition still continues as before...in their behaviours, in the way they do, the way they live....what I say is the local people, the countryside, the villages, the tourists have to go there because they can see this is the real Cambodia....I hope the people will have a better life, but I hope the authenticity of these people [culture and traditions] still remains. (R#37)

Similarly, the 43-year-old Canadian tourist, who was on a guided holiday in Cambodia, explained that to obtain a truly authentic experience tourists would not have gone on such a [guided] tour. She suggested that:

...they have to try and learn more about all the different types of groups of people and visit, experience and stay in the homes and eat their cooking and talk to them. You know in different countries they have a taste of that like a day trip... And instead of staying necessarily in a hotel, you spend a night or a few nights at these people’s home and help them with their livelihoods...the farming...Experience some harvesting and help them with the animals. That will be more authentic. (R#10)

A 60-year-old French tourist (R#31) reiterated a number of times that “authenticity is with the people...in the ways of life” and said that every time he travelled he would read novels about the place or the country he was visiting so that he could learn about the people. He also repeated that sometimes when he liked the place so much, he stayed for a long time in the [same] place to get the feeling of the place and to feel like the local people. “This is the only way to find authenticity”, he claimed.

Some tourists were interested in experiencing local ways of life, in addition to their own primary experience of Angkor temples and history, said a tour guide (R#57). His guests (a US couple on a packaged holiday in Siem Reap) included a guided tour to the Floating Village to see local life on the Great Lake and participated in Water Blessing, a religious ablation performed by a Buddhist monk to provide happiness and drive away bad luck.

Another tour guide who took an Australian couple on two-day holiday in Siem Reap added about the tour activities he organised for them. In addition to the tour of temples, he said:

They [the Australian couple] were really happy that we [tour guide and tourists] chatted about our [Cambodian] ways of life...On Day Two, on the way to Bantey Srey temple, I took them to Pradak village [a village in the Angkor Archaeological Park]
to see the village life, and then to Tonle Sap [the Great Lake] to see crocodile farms. They liked the Floating Village very much. (R#64)

Another tour guide noted that, in addition to the temples, the couple were very interested in Cambodian ways of life.

They [tourists] really wanted to know what we [Khmers/Cambodians] make for a living. I told them in the rainy season, most Khmers do the farming. They go fishing on the [Mekong/Tonle Sap] river. They collect forest products and make charcoal. They produce palm sugar... (R#63)

Another guide also stated about tourist interests in local ways of life:

Usually tourists asked about income. How much people, e.g. those working in a restaurant, earned a month. How much a teacher earns and asked if that was enough. What a majority of people did in Cambodia. (R#65)

Tour guides (e.g. R#63; R#64; R#65) also told tourists about local architecture/housing and local lifestyles (low culture).

...also [I] talked about Khmer traditional housing. Traditionally we built houses on stilts. Why? It is not only because of the flooding alone. It is also because: (1) in the old time there were wild animals such as tigers and lions and (2) traditionally, Khmers used firewood and charcoal for cooking. So the ground area under the house could be used for storage of firewood/charcoal and paddy rice away from rains. (R#57)

A Thai-speaking tour guide (R#61) also reported that his group tour with six people from Thailand [three of who were Thais-Dutch] also bought packaged tour of the temples and of the Floating Village. In the package, he also included a visit to a local shrine, since Thais and Cambodians shared similar beliefs. On the way to Bantey Srey temple, about 29 kilometres from Siem Reap town, tour guides (e.g. R#57; R#61; R#63; R#64; R#65) generally incorporated a visit to a local sugar palm production.

The Floating Village appeared to be a second important attraction in Siem Reap after Angkor. Both the tourists and the tour guides often included this attraction in the tourist holiday packages to Siem Reap. Some emerging attractions that exhibit local ways of life were orphanages and the Silk Farm, as identified in the visits to the Greater Siem Reap-Angkor by the respondents (e.g. R#62; R#63).
Even when authenticity used in the context of tourism had never been heard of before, a tourist from Melbourne, Australia, provided his view on the concept with reference to both his visit to Angkor and his activity in search of his personal experience; that is consuming [authentic] local life.

So the authenticity, for me, of tourist experience is certainly there in the temples, but equally the authenticity in my experience in Cambodia will be those walks that I had done backstreets or the walks along the river and some of the sites that I saw there, you know. That’s more authentic. That’s authentic tourism to me...I have always been interested in how ordinary people life their life, you know. An so I tried to get a sense of that even though it might be a very limited sense of that authentic life that people actually lead... (R#44)

A US tourist provided an anecdote of a „corny“[very inauthentic] experience of a dinner show in Hawaii, in which dancers wore costumes that had not been traditionally worn. He contrasted such on-stage experience with an authentic „cook-out“ and his unique experience living 9 months with a local Hawaiian household:

I was living with people that grew up there the whole life...We would go to somebody’s house for a party—a cook-out...[people] sitting around in shorts and T-shirts eating, and somebody would bring out a small guitar and start playing and dancing in regular clothes, no fancy costumes... in their backyard...that was really authentic. (R#24)

A combined response from US and Australian tourists who were travelling together provided an account of their previous „authentic“ experience in Thailand. That was the experience of local life such as “going to the local food market, buying and preparing food, [and] cooking that reflected another side of the other culture” (R#19). Her travel companion on the same group tour cited her homestay experience in India as a type of activity she liked doing on holiday, recalling her eating a meal and talking with the family and practicing the language. She labelled that experience as “amazingly authentic” (R#20). Another US tourist who was on a guided holiday in Siem Reap with her spouse stated that “living in home with the family is authentic” (R#26), adding that “getting down seeing the farmers and the rice fields, seeing the way that children are getting education in the poor section in the city...Get a feel of how they really are living” (R#25). He perceived such a holiday to be authentic.

Another added that he consumed local ways of life in the places he has been to.
Last week I was in Thailand...I went past a floating village and you know all on stilts...I went over the floating village down a little back street...I took some photos of the people doing their washing, people picking up their fishing lines, so that is more kind of what I want to see when I come to a place. I have done it everywhere though. Last year I was in Laos, Luong Prabang, and I did the same. I went to all the temples, but also I walked to lots and lots of villages, where there is no English [spoken] and they were a bit surprised to see somebody walking, like me...I find it quite interesting sometimes to go to a place where there is no English or any tourists. I had meal in a restaurant...and eat what local people eat. When I am away, I very rarely eat Western food, so I always try to eat Cambodian food, Laotian food and Thai food... (R#44)

Other respondents (e.g. R#32; R#45) also possessed a similar view with regard to consuming local culture and lifestyles for their experience. For these tourists, authenticity in local culture, traditions and ways of life is important for their experience, an integral part of the whole experience of place. The tourists viewed the consumption of daily life of the local, ordinary people for their holiday experience as being an authentic one. The deeper they delved into local lifestyles, the more authentic they would feel. Some tourists like to immerse among locals, but do not like the presence of other tourists consuming an attraction or destination at the same time, as also mentioned by MacCannell (1989).

Lifestyles could be used in reference to material objects (e.g. modern cars, housing, clothes) that represent a particular way of life. Although most non-guided tourists were initially motivated by the fame of Angkor temples, local lifestyles, culture, and traditions also became a focal point of tourist consumption for an authentic experience. From the interviews, the respondents frequently alluded „lifestyles” to various aspects of life from the daily conducts of the living, local housing, foods, and to economic/social/cultural/religious practices of local people. Sharply’s (2005) definition of authenticity is also related to the description of these tangible aspects of life. However, placing the consumption of lifestyles under the overall framework of objective authenticity seems rather odd because aspects of lifestyles are not explicitly discussed within Wang’s (1999) framework of objective authenticity. This thesis attempts to expand this boundary and considers lifestyles as sights (including tangible objects, events, and conducts of daily life) that can be observed, encountered, and felt by tourists, and thus should be framed within the discussion of objective authenticity in tourism experience. On top of the consumption of lifestyles, tourist perceptions towards true history,
interpretation, representation, and honesty in tourist encounters are also an integral part of constructive authenticity.

5.4.1.3 ‘Social interaction’ consumption as an authentic experience

The tourists frequently associated ‘honesty’ in social relations with an authentic experience. The research revealed that honest social interactions were considered an authentic experience, but not anything done for a business purpose or done to rip money off tourists. In other words, tourists with such perspective framed authenticity within the concept of ‘honesty’ or honest behaviours and attitudes of local people in not-for-business encounters. The study found that the issue of honesty did not appear to be a problem for the guided tourists during their visits to Siem Reap-Angkor although they (e.g. R#01 & R#02) raised it as an issue elsewhere (e.g. in Egypt). However, this issue was often observed and raised by the non-guided tourists (e.g. R#33; R#34; R#38; R#39; R#40).

A US couple defined „authenticity” as real ‘human connection’ [original words]. “To me, [authenticity is] human-human connection. I think it is all about human connection and having real conversations”, they explained.

I have definitely met some real cool Cambodians because, I think, people generally seem very friendly... the lady who sold us a Camera charger (R#34)...That was a real experience. That was human-human. That was real (R#33)...The ones who work in the kitchen. Very, very nice people, but a lot of it seem like somebody nice and tell you don’t buy something from them [sellers] (R#34)

Although they had mixed (authentic and inauthentic) experiences, they cited an example (the above quote) of an authentic experience they once had at a camera shop in Siem Reap town.

Authentic experience was limited to not only the interaction/chatting between the tourists and their tour guide, but was also extended to that between the host-guest interactions in general. Upon her second visit to Angkor with her friend, a US visitor who was newly posted for another three months in Phnom Penh explained that „authentic” was about achieving the experience that is “good, genuine, honest, [and] interactive for both whoever the tourist was and whoever the host was” (R#17). As quoted from a non-guided French tourist (R#31) earlier in this chapter, one of the reasons he travelled alone was to meet other people (tourists and locals). Quality two-way interactions could contribute to a good [authentic] experience. Chatting with travel companions, with a tour guide/driver, or with
people in their hotels/restaurants (not for business purposes) are examples of authentic experiences.

Two Malaysian friends travelled to Cambodia partly because they wished to spend some time together to enhance friendship as they did not see each other much back in their home country. They decided to plan a holiday together once a year. One of them said, “I think another major reason would be to spend time with my friend. We hadn’t had time to spend time with each other. I took this opportunity. It is a good place” (R#29). A US tourist (R#18) on her new posting in Cambodia visited the temples of Angkor with her friend who just visited her because she wanted to share the wonderful experience of the temples with her friend. Another tourist, an Australian who taught at a university in Singapore, saw herself being interviewed as an authentic experience because she did similar things on her job and was interacting with a person with a similar profession. “…surprisingly being interviewed by you [the researcher] is somewhat authentic for me…,” she said (R#27). As illustrated, truthfulness, honesty, and respect thus formed an integrated part of an authentic social experience.

Earlier in this chapter, the experiences that the participating tourists considered to be authentic have been provided in three main categories — heritage, daily life/lifestyle, and social relation. The experiences of these could be associated to both objective-related authenticity and existential authenticity. From the respondents’ notions of authenticity, the experiences (Table 5.4) were more related to objective-related authenticity, but it could possibly be associated with existential authenticity at the same time. The rest of this chapter is thus devoted to the latter.

5.4.2 Existential authenticity

Wang’s (1999) central thesis of existential authenticity is the exploration of real self (or authentic self) in tourism experiences. Reisinger and Steiner (2006) and Kim and Jamal (2007) appears to be advocates of this relatively new concept. Some evidence of existential authenticity in tourist experiences was observed in this study.

5.4.2.1 Intra-personal

5.4.2.1.1 Bodily feeling

The activities of some tourists are associated with the comfort of the body and relaxation, or “bodily feelings” in Wang’s (1999) word (p.361), ranging from sports (e.g. R#32; R#6; R#7), such as cycling to attractions (especially mentioned by non-guided tourists), body
massages/relaxation and excitement/thrill (e.g. eating deep-fried crickets/spider-like/tarantula-like creature).

A Canadian tourist, who taught in Singapore, stated that she liked to obtain an authentic experience, the experience that was as close as to the local people’s. On the topic of local food, she emphasized:

...So I could have crickets too. I never had crickets before. That is something I decided to do. I saw a lady with a basket there and I wanted to know so I decided to try it. I really liked it...I would have bought more for me. It was really good. I guess I was making sound like umm...Very good! Again, my bus driver is going to stop [on the way to Phnom Penh] and my guide said you are going to see, I don’t know, he told me there are spiders...My guide said they are spiders. (R#10)

She went on expressing her willingness to taste tarantulas too on the way to Phnom Penh the following day. It was an authentic experience for her to have eaten deep-fried crickets and was going to be a thrilling experience for her to try tarantulas. Respondents #8 & #9 similarly expressed their intention to eat crickets although they would feel “scary to try”.

Participating in a cooking class or food preparation could be another example of satisfying bodily feeling. It is fun. The tourists participating in the interview put it:

That is a good way to experience another culture and to know the people, by just getting to know how to cook some of their dishes (R#19)... and you know the food market. We walked through this beautiful market, buying the food, preparing it. It is another side of the other culture. (R#20)

An engaged US couple (R#22 & R#23), similarly stated:

...learning to cook food... it was fun... I think I liked so any culture it come to, what you eat, how you eat it. KOKO [Khmer traditional dish/soup], eating soup, eating rice, and spent time walking to the market and we had so much fun doing that before by ourselves. We went with the chef. She pointed out everything. We got class in Thailand too. We wanted to continue doing that. So I think we really enjoyed cooking class too. (R#23)

Tourists also want bodily comforts. I observed that, especially in the evening, tourists were drinking and relaxing at restaurants and going to massage shops. Although some of these activities were not the main purpose of going on a holiday, but they could certainly complement overall tourist experience. An Australian tourist surprisingly said:
As a tourist, I thought there was a simple hotel. I was surprised there was a spa stuff. That really surprised me. There are spas and so on. Wealthy hotels. So maybe I will stay one night in one of those hotels here. (R#27)

Drinking in pubs and eating in restaurants are also examples of social/leisure/relaxation activities that have been an integral part of people, either in home country or away. Another type of authenticity-seeking is self-making (Wang, 1999).

5.4.2.1.2 Self-making

Tourists travel in search of their authentic self lost in their mundane environment. Tourists, Wang (1999) argued, are motivated for an opportunity to recover such loss or an alternative self, which is considered as self-making or identity-making.

A guided respondent expressed that her most important experience is the appreciation of her own existence (what she has had at home), especially when visiting developing countries. In Wang’s (1999) perspective, this is associated with self-making as she evaluated her existence against local people, then reinforcing or reaffirming her own identity. She stated:

...it’s for me is about coming to a different country, regardless of where I go to. It is always a better appreciation [at home] for...being from the US. Things I had at home that I don’t here. Honestly, probably, Cambodia, among the countries I have been to, has the slightest amount of infrastructure. Certain things...that make me appreciate what I had at home...(R#1)

Another example of self-making was found in an Australian tourist (R#44) who searched for an authentic experience in relation to the original purpose of the temples. That was achieved by locating himself, though temporarily, in quiet places within temples away from other tourists, contemplating and imagining in time back to the historical period of the religious structures.

...Angkor Wat is the one in the popular imagination...I hate to be here in peak season...I’d like to have a place more to myself...I decided to go outside the main temple area and sit and just watch for a little while and have some quiet time, some silence, away from all the people...to actually find somewhere quiet or secluded. And it is the place that is designed for meditation, isn’t it? At the temples where the place people are thinking in a spiritual way...the Bayon again for me...I did [eventually] find some places inside where I sat down. It was quite dark and the tour guide didn’t take the groups in there...(R#44)
The desire to go off the beaten track or to be adventurous and such activities were also identified in other tourists, which is again associated with self-making or identity-making.

Another example of self-making is that some tourists tended to stay away from others while at tourist places. This was commonly evident in interviews of both guided and non-guided tourists and also acknowledged by the tour guides. The tourists felt the omnipresence/presence of other tourists as anti-authentic.

Such feeling was expressed by many respondents (e.g. R#1&R#2; R#07&R#8; R#13; R#22). A tourist from the UK said that “The temple is authentic. Perhaps the experience is clouded by...the fact that it is a tourist destination” (R#13) and her statement was nodded at and supported by her holiday travel companion. Moreover, an Australian tourist who travelled with a priest explained that for them they would “find places by ourselves that we can just go where there are not many tourists around...that is where authenticity comes into it as well...”(R#08).

Another tourist made reference to the Grand Canyon as a place from which tourists would not obtain an authentic experience, citing that:

...It is a very beautiful place and very, very crowed and noisy, and you know in the park there are groceries store where they sell alcohol...this kind of ruins it you know..., which is supposed to be the wilderness. You heard traffics almost all days...even up in the mountain. (R#24)

When I asked about his experience of Angkor, an Australian tourist in his mid-50’s explained:

There are elements of it [Angkor] that are authentic, I suppose! A bit, not contradiction, but it is a bit of you get so many people flocked to one place. That was what I was saying before about the experience of place. I think I am a bit selfish, you know. You want the place to yourself and not want to share with thousands of other people, taking away from the authenticity, I suppose...there is always going to be that contradiction between authentic experience and the tourist experience, I suppose, where you share the space with somebody. (R#44)

This tourist preferred to find places in temples with no tourists and to avoid tour groups, as stated in “[Tour groups were] just driving me mad. I did find some places inside [a temple] where I sat down. It was quite dark and the tour guide didn’t take the groups in there.” The tranquillity of the experience of Angkor temples was also a preference for a US woman traveller. Although she viewed authenticity from the perspective of „being true
to one’s root, to one’s culture’ [original words] and Americanisation and global
commercialisation undermined the authenticity of a place, she noted that she liked to
climb the steep steps to the top of temples alone, with black cloud and sky, giving her ‘a
sense of long rich history’ [original words]. She added:

I don’t want to do that with ten thousand people yesterday. I mean who wants to do that? I think the thing to do is to do the reverse for me of what other people are doing. So thinking a little bit ahead (R#46)

These respondents have shown that the presence of „other” tourists, to some extent, affected the respondents” [authentic] experience. As a result, some tour guides tried to avoid the peak time when taking their guests to the temples.

A tour guide with 12-year experience, who told the researcher about a US couple who bought a packaged tour/holiday to Siem Reap and Phnom Penh, reported that:

They [the US couple] said if they didn’t have me as their tour guide, they would not be able to visit the temples when it was very quiet like that because they didn’t see other tourists. They asked me why. I said it was because I chose to bring them here [Angkor Wat] at the time of the day with the lowest number of tourists. I knew that at 11:00 am, there were no tourists at Angkor Wat... And that is the time I usually take tourists to Angkor Wat because most Asian tourists (Chinese, Japanese and Korean) would return for lunch in the town... (R#57)

When asked if the tour company had set specific times of visit to an attraction, he said no. The company had just listed what to include in the package, while the choice of what to see first or on what day depended on him [the tour guide]. Other tour guides (e.g. R#64; R#65) similarly had the same understanding of the impact of the presence of others on tourist experience and guided their clients in a reverse order of time. An English-speaking tour guide, who talked about the Australian tourists on his last tour to Angkor, said “With my 7-year experience, [I know] tourists like the peace and quiet of the temple site. So I organised the reverse of the other tours” (R#64).

The desire for authentic experience away from thongs of other tourists was also clearly indicated by the 60-year-old French tourist, as in the following statement.

I look for things away from the other tourists. I don’t want to be on the steps of tourists so I try to find something interesting, but unusual. Of course, I visit every big thing, but I also like to visit small things where nobody wants to go. (R#31)
The presence of „other” tourists could play an important part in acquiring authentic experience by non-guided tourists, especially when they visited a place like Angkor temples that are characterized and associated with spirituality or a place for worship. Self-seclusion from other tourists could thus enhance authentic experience.

Inter-human relationship or human-human connection, framed in Wang’s (1999) view, is associated with self-making as found in the interviews of some of guided and non-guided tourists. Intra-personal authenticity is one of Wang’s (1999) types of authenticity-seeking experience and inter-personal authenticity (family ties and tourist communitas) is another.

### 5.4.2.2 Inter-personal

#### 5.4.2.2.1 Family ties

A case where an Vietnamese-Australian tourist making the diasporic visit to Vietnam before continuing her trip to Cambodia can be attributed to family-tie inter-personal authenticity. In Cambodia, however, she was motivated by the World Heritage status of Angkor and the Killing Field.

#### 5.4.2.2.2 Touristic communitas

Touristic communitas, Wang’s (1999) other type of inter-personal authenticity, were relevant to some tourists” option for budget accommodation so that they had more opportunities to socialise with other tourists and locals. Those tourists who stayed in luxurious accommodation found themselves in higher environmental protection. The choice for budget accommodation/guesthouse, on the other hand, reduced such barriers (e.g. R#25; R#26; R#33; R#34). Looking poor increased the chance of social integration, especially in the poor destinations. Another example of communitas was found in the illustration of a retired US tourist viewed his interaction with a motorbike mechanic as an authentic experience, underscoring his intention to disregard local social status.

...Authenticity means real in people. I actually respect everybody no matter what the level whatever they are workers... authentic motorcycle mechanics, but great if you are mechanics tourist. I talked to him the other day. We were having fun...(R#36)

Tourists found themselves having an authentic experience from making friends with other tourists or locals (R#31), being interviewed by the researcher (e.g. R#18; R#19) or having an adopted son/daughter from the destination visited (R#11). The inter-personal authenticity is an integral part of tourist communitas.
Sometimes, there could be a combination of intra-personal and extra-personal experience from a tourist’s activities at a destination/site. An important question is whether the tourists consciously pursued or were primarily motivated to pursue intra- or inter-personal authenticity.

Tourists rarely are single-minded persons. Often, s/he looks for a number of things on his/her holiday (a variety of experiences — primary and secondary) and sometimes does not even know exactly what s/he is looking for — just something interesting. In response to the question on what she looked for in her visit, a Finish tourist said:

*It is normally a mixture of things like, visiting ...and most importantly ...enjoying the food and meet people. Because I work very hard back home, my holiday is not only like the sites. Sometimes it is nice to have one day, just resting and just looking around, not doing much. It is a mixture of....I look for some sports experience and then I liked biking here. When I am going to Laos, I am going to do some kind of....so I am looking for some outdoors activities. (R#32)*

This typical non-guided Finish tourist sought experiences related to food tasting, relaxation, sports/cycling (bodily feelings); and meeting new people (tourist communitas), in addition to her primary heritage experience at the Angkor Site. She also engaged in some benevolent work. At a temple site, I saw her enjoy talking with some kids selling books and teaching them some English. She also went to a local primary school bringing some free notebooks and pens for pupils there. She also told me she planned to visit an orphanage the next day.

Difficulties were encountered in attempting to attach certain pursuits or experiences to either object-related authenticity or existential authenticity due to messy messages/findings obtained from the ground and such messy texts are a characteristic of qualitative research of human enquiry. The attempt having made so far was to simplify the data into a more readable illustration of this particular study. The next chapter discusses issues related to tourists’ pursuits of authentic experiences mainly in relation to the theoretical framework discussed in Chapter 3 and the key findings in Chapter 5.
Chapter 6
Discussion

This research began with an implicit assumption that the guided tourists, who were subject to influence and direction from their tour guides (Cohen, 1985; Holloway, 1981), and the non-guided tourists, with more interest in exploration and an independent mindset, would choose different activities and pursuits of experiences at a destination. Within this assumption, guided tourists, who could be equated to Cohen’s mass institutionalised tourists, were assumed to be less concerned with authenticity or authentic experiences than non-guided tourists, who could be thought of as Cohen’s noninstitutionalised tourists. These differences became the hypothesis of this investigation. The aim of the study was to explore the similarities and differences between the two types of visitors (guided and non-guided) to the Angkor WHS of Cambodia. In this chapter, the discussion mainly addresses Objectives 4 and 5, which was intended to provide an analysis of authenticity as developed by Wang (1999) in the contexts of the tourist pursuit of authentic experiences and the importance and implications of authenticity in tourist experiences.

6.1 Objective authenticity

As indicated in Chapter 2, Angkor is a World Heritage Site placed under the oversight of UNESCO and the APSARA Authority. The temples within the Angkor Archaeological Park are dated to the 9th century. They are not only ancient, but also, to use the terminology of the respondents, unique, special, and mind-blowing with sophisticated history, culture, architecture and styles. Within their historical, cultural, and aesthetic global significance, an important criterion for the ancient temples to be registered as a UNESCO WHS is that there remains a high level of authenticity. Statements on the importance of authenticity are emphasised in various ICOMOS documents (see Chapter 2). In Wang’s (1999) perspective, ICOMOS adheres to objective authenticity in its criterion. UNESCO’s conceptualisation of authenticity is dominated by “western aesthetics” that place the emphasis on “the museum definition of authenticity” (Meethan, 2001, p.102).

The tourists participating in the interviews felt that the temples are ancient and authentic, and therefore the experiences from their visits are authentic. This objective authenticity is based on the ancient temples, the authenticity of which has been maintained and
safeguarded by the UNESCO and the APSARA Authority, in particular. As evinced in chapter 5, both guided and non-guided tourists obtained authentic experiences, or objective authenticity, from visiting the Angkor temples, from seeing the depiction of real life stories of the Angkorian era on the temple galleries, from pondering how the constructions of these ancient temples could be possible, and from sensing the tension between temples and nature reclaiming them for hundreds of years. The vegetation reclaiming the ancient temples (e.g. Ta Prohm) indicates the temple’s ancientness and originality. Further, the preservation of the local traditional housing architecture and local people dwelling in the Angkor Archaeological Park adds value to an authentic experience perceived by the tourists. This objective authenticity was pronounced among both the guided and non-guided tourists.

In this study, both guided and non-guided tourists participating in the study generally viewed the Angkor temples as authentic because they are real, original, ancient, and unique, for example. Thus, the tourist experience of the Angkor site/temples is dubbed authentic. The tourists visited the Angkor site, touched and walked on the ancient stones [sic!], and gazed upon sculptures and statues. These interactions with the ancient ruins create an objective authentic experience for tourists. The guided and non-guided tourists had very similar objective experiences from their visits to the Angkor heritage.

The differences in the experiences of the guided and non-guided tourists at the Angkor WHS were small, but they were significant in the minds of the non-guided tourists. The guided tourists could further obtained information about the ruins’” history from their tour guides. As their registered tour guides were considered as experts from whom history and information about the temples’” architecture and styles were conveyed. This information is expert knowledge that was desired by the guided tourists and that was a motivator for employing a tour guide as illustrated in 5.2.1. This educational experience is called the authenticity of knowledge or cool authenticity (Selwyn, 1996).

Overall, the guided tourists had an optimistic view of their tour guides and the tourists perceived true, objective, honest, and authentic narratives and interpretations from the guides. The guides were viewed as knowledgeable about local history, culture and architecture. What tourists obtained from their tour guides was cool authenticity in the experience of Angkor/Cambodia. Such authenticity, which was related to the characteristics (e.g. symbolism, orientation, and scale) of the heritage objects, aspects of the local life, and social relations, formed an important part of the guided tourists”
experience. Tourists who employed a guide stressed the importance of knowledge desired from their guided visits to Angkor. In this regard, tour guides played an important role of the tour guides in enhancing the tourists’ cool authenticity, or the authenticity of knowledge, while the non-guided valued more highly their freedom and personal or subjective interpretations of the heritage.

A role of a tour guide is to educate and provide such knowledge about the heritage site to their customers. The study found that tour guides emphasised similar areas of interpretation of the temples, which focuses on high culture — the temples’ history and its timelines, culture in the Angkorian period, and temples’ architecture and styles. Local tour guides possess authentic knowledge of place (Cohen, cited in Silver, 1993). While Cohen raised the issue of *communicative staging* where transformed sites are interpreted as authentic by tour guides (see 3.1), the case of the Angkor tangible heritage, unlike the intangible one, is different as the tourists could see with their own eyes that the temples were really ancient and authentic.

The study shows that the guided tourists were happy with their local tour guides who possessed adequate (even good) knowledge of local history and culture and provided objective interpretations. Without the tour guides, they would not have achieved knowledge-based authenticity of the temples due to the temples’ sophisticated symbolic significance and representation. This knowledge is deepened with the value of interactions with their tour guides, learning about the tour guides’ life and family.

While the guided tourists opted for guided visits because of their desire for cool authenticity and an interaction with someone local (a local tour guide), the non-guided tourists valued freedom and independence in their pursuit of the temple heritage experience. Slightly different from the guided tourists, the non-guided tended to mainly search for off the main tourist tracks and off-peak times. As shown in Chapter 5, the respondents (e.g. R#31; R#44; R#46) typically represent the voice of the non-guided tourists. They tried to get away from the main paths, the ones that tour guides took their tourists on. They visited smaller temples where few tourists go. The non-guided tourists’ experience of the lost temples involved more imagination than the guided; thus they had to find a quiet place that could make their imaginative experience possible. Such approach made their experience authentic. As written in the *Dos and Don’ts in Cambodia*, “There is little spiritual ambience at the main Angkor complex and no place to sit and mediate or
worship quietly. Yet you will find wonderful oases of silence and beauty off the beaten track” (Hill, 2005, p.47).

Some non-guided tourists were not happy to be directed and guided to see the ancient temples. They relied on themselves to make sense of the world around them. In reflexive deliberation, since the researcher is a Cambodian, it was euphemistic for them, especially the experienced travellers, to state that it was their preference to be unguided, rather than saying that they did not want to see things through somebody else’s eyes and that they did not appreciate the Cambodian tour guides” knowledge. Instead, they pointed out that it was their preference for non-guided visits or that they did not actually need tour guides (e.g. R#44; R#45; R#46).

So far the similarities between the guided and non-guided tourists have been considered in relation to the visits to the Angkor temples and the difference (though a slight difference, especially with regard to the approach to an authentic experience) has been highlighted. These are mainly related to their pursuits of an authentic experience, while a number of other reasons were not actually related to the quest of authenticity (Figures 5.1 & 5.2). For the guided tourists, the issues relating to financial ability, strange cultural contexts, time efficiency, convenience, and the size/scale/spread of the temples could be combined to provide a strong rationale for the choice of a guided visit/holiday. The non-guided tourists could have considered other issues such financial constraints due to the facts that they were students and the retired. It is beyond the scope of this study to explore the ranking of priorities that form the basis of the tourists” decision of a guided/non-guided visit.

As found in the study, authenticity (cool authenticity in this case) appears to be important for the guided tourists, although it cannot be stated that it is the most important factor that forms the tourists” decision for the guided visits. Such knowledge-based authenticity is highly dependent on the ability (language and contents) of the registered tour guides and it requires them to perform their job as both a tour guide and a host to facilitate an authentic experience, as stated by the respondents (e.g. R#01) and to perform their roles and responsibilities as suggested by Holloway (1981) and Cohen (1985). The local tour guides are equipped with authentic knowledge; and they can help their customers “(re)construct, folklorise, ethnicise, and exoticise” (Salazar, 2005, p.642) the local people, places, and pasts to provide a sense of authenticity, ancientness, originality and uniqueness. Park (2010) also found that tour guides could provide an authentic interpretation of the Changdeok Palace. As identified in this study, the tour guides also took tourists to see
village lives (e.g. palm sugar production, silk production, Floating Village, an orphanage); in a way, the guided tourists were taken to back regions. Some of them also participated in a water ablution ritual.

While the importance of authentic experience for the guided tourists is mainly based on the expert knowledge of their tour guides, the non-guided depend on their own ability to achieve their authentic experiences from the off-track places and off-peak times.

The objective authenticity of the ancient Angkor temples has been discussed as if there were no restoration projects going on. The temples of the post-conflict Cambodia enter the “restoration culture” (Muan, cited in Winter & Ollier, 2006, p.10). The adoption of traditional methods for restoration/preservation of the Angkor temples was undertaken by the authorised conservation agencies. The use of the same material (stone type), for example, could fit very well with what Ashworth calls the authenticity of material (Howard, 2003). A guiding principle of the restoration is, however, not to make the newly fitted stones look old. The temples were restored with deliberate intention to show tourists that they are the restored parts. Thus, tourists could easily identify if any parts/sections of the Angkor temples have been restored. The use of the same material has also been projected to appear like the originals as time passes by, which is exactly the concept of emergent authenticity (Cohen, 1988). The guided and non-guided tourists and the tour guides found it hard to come to terms with the balance between preservation and authenticity, as expressed by Timothy and Boyd (2003).

As seen in Chapter 5, the tourists generally felt that the restoration degrades the value of (objective) authenticity/originality as it modifies the originals, while the tour guides (and the conservation agencies like the APSARA Authority, UNESCO, and others) advocate for tourist safety and the need to keep those temples standing for the next generations. Heritage involves the construction of the imaginary pasts and places, and politics and ideology. UNESCO World Heritage Sites also have tourism component of potential top attractions. The Angkor, having global significance, “confers status and entry to the elite group of nations whose cultural authenticity cannot then be doubted” (Meethan, 2001, p.102).

In addition, authenticity depends largely on honesty in reproduction and the issue of honesty raises the questions: “How real is the place created by heritage tourism? How honest is it in historic and conservation terms?” (Newby, 1994, p.217). One could
critically question the concept of the original physical structure of the ancient temples. Due to the temples’ old age and dilapidation, the Conservation Office of the Ecole Française d’Extreme Orient (EFEO) established its office in Cambodia in 1908 to start conservation work on the ruins (Freeman & Jacques, 2010; Glaize, 1944). The vegetation was cleared and the stone structures were erected to represent their original form according to the imagination and beliefs of the French archaeologists at the beginning of the 20th century. These archaeologists had to work out the (real/true?) representations of the original temples and structures from the mindset of the French colonialists. Critics could point to this „imaginary authenticity” or „representational authenticity” of the temples, especially in terms of endeavouring to stimulate or copy the original structures.

After centuries of natural and man-made damage, what was left for the EFEO archaeologist team was just the foundations of the temple structures. The team gave France exclusive rights to “the production of knowledge on Angkor” which resulted in “plastic and textual representations rebuilt Angkor as a totem of the Western imagination” (Edwards, 2007, p.21). Thus, “representations, fragments, replications, restorations, and images of Angkor acted as surrogate sites, which can in and of themselves be mined as archaeologies of colonial fantasy” (Edwards, 2007, p.22). Objective authenticity is based on the authenticity of the original temples and if the originality is questioned, so is their objective authenticity. Strictly, according to Cohen (1988), for something to be authentic, it must be traditional in the production process and the purpose for local/traditional use, not for tourism (see section 3.1.1). However, the tourists (guided and non-guided) and tour guides similarly indicated that the temples were real and original and thus they felt they obtained an authentic experience (objective authenticity) from their visits.

Arguably, in restoring the ruins, the UNESCO and other agencies (e.g. the APSARA Authority) would carefully consider the trade-off between restoration (fixing with something new) and authenticity (keeping things original as it was). For this reason, traditional methods (e.g. re-use of old temple stones and the same type of stone) were adopted by the authority. Further, in order not to confuse visitors and to strive for an objective presentation, newly restored parts of the ruins were made old and different (stuck out). Arguing along the line of Ashworth’s classifications of authenticity, the temple ruins are the authentic in terms of its creator, material, function, concept, history, ensemble, context, experience, and style (see section 1.1). These criteria fundamentally constitute the tourist authentic experience of place.
Chapter 5 indicates that the guided tourists acknowledged that their tour guides’ interpretation of the temples, history and culture was honest or accurate, making their experience authentic. Judging if the tour guide’s interpretation was true or correct (and, thus the tour guide was honest or objective) was a challenge. One could argue if the interpretation/information was truly correct. However, if tour guides are considered to be experts from whom heritage information/significance/interpretation is conveyed to tourists, then the tourists could probably rely on them for (accurate?) interpretation. In the study, the guided tourists did consider their tour guides as experts and trusted them in providing information, or knowledge of/about Angkor—objective authenticity/cool authenticity. In actuality, it is impossible for the tourists to know what information is truly correct, but they could just perceive that it is.

Evaluating if the tour guide’s interpretation was accurate could be more complicated. As a guided tourist (R#2) argued although he and his travel companion felt that their tour guide provided them with reliable information, they would have to verify with other relevant sources. In this regard, accuracy for them is the result of triangulation of information. In their case, cool authenticity or authenticity of knowledge was evaluated at the destination and would be re-evaluated after the visit. They would turn to search for truth/accuracy of information out there; that is, the information that was created by the travel industry (e.g. tour operators, marketers and government agencies), guide books, media, and others. In other words, these tourists were consuming the reality, or rather authenticity, that is socially constructed.

Authenticity of the original physical structure is not the only thing the tourists consumed, however. While talking about authenticity in their experience of the temples, the guided and non-guided tourists alike often turned away from the authenticity of the Angkor temples to the authenticity of the locals, their culture, traditions and lifestyles. Authentic experiences are related to people (Alonso et al. 2010) and lifestyles (Sharpley, 2005), which are confirmed in this study. In addition to the discussion about the temples, tourists frequently associate authenticity/authentic experience with the local people and their day-to-day activities. In the eyes of the tourists, the poor locals dwelling within the Angkor area and making their living from agriculture (and tourism) were considered backward (or, in a way, primitive/authentic) as seen earlier in the presentation of the consumption of lifestyles as an authentic experience (see 5.4.1.2). Authenticity can be judged by the
absence of commodification (Cohen, 1988) and Western influence (MacCannell, 1989; R#19; R#44; R#45; R#46, etc.).

The current study and the existing literature have confirmed that objective authenticity does not only refer to temples and tangible artefacts, but also to local people and their culture/traditions/lifestyles that are becoming important objects for the tourist gaze. Bowen and Clarke (2009), using the case of the floating market in Thailand, argue against MacCannell”s (1989) thesis that tourists fail in their search for authenticity and they actually encounter and consume staged authenticity. Tourists visiting the floating market in Thailand “still feel authentic enough” (p.162). This study reveals a similar finding with regard to the Floating Village on the Great Lake. Tourists often cited the place as another example where their authentic experience/authenticity was obtained. Strictly, in the case of the Floating Village in Cambodia, MacCannell”s (1989) argument was supported as many of the local people living on the Floating Village were Vietnamese, according to tour guides. The issue of the authenticity of the local lives on the Village is then questioned.

This study reveals that tourists had similar consumption/experience of the ancient site (Table 5.4), while the difference was attributed to the approach to their experience. Generally, local people and their socio-cultural and economic practices constitute a live museum and an important source of authentic experiences, according to the tourists (guided and non-guided). The question of authenticity however rests on the epistemological knowledge of the tourists in knowing or recognising the authentic, on what bases the authentic/the real is judged, and on the approach to the authentic experience.

Social relations and interactions (Table 5.4) appeared to be important for authentic experience, valued and pursued by the guided and non-guided tourists alike. The guided tourists viewed their tour guide not only as a professional to perform their job, but also a host or ambassador to the destination visited. The hosts included tour guides and other service providers (e.g. drivers). The view of the hosts stressed on the importance of the social relation between the tourists and the hosts. If this relation is contaminated, then the tourist experience is viewed to be less authentic. For example, if the tourists (e.g. R#01; R#02) felt that they are ripped off or overcharged, authentic experience is hardly possible.
Strengthening friendship and family bonds (further elaborated in the discussion of existential authenticity) also renders the importance for an authentic experience. Holiday is a forum in which social relations with friends and new people alike can be enforced and made. The study of solitary travellers in the Norwegian Lofoten Islands (Mehmetoglu & Olsen, 2003) also found that social relationships (meeting people) were considered as an authentic experience. Meeting orphans or visiting an orphanage was emerging as an important source of authentic experience for both the guided and non-guided tourists (Table 5.4).

For the guided tourists, tour guides play an important role in the facilitation of an authentic experience of place. First, it is because the tour guides were able to provide what the tourists need, particularly the knowledge of place (history/culture/traditions). The tourists desired for such knowledge were motivated to hire tour guides. In this sense, tourists valued local expert knowledge. Second, the tourist-guide interactions were also viewed to be authentic because tourists felt that they could develop certain social contracts with tour guides, learning about their guides’ family history/situations and their job. Understanding and acquiring this extra information from the interaction further enhance their sense of an authentic experience. This is the reason why Taylor (2001) suggests using the term „sincerity” instead of authenticity. In his argument, authenticity is grounded in sincere social relations between locals [Maori] and the tourists. Once such real contacts are limited, authenticity diminishes from the tourist experience. An authentic experience in this study is judged from „honesty” in tour guides’ personality and interpretation of heritage and in human interactions. If tour guides or locals (e.g. vendors, sellers, Tuk Tuk/taxi drivers) are viewed or perceived to be dishonest (e.g. overcharging tourists), this will generally influence the tourists’ perception of their authentic experience.

The concept of honesty emerged from the study as an extension of what Taylor (2001) meant by sincerity in the context of the Maori. The tourists argued that the quality of an authentic experience is degraded once the social relation is turned into a buyer-seller relation. As respondents stated, anything oriented for business or for profit-making is not considered authentic or honest. They (e.g. tour guides, vendors/sellers and drivers) were making a living, after all. Neither the guided nor the non-guided tourists felt they would have an authentic experience, if the locals treated them as a dollar sign. This has an important implication for the supply sides, including tour guides/hosts and tourism businesses, in facilitating authentic tourism experiences. This aspect is very much under-
developed in literature. The issue of honesty is seen mentioned very superficially in Mowforth and Munt (1998) and Yeoman’s (2007) definition of authentic experience. „Sincerity” in touristic experiences, however, is Taylor’s (2001) prime thesis. I, therefore, argue along this line that honesty/sincerity emerges as an important attribute for authenticity in tourist experiences. Honesty/trust covers both the social, cultural, and economic aspects of mutual human relationships.

It should, however, be noted that sincerity/honesty is subjective, depending on the tourists’ perceptions of social relations. Tourists’ perceptions/attitudes are formed by their social-cultural, economic backgrounds and shaped by mass media and situational/environmental conditions where contacts occur. For instance, tourists, shaped by the perceptions that a holiday in developing countries is really cheap or much cheaper than in any developed countries they had been to, would consider anything sold more expensive at the tourist destination than their expected price to be as „dishonest”, thus inauthentic. Or, they sometimes compare prices with other developing/neighbouring countries and draw a conclusion along the same line about their authentic experiences. One bowl of noodles was sold for 1US$ in Thailand, while it is sold to him for 3US$ in Siem Reap town (R#33). This significant price difference would make them feel that their experience was affected or not authentic. It should be noted that these respondents (R#33; R#34) were unemployed and were looking for a job in Cambodia, but due to their unpleasant experience—their perception of being overcharged—they turned to look for a job somewhere else.

Honesty and trust is important after all, although sometimes there is misunderstanding between tourists and service providers. It is more important for tourist experiences when non-business interactions are involved. Therefore, I argue once again that honesty/sincerity is an important determinant in enhancing the authenticity of social relations (as viewed from the „honesty” perspective).

This argument does not rule out the possibility that authenticity can only be found in customized guided tours. Tourists participating in big groups might not care about authenticity, as implied by Holloway (1981) (see 1.1.1). They may instead place more values on better price offer and just the experience of being at the place. This reinforces the line of debates that authenticity largely depends on individual tourists’ perceptions/expectations/ motivations, as also found in Tucker (1997), Kerstetter et al.
(2001), and Poria et al. (2006). The study also indicates that some aspects of tourist experiences were related to different typologies of authenticity.

As stated earlier, there is a difficulty in assigning the findings into the typology as proposed by Wang (1999). Some aspects discussed earlier in objective authenticity thus could be relevant to the next section on constructive authenticity and even existential authenticity. The next section mainly focuses on the themes that emerged within the framework of constructive authenticity. Despite the attempt to outline the differences between the guided and non-guided tourists, similarities appear to dominate the next section.

6.2 Constructive authenticity

Wang (1999) argued that authenticity is actively constructed by social participants (e.g. tourists and tourist industry). Tourists’ perceptions and expectations could also be created by the industry through marketing and promotion that appear to dominate the information sphere. It is hardly possible to argue that tourists in this globalised world could escape from the influence of marketing and promotional messages. The discussion of this type of authenticity is closely related to the objective form, as constructive authenticity is concerned with how symbolic meanings and functions of objects are socially constructed.

Chapter 5 illustrated that the tourists (both guided and non-guided) projected similar conceptualisations of authenticity in accordance with the mainstream literature. Once the deeper discussion was aroused among the respondents, the notion of authenticity became blurred and complex. The tourists (e.g. R#18; R#21) doubt their ability to know the authentic and the blurred line between the inauthentic and the authentic prevails. How authentic is food, for example? Is food cooked and prepared by a local authentic? Or it is not authentic, unless local ingredients are used, etc. But how can tourists know about all these (e.g. who cooks the food, what ingredients are truly local)? Even the term local could be understood differently. The same applies to the Angkor heritage. How can tourists know how the original standing temples looked like?

Tourists then judge what is authentic according to their varying abilities, experiences, and what has been framed as authentic by the tourism industry/guide books. Thus, tourist perceptions of the authentic are constructed or framed by the tourists’ experience, culture, education, and the industry. In this regard, the tourists consume constructive authenticity (Wang, 1999) or legitimised authenticity. The tourists are prone to misjudge the authentic.
They are “easily fooled into accepting contrivance as the „real thing”” (Meethan, 2001, p.112). For example, (life on) the Floating Village was promoted as the authentic life and thus considered as authentic by the tourists (both guided and non-guided). According to the tour guides (e.g. R#57), most of the people living on the Floating Village were Vietnamese, not Khmers. In a strictly objective sense, this is not authentic, but the tourists did not recognise that and perceived life on the Village as authentic because the life there was more traditional, purer, and simpler than theirs.

In translating Kant’s (call for) constructivist philosophy, Rockmore (2005) states that reality, as a concept, is a historical variable and knowledge of reality depends on the subject or the knower, who is a subjective human being. Knowledge is thus contextual and historical. Likewise, authenticity is a concept of a human mind. Human projection of the authentic is historical, contextual, and subjective. The authentic is then the result of a subsequent enforcement of the concept whose legitimacy and authentication are passed on to tourists and framed within tourist minds via print and visual media, for example.

The non-guided tourists viewed authenticity in their experience of Angkor very much in the same way as the guided tourists did (see Chapter 5). For the former, however, they interpreted people and place from their own experiences, background knowledge, and culture that shaped a particular way of seeing how the world operated. The latter could obtain more insights, whether they agreed or not, from their interaction with their local tour guides. The dialogue could possibly provide the guided tourists with a different worldview. In either way, tourist experience is socially constructed, and so is authenticity. Another example of constructive authenticity is related to the tourist feeling of the honesty of the people they were in contact with. The issue of sincerity/honesty appeared to be more of a concern for the non-guided tourists than for the guided ones, partly because the former’s experiences are not mediated by local tour guides. Their perspectives were shaped by their worldview (e.g. their own culture, experiences, and education), rather than by a view specific to the contexts they were in as found in the respondents’ view of Vietnamese tour guides (e.g. R#01; R#02). The non-guided tourists interviewed did not learn much about the local mindset from their short visit due to the lack of interactions and understanding as discussed earlier.

In Chapter 5, it was noted that the tourists’” authentic experiences were associated with the „true/honest” narrations of history/local culture/traditions. To extend it a little further, what the tourists conceptualised as true/real was truly/really relative and subjective. In other
words, an authentic experience depends on the tourists’ perceptions of it, as also found in Sharpley’s (2005) second meaning in 3.1.2, and on tourists’ prior knowledge and prior experiences. When asked how he knew the history was true, a tourist (R#02) stated that they could go back and read later because they did not have much prior knowledge and time to prepare for the trip. He also suggested another way of verifying the facts from the knowledge he had about some countries in the same region, taking account of their historical and present relationship. The guided and non-guided tourists alike possessed similar critical views of honesty among the locals. The difference was that the guided tourists tended to show more understanding or to be more compassionate towards the locals than the non-guided because the former’s views were often negotiated with the local tour guides. Moreover, the guided were more affluent that the non-guided. In the tourists (both guided and non-guided)’s view, visits to (Siem Reap-Angkor of) Cambodia is cheap if compared with that in the developed countries, but is more expensive than holidaying in its neighbouring countries.

Some American tourists viewed Vietnamese tour guides as dishonest or inauthentic, stating that their tour guides did not provide true/honest narrations of the history because Ho Chi Minh (Vietnamese ex-leader in the Dien Bien Phu/Indochinese wars) was interpreted as a hero. This story could be considered true/honest by Vietnamese in the way that Ho Chi Minh liberated and protected Vietnam from colonial dominance and invasion, but was viewed to be a “rosy” painting of history by some Americans (e.g. R#01; R#02) who were educated to see history from a different version. Such social construction or difference influenced the way in which tourists viewed their experiences.

Prior knowledge and experiences are relevant here in judging what is authentic and are the results of what some authors called *framing*, as found in the discussion of authenticity in Donald Horne’’s (1992) ‘the Intelligent Tourist’ (see Chapter 9) and the discussion of Chinese tourism, titled the ‘Scenic Spots: Chinese Tourism, the State, and Cultural Authority’ (see Chapter 2) by Pál Nyíri (2006).

Tourists of different origins (e.g. Australians and Europeans), both guided and non-guided, could view their experiences differently (e.g. from Americans), depending on their socio-cultural, educational backgrounds. A Vietnamese-Australian tourist (R#21), for example, viewed their experiences in Vietnam as authentic. She learned to communicate in Vietnamese, explored her roots, and was taken by a war-veteran tour guide to see the remnants and the handicapped left from the Vietnam War.
A Canadian non-guided tourist (R#40) viewed a scenario where an old local lady at a small, quiet temple gave him some incenses and prayed for him, as an act of honesty that provided him with an authentic experience because she was not asking for any money from him; whereas I, as the researcher from Cambodia and a frequent visitor to Angkor, and the local tour guides viewed the act as an attempt to earn a living from tourists. Consequently, it was not authentic if viewed from the Canadian tourist’s conceptualisation of authenticity; that is anything that is profiteering is anti-authentic. The three 19-year-old students travelling together from the UK, who had been to the Seven Island in Thailand where they hardly saw any locals, reflected on their experience there as being inauthentic. They instead perceived Siem Reap town rather authentic because locals were everywhere. On the contrary, a Dutch tourist, who had been to most remote parts of Cambodia, saw Siem Reap town as inauthentic; and he argued authenticity could only be found about 5 kilometres away from the town and in villages in the countryside. It is quite obvious that authentic experiences are subjective, pluralistic, and relative to individuals.

Participants in the tourism industry, both public and private, also contribute to create a certain form of authentic experience for tourists. The UNESCO, the ICOMOS, and the APSARA Authority, for example, created their own version of authenticity, balancing it with their needs for restoration/conservation and maintenance. In their present views, some restoration, using cement and iron, by the French in 1900s undermines authenticity of the Angkor temples. This view was also shared by tourists, both guided and non-guided. Scholars such as Turnbull viewed that it was hard for tourists to obtain authentic experiences from their visits to Angkor Wat as few artefacts remain in situ (Bowen & Clarke, 2009).

This issue identified by Bowen and Clarke (2009) was, however, not raised anywhere in the interviews with tourists and tour guides. Both the local and international agencies partaking in restoration was trying to maintain temples, with an attempt to minimize impacts on tourist authentic experiences. They have now adopted traditional methods in restoration, trying to balance the up-keep of temples and its authenticity, while maintaining tourist authentic experiences. The way in which the APSARA Authority left Ta Prohm temple reclaimed by nature was to construct a certain authenticity (naturalness) and to maintain the temple structure. Removing the vegetation could shake the foundation of the temple. The tourists and the tour guides also shared this version of authenticity because, compared with other temples, it was left natural and relatively untouched. The
tour guides also had influence in mitigating tourists’ perceptions or views on authenticity. For example, when tourists viewed restoration of statutes/temples as being inauthentic, the tour guides argued for the balance of the needs of maintenance, tourist safety, and the benefits of the next generations. In the study, the tour guides, in line with attending restoration agencies and authority, supported the traditional methods of restoration. They advocated the concept of emergent authenticity, as found in Cohen (1988) and Wang’s (1999) discussion. In this way, the authorized agents authenticated their version of authenticity and, to some extent, influenced tourists’ perceptions of it. Such influence could, however, be negotiated with tourists’ views.

It has been shown in this section that the authentic is the result of the negotiation between social actors, such as those in the tourism industry and the tourists. The industry has control over the image of the destination to be promoted, while the tourists are bombarded with information from guidebooks, promotional messages, and other media that help frame their views of the authentic. In addition, both guided and non-guided tourists searched for an authentic experience within themselves, as discussed in the following section. In this way, they have more control on the quest of their authentic selves and their own ability proves important to such quest.

### 6.3 Existential authenticity

As stated in 6.1, a difference between the guided and non-guided tourists is their approach to authentic experiences. Different experiences were obtained by each type of tourists although these differences were only slight. Existential authentic experiences were pursued by both the guided and the non-guided tourists alike. The tourists, for example, were looking and tempting to experience bodily feeling—a form of intra-personal authenticity in Wang (1999), such as eating and drinking in a restaurant or pub, going for a massage after a long day walking at the temple sites, and relaxing in a spa or sauna in a hotel (e.g. R#27; the researcher’s observations). Some of the tourists were willing to try strange food eaten by the locals such as deep-fried crickets and tarantula-like creatures (e.g. R#06; R#07; R#10). Sometimes, travel, in addition to their main activity, is also an opportunity to do sports such as walking and cycling (R#32). Wang’s (1999) intra-personal authenticity—the other form of existential experience—is further distilled in Table 6.1.
Table 6.1: Distillation of Wang’s (1999) intra-personal authenticity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intra-personal authenticity pursued/obtained</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bodily feelings</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cycling was taken up particularly by the non-guided/independent tourists (e.g. R#32). They combined their main visit to Angkor (about 7 kilometres away from Siem Reap town) with sports as a form of ‘healthy’ holiday, while enjoying themselves and saving money on transportation (1US$-2US$ per bicycle per day). The guided tourists took a different form of sports (e.g. swimming) provided by luxury accommodation and hired a better form of transport (e.g. usually an air-con car) as they are more financially able at the time of their travel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Relaxation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drinking/eating in a pub/restaurant in town particularly in the evening after their day-long visit to Angkor or beyond is a popular activity for both guided and non-guided tourists, as understood from my observation and interaction. Some of the respondents were interviewed in the pub/restaurant on Pub Street. Pub Street is a section of a street within the tourist district/tourist enclave in Siem Reap town that was designed particularly for night life—eating, drinking, dancing, performance, massage, shopping, etc. The area is the main place for relaxation and the tourist-tourist meeting point/interaction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Excitement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The tourists, particularly the guided ones, took courage or wished to try out some strange/exotic food (e.g. eating crickets and tarantula-like creatures—mistakenly called [hairy] spider). Some tourists did not know that the locals eat them unless they were introduced and urged by their tour guides. They got excited having eaten them (e.g. R#06; R#07; R#10). A Canadian respondent even said the deep-fried crickets were nice and authentic. The non-guided, independent tourists also wanted try and even felt disgusting hearing about eating them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Fun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fun is an aim for both guided and non-guided tourists. Some looked for fun in interactions with the locals and others in doing extra activities such as going to a local market or learning to cook local foods. It is an authentic experience/enjoyment talking to locals and doing what the locals do (e.g. R#20).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self-making</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Self-reinforcing/ self-reaffirming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourists, especially those from a modern society, visited a pre-modern one and suddenly realised that they felt a need to appreciate what they had enjoyed back home (e.g. in terms of infrastructure/amenities) and felt petty on the less fortunate local people in the pre-modern nations (e.g. R#01). This feeling enforced their sense of self-appreciation, understanding themselves and their existence better—a kind of authentic experience. This could be applied to both guided and non-guided tourists alike.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Self-transforming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some tourists visiting a heritage or religious site/temple would like to act as a time traveller, not only by seeing but also by meditating and imagining of what happened in that past period. They found and stopped a tranquil place within the site, meditated, and transformed themselves temporarily in the imaginary, probably framed by what they have read or heard about it/about the purpose and functions of a structure/temple. This authentic experience could be most likely achieved by the non-guided tourists (e.g. R#44; R#46), rather than the guided tourists as the former had more freedom on their own use of time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Self-seclusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staying secluded from the main path/sight of the crowds/other tourists, tourists, especially the non-guided/independent tourists (e.g. R#31; R#44; R#46), could find other tourists irritating. Particularly in a religious building, noises made by other tourists degraded the experience of place, thus making the experience less authentic. Some guided tourists also had the same views, but the difference between the two types of tourists lied in the level of acceptability and priority of the experience, which contributed to a particular mode of visit they undertook. The issue was also well-understood by the tour guides. Even so, this secluded/authentic experience is more likely to be achieved by the non-guided tourists than the guided ones.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Experiencing a developing country like Cambodia, particularly from their visits to Siem Reap-Angkor, made the guided tourists obtain a sense of self-reinforcing/self-reaffirming in that they achieved a better appreciation of their own existence (e.g. R#01). Self-making
(Wang, 1999) is part of an existential experience/existential authenticity for the tourists (especially the non-guided tourists) because they had more freedom to use their own time travelling back in time by standing/sitting somewhere quiet within the temple complex mediating/imagining what had happened in the past. This is called self-transformation, which happens within the tourist self.

The non-guided tourists, in particular, pursued self-seclusion as part of an existential authenticity/experience (e.g. R#31; R#44) by detaching themselves from other tourists and taking the place for their own/personal consumption. Concurrent consumption of place, in their views, makes their experience less authentic or inauthentic. Thus, self-inclusion as an authentic experience is more important for the non-guided than it is for some guided tourists.

Holidays were used to strengthen family ties (Wang, 1999) and/or friendship (R#18; R#29) while work took most of their time at the expense of socialisation at home. Travel sometimes is an opportunity to understand one’s own roots better (R#21).

Table 6.2: Distillation of Wang’s (1999) inter-personal authenticity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inter-personal authenticity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Family ties</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Family/ friendship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>strengthening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holiday is a time away from</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>work and an opportunity to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>enhance bonds by spending</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>time with family members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and friends (e.g. R#18;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R#29). It is authentic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>within the tourists’ own</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bonds, either relations or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>friends. Strengthening such</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>relationship could be</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>important for the tourists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e.g. guided and non-guided),</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>apart from their visits to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the Angkor site.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Diaspora exploration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Australian Vietnamese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tourist (R#21) who visited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnam, her country of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>birth, trying to understand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>her own roots and the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>connection with the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>neighbouring country—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambodia. Diasporic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>experience—meeting her own</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>relations/people, learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>her own history (in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>connection with others),</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and struggling with her own</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>language—was authentic for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>her. Although this finding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>was not attempted in this</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>study, it is an emergent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>finding that could be</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>typical of others pursuing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>diaspora and could be</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>applied to both guided and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>non-guided tourists.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tourist communitas</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Status downplay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staying in budget accommodation (e.g. guest houses), as opposed to luxury accommodation, was seen as a means to, or a pursuit of, authentic experience since the budget accommodation provides less environmental bubbles; thus it provides more opportunity for host-guest interactions that make touristic experience more authentic than staying in luxury hotels. The tourists could just talk to the locals hanging around (either day or night) near the guest house and interactions would be made possible easily. This „looking poor” approach was taken by both guided tourists (e.g. R#25; R#26) and non-guided tourists (e.g. R#33; R#34; R#36) in the pursuit of their experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Social self-broadening/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>deepening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The tourists obtained their authentic experience from making friends with locals and other tourists (e.g. R#18; R#19; R#31). Such experience could be broadened as the tourists begin to establish friendship with somebody else, trying to understand each other and each other’s culture. The experience was further deepened when tourists understand the real existence of the locals, especially the unfortunate ones, and then adopted them as sons/daughters (R#11).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tourist communitas, a form of inter-personal authenticity (Wang, 1999), were considered as an authentic experience by both guided tourists and non-guided tourists by staying in budget accommodation that provides less social protection than in luxury hotels. This could be seen as playing down their status as a tourist is normally considered rich by the locals. It is an approach, called *status downplay*, undertaken by tourists (e.g. R#25; R#26; R#33; R#34; R#36) to increase opportunities for tourist-host interactions. Also a form of tourist communitas is *social self-deepening and broadening* that forms an authentic experience/existential authenticity by seeking opportunities to make friends with locals/the researcher or other tourists while at the destination (R#11; R#18; R#19; R#31). Wang’s (1999) existential authenticity is further distilled in this study. These existential experiences were temporary experiences undergone by tourists while visiting Siem Reap-Angkor. Wang’s (1999) inter-personal authenticity is further enunciated in Table 6.2.

It could be seen in the breakdown and distillation of Wang’s existential authenticity that while some tourist pursuits of existential authenticity were feasible and could be achieved by both the guided and non-guided tourists alike, other pursuits were more practical for non-guided tourists than guided tourists and vice versa. Chapter 7 will draw a number of conclusions from the study and discuss these in relation to their implications for contributions to the debates on authenticity and its usefulness to the tourist experience and also for future research.
Chapter 7
Conclusions and Implications

As illustrated and discussed in the preceding chapters (chapters 5 & 6), there are more similarities than differences between the two types of tourists visiting the Angkor World Heritage Site in Siem Reap, Cambodia, in their pursuits of authentic experiences. This chapter is designed to provide important conclusions, implications and potential future research that are drawn from this study.

A similarity in the pursuit of authentic experiences between the two types of tourists discussed under the framework of objective authenticity is a result of consumption that focuses on the interactions between the tourists and culture, heritage and social relations. Their tourist-host interactions are limited to MacCannell’s (1989) front region locals such as the tour guides, the drivers, the hotel staff, the restaurant staff, the sellers/vendors, and the orphan dancers. Although the non-guided tourists tend to go off the main tourist tracks, they will soon return to the main paths used by the mass/guided tourists. It is just a quick escape off paths.

Another important similarity is the guided and non-guided tourists’ perspective towards the authenticity of the repairs made to the temples. Although they agree that restoration degrades the objective authenticity, originality, and ancientness of the temples, the existing level of restoration has not yet changed their perception of objective authenticity at the site. The temples are still (rather) authentic; thus their experience there is authentic.

Along with the similarities, some differences are noted. First, when knowledge-based authenticity is important for the tourists, it becomes a motivating factor for them to employ a tour guide who is thought of as an expert who could provide desirable knowledge of the people, places and pasts. The non-guided tourists, on the other hand, think that they would be deprived of freedom and self-regulation on a guided visit or holiday. I call this difference “the first-order” difference that acts as a foundation upon which other differences are derived. This first-order difference is not universal, however, since there were many other important factors that could be considered (see figures 5.1 & 5.2). Those factors include personal/situational constraints, such employment that determines the tourists’ financial condition, the historical/cultural contexts of the destination, and their trip plan.
The „second order” difference that builds on the first or on the approach to authentic experiences is attributed to the kind of authentic experiences obtained as a result of being guided or non-guided. There are dissimilarities in the second order difference that could be related to Wang’s typologies of authenticity. The guided tourists obtain what they desire; that is, the expert knowledge/cool authenticity and educational experience which are provided directly by communication and interaction with their registered tour guides. The communication produces a platform for the tour guides’ interpretations and questions and answers, creating more passionate understanding of the people, places, and pasts, especially when they, the tourists, are complete strangers to the local culture, history, and geography of the place. To this end, the roles of tour guides prove important in the facilitation of the knowledge-based authenticity. The non-guided tourists, on the other hand, obtain an experience which is shaped heavily by their own cultural, social, and educational backgrounds due to the lack of communication and understanding between them and the locals. They pursue authentic experiences off the beaten tracks as the presence of other tourists poses problems for them obtaining their authentic heritage experiences — the imaginative experience that relates to the spiritual and religious significance in the case of the Angkor World Heritage Site. This dissimilarity was discussed under objective authenticity.

Is there a difference between authenticity of knowledge/cool authenticity obtained by the guided tourists and the knowledge/information of the site obtained by non-guided ones? As indicated earlier, the EFEO’s archaeological work on the Angkor temples in the beginning of the 20th century formed the basis of the subsequent restoration work and the archives of the information/interpretations about/of the temples. For example, the EFEO conservateurs such as Jean Commaille, Henri Marchal, Henri Parmentier and Maurice Glaize were among the first to write guide books on Angkor (Freeman & Jacques, 2010). The interpretation of Angkor is mainly based on the works of these French archaeologists. The interviews indicate that the tour guides based a lot of their interpretation on guide books and media, which are more or less the same sources from which information is extracted by the non-guided tourists. Thus, the contents (e.g. timelines, history, architecture and styles) of knowledge — the expert knowledge provided to the guided tourists by the tour guides and the knowledge obtained by the non-guided tourists — are similar. In other words, this knowledge which bombarded both the guided tourists and tour guides and the non-guided tourists has been constructed by the imagination of the French colonial archaeologists who constituted what is authentic.
Although the study utilised a theoretical framework or rationale that suggested similarities and differences in the nature of guided and non-guided tourists’ pursuits of authentic experiences, a conclusion could not be drawn due to other sets of factors which were important even though those factors were not directly relevant to the quest for authentic experiences. This is because the participating tourists are not in the conscious pursuit of authentic experiences, as was advocated by MacCannell (1989). His proposition about the tourist consciousness in the search for authenticity is not supported in this study. Most tourists travel in search of the sights and sites marketed and promoted by the tourism industry, guidebooks and postcards and some are risk-adverse in a new cultural environment, which is a reason why tour guides are needed. The explorers, however, avoid the paths or tracks taken by other (especially guided) tourists.

How important is objective authenticity if the pure authentic is almost impossible to find and if the tourists normally do not have the capacity to epistemologically know what is authentic due to their unfamiliarity with the destination and culture visited and their trip characteristics? In other words, often tourists simply do not know what is truly authentic or inauthentic; at best, they just can perceive that it is authentic. As Urry (2002) argues tourists are semioticians who pursue the signs and symbols presented to them by the media. Thus, what is important is to manage the expectation of the tourists and the media to represent the sites/attractions promoted. Angkor has been promoted as a World wonder due to its immense structures, elegant architecture and styles, and ancientness with global symbolic significance that form a certain expectation in tourists. If the tourists’ expectation is met during their visits, then tourism should be a success.

As discussed in Chapter 6, Angkor is not strictly authentic, in an objective sense, due to restoration, but there still maintains a certain level of authenticity if argued along the lines of Ashworth and Cohen’s (1988) emergent authenticity. It could be drawn from this study that authenticity is not a discrete concept, and thus it should be viewed on a continuum, as purported by Cohen (1988). It is difficult for the tourists (both guided and non-guided) to say something as an absolute authentic or an absolute inauthentic. In actuality, there are a lot of grey areas—i.e. hybridity— in between. The Angkor temples, for instance, were not all erected from the original stone by the UNESCO, the EFEO, APSARA Authority or other conservation agencies as some stones were missing due to looting and war and thus new stone or materials were used to restore the original structures. Likewise, the culture, traditions and lifestyles of the locals changes through time. Tradition is invented and adapted during the course of history to show continuity with the past (Hobsbawm, 1983).
Thus, authenticity is “clearly not a unified or universal category that can be measured against external objective criteria in all situations. The questions of importance then are to whom is the authentic of interest and to what uses it is put” (Meethan, 2001, p.111).

As noted earlier in this chapter, tourists often do not know what is authentic. This may be partly because they are not often experts on what they visit and partly because the complexity of the concept itself. This ignorance and lack of understanding could create a condition in which their perspectives on what is authentic are pluralistic and relative, as discussed in 6.2. The discussion of constructive authenticity therefore focused mainly on the differences, not only just between the groups (guided and non-guided) but also within each group. A notable difference between these groups is that the guided tourists, having negotiated their views with their tour guides, appeared to obtain an (authentic) experience that is more compassionate towards the local poor who rely on tourism for their livelihood. The non-guided tourists, in contrast, had less compassion and understanding of the local mindset/situation and tended to view any transaction they entered into with locals as dishonest or inauthentic. The guided tourists themselves (e.g. R#01 & R#02; R#21) had different views on what is authentic, especially with regard to the interpretation of the Vietnamese tour guides (see 6.2).

In addition to objective authenticity and constructive authenticity, Wang (1999) argues that tourists locate authenticity in one’s self—the authentic self. Apart from what has been summarised earlier in this chapter, the pursuit of existential authenticity does not provide many distinct differences between the guided and the non-guided tourists. Both obtained similar sorts of authenticity. A notable difference, however, is related to self-transformation which is more feasible for the non-guided tourists. The authentic self is temporary and specific to contexts and individuals. In other words, existential authenticity is individually constructed and it depends on individual social and cultural experiences. For instance, what is considered to be intra-personal authenticity (e.g. excitement from eating deep-fried cricket, fun from cooking local food) or inter-personal authenticity (e.g. status downplay) are socially and culturally dependent. Tourists from a similar culture/society (especially from a developing country such as Thailand and Vietnam) would not find eating deep-fried crickets and tarantula-like creatures as exciting/authentic when visiting Cambodia since the Thais and the Vietnamese eat such things themselves.

The similarities and differences between the guided and non-guided tourists in their pursuit of authentic experiences can be partly explained by the interpretation that
authenticity is constructed either within displayed objects and heritage or within the tourist self. Either the objects were constructed and presented to be authentic to tourists or the tourists evaluate something to be authentic although they do not actually know if it is. It is authentic to them due to their conceptions of peoples, places, and pasts. In tracing the origins of constructivism in Kant’s philosophy, Rockmore (2005) interprets that reality, or rather authenticity, is a human concept and is not human-mind independent. Authenticity thus needs justification which is contextual, or rather relative, within “the standards in use in a given cognitive domain” (p.7). Therefore, a conclusion that is drawn from this study is that despite the typologies of authenticity discussed in literature (e.g. Wang, 1999) what the tourists consumed is the imaginary authenticity or representational authenticity. The true epistemological knowledge of authenticity, as argued earlier, is impossible for the tourists from their unconscious pursuits of authenticity, trip characteristics, unfamiliarity with local culture/history/heritage, and the complexity of the concepts and thus they instead consume perceived authenticity.

Another conclusion as implied in the discussion (Chapter 6) was that something good, fun, positive, rich, and honest in experience appeared to be considered as authentic by tourists (e.g. R#17; R#18; R#36; R#58; R#59), which is consistent with the arguments about post tourists who do not consider authenticity as important and they are willing to accept that the representations of the tourist sight are as important as the sight itself (Rojek, 1993a). As Chapter 5 illustrated, the guided and non-guided tourists alike tend to consume all types of authenticity at the same time at the destination, which is indicative of post tourists who are “open to negotiation” (Getz, cited in Smith, 2003, p.20) and tend to dissolve “boundaries, not only between high and low culture but also between different cultural forms” (Urry, 2002, p.74). Therefore, a pre-assumption that the guided and non-guided would pursue a different type of authentic experience is not strongly supported. The similarities are much greater than the differences. They want fun, something good as an experience, or “a souped-up, fantastic experience” (Craik, cited in Smith, 2003, p.22). The study was not able to gather any evidence that the tourists also consider something negative or bad as authentic, which is contrary to Steiner and Reisinger (2006).

Wang (1999) proposed that existential authenticity is a more applicable concept than object-related authenticity in explaining a tourism phenomenon. In this study, the pursuit of authenticity occurred mainly as secondary, additional experiences that are ordinary to the tourists, while their primary pursuit is the consumption of the sights (Angkor heritage) that are promoted as a World wonder that has global cultural/historical significance for
humanity. Moreover, as Meethan (2001, p.112) stated existential authenticity is a “minority pursuit and cannot be applied to tourism per se”.

With their inability to know the authentic, tourists consume the representations/symbolic significance of the imagined peoples, places, and pasts which I call the imaginary or representational authenticity. They do this rather than go in a conscious, hot pursuit of authenticity. On Benjamin’s essay on authenticity and reproduction, Rojek (1993b, p.107) noted “We are bombarded with representations and simulations of the distant in time and in space”.

Another important contribution of this research is the comparison between the guided and non-guided tourists’ pursuits of authentic experiences. Although this study cannot completely determine what lies behind the tourists’ motivation and behind their decision for a guided or non-guided visit/holiday, it provides some useful indicators for further research. The approach of this research could be applied to tourists in larger guided tour groups at Angkor in relationship to their pursuit of authentic experiences. The findings might have been different if big package tours had been incorporated into the study. The failure to do this in the current study was attributed to the project time constraint, the difficulty of approaching big tour guides, and rigid holiday schedules. Notwithstanding this limitation, this study, in examining the relationship between tour guiding and authentic experiences, makes an initial contribution to the existing knowledge. This study addressed some aspects of tourists’ decisions for a guided or non-guided tour, though it was not the prime focus. Future research with a special focus on the decision-making process of tourists in choosing or not choosing a tour guide is also recommended.
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Appendix A
Interview Schedules

A.1 Guided tourist

Why have you decided to visit Angkor?
Did you have any interest in Cambodian cultural heritage before your visit? If yes, what particularly interested you?
Are there any important factors that contributed to your decision to undertake this trip? If yes, please describe them.
Why did you choose a guided tour to visit Angkor?

Please describe your tour of Angkor?
Did you learn anything about the tour (i. Angkor; ii. Cambodia; iii. Travelling in Cambodia)
a value for money?
How did this tour compare with others you have been on?
What do you look for in a tour?
What else did you do/would you like to do besides the activities on the tour?
Did you know much about...
i) Cambodia? ii) Angkor before this trip?
Did you have any knowledge of Cambodian architecture before this trip?
Do you feel that you have any knowledge about Cambodian architecture now? If yes, what about?
Do you think your tour is a success? If yes, why? If no, why not?

For you, what are important attributes in Angkor cultural heritage tourism?
Do you think your tour is a success? If yes, why? If no, why not?

Have you heard of the word “authentic” applied to tourism?
What do you think “authenticity” in tourism is all about?
What do you think about “authenticity” in Angkor cultural heritage?
Is “authenticity” a consideration for your experience of Angkor cultural heritage?
If yes, why? What did you do or what are you planning to do to pursue “authenticity” for your experience?
If no, why not?

Do you think Angkor cultural heritage has been commodified/commercialised for tourists?
If yes, why? Do you think such commodification affects tourist experience? If yes, how?
If no, why not?

How do you describe your experiences of Angkor cultural heritage to a family member, friend, or colleague?
What do you think are the most important experiences you gained from your visit to Angkor during the last 2/3/4 days?
Would you recommend the tour to someone who was planning to visit i. Angkor; ii. Cambodia? If yes, why? If no, why not?

Is there anything else about “authenticity” you would like to add?

Thank you very much for your time!
A.2 Non-guided tourist

Why have you decided to visit Angkor?
Did you have any interest in Cambodian cultural heritage before your visit? If yes, what particularly interested you?
Are there any important factors that contributed to your decision to undertake this trip? If yes, please describe them.
Whom do you travel independently with? Throughout the trip or part of the trip? [Ask in accordance with Question 1 of the basic profile form.]
Why did you decide to travel independently to visit Angkor without a tour guide?

Please describe your visit?
Did you learn anything about the visit (i. Angkor; ii. Cambodia; iii. Travelling in Cambodia) a value for money?
How did this visit compare with other independent travel you have undertaken?
What do you look for in a visit?
What else did you do/would you like to do besides visiting Angkor?
Did you know much about...
i) Cambodia? ii) Angkor before this trip?
Did you have any knowledge of Cambodian architecture before this trip?
Do you feel that you have any knowledge about Cambodian architecture now? If yes, what about?
Do you think your visit is a success? If yes, why? If no, why not?
Do you have any personal feelings about Cambodian cultural heritage? If so, what are these?
For you, do you think are important attributes in Angkor cultural heritage tourism?

Have you heard of the word “authentic” applied to tourism?
What do you think “authenticity” in tourism is all about?
What do you think about “authenticity” in Angkor cultural heritage?
Is “authenticity” a consideration for your experience of Angkor cultural heritage?
If yes, why? What did you do or what are you planning to do to pursue “authenticity” for your experience? If no, why not?

Do you think Angkor cultural heritage has been commodified/commercialised for tourists?
If yes, why? Do you think such commodification affects tourist experience? If yes, how?
If no, why not?

How do you describe your experiences of Angkor cultural heritage to a family member, friend, or colleague?
What do you think are the most important experiences you gained from your visit to Angkor during the last 2/3/4 days?
Would you recommend the tour to someone who was planning to visit i. Angkor; ii. Cambodia? If yes, why? If no, why not?

Is there anything else about “authenticity” you would like to add?

Thank you very much for your time!
A.3 Tour guide

Note: The Interviews with tour guides were conducted in Khmer language.

What do you think tourists want from you as a tour guide?

Have tourists ever given compliments about their tour? If yes, could you please tell me about their compliments and why?
Have tourists ever complained about their tour? If yes, could you please tell me what they complained about and why?

Why do you think tourists choose a guided tour?
Do you think tourists will miss anything if they do not have a tour guide? If yes, what do they miss? If no, why not?

Could you please tell me what tourists are keen on knowing, seeing or experiencing on their trip to Angkor? Why?
What else do tourists like to do besides the activities on their formal itinerary? Why?
From your observation, have there been any changes made to Angkor cultural heritage since you have worked as a guide? If yes, what are they?
Do you think the changes have affected/will affect tourist heritage experience? If yes, how? If no, why not?

Have you ever seen or heard tourists reacting to the changes? If yes, what were their reactions? Why?

Have you heard of the word “authentic” applied to tourism?
What do you think “authenticity” in tourism is all about?
What do you think about “authenticity” in Angkor cultural heritage?
Do you think “authenticity” is a concern for tourists in their experiences at Angkor?
If yes, why? What do you think they do to pursue “authenticity” in their experiences? If no, why not?

What level of authenticity do you think will be affected if tourists do not have a guide?
What particularly about Angkor cultural heritage do you think tourists like most? Why?
What particularly about Angkor cultural heritage do you think tourists like the least? Why?

Do you think tourists gain an authentic experience from their visit? If yes, why? If no, why not?

Is there anything else about “authenticity” you would like to say?
# Appendix B
## Basic Profile Forms

### B.1 Guided and non-guided tourist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tourists’ BASIC PROFILE FORM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>for the Study of “The Pursuit of Authenticity in Tourist Experiences: The Case of Siem Reap-Angkor”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Demographic characteristics
1. Your gender: □ Male □ Female
2. Your age: ______________
3. Current marital status: __________________
4. Highest education attained: ____________________________
5. Occupation: __________________________________________
6. Ethnicity/race: ______________________

#### Trip characteristics
7. Main purpose of travel:
   - □ Holiday  □ Business  □ VFR  □ Other (please specify): ______________
8. Are you on a guided holiday/trip? □ Yes  □ No
9. Are you on guided visit at Angkor? □ Yes  □ No
10. Number of travel companions (not including yourself): __________________
11. Number of days already spent in Cambodia: ______________
12. Total number of days to spend in Cambodia: ______________
13. Other countries visited or to visit on the same trip: *(Please tick ✓ all that are applicable to you.)*
   - □ Laos  □ Myanmar  □ Thailand  □ Vietnam  □ other (Please specify): ____________
## B.2 Tour guide

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tour Guides’ BASIC PROFILE FORM for the Study of “The Pursuit of Authenticity in Tourist Experiences: The Case of Siem Reap-Angkor”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Your gender: [ ] Male  [ ] Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Your age: ____________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Current marital status: ____________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Highest education attained: ____________________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 5. Occupation: Tour Guide (Language for guiding: __________)  
[ ] Permanent  [ ] Freelance  [ ] Other (please specify): __________ |
| 6. Are you…?  
[ ] a registered tour guide (has undertaken formal training and holds a guiding license from the Ministry of Tourism)  
[ ] a non-registered tour guide (has undertaken formal training, but does not hold a license from the Ministry of Tourism) |
| 7. How long have you worked as a tourist guide? __________ |
Dear Sir or Madam:

I would like to invite you to participate in a study of tourist experiences in Cambodia.

The research study I am undertaking is called “The pursuit of Authenticity in Tourist Experiences: The Case of Siem Reap-Angkor, Cambodia”. It is a research project for my Masters programme in Tourism Management at Lincoln University, Canterbury, New Zealand. The project is approved by the Lincoln University”s Human Ethics Committee.

The research is conducted using unstructured interviews. Your participation in this research will involve you answering questions regarding motivation, authenticity and activities in pursuit of your tourism experiences. The entire interview may take up to 60 minutes.

Participation in the research is voluntary and, if you agree to take part, you may decline to answer any question or withdraw any time during the interview. You may withdraw from the project, including any information that you have provided, up to four weeks from the day of the interview. All information you have provided will be destroyed.

Your identity will not be revealed in any of the research documents, such as interview transcripts or thesis report. Your anonymity will be maintained which means that none of the data provided by you will be able to be linked to your identity.

For the purpose of data analysis, you can either allow me to record the interview electronically or to take notes manually.

If you agree to participate in the research, please sign the consent form attached.

If you have any questions about the study, please do not hesitate to contact David, Grant, or myself. You may reach us via post at:

Faculty of Environment, Society, and Design
P.O. Box 84,
Lincoln University
Lincoln 7647
Canterbury, New Zealand

Or email me: (insert email address); Contact number: (insert a phone number)

Or email my supervisors:

1. (insert name and email address), or Telephone: (insert a phone number)
2. (insert name and email address), or telephone: (insert a phone number)

Thank you for your time and participation.
Appendix D

Consent Form

Research Project:

The Pursuit of Authenticity in Tourist Experiences
The Case of Siem Reap-Ankor, Cambodia

I have read and understood the description of the above-named study presented in the research information sheet. On this basis, I agree to participate in the research, and I consent to publication of the information that I provide in the thesis report with the understanding that my anonymity will be preserved. I understand also that I may withdraw from the project any time during the period up to four weeks after the interview or before data analysis, including withdrawal of any information I have provided.

I also agree that, with my permission, the researcher may

☐ electronically record the interview; or

☐ manually take notes of the interview

for the purpose of data analysis in this Masters thesis project.

I understand that I am mature enough (at least 18 years old) to participate in the research.

Name: __________________________________________________________________

Signed: ___________________________ Date: _______________