

Sheltering from violence: Women's experiences of safe
shelters in Cambodia

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Abstract

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This thesis centres on the lives of Cambodian domestic violence survivors who have fled their abusive partners to live in NGO-run safe shelters. Through in-depth interview research undertaken across 2016 with 17 survivors and 11 staff in the safe shelters of two NGOs, I explore their experiences of the shelter and the services they provide including counselling, skills training, and legal assistance. Empirically the thesis addresses a knowledge gap which exists on shelter spaces, both in Cambodia, but also in the discipline of geography.

The narratives discussed in the thesis provides new insights into experiences of violence and the (in)efficacy of after-care services from a survivor-centred perspective. The findings show how the impunity of the legal system means that Cambodian society operates as a safe space for perpetrators of domestic violence and spatially excludes survivors from it to guarantee their safety from injury and even murder. The research argues that safe shelter provision in Cambodia, albeit essential, does not necessarily afford freedom from violence, but rather a punitive safety from it. Survivors are too often being excluded from decision-making processes in the shelter and treated as passive recipients of physical safety. Exploring their practical as well as long-term strategic goals reveals a more complex set of needs which the shelters struggle to meet. As such, this thesis makes important theoretical contributions to debates on agency, choice, and capabilities and raises challenging questions about the opportunities and limitations that women face when striving towards living an economically independent life that is free from violence. The thesis demonstrates that while women's shelters in Cambodia are vital life-or-death services, there is a significant need for improvement and ends by suggesting ways forward to achieve this.

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Chapter One: Introduction

“I feel safe here because of the security. This place is secret and he cannot come here. We have a security guard. The fences are high and nobody can look inside...I didn't have this feeling of safety in my home before. But now I am safe, I do not have freedom. We do not talk with people outside and we cannot go out alone. This is not a normal place. This is not how you live on the outside. I feel worried I am forgetting how to do that” [Puthea]

Puthea arrived in the safe shelter with her two children having fled her violent partner. She had reported the physical, emotional, and economic violence for the past two years of their nine-year relationship to the police, but they took no action. Not held accountable, her husband went on to damage her hand so severely that she could no longer work as a construction labourer to support the family's needs. Puthea took the difficult step of contacting Banteay Srei, a Khmer NGO that works with women survivors of violence but does not have a long-term stay safe shelter. She was then referred to a Cambodian Women's Crisis Center (CWCC) shelter so that she could pursue a court-sanctioned divorce and legal division of land ownership without risk of retaliation. While she feels a sense of physical protection from the security of guards and fences around her in the shelter, she no longer has freedom (*seripheap*). Not only this, but eight months into her stay and uncertain when the legal processes will conclude, she voices fear and a lack of confidence about going out alone and functioning in normal (*tomodah*) society in the future. Puthea's concerns over her diminishing confidence, social skills and economic independence were echoed by other participants and will be explored throughout the rest of this thesis.

This thesis gives voice to the stories of 17 Khmer women who survived violence and accessed violence against women services at a safe shelter in Cambodia. Arranged over two empirical chapters, the women's stories presented in this thesis trace and recount experiences of violence, home, safety, freedom, ontological security and capabilities prior to, and during,

a stay in one of three safe shelters in Cambodia. The research also explores the experiences of women who chose not to stay in a safe shelter and, instead, remain in their home or stay with a family member. In this research I explore three implicit propositions: first, that women need immediate safety from violence; second, to live free from violence in the long-term, women need to acquire the ability to live independent lives and; third, that violence against women services can be an effective means to accomplish these goals.

The research project was carried out with two NGOs in Cambodia. The first NGO, the Cambodian Women's Crisis Centre (CWCC), provided access to conduct interviews with all seven of the women staying in their three safe shelters at the time of research. The safe shelters were located in three locations: Phnom Penh, Siem Reap and Banteay Meanchey. In the CWCC safe shelters the women had stays of between three months and a year. Whilst living in the safe shelters the women received access to other services such as counselling, legal advice and skills training. The CWCC safe shelter staff (managers, counsellors and care takers) also participated in interviews.

The second participating NGO, Banteay Srei, provided access to conduct interviews with ten women who had previously used their legal and counselling services, though not all had stayed in the safe shelter. Banteay Srei's safe shelter was in the same building as the office and the premises acted as a place where women could drop-in and receive services, irrespective of whether or not they chose to stay. In this way Banteay Srei differed in their approach from the CWCC; the organisation provided temporary stays in their 'transit shelter' for women for up to one week. The transit shelter acted as a safe space for women at immediate risk of violence, as well as a place for rural women to stay when they needed to attend legal meetings and go to court. To gain insight into why Banteay Srei implemented this approach, data was collected from four staff members: the executive director, the shelter and service manager, the counsellor and an affiliate of the Ministry of Women's Affairs.

My thesis draws upon ideas from geographies of home and safe spaces, with a particular focus on emotional safety. Women's shelters have often paid particular attention to ensuring

women's physical safety, but the same attention has not been given to emotional safety. Thus, this thesis explores women's emotional safety through the lens of ontological security. I explore the women's everyday practices – embodied, material and emotional – of living in their temporary home and how they negotiate living in limbo, cut off from their previous lives. The data raises important questions about women's safety, safe spaces and ontological security.

Feminist geographers have been responsible for a wealth of research on violence against women including: violence and fear (Koskela, 1997; Mehta, 1999; Pain, 1997 & 2001); violence and the home (Koskela & Pain, 2000; Brickell 2008 & 2014); domestic violence as everyday terrorism (Pain, 2014); conflict, peace and gender-based violence (Moser & McIlwaine, 2006; Hume, 2008); methodological and ethical considerations for researching violence against women (Ellsberg et al, 2001); colonial violence and spatio-legal modes of control over women and children (De Leeuw, 2016) and domestic violence law and practices of reconciliation (Brickell, 2015b & 2017). In contrast, women's shelters have remained a largely underexplored space and place. In the UK context, Bowstead's research has explored making and re-making home in response to domestic violence (2015a) and theorised women's domestic violence journeys (2017), as well as interrogating why domestic violence shelters are not local services (2015b). Other scholars in geography have shed light on the geographies of homelessness and homeless shelters specifically (Veness, 1992; Rollinson, 1998; Lee & Price-Spratlen, 2004; Daya & Wilkins, 2013; Williams, 2016; Moloko-Phiri et al, 2017; Speer, 2017), as well as experiences of temporary dwelling for asylum seekers (Martin & Mitchelson, 2009; Mountz, 2011), patients in psychiatric units (Parrott, 2005), people living in refugee and disaster-relief camps (Maheen & Hoban, 2017; Collins et al, 2018) and students living in purpose-built student accommodation (Hubbard, 2009). Despite an increased understanding that domestic violence contributes to women's housing instability and homelessness (Malos & Hague, 1997; Chung et al, 2000; Baker et al, 2003; Sullivan & Olsen, 2016), geographers have failed to examine and understand the geographies of domestic

violence shelters specifically. As such, this research develops important lines of inquiry in geography.

The current literature available on women's shelters is scattered across disciplines and comes largely from the global north. Research in psychology has included explorations of post-traumatic stress disorder treatment for survivors in shelters (Johnson et al, 2011) and evaluations of hotline, advocacy, counselling and shelter services (Jouriles et al, 1998; Bennett et al, 2004). Other literature has emerged in the discipline of health and social care including analyses of rural shelter programmes in the USA (Tice, 1990; Few, 2005), staff burnout (Chatigny et al, 2004) and needs assessments of women entering and leaving shelters (Sullivan et al, 1992; Sullivan & Rumptz, 1994; Gorde et al, 2004). Cohen's (1992) book on the evolution of women's asylums makes an attempt to document the first women's shelter, though again these perspectives only account for shelters in the global north, namely the USA and UK. At present, there is no academic research or grey literature on women's shelters in Cambodia. My thesis responds to this gap in knowledge by addressing women's shelters beyond these contexts, examining the experiences of survivors through a social and cultural geography lens. By doing so, it goes beyond the Anglo-American focus of interdisciplinary academic research which currently exists on safe shelters concentrated on the United Kingdom, Canada, and the United States (e.g. Bowstead, 2015; Lyon et al, 2008a & 2008b; Warrington, 2001; Woodhall-Melnik et al, 2017). The thesis centralises the voices of services users, which provides important insights into how women who stay in safe shelters in Cambodia feel about their everyday practices and lives, as well as how they feel about their futures.

With this in mind, the key questions guiding this research are:

1. What is the role of ontological security in women's safe shelters in Cambodia?

2. How do women manage and negotiate the physical and emotional boundaries of safe shelters in Cambodia?
3. How can different approaches to violence against women services impact women's capabilities while staying in a shelter (and) in preparation for their future lives?

The next part of this chapter discusses violence against women in a global context. This is followed by an overview of the global evidence base of research on women's shelters. The next section outlines ideas within geographies of home, specifically focusing on temporary accommodation. While little evidence exists on geographies of home and women's safe shelters, but there are synergies between other types of temporary accommodation (such as asylum centres and homeless shelters) and the shelter as a place and space. Following this, I will explore the concept of emotional safety, framed as ontological security (Giddens, 1991) and how this links to the home. This leads into a discussion on freedom, unfreedom and capabilities.

Violence against Women: A Global Context

Unlike the Millennium Development Goals, which had no targets or indicators related to violence, the Sustainable Development Goals have 'put violence prevention on the map' (Matzopoulos & Bowman, 2016: 1). Women are disproportionately affected by violence in every country worldwide cutting across every life stage and socioeconomic group (UN Women, 2013). Marginalised women that are affected by poverty and other intersectional factors such as ethnicity and disability are typically more at risk of experiencing violence because of their multiple vulnerabilities (Wyatt et al, 2000; Jewkes et al, 2002; World Health Organisation, 2005b). At the roots of the global epidemic of violence against women lies the fact that there is nowhere in the world that women have equal social and economic rights to men, as well as access to the same resources (True, 2012). Humanitarian disasters and

conflicts have further deepened gaps in gender equality and increased women's vulnerability to violence (Garcia-Moreno et al, 2005; Hume, 2008; Fisher, 2010). This section of the introduction briefly situates violence against women in Cambodia within the broader framework of violence against women worldwide. While the challenge of ending violence against women in Cambodia presents context specific dilemmas, it also shares synergies with other global settings. This is because violence against women is rooted in the wider patriarchal and power structures of society.

The United Nations (1993, np) defines violence against women as 'any act of gender-based violence that results in or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life'. Research conducted in 2013 (World Health Organisation, 2013) reveals that 35% of women worldwide have experienced intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence. The World Health Organisation (2017, np) has identified nine risk factors that can increase women's exposure to violence. These are:

- Lower levels of education (perpetration of sexual violence and experience of sexual violence);
- A history of exposure to child maltreatment (perpetration and experience);
- Witnessing family violence (perpetration and experience);
- Antisocial personality disorder (perpetration);
- Harmful use of alcohol (perpetration and experience);
- Having multiple partners or suspected by their partners of infidelity (perpetration);
- Attitudes that condone violence (perpetration);
- Community norms that privilege or ascribe higher status to men and lower status to women; and
- Low levels of women's access to paid employment.

There are significant health consequences for women who experience violence. The outcomes can be fatal or can lead to debilitating injuries. Violence can cause trauma and distress and increases the likelihood of psychological disorders, stress, anxiety and depression (World Health Organisation, 2017). The social and economic costs of violence against women are huge. It prevents women from participating in everyday activities such as caring for themselves and their children and engaging in employment (Heise et al, 1999; World Health Organisation, 2013). In high-income countries intervention strategies such as advocacy and rights services and access to counselling have been identified as effective. The World Health Organisation (2017) has highlighted several types of prevention strategies that have shown promise in low-income countries. These include: strategies that economically and socially empower women through a combination of micro-finance and gender equality training; that promote effective communication and relationship skills; that reduce harmful use of alcohol; and those that transform harmful gender and social norms by mobilising communities and using group-based participatory education. My thesis examines either intervention or prevention strategies, but instead turns the focus to protection. The next section of this chapter outlines the global evidence that exists on women's shelters.

Women's shelters: An Overview

Records show that women's shelters date back to at least 1875 when Martha McWirtter established a refuge for women escaping violence in Belton, Texas (Betancourt, 2016). However, historical accounts of the shelter movement suggest the first well-documented women's shelters were founded in the early 1970s in the UK and USA (Refuge, 2013; UN Women, 2013) as part of the 'battered women's movement' (Murray, 1988) and second-wave feminism (Dobash & Dobash, 1980). Traction for women's shelters was also gained through women's liberation movements, civil rights movements and anti-rape movements (Murray, 1988). They emerged as a response to women's needs for safety by providing secure accommodation, but also responded to physical injuries, children who arrived with their

mother and legal, social and medical service needs (UN Women, 2013). Since, there has been significant expansion of women's shelters globally and they are recognised as a vital and often life-saving resource for women escaping violence (Lyon et al 2008a; 2008b).

UN Women (2013:23-24) states there should be four guiding principles that inform the planning and running of a shelter. These are:

- Safety and security should be central to all aspects of accommodation and services
- Programmes should reflect the voice of survivors, promoting women's empowerment and right to self-determination
- Shelters should be operated by individual women's organisations
- Services should be open to all women and appropriately tailored to the diverse needs of seeking support.

In addition, women's shelters should be designed to offer a variety of benefits to women who access them. The UN Women (2013) guidelines suggest shelters should include, but are not limited to:

- Safe accommodation
- Medical treatment
- Counselling and therapeutic support
- Financial and economic assistance
- Legal assistance

Throughout my thesis I reflect on whether the CWCC and Banteay Srei follow principles similar to those set out by UN Women (2013). While these guiding principles are helpful for understanding best practice, my research data shows that implementation is constrained by a

variety of factors that are context specific to Cambodia. Furthermore, my thesis highlights how the UN Women (2013) guiding principles can conflict with one another. My thesis addresses these tensions, examining how the idea of safety and security as a central tenet of accommodation and services can undermine women's empowerment and right to self-determination.

Attempts have been made to map the prevalence of women's shelters in different countries, though there is no co-ordinated worldwide survey of shelters. Instead, several individual pieces of research have emerged, though these are largely from the global north. Such research has highlighted uneven distribution and inadequate coverage of women's shelters. For example, Coy et al's 'Map of Gaps' (2007) found that 26.5% of local authorities in the UK have no specialised violence against women support services. These findings resonate with other research that highlights the lack of options for women fleeing violence. Women Against Violence Europe¹ (Fisher et al, 2011; Futter-Orel et al, 2017) have been responsible for recording the amount of women's shelters across 46 European countries. Data shows that despite a slight overall increase in women's shelters across European countries, there is still a significant lack of bed-spaces available across the countries surveyed (Futter-Orel et al, 2017). Data from the USA presents similar findings, with approximately 6,714 requests for emergency shelter or transitional housing unmet annually (National Network to End Domestic Violence, 2011). Equally, the 2015 Women's Aid Annual Survey reported that approximately 92 women and 75 children were turned away from shelters in the UK over a 24 hour period. Nearly half (45.6%) were turned away because there was no space for them. A significant lack of refuge spaces remains in the UK, with 60% (11,867 women) of referrals declined in 2016 (Women's Aid, 2017).

¹ The WAVE Network, established in 1994 as an informal network, is a legal entity since 2014 and a formal network NGO composed of European women's NGOs working in the field of combating violence against women and children.

The guiding principles of the UN Women shelter module (2013) state that services need to be open to all women and tailored to the individual needs of women seeking support. However, organisations running shelters have been criticised for their lack of consideration for cultural diversity, individual experience and intersectionality, often labelled as a ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach (Koyama, 2006; Arnold & Ake, 2013). Service providers and users have advocated for the development of specialist services and refuges for women with multiple needs (Women’s Aid, 2017). Research and reports have also highlighted the importance of attending to the specific cultural contexts of women (Gill & Banga, 2008; Mantler & Wolfe, 2017; Women’s Aid, 2017). Murdolo’s (2014) narration of ‘Alternative Histories of the Women’s Refuge Movement in Australia’ highlights how scant, marginal and often imprecise attention has been paid to the experiences of immigrant and refugee women in the refuge movement in Australia. Murdolo’s (2014) writing raises important questions for refuges about the exclusion and absence of marginalised voices in the histories of refuges, as well as current provision of services - not just in Australia, but also around the world. This resonates with the experiences of women with disabilities who have reported not being taken seriously by service providers, as well as receiving inadequate assistance due to a lack of disability knowledge (Mandl et al, 2014). In addition, evidence shows BAME women need access to specialist support services that are equipped to deal with their unique circumstances (Gill & Banga, 2008; Robinson & Maxwell, 2008; Women’s Aid, 2017). Research from the UK suggests that a BAME woman’s case is less likely to escalate to ‘high risk’ and result in homelessness again if she is placed in an appropriate, culturally-specific refuge (Gill & Banga, 2008). This is because understanding a woman’s individual context is essential in understanding her needs (Coy et al, 2007). These critiques of women’s shelters show how there is a discrepancy between the rhetoric of the UN Women’s (2013) guiding principles and the actual practice of individual shelters.

Coy et al (2007) use the term ‘postcode lottery’ to explain the uneven distribution of and access to specialised violence against women services in the UK. The idea of a postcode

lottery can be extended far beyond the UK and can be applied in other global settings. For example, a 2007 report by UNIFEM in Kenya highlighted unequal distribution of services across the country. The study reported that rural areas are lacking services in comparison to urban settings, and this is particularly problematic because a 73.95% of the Kenyan population reside in the countryside (World Bank, 2016). Furthermore, responsive interventions appear to receive less attention because of a lack of trained professionals with psychosocial, legal and health skills (UNIFEM, 2007). Similar findings emerged in my doctoral research; all of the NGOs were located on the outskirts of urban areas, leaving vast amounts of rural women without any close access to a safe shelter.

Research has found shelters to have strict and arbitrary rules that govern the freedom of women accessing services, thus keeping the residents within the same abusive dynamics of power and control they are seeking to break free from (Ferraro, 1983; Gaddis, 2001; McDermott & Garofalo, 2004). The debate surrounding women's shelters is further complicated by vast contrasts in the approach towards the provision of services, namely because shelters and their providers are informed by ideals and values stemming from different cultural perspectives and ideologies (Garcia-Moreno et al, 2005). These critiques of shelters conflict with the UN Women (2013) shelter guidelines for best practice. The guidelines state that shelters and their services need to reflect the voices of the women accessing them and be tailored to the diverse needs of seeking support, as well as being operated by individual women's organisations and open to all women. When shelters are enforcing their own initiatives that are not survivor-directed, they are failing the very women that access their shelters and services.

Violence against Women Terminology

There is a variety of different terminology used to describe violence against women.

According to UN Women (2013), the terms 'violence against women' and 'gender-based

violence' are often used interchangeably, despite their differences. The terminology 'gender-based violence' acknowledges the gendered nature of violence and is 'an umbrella term for any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person's will, and that is based solely on ascribed (gender) differences' (Inter-Agency Standing Committee, 2005: 7). While women and girls disproportionately experience violence at the hands of male perpetrators, men and boys can also experience gender-based violence (UN Women, 2013). This means that violence against women is a form of gender-based discrimination. As such this thesis will use the terminology 'violence against women', as opposed to 'gender-based violence', because it is specific and reflects the focus of the research: violence directed towards women.

There are debates around the terminology of 'domestic violence' and 'intimate partner violence'. According to UN Women (2013:18), legislation on domestic violence should 'include a broad definition that includes physical, sexual psychological and economic violence'. Domestic violence can be used to refer to violence that occurs within relationships defined by familial or emotional attachment (World Health Organisation, 2005). It can encompass intimate partner violence, child or elder abuse, or abuse by any member of the household (World Health Organisation, nd). In contrast, intimate partner violence refers to behaviour perpetrated in an intimate relationship and includes any acts that may cause physical, psychological and/or sexual harm (World Health Organisation, 2005).

In this instance, the Istanbul Convention (2011: 8) definition of domestic violence is useful. It states,

'Domestic violence shall mean all acts of physical, sexual, psychological or economic violence that occur within the family or domestic unit or between former or current spouses or partners, whether or not the perpetrator shares or has shared the same residence with the victim'.

This definition accounts for intimate partner violence and domestic violence, illustrating how one definition can incorporate the features of both terms. However, given that this thesis draws on a range of literature on violence against women from different global contexts where the terminology ‘domestic violence’ and ‘intimate partner violence’ are used interchangeably, it is impossible to use only one term in this thesis. Instead, the interchangeable use of the language is reflected in my writing, with both terms used throughout.

The term ‘victim’ has long been used to describe women who experience violence. However in more recent years some literature has exchanged the language of ‘victim’ for ‘survivor’ (Inter-Agency Standing Committee, 2005). There are debates around the differences between what the two terms imply. It is argued that the language ‘victim’ infers passivity, unawareness and helplessness (Convery, 2006). In contrast, the term ‘survivor’ indicates strength, resilience, initiative and agency (Papendick & Bohner, 2017). It is argued that using the language of ‘survivor’ places an emphasis on active resistance and recovery and helps women to build a ‘survivor-identity’ that is rooted in their strength (Convery, 2006). In recent research by Papendick & Bohner (2017) on the perceived meaning of labels applied to women who were raped, participants identified survivor as a more positive label overall and characterised it as ‘strong, brave and active’ (2017: np). In comparison, the language of victim was associated with being ‘weak and passive’ (2017: np). When the participants chose to leave their homes, though under constrained circumstances such as life or death, they had made an active choice and survived their experiences of violence. With this in mind, the language ‘survivor’ is used throughout this thesis. This is because it reflects the strength and resilience of the women that participated in my research, as well as their use of agency in fleeing violence.

Thesis Structure

This section outlines the structure of the thesis chapter by chapter.

Chapter Two: Conceptual Framework

This chapter explains the conceptual framework used in my research. It begins with geographies of home and homelessness. This is followed by a discussion of the literature on safe spaces. Next, Giddens's (1990) concept of ontological security is outlined, as is Sen's (1988) capabilities approach.

Chapter Three: Understanding Cambodia

This chapter is devoted entirely to Cambodia. It documents key information that provides a clear context for understanding the data presented in the empirical chapters. It starts by documenting the violent history of the Khmer Rouge, exploring how women were impacted both during and after the Pol Pot era. Following this, I present key academic research and grey literature on violence against women post-Khmer Rouge. This leads into a discussion of the current policies on gender-based violence in Cambodia. Following this, I examine gender (in)equality in Cambodia. This section covers gender attitudes and relations, men and masculinity, Buddhism and violence against women, marriage, reconciliation and divorce and education and employment. After, I document the current political situation in contemporary Cambodia, including women's roles in politics. Finally, the chapter closes with a section on NGOs in Cambodia and the newly introduced 'NGO law'².

Chapter Four: Research Methods and Methodology

² Formally entitled 'Cambodia's Law on Associations and Non-Governmental Organisations' (LANGO).

This chapter starts by outlining feminist epistemology and methodology and how these informed the research project. This is followed by a discussion of why semi-structured interviews were selected as a method. Then, I provide the reasons behind the locations of my fieldwork. This is followed by a detailed description of how I gained access, including reflective discussion on the difficulties of gaining access. The next section documents how I recruited research assistants (as well as why I chose to use this phrasing, as opposed to ‘interpreter’). I also reflect on how cross-language research and using research assistants to interpret throughout the data collection process may have impacted the data collected. Following this, I provide a comprehensive discussion on the ethical dilemmas of conducting research with women affected by violence. I outline the steps I took to ensure the physical and emotional safety of the participants and the research team, as well as confidentiality and anonymity. Next, the data collection process is explained, including sampling and descriptions of the fieldwork locations and safe shelters. This is followed by a section on data analysis. The chapter closes with a reflective discussion of my positionality and reflexivity.

Chapter Five: Causes, Protection and Prevention: Stakeholder Perspectives

Chapter Five is the first empirical chapter. The chapter uses data collected from service providers to understand how staff feel about the services they offer. The data discussed provides important insights into the causes of violence, as well as the difficulties women’s organisations face when trying to work with women survivors of violence.

Chapter Six: Women’s experiences of punitive safety and unfreedom in Cambodian shelters

Chapter Six, which is the second empirical chapter, explores the experiences of Cambodian women survivors of violence who live temporarily in safe shelters hidden from their perpetrators. The chapter examines the women’s freedoms and unfreedoms during their stay. Giddens’ (1990) concept of ontological security is used to better understand how these

(un)freedoms contribute to women's feelings of wellbeing, personhood, independence, self-esteem and control. The data in the chapter is presented in two main sections: 'Unfreedom of movement outside the shelter' and 'Everyday unfreedoms in the shelter'. In the first section, narratives of the women centre around the restrictions placed on leaving the shelter and how women try to negotiate these boundaries, for example through the use of mobile phones. In the second section, the focus turns to the inside of the shelter as an everyday space and place. Here, the women's narratives focus on the time scheduling of the shelter, their roles as mothers, sharing their space and their thoughts about materiality and decoration. The chapter demonstrates how the shelters' exclusive focus on physical safety is, at times, to the putative neglect, and further detriment, of women's feelings of ontological security.

Chapter Seven: Enhancing Capabilities for Women Survivors of Violence in Cambodia

Chapter Seven, the third and final empirical chapter of this thesis, focuses on the different services that women can access both inside and outside of shelters in Cambodia. It presents and discusses data collected from the two NGOs, CWCC Banteay Srei. The chapter explores the women's experiences of different services such as skills training, counselling and legal advice and support and examines whether they enhanced women's capabilities (Sen, 1988; Nussbaum, 2005). The chapter is divided into several sections. Each of these sections is divided into two: the CWCC and then Banteay Srei. The first theme discussed is counselling. This is followed by skills training. The third theme discussed is housing. This section on housing differs from the first chapter because it explores the experiences of women who stayed in Banteay Srei's transit shelter for no longer than a week. It also explores the housing experiences of women who did not stay in Banteay Srei's shelter and, instead, sought an alternative route to living free from violence. This sheds light on the strengths and limitations of alternative approaches for women escaping violence. The chapter demonstrates how the violence against women services provided by the CWCC and Banteay Srei do not afford

women enough freedom to choose what they want to do and be. The data further reveals that seeking to enhance certain capabilities can simultaneously diminish others.

Chapter Eight: Conclusions

Chapter eight is the closing chapter of this thesis. It brings together the research findings under the conceptual framework used: ontological security and capabilities.

Chapter Two: Conceptual Framework

This chapter outlines the conceptual framework used in my thesis. It starts with discussion on geographies of home and homelessness, which highlights the complex relationship between violence against women and homelessness. While research has explored experiences of home in temporary accommodation such as homeless shelters (Veness, 1992; Rollinson, 1998; Lee

& Price-Spratlen, 2004; Daya & Wilkins, 2013; Williams, 2016; Moloko-Phiri et al, 2017; Speer, 2017), asylum centres (Martin & Mitchelson, 2009; Mountz, 2011) and student halls (Hubbard, 2009), women's shelters have remained largely neglected. Next, 'safe spaces' are discussed. This is because "safety and security should be central to all aspects of accommodation and services" (UN Women, 2013:10). This is followed by Giddens's (1991) concept of ontological security. As research on housing has shown, the home is an important site for attaining ontological security (Woodhall-Melnik et al, 2017). Thus, here the complex relationship between homelessness and emotional wellbeing is highlighted. The final section of the chapter outlines Sen's (2005) Capabilities Approach, which is useful for understanding how women's lives are impacted by the services they receive.

Geographies of Home and Homelessness

Domestic violence forces women to leave their homes (Malos & Hague, 1997; Chung et al, 2000; Baker et al, 2003; Sullivan & Olsen, 2016). In the USA, domestic violence has been identified as one of the largest contributors towards women's housing instability and homelessness (Wilder Research Centre, 2007). Baker et al (2003) note that women's experiences of housing instability may include (but are not limited to) multiple unwanted moves, being threatened with eviction, sacrificing eating and paying bills to cover rent and living with family and friends. Research has emphasised the importance of tangible resources for women when fleeing violence (Clough et al, 2014), and stable housing has been recognised as one of the most important of these tangible resources (Baker et al, 2003; Clough et al, 2014). As Malos and Hague (1997:1) write, 'in addition to the violence they have experienced, the loss of home is in itself an element in the complex nature of the trauma that women in a violent relationship suffer'.

The relationship between domestic violence and housing instability is complex and not always direct (Baker et al, 2003). Women are forced to flee their homes because of violence, however it is women's individual circumstances that increase their likelihood of experiencing housing instability. Research has identified several key factors that interplay and increase women's vulnerability to homelessness. Evidence from Psychology shows that dealing with the psychological and physical trauma of domestic violence impedes a woman's ability to work and acquire housing stability (Baker et al, 2003). Economic circumstances have been identified as a significant contributing factor to women's housing instability after separating from a violent partner. In work by Byrne (1995) on the socioeconomic impact of interpersonal violence on women, an exposure to domestic violence was linked to future unemployment and poverty. This is because women may face difficulty finding a job with a sufficient wage, particularly women with low education and limited job experience (UN Women, 2013). Furthermore, women with children face the barrier of finding a job that fits around their family responsibilities. In research in the USA by Riger et al (2000) approximately 50% of a sample of women survivors of domestic violence reported losing their job because of the actions of their abusive partner. Women in the sample reported being harassed and stalked by their abusive partner, sabotaging their ability to keep their job.

Research shows that accessing stable housing is further complicated by women's previous housing experiences, which are often characterised by poor credit history and being forced to move multiple times out of a need for safety and/or being evicted because of an abuser's actions (Martin & Stern, 2004). The range of factors described here show how barriers to permanent and stable housing can interfere with a woman's ability to acquire the stability needed to access services, which in turn will increase their safety and enable them to maintain separation from their abusive partner. As such, it is clear that women need an array of services to meet their needs, and at the root of meeting these needs is access to safe, stable and permanent housing.

Research indicates that homeless people have home-making goals and evaluate the qualities of home in temporary accommodation (Kellett and Moore, 2003). It can be argued that temporary and institutional accommodation does not fulfil its duty of care to residents by merely providing a place to eat and sleep. Focusing on homelessness as more than just an absence of shelter allows for the individual meaning and experiences of home to be explored (Rivlin, 1990; Somerville, 1992; Tomas & Dittmar, 1995), thus raising important questions about (un)homeliness, (non)belonging and (im)permanence in temporary and institutional accommodation. Important questions like this must be asked because their answers have the capacity to invoke more appropriate and informed responses that can adequately meet the needs of residents in temporary accommodation.

Literature suggests that experiences of homelessness cannot be understood without exploring the meaning(s) of 'home' because individual conceptualisations of home are shaped and influenced by how individuals have experienced home and/or homelessness (Veness, 1992; Tomas and Dittmar, 1995; Wardhaugh, 1999; Moore, 2000; May, 2000). Research has acknowledged this and studies of temporary accommodation in a range of spaces such as asylum centres (Van Der Horst, 2004), women's refuges (DeWard & Moe, 2010) and psychiatric units (Parrott, 2005) have used home as a relevant point of reference for exploring experiences of homelessness (Hill, 1991; Moore et al, 1995; Moore, 2000). Although homelessness is typically associated with not possessing or having access to a physical dwelling, homelessness has no universal definition and can be better understood as a continuum of housing whereby people who are labelled as (or label themselves as) homeless can range from living on the streets to residing in inadequate, insecure housing or living in an institutional or temporary setting (Watson & Austerberry, 1986; Cloke et al, 2000).

Viewing home and homelessness as oppositional can highlight the complex and profound nature of being homeless but it can also simplify the two concepts. Such juxtaposition does not account for the experience and meaning of being homeless and risks reducing it to a

purely physical state. Although homelessness does exist physically (e.g for those who live on the streets or in public spaces; individuals who society typically labels as "homeless"), a lack of home has also been recorded by individuals in other settings such as people living in asylum centres (Van Der Horst, 2004) and 'special-needs' housing (Means, 1996). In DeWard and Moe's (2010) research into women's narratives of surviving shelter living in New York one woman referred to the shelter as 'like a prison': a stark contrast to the notion of home. Such populations can otherwise be referred to as 'hidden homeless' because they are not visible in the same way people sleeping rough are, yet experience similar feelings of insecurity as those who are visibly homeless.

Definitions of homelessness have moved toward recognising it as more than just a housing problem, but a wider personal, social, cultural, economic and political issue (Kellett and Moore, 2003). The United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habit, 2000:13 cited in Robson, 2011) argue that homelessness is 'a condition of detachment from society characterised by the lack of the affiliative bonds that link people into their social structures' and that 'homelessness carries implications of belonging nowhere as opposed to having nowhere to sleep'. This definition illustrates that individual conceptualisations of homelessness are impacted by the qualities of home that particular settings provide (Rivlin and Moore, 2001) and that homelessness can be more than physical; it can also be a set of feelings. Kellett and Moore (2003) support this idea through the use of the example of a person living in a hostel for the homeless; although they may be officially classified as homeless, a resident may feel 'at home' because of a long period of stay in one place. For others, classifying a place as home may be related to how they imagine the home architecturally, materially and spatially. It may also relate to feelings around privacy, freedom and control.

Geographical research has documented how residents' feelings of home interact with and are influenced by the design of temporary accommodation. Having access to private spaces that

are typically associated with home has been recognised as key to creating feelings of independence and control. It is not commonplace for people living in temporary accommodation to have private spaces. Ayona Datta's (2005) research into the architecture of emergency shelters for families in Arizona makes important contributions to this domain. Datta (2005) states that emergency shelters are where homeless families start their journey of being permanently 'homed' and this first step can make important positive contributions towards the reconstruction of perceptions of home and homelessness. The families residing in the emergency shelter in Datta's (2005) research each had their own private apartment with a kitchen, living room and bathroom. As a result the participants experienced independent living and a re-enforcement of the qualities of a home (Sprague, 1991). Here it can be argued that providing private spaces in temporary accommodation can be crucial to positive development because these private spaces are important sites for strengthening the household. Furthermore, they can play a key role in individuals regaining partial control of their lives and experiencing feelings of independence (Kellett and Moore, 2003). Feelings of independence and control were commonly discussed throughout the interviews with the participants in my doctoral research. In the empirical chapters I pursue this line of inquiry, examining how a lack of access to private spaces impacts the participants' agency, freedom, decision-making capacity and self-esteem.

In keeping with exploring how the design of temporary accommodation intersects with experiences of homelessness, Liebow (1993) documented the lives of single women in emergency homeless shelters. It was acknowledged that the architecture of the shelters reflected that the women were separated from partners, family and children through the lack of private spaces (such as individual bathrooms and kitchens). Research into hostels for homeless people problematises having to share spaces that would typically be private in a normative home (such as the living room, kitchen and bathroom). This is because it has been indicated that not possessing private spaces can affect feelings of autonomy, independence and control and sharing spaces takes away freedom and privacy. Furthermore, differences

between residents can lead to in-house conflicts (Busch-Geertsema, & Sahlin, 2007). Other geographical research (Rivlin & Moore, 2001; Kellett & Moore, 2003) reinforces the idea that possessing an individual space in temporary accommodation can help residents to regain partial control of their lives, be independent and to experience many of the comforts associated with “home”.

Other research has advocated for sharing ‘community’ spaces because it is suggested that individuals can benefit from the interactions that take place in these spaces. In Ahrentzen’s (1989) research into housing for single parent families it was found that communal facilities provide opportunities for socialisation. Datta’s (2005) research complements this earlier idea and indicates that communal zones outside of the immediate home (the laundry room, the smoking area and the children’s play area) lead to casual encounters between residents and can help to create a sense of community. Sharing the laundry room, smoking area and children’s play area engaged residents in conversations and activities together, resulting in the residents forming a common identity with one another. The relationships that were built through accessing community spaces meant residents could turn to one another for informal support and could enjoy interactions that were reflective of neighbourhoods outside of the homeless shelter. I examine these ideas throughout the empirical chapters of this thesis, exploring how sharing space impacts women’s experiences of shelter living.

The objects and materials residents living in temporary accommodation use to furnish space can be indicative of past experiences of home, but also reflective of the present circumstances. In the interviews in my doctoral research the significance of furnishings, as well as choosing not to decorate, were discussed. This is because how residents choose to decorate their space in temporary accommodation may deviate from the normative decorative practices that would be implemented if it were their own home. Research by Parrott (2005) into the material culture of hope for patients in a medium secure psychiatric unit illustrates this by exploring how residents relate to their accommodation through the decoration of their

personal space. In some cases patients refused to decorate their bedrooms (although they were free to do so) because of a perception that fixing objects to the walls symbolised being fixed in the institution. Many residents did not consider it their home because the unit was seen as a transient place, neither did they wish to make the place feel like a home. As a result, keeping their walls bare helped reflect that they did not view the unit as their home. Instead, the affirmation of temporality through decorative practices asserted the confident belief that their exit would be imminent and they would soon return to a place they considered to be home: a place that they would choose to decorate because it was their home. Choosing not to engage in decorative practices was an act of resistance for the residents in Parrott's (2005) research. The ability to choose whether or not to engage in decorative practices allowed the residents to assert their own agency and exercise their freedom in a space where they had little other control. Thus, the lack of resident decoration in Parrott's (2005) research can be linked to negative feelings about the unit but also maintained positivity for the residents. The residents stated that if it were their own home they would decorate the space with photographs, posters and other material objects. In contrast to this was the decoration of the central areas where paintings and flowers were used in an attempt by staff to create a 'home' atmosphere. It was hoped this would help patients accept they were 'in-there' by using furnishings that would typically help a house feel like a 'home'. However, these efforts were rejected by the residents who needed more than flowers and paintings to qualify the space as their home. In my research the participants expressed similar sentiments about decorative practices and conceptualised home as more than material objects and furnishings. This idea is explored in-depth in Chapter Six, 'Women's Experiences of Punitive Safety and Unfreedom in Cambodian Shelters'.

Research into the geographical locations of homeless shelters has drawn links between negative community attitudes towards the placement of homeless shelters and the aesthetics and desirability of neighbourhoods (Wolch et al, 1993; Stark, 1994; Takahashi, 1996). Negative attitudes and opposition towards homeless shelters can be attributed to the

stigmatisation of homeless people as undesirable behaviourally and aesthetically, resulting in a ‘not in my backyard’ attitude. This is problematic because although homeless shelters may aim to support and rehabilitate homeless people so that they can (re)enter a normative home, this work can be undermined by placing shelters in deprived social areas where there is repetitive risk of exposure to negative behaviours such as drug taking and crime (Brinegar, 2003). In addition, a ‘not in my backyard’ attitude can lead to the isolation of shelters and their residents. In my doctoral research I explore this idea because the safe shelters were located just outside urban areas on the outskirts of villages. In Chapter Six I discuss how the geographical locations of the shelters symbolise the shunning of domestic violence survivors because it pushes them to live on the margins of society and further increases their feelings of stigma and shame.

Safe spaces

In August 2018 the UNFPA reported on a group of young people in Cambodia who participated in the International Youth Day’s theme of “safe spaces for young people” by releasing three short videos around safe and consensual sex. Outside of these international initiatives, the term ‘safe space’ remains unexplored in the Cambodian context. Research on safe spaces reflects this, with much of the literature emerging from the global north. The concept of safe spaces is relevant to this thesis because it is language that was adopted by both of the participating NGOs. While the CWCC referred to their women’s shelter as a ‘safe house’ (phteah sovotthephap), Banteay Srei described their transit shelter as a ‘safe space’ (kanleng mean sovotthephap). As such, it is important to explore the concept of safe space. The United Nations Population Fund³ (UNFPA, 2015) defines a women and girls safe space as:

³ UNFPA is the United Nations sexual and reproductive health agency. Their mission is to deliver a world where every pregnancy is wanted, every childbirth is safe and every young person's potential is fulfilled.

‘A formal or informal place where women and girls feel physically and emotionally safe. The term ‘safe,’ refers to the absence of trauma, excessive stress, violence (or fear of violence), or abuse. It is a space where women and girls, being the intended beneficiaries, feel comfortable and enjoy the freedom to express themselves without the fear of judgment or harm’.

The UNFPA (2015) states the key objectives of a women and girls’ safe space are to provide an area where women and girls can socialise and re-build their social networks, receive social support, acquire contextually relevant skills, access safe and non-stigmatizing multi-sectorial GBV response services (psychosocial, legal, medical) and receive information on issues relating to women’s rights, health, and services (UNFPA, 2015:5). In addition, the UNFPA (2015) states six guiding principles for establishing a women and girls safe space: leadership and empowerment of women and girls; survivor centred; safe and accessible; community involvement; coordinated and multisector; tailored. These guiding principles are in-keeping with and overlap the UN Women (2013) shelter guidelines for best practice. This is because women’s shelters should be safe spaces. My doctoral thesis takes into consideration the guiding principles of women’s shelters and safe spaces. It interrogates the conceptualisation of safe spaces as places of freedom and self-expression where women are free to live away from judgement and/or harm, largely by placing women’s experiences and perspectives at the centre of the discussion.

The term ‘safe space’ can be traced back to the women’s movement in the late 20th century (Kenney, 2001) with its roots ‘primarily but not exclusively in activist and pedagogical communities’ (The Roestone Collective, 2014:1). Educators have used the language of safe spaces to label their classroom as an inclusive environment that allows students to uninhibitedly ‘unravel, build and rebuild knowledge’, particularly in relation to individuals with marginalised identities (Stengel and Weems, 2010:507). Civil rights, feminist and queer activists have been forced to create their own separatist safe spaces where individuals can

share lived experiences, be free from violence and abuse and ‘speak and act freely, form collective strength and generate strategies for resistance’ (Kenney, 2001:24). However, in a critical examination of the classroom as a safe space, Barrett (2010:1) states that the language of ‘safe space(s)’ has become an ‘overused but under theorised metaphor’ because it has been so widely adopted. The Roestone Collective’s (2014) paper highlights how the language has been adopted by the aforementioned groups, but also by individuals affected by environmental illnesses (Coyle, 2004), survivalists/ ‘doomsday preppers’ (O’Brien, 2012) and climate scientists (Rockström et al, 2009).

Safe spaces are a response to realities of risk and feelings of fear. Feminist geographers have been responsible for producing a wealth of research and literature on the gendered dynamics of ‘fear’ and how these produce experiences, imaginations and perceptions of what is safe and not safe (see Valentine, 1989; Pain, 1991, 1995, 1997, 2011; Day, 1999; England & Simon, 2010). For many women, not feeling safe relates to fears of abuse and violence, and these fears have a direct impact on the spaces and places women frequent. This fear is gendered, but also inexplicably related to other intersectional factors such as race, sexuality and disability. Thus, perceptions of safety are not fixed and, instead, depend on and interplay with multiple individual factors and wider contexts. According to Bondi and Rose (2003), perceptions of safety are partly based on identity production and performance and on how a space is used and controlled (Valentine, 1989; Bondi & Rose, 2003). Thus, a space or place that is considered physically and/or emotionally safe by one woman may not be considered safe for another woman of a different ethnicity, sexuality and/or class. As Ahmed (2013: 70) states, ‘fear works to enable some bodies to inhabit and move in public spaces through restricting the mobility of other bodies to spaces that are enclosed or contained’. Ahmed’s statement and work in gender and feminist geography more broadly speaks to the experiences of women staying in safe shelters in Cambodia. In the same way women on college campuses were restricted to their dorms to keep them safe from potential assault in the mid-twentieth

century (Stengel, 2010), women accessing safe shelters in Cambodia are held in place by their constrained mobility.

Arao and Clements (2013) argue for a move away from the language of safe spaces to instead using the phrase ‘brave spaces’ because the processes of authentic learning involve elements of risk, difficulty and controversy; which are arguably incompatible with safety. Furthermore, the language of safe spaces neglects the power dynamics of oppressed and oppressor/target and agent groups and fails to account for the bravery required from marginalised people when exercising their voices in safe spaces. As I explore in the empirical chapters of this thesis, accessing a safe shelter required the women to assert agency under constrained circumstances and step outside of their social norms by leaving their homes. Leaving everything behind, the women then had to enter a new space, or as Arao and Clements (2013) state, a ‘brave space’, where their everydayness required them to engage with elements of risk, difficulty and controversy. This everydayness was an achievement in itself.

While feminist geography has a long lineage of scholarship on the geographies of women’s fear (e.g. see early seminal work by Valentine, 1989, who discusses how women’s restrained use of space is a spatial expression of patriarchy), my thesis shifts this focus to their encounters with ‘safe spaces’ as per more recent work discussed here. In the last five years geography has seen a burgeoning of scholarship on a diversity of ‘safe spaces’ for different groups (see The Roestone Collective, 2014 for a review), from child contact centres (Morrison and Wasoff, 2012), universities (Arao and Clemens, 2013), gay neighbourhoods (Hanhardt, 2013), to theatres and other sites of night-time leisure (Held, 2015; Richardson, 2015). My thesis expands the spatial remit of this work through the exploration of women’s safe shelters as safe spaces.

As Lewis et al’s (2015: np) writing on women-only feminist gatherings in the UK argues, ‘once women are safe from harassment, abuse and misogyny, they feel safe to be cognitively,

intellectually and emotionally expressive' in this environment (emphasis in original). Such separatist safe spaces engineered by civil rights, feminist and queer activists are understood to offer individuals the opportunity to 'speak and act freely, form collective strength and generate strategies for resistance' (Kenney, 2001:24). My thesis explores whether this is the case in women's shelters in Cambodia.

Ontological Security and the Home

The findings discussed in this thesis aligns with, but pushes further, recently published work in housing and built environment studies which finds that for women who leave violent partners the positive dividend that comes from this is tempered by their experiences of temporary housing which 'delays women's abilities to achieve a state where their housing is a major contributor to ontological security' (Woodhall-Melnik et al, 2017: 256). The authors' study in Ontario, Canada, found that while shelters provide women with relative stability in comparison to the unstable environment of living with an abusive partner, the shelter is only the beginning to re-establishing ontological security. As Allen and Wozniak (2010: 37) note in their US-based work, 'shelter-based interventions are limited and frequently end before traumatized women can adequately reconstruct social and personal identity'. It is this beginning rather than end point that I explore in more depth in this thesis, examining the limited options women have to build ontological security while accessing safe shelters and their services in Cambodia.

Women's safe shelters have long focused on protecting women's physical safety. However, the intention here is to highlight the problems associated with focusing entirely on constructing a physically safe space and, in turn, give much needed attention to the emotional dimensions of safety – framed as ontological security. As my thesis goes on to show, women's narratives of safe shelters in Cambodia do not necessarily afford agency, but instead are dominated almost exclusively by a 'safety from' approach, which delimits women's

potential for ontological security building. It must be emphasised here that for women in Cambodia safe shelters are a life-saving resource and for the women in my research, the safe shelters saved them (and their children) from death. This highlights how shelters are an integral and necessary service, but the emotional dimensions of women's stays must be given greater consideration.

This thesis will use Giddens' definition of ontological security in order to do this. Giddens (1991) defines ontological security as a sense of order and continuity regarding an individual's experiences, and 'the confidence that most human beings have in the continuity of their self-identity and in the constancy of the surrounding social and material environments. A sense of reliability of persons and things [...] is basic to feelings of ontological security' (Giddens 1990: 92). According to Giddens (1990; 1991), when these conditions are breached anxiety comes "flooding in" (Giddens 1991) and this threatens an individual's identity and their sense of ontological security. This means that a woman's capacity to achieve and maintain conditions of ontological security are compromised by her experiences of intimate partner violence. This is because, as Nussbaum (2005) argues, violence curbs a woman's ability to live with bodily integrity and when living a life characterised by violence women are not in control of their freedom of movement or their freedom to live without fear of violence.

Giddens (1991) further argues that securing, maintaining or restoring a sense of ontological security often takes place in the private realm 'where tensions built up from the constant surveillance in other settings of daily life can be relieved' (Dupuis & Thorns 1998:27). Research argues that one of the private realms for attaining ontological security is the home (Dupuis & Thorns, 1998). This is because it is a place where daily routines are carried out and individuals can gain a sense of mastery and control away from the scrutiny of the outside world (Dupuis & Thorns, 1998; Padgett, 2007). However, this means that when the private realm is characterised by conflict, tensions cannot be relieved and ontological security is

diminished. As others have identified in long-running work on the relationship between home, tenure, and ontological security, those with few rights over their dwelling and who are unable to assert control over its occupation and use tend to find that ideals of 'home', namely constancy and continuity, are compromised in practice (e.g. Hiscock et al, 2001; Easthope, 2014; Hulse and Milligan, 2014; Hoolachan et al, 2017). Ontological security, Hiscock et al (2001: 50) argue, 'suggests that people need more than just adequate sustenance and shelter to live happy and fulfilled lives'. They assert furthermore, that 'autonomy is a mixture of freedom to do what one wants and to express oneself as well as freedom from any need to have one's actions approved by others and from any need to conform with others' expectation of oneself' (2001: 53 emphasis in original). Thus, , this thesis addresses the safe shelter as a social and material transient home that does (or does not) provide women affected by violence with feelings of ontological security.

Research has studied ontological security within the context of home ownership (Easterlow et al, 2000; Kearns et al, 2000; Hiscock, et al, 2001). Saunders (1984) proposed that home ownership can give individuals a means by which they can attain ontological security in their everyday lives. This is because, Saunders (1984) claims, the home is where individuals feel in control of their environment. However, this idea fails to account for variations in the meaning of home or whether home ownership is prioritised for all individuals. Neither does it account for the stress and anxiety related to home ownership and mortgage indebtedness (Nettleton & Burrows, 1998; Cairney & Boyle, 2004). Furthermore, not all individuals experience control within their home environment – the homes of women affected by violence are characterised by conflict and tension. Early research into the home presented it as an idealised place where people are free to relax and retreat from the stresses of the world outside. However, the idea of the home as always being a safe place has been dispelled and it is now recognised that the home can be a place of struggles and conflict. Although the home can be a safe space and place for attaining ontological security, it cannot be assumed that it always is. It is this point

that I interrogate throughout this thesis, exploring how disruption and change to women's home lives shapes their experiences of ontological security.

Other research on the home has shifted the focus away from the physical and moved towards recognising the psycho-social dimensions of housing and how this relates to ontological security – examining feelings of safety, security, belonging and attachment to home. Shaw (2004) makes distinctions between the 'hard' and the 'soft' dimensions of housing, the 'hard' being the tangible and material aspects, and the 'soft' being the subjective sense of being at home. It is the 'soft' that brings ontological security; feelings of well-being that emerge in relation to the constancy in an individual's material and social environment which, as Padgett (2007:1926) states, 'provides a secure platform for identity development and self-actualization'.

Dupuis and Thorns (1998) suggest that there are four markers related to home and ontological security. These are: home as a place of constancy in the material and social environment; home as a place in which the day-to-day routines of human existence are performed; home as where people feel in control of their lives because they feel free from the surveillance that characterizes life elsewhere; home as a secure base around which identities are constructed (Dupuis & Thorns, 1998). In Padgett's (2007) research, the four markers of ontological security among recently housed homeless people suffering from mental illness were identified - home as a place of constancy, privacy, control and identity construction. The combination of engagement in everyday activities (shopping, socialising, cooking) and having a secure base that afforded the participants a 'freedom' to reflect on past losses, ongoing dependencies and future prospects granted the participants feelings of ontological security.

In contrast to the normative home, research has illustrated how the governance and rules of temporary accommodation and institutional living can impact upon feelings of homelessness, autonomy, control and self-identity (Stark, 1994; Van der Horst, 2004; DeWard & Moe,

2010). The dominant discourses in temporary and institutional accommodation tend to focus on efficiency and providing immediate shelter. However, this is contrasted with that of residents who often use discourses of home to evaluate their living circumstances. Of note here is the research of Van Der Horst (2004) on residents living in asylum centres in Holland. Homelike attachments to the centre were discouraged by the institutional discourses that focused on producing quality and efficiency as opposed to homelike standards. Van Der Horst's (2004) research reported that residents of the asylum centre felt frustrated because they were not provided with the basic attributes of a home. Here it can be argued that although residents were provided with food and shelter, it was not enough to feel as if they were 'at home'. As a result, residents had negative experiences of the centre as a home because of their lack of autonomy; they could not uphold cultural traditions or take control of basic homelike tasks such as cooking, choosing what to eat and having visitors whenever they wanted. This idea is reinforced by research into nursing homes (Van der Horst, 2004) and homeless shelters/hostels (Stark, 1994) that indicate residents are unable to exercise agency and autonomy when their decision-making is restricted by rules and governance.

Research by DeWard and Moe (2010) in the USA explored how this is also the case for women living in homeless shelters. The women's refuge examined had a clear hierarchy and illustrated a distinct demarcation between residents and staff. To exercise discipline the shelter implemented a point system whereby any staff member could issue a point to a resident for perceived rule infraction or disobedience. Receiving three points resulted in being expelled from the shelter. Thus, such emphasis on conformity and rules gives little respect for individuality and autonomy and, instead of being viewed as independent and capable of decision-making, the women in DeWard and Moe's (2010) research were reduced to a child-like status because they were entirely reliant upon the shelter for all their basic needs (food, shelter, clothing and personal items).

In the same vein, findings have emerged from research into the geographies of women's shelters for survivors of domestic violence. Women who have experienced abusive relationships have often been spatially restricted to the home. Warrington (2001) posits that women who seek safety in a domestic violence refuge continue to live spatially restricted lives because of the fear their partner may trace them. Koyama and Martin (2002) produced the 'Power and Control Wheel' to illustrate how shelters for survivors of gender-based violence may advertently and/or inadvertently use power and control to restrict the lives of women who access refuges. The use of arbitrary rules and governance can dictate how the women live their lives: when they can eat, sleep, socialise and work. This is problematic because shelters should be working to positively reconceptualise a woman's understanding of home, yet these dynamics can in fact perpetuate and reinforce the lack of control and autonomy that they are seeking to break free from.

Under these circumstances it is important to understand how women try to manage and compensate for these dynamics in the safe shelter and how their ontological security could be better supported. Being attendant solely to the 'hard' material conditions of housing – or the security offered by the temporary shelter - is not enough to afford ontological security if the 'soft' dimensions of dwelling are ignored (Padgett, 2007: 1926). This thesis provides experiential perspectives from domestic violence survivors on these 'softer' matters which encompass the shelter not just as a physical location of safety but also as an imaginative and metaphorical space of emotion and even belonging. This is particularly important for women who may have experienced feeling 'homeless at home' in their previous marital abodes. Although the home has been identified as a source of ontological security, par excellence, scholarship in geography has conceptualized home as a more ambiguous entity of 'belonging and alienation, intimacy and violence, desire and fear' (Blunt and Dowling, 2006: 3). This point sits in contrast to well-known early work on the home by Saunders (1990: 361) which uncritically identifies the home as a space that allows people to 'feel in control of their environment, free from surveillance, free to be themselves and at ease, in the deepest

psychological sense, in a world that might at times be experienced as threatening and uncontrollable’.

Just as feminist geographers have long argued that identities are both performed and come under surveillance ‘at home’ (Johnston and Valentine, 1995), it is also the case that home can be experienced as a threatening space of coercion and violence rather than agency and comfort (Brickell, 2012). This thesis therefore contributes to debates on these contrasting connotations and offers a critical analysis of temporary shelters as potential spaces of ontological security or its ardent ambition. I argue that allowing women greater freedom, autonomy and inclusivity in decision-making processes can enhance ontological security. In addition, I argue that the physical environment of the safe shelter plays a key role in undermining the women’s ontological security. Creating a physical environment that is therapeutic is of utmost importance to the recovery process of survivors of violence.

Unfreedom, Choice and Capabilities

In this thesis I harness Sen’s (1988, 2005) capabilities approach to understand how violence impacts a woman’s quality of life, exploring women’s capabilities when accessing services and how they have been enhanced and/or curtailed by engaging with NGO services. In Sen’s (1988, 2005) capability approach, development is framed as a process of expanding the freedoms of people so they can live the kind of lives they have reason to value. In his work, Sen (1988) refers to lack of freedom as ‘unfreedom’ and, it is argued, ‘development consists of the removal of various types of unfreedoms that leave people with little choice and little opportunity of exercising their reasoned agency’ (Sen 1999: 12). With this in mind, this thesis explores how unfreedoms in safe shelters can enhance and/or curtail a woman’s ability to exercise agency and live the life they have reason to value.

Sen (2005) argues that when evaluating wellbeing, the primary consideration must be what people are actually able to be and do. The capabilities approach shifts the focus away from measuring the commodities and/or wealth people have access to and, instead, turns to assessing the quality of life individuals are able to achieve. It recognises that access to resources is inadequate if individuals do not have the capability to action these tools. Sen (2004) uses the core concepts of ‘functionings’ and ‘capability’ to highlight this: while functionings are states of ‘being and doing’, for example having access to shelter and being well nourished, capabilities are the valuable functionings that individuals have access to. Sen frames these capabilities as ‘freedoms’, whereby an individual’s capability represents their effective freedom to choose between different types of life, based on what they have reason to value.

The chapter will also draw on Nussbaum’s (2005) work on the capabilities approach because it makes clear connections with violence. Nussbaum’s (2005) work deviates from Sen’s by providing a prescriptive list of capabilities that includes more explicitly feminist concerns, particularly relating to violence. Nussbaum (2005) draws attention to how violence impacts women’s capabilities of life, health, bodily integrity, senses, imagination and thought, emotions, practical reason, affiliation and control over environment. However while this list is useful for thinking through how violence impacts women’s capabilities, it is also a shortcoming; a predefined list of capabilities may fail to capture anything that exists outside of it. Sen (2004) argues that capabilities should emerge from the individual and, indeed, if choice is the aim and the principle of development, individuals must be free to choose their own capabilities. In this way, organisations must give women who access safe shelters the ability to make choices about the lives they wish to lead.

Sen (2005) intended for the capabilities approach to be combined with other theoretical ideas. As such, my thesis combines Sen’s (2005) work with Kleine’s (2010) Choice Framework. The Choice Framework (Kleine, 2010) is particularly useful for operationalizing the

capabilities approach because it takes a systemic and holistic approach to analysis. In her research on the role of ICT in rural Chile Kleine (2010) highlights how economist views of development and linear conceptualisations of impact do not identify the particular contributions that information and communication technologies make to specific development goals. The Choice Framework is useful in the context of my research because women's experiences of shelters and their services cannot be analysed and understood without understanding how individual agency and wider structures contribute to degrees of empowerment and, in turn, development outcomes. In the Choice Framework (Kleine, 2010) analysis works backwards – starting with the outcomes and working into the systemic relationships between agency, structure and choice and this provides an understanding of how individuals arrive at specific outcomes.

Kleine's (2010) work makes clear connections between structure and agency and degrees of empowerment. These degrees of empowerment are defined as existence of choice, sense of choice, use of choice and achievement of choice. When degrees of empowerment are free to be exercised, the principal outcome is freedom to choose and such choice equips individuals with the capability to pursue their own conception of the good (Sen, 2004). Throughout this chapter I explore how the approaches implemented by the NGOs have the potential to enhance some capabilities, but this can be to the detriment of other capabilities, thus highlighting the gaps in the services and the importance of adequate planning when women choose, though under constrained circumstances, to leave their home and (sometimes) pursue divorce. I also argue how the effectiveness of the services is dependent upon several factors operating at the individual, family, local and state level. Thus, this links clearly to Kleine's (2010) suggestion that development processes can be better understood if they are analysed in a systemic and holistic way.

Chapter Three: Violence against women in Cambodia: An Overview

Research on violence against women and girls in Cambodia points to an endemic problem with high prevalence rates (Cambodian National Institute of Statistics, 2005; Cambodian Ministry of Women's Affairs, 2006, 2010, 2014b; 2015; LICADHO, 2006 & 2017).

The Cambodian Millennium Development Goals stated the government is committed to “reduce significantly all forms of Violence Against Women and children” (2003: np). However women and girls continue to be subjected to physical, emotional, sexual and economic violence, “cutting across all divisions of income, culture and class in their daily and private spheres” (National Action Plan to Prevent Violence Against Women, 2014:2). Statistics show that just over one fifth of ever-married women in Cambodia between the ages of 15 and 49 have experienced physical violence since the age of 15 and the most common form of violence is intimate partner violence (65%) (Cambodia National Institute of Statistics, 2005). Women and girls face numerous barriers to accessing protection and justice and this is often heightened in situations for women experiencing other vulnerabilities such as women with disabilities, women living with HIV, lesbian, bisexual and transgender women, entertainment and sex workers, garment factory employees, women who use drugs and women from indigenous, religious, or ethnic minority groups (Ministry of Women’s Affairs, 2014b). Similar to violence against women in other global settings, though also context specific, the different types of violence experienced by Cambodian women and girls are driven by a combination of complex and interlinked factors at the individual, relationship, community, national and international levels.

This chapter will set the stage for the empirical discussions on violence against women services in Cambodia. Violence against women in the Cambodian context cannot be understood and tackled without first discussing the contributing factors that are intimately linked to, and embedded within, the social structures and norms of Cambodian society. The chapter starts with a section on the Khmer Rouge and violence against women. It is followed by data on violence against women, including information on prevalence rates, types of violence, attitudes towards violence and barriers to accessing help in current times. This leads into discussing the specific national and international laws, policies and strategies that are in place to promote women’s equality and prevent violence against women. Following this,

there is a comprehensive discussion of gender equality in Cambodia. Attention is given to gender attitudes and relations, men and masculinity, the resistance of gender norms, Buddhism and violence against women, marriage, reconciliation and divorce and education and employment. Next, there is an outline of the current political climate in Cambodia and exploration of women's roles in politics. Finally, the chapter closes with information on NGOs and the NGO law (LANGO). Together this information paints a picture of the political economy in which women's experiences of violence and shelters in Cambodia are situated.

The Khmer Rouge and Violence Against Women

On 17 April 1975 the Communist Party of Kampuchea (CPK), otherwise referred to as the Khmer Rouge, violently seized control of Cambodia. Within days, approximately two million citizens from Phnom Penh and other cities were removed from their homes and forced to undertake agricultural work in the countryside. The Khmer Rouge implemented radical Maoist and Marxist-Leninist ideologies and dreamt of transforming Cambodia into a rural, classless society. Citizens that disobeyed or were educated were violently killed or imprisoned. Money and the free market were abolished, as was traditional Khmer culture. Schools, pagodas, mosques, universities and government buildings were turned into prisons and re-education camps. During this period, it is estimated that nearly one quarter of the population (approximately 1.7 million people) died from execution, starvation, disease and overwork (Heuveline & Poch, 2006). The atrocities endured by the Khmer people under the rule of the Khmer Rouge have been acknowledged and identified as genocide (Banister & Paige Johnson 1993; Chandler 1998; Chan, 2004; De Walque, 2004; 2005). However, it has taken a United Nations backed tribunal 12 years and 320 million US dollars to prosecute only three Khmer Rouge leaders for crimes against humanity and genocide (The Guardian, 2018). The very fact the Prime Minister of Cambodia has been acknowledged as a previous comrade

of the Khmer Rouge, yet has remained in power for thirty years, gives testament to the culture of impunity that is rife within the upper echelons of Cambodian society.

During the Pol Pot era (1975-1979), women were exposed to a variety of different types of violence, including forced marriages organised by Pol Pot's cadres (Surtees, 2003; Heuveline & Poch, 2006) and sexual violence and rape by Vietnamese, Thai and Khmer Rouge soldiers in camps (Byrne, 1995; Kumar et al, 2000). The Khmer Rouge espoused a policy of no sexual relations outside of marriage, as well as strictly forbidding rape. However, though the strict prohibition acted as protection for some women against sexual violence because men feared transgression, research has concluded that Khmer Rouge policy had the perverse effect of encouraging sexual crimes against women because it "drove the practices underground" (Anderson, 2004: 790).

The violent rule of the Khmer Rouge has had a lasting impact on the country in a variety of ways, all of which intersect with the current prevalence of violence against women and girls. War and violence have significant demographic consequences due to excess mortality and mass displacement of populations (Zimmerman et al, 2005). The Cambodian population structure was altered because of these reasons, as well as low marriage and fertility rates (though marriage and fertility rebounded after the regime collapsed and a 'baby-boom' followed) (De Walque, 2005). In 2013, the median age of the Cambodian population was 24.5. Of an estimated population of 15.8 million in 2016 approximately 70% were of working age (15-64), whilst 29% were younger than 15 and only 5% were 65 and older⁴ (Ministry of Planning, 2013).

Research has repeatedly advocated that domestic violence increased in the aftermath of the Khmer Rouge regime (Mackay, 1995; Kumar et al., 2000; Pickup et al., 2001). The quality of

⁴ More recent population data will be available after the Census has been conducted in 2019.

intra-familial relations was affected by destitution, loss and separation and has increased women's vulnerability to violence and abuse (Walsh, 2007). The widespread prevalence of violence against women and children has been partially attributed to the normalisation of violence during the regime (Walsh, 2007). Research has also documented the long-term psychological impacts for those who endured the atrocities of the Khmer Rouge. High rates of post-traumatic stress disorder, somatic symptoms and disability have been recorded in survivors (Molleca et al, 1993; De Jong et al, 2001; Marshall et al, 2005), as well as prolonged grief disorder (PGD), which is associated with symptoms of anxiety, depression and PTSD (Stamell et al, 2012). This is in line with research that highlights psychological stress factors as being linked with perpetration of violence (UN Women, 2013).

Increases in violence against women and girls have also been linked with the decline of women's social status. During the rule of the Khmer Rouge, adolescent and younger males were particularly vulnerable to death (Heuveline & Poch, 2006). When the Khmer Rouge was overthrown in 1979, there was a population imbalance in relation to age and gender (Heuveline & Poch, 2006). This resulted in a surplus of women of marriageable age in the 1980s and early 1990s and led to a decline in women's status in the family (Brickell, 2015b). Prior to the conflict, women occupied an honoured position in the family and kinship was traced through both husband and wife (Walsh, 2007). Furthermore, the husband typically moved to live with his wife and her family, affording women greater emotional and material support from their family and surrounding friends. This slightly strengthened women's position within a marriage (Walsh, 2007), though it did not afford her equality entirely. Post Khmer Rouge, Cambodia's demographic imbalance meant men were in a greater bargaining position and proceeded to offer lower prices for brides in marriage arrangements and engage in polygamy – a practice that did not exist pre-Pol Pot (Brickell, 2015). Though the status of a second wife is not as valued in Cambodian society, research has argued that a lack of eligible Khmer men has resulted in women preferring to be second or third wives, as opposed to remaining unmarried (Ledgerwood, 1996; Kumar et al, 2000; Brickell, 2013).

The imbalance between males and females has also had an impact on the labour force, with more women required to work in sectors such as agriculture and construction. Though an increase in women's participation in the workforce can be heralded as progress, these jobs also expose women to greater risks of violence. As an example, in CARE's (2017a) research with women working in the construction sector, 40% of women workers stated they did not feel their living conditions were safe. Furthermore, they reported that domestic violence was common. Up to 36% of women had experienced emotional, physical or sexual violence by their husband in the past 12 months and one in five women reported their living environment did not feel safe because of their neighbours' domestic violence and men's alcohol consumption (which they believed caused domestic violence, see Brickell, 2008 on this latter relationship). This illustrates how the consequences of the Khmer Rouge are still felt in contemporary Cambodia and how its unique past and current factors intersect and facilitate violence against women.

Violence Against Women and Girls since 1979

One of the major barriers to tackling violence against women and girls in Cambodia is a lack of reliable data. This is due to differences in data collection and methodology implementation (UNFPA, 2015). As gender rights have shifted into greater focus both nationally and internationally, a number of pieces of research in the Cambodian context have attempted to address this previously limited knowledge base (see The Ministry of Women's Affairs, 2006 & 2010; Cambodia National Institute of Statistics, 2005; Partners for Prevention, 2013; Fulu, 2015). Research has revealed that women and girls in Cambodia are subjected to a variety of forms of violence including physical, emotional, sexual and economic violence. This includes, but is not limited to, intimate partner violence, rape and sexual assault, harassment, acid violence and trafficking (Ministry of Women's Affairs, 2008). Both academic and non-academic research on violence against women in the Cambodian context has also explored

violence against women in the home (Brickell, 2008;) and in Law (2017), violence against children (Unicef Cambodia, 2014), violent masculinities (Lilja, 2012) violence against women in the entertainment and sex-work sectors (Maher, 2011), violence against women with disabilities (Astbury & Walji, 2013) and violence and sexual harassment for women in the workplace, namely garment factories (Nishigaya, 2002; CARE Australia, 2017b). This section of the chapter will present a summary of key findings from reports on the ways violence against women has manifested itself. It will explore the experiences, causes, facilitators and attitudes towards violence.

Experiences of Violence

The Ministry of Women's Affairs is the leading ministry for advocacy and implementation of violence against women and girls' legislation and public policy in Cambodia. In 2006, the Ministry of Women's Affairs conducted a nation-wide baseline survey to collect data on the prevalence of, and attitudes towards, violence against women. The survey showed that 75% of women had experienced their partner yelling at them, 44% had experienced cursing, 18% had objects thrown at them, 12% reported being knocked on the head by their partner/husband, 5% had been threatened with a knife and 4% had been subjected to tying up and hitting. In keeping with these findings, Yount and Carrera's (2006) research on intimate partner violence amongst 2,074 married women in Cambodia found that 16% of respondents had experienced physical intimate partner violence and 25% had experienced physical, sexual and/or emotional violence perpetrated by their partner.

According to the UN (2016), Cambodia's history of civil and regional conflicts, as well as low-income status, increases risks of disability. In 2015 the Cambodia Socio-Economic Survey recorded a disability prevalence of 3.6%. The Triple Jeopardy Study (Astbury et al, 2013) explored how women with disabilities experience violence. According to the data, significant differences were found between women with disabilities for two of seven controlling behaviours exerted by partners. Women with disabilities were 4.2 times more

likely to have a partner that insisted on knowing where they were at all times and were 2.5 times more likely to need the permission of their partner before they accessed healthcare. Furthermore, the research reported that women with disabilities were more likely to be subjected to physical violence by other household/family members. The study revealed that 25% of participating women with disabilities had experienced physical violence perpetrated by a household member, in contrast to 11.4% of women without disabilities. In addition, women with disabilities were more likely to be insulted, belittled, intimidated and made to feel bad about themselves. This is in line with other studies that have indicated a clear link between disability and vulnerability towards violence (Barrett et al, 2009). The Triple Jeopardy Study (Astbury et al, 2013) reveals that there is an urgent need for mainstream violence against women services to ensure they are accessible for all women with disabilities in Cambodia. The study also recognises a critical need for transforming attitudes that condone and perpetuate violence against women with disabilities.

The National Survey on Women's Health and Life Experiences in Cambodia (Fulu, 2015) offers recent quantitative data on experiences of violence against women in Cambodia. To collect the data, a structured household questionnaire was issued to a nationally representative sample of women aged between 15-64 years. The main focus of the study was domestic violence experienced by women. The decision to focus on intimate partner violence was made because it is the most pervasive form of violence against women globally. The study focused on all experiences of intimate partner violence (physical, emotional and sexual), irrespective of whether the women were currently experiencing violence or were married or partnered. The study also looked at physical and sexual violence against women before and after the age of 15 committed by non-spousal perpetrators. The purpose of the study was to generate nationally representative data about women's experiences of different forms of violence, with the intention of "inform[ing] programming and advocacy on response and prevention of violence against women and girls" (2015: 18). Quality data on all aspects of violence against women (ranging from prevalence to impacts to services) at the local and national level can

play an integral role in forging action plans and monitoring progress on key indicators. As a result, the National Survey on Women's Health (Fulu, 2015) opted to carry out a national prevalence study using the World Health Organisation's (2005b) multi-country study (Abramsky et al, 2011) methodology. The World Health Organisation's (2005b) multi-country study methodology has been recognised for its reliability in producing data, but also because it allows for cross-country comparisons and is internationally recognised for its ethical and safety standards.

Data collected for The National Survey on Women's Health and Life Experiences in Cambodia (Fulu, 2015) shows that women are much more likely to experience frequent acts of violence rather than a one-off incident and three-quarters of women who had experienced physical and/or sexual partner violence reported the violence consisted of severe acts, as opposed to moderate acts. Approximately one in five Khmer women (21%) who had ever been in a relationship reported experiencing physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner at least once in their lifetime. Furthermore, almost one in three (32%) ever-partnered women aged 15-64 reported experiencing emotional abuse by an intimate partner in their life. The survey also found that there was a significant overlap between physical and sexual partner violence with nearly 50% of participants who had experienced violence reporting the co-occurrence of both types of violence. The most common acts of physical violence reported were being slapped (11%), being pushed or shoved (9%) or being hit (7%). Women also reported having been kicked, dragged or beaten (4%). In relation to experiences of sexual violence, the majority of women reported having sex with their partner/husband when they did not want to, but feared the consequences of refusal, and/or being forced to have sex (raped) when they had said no. In addition to asking about physical and sexual abuse, the National Survey on Women's Health (Fulu, 2015) also asked ever-partnered women about emotional abuse, controlling behaviour and financial control in relation to their partner/husband. Women were asked about being insulted or made to feel bad about oneself, being humiliated or belittled in front of others, being intimidated or scared on purpose and

being threatened with harm. Approximately 15% of women reported they had experienced emotional abuse in the 12 months prior to the interview, and 32% reported having experienced emotional abuse in their lifetime. Furthermore, 14% of ever-partnered women had experienced at least one form of financially controlling behaviour and 10% reported their partner/husband had prohibited them from getting a job or earning money.

Causes and Facilitators of Violence

Masculinity

According to the UN (2006; np), domestic violence “is significantly correlated with rigid gender roles that associate masculinity with dominance, toughness, male authority in the home and threats to male authority”. Scholars, policy-makers and activists have recognised that beneath the different types of violence against women lay ideas about masculinity and power. For example, empirical data collected in El Salvador indicates that knowledge about violence is built on masculinist logic (Hume, 2008). However, while masculinity is a dominant discourse globally, masculinity can also be context specific and so attention must be given to understanding past and present constructions of masculinity in the Cambodian setting. The codes of conduct for women (chbab srei) and men (chbab proh) provide a partial basis for understanding masculinity in Cambodia, but there is a need to further explore gendered identities of Khmer men. Indeed, research has identified multiple interpretations and experiences of masculinities in the lives of men in Cambodia (Partners for Prevention, 2011). Research by Brereton & Vannak (2009) explored men’s attitudes towards men, women and violence against women in Cambodia. The aim was to understand men’s current perceptions of masculinity. In the research, the men defined themselves as being the head of the household and the ‘provider’. Furthermore, they stated that Khmer men should be strong, courageous and a leader. However, men also emphasised that they should be gentle, polite, loving and respectful to everyone. This challenges the perception that being gentle and displaying emotions is not masculine and shows how there is conflict between men’s identities; they must be strong whilst simultaneously being kind and gentle.

Qualitative research by Gender and Development Cambodia (2010) provides further understanding of gender norms, masculinity and domestic violence in Cambodia. Respondents in the research indicated that Cambodian men are expected to be the head of the household; the breadwinner; superior to women and girls; dominant over women; and strong and brave. Gender roles in Cambodia are learned from childhood through active socialisation and observation and are further reinforced by the community, media, schools and other institutions (GADC, 2010). For men in Cambodia, an inability to fulfil the expected role of primary breadwinner is akin to not being a “real man” (pram hadth). This stereotype can be damaging and contributes to the perpetration of violence because of a need to reassert masculinity, strength, power and patriarchal control (Jewkes et al, 2002; GADC, 2010). Furthermore, men have expressed they “cannot talk about these social expectations because they are afraid of being criticised and discriminated” (Partners for Prevention, 2011:11).

In 2013 Partners for Prevention released a report entitled “Why do some men use violence and how can we prevent it?” The research presented findings from the UN multi-country study on men and violence in Asia and the Pacific. The study was a collaborative effort involving partners from academia, research institutes, civil society, the United Nations and governments. Conducted between 2010 and 2013, the research issued population-based quantitative surveys to more than 10,000 men and 3,000 women in nine sites across six countries in the region (Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Papua New Guinea). Out of the participating countries, Cambodia was the only site to produce nationally representative data. The quantitative findings from Cambodia showed that a larger proportion of men reported perpetrating sexual violence against an intimate partner, rather than physical partner violence. In keeping with the aforementioned high rates of sexual violence, non-partner rape and gang rape were much more common in Cambodia in comparison to the other countries. According to the data, half of the men who had reported having raped a woman had done so for the first time as a teenager. A majority admitted this was before the age of 15.

The most common motivation for perpetrating rape was related to sexual entitlement and men believing they had the right to sex, irrespective of consent. The second biggest motivation was related to entertainment seeking, curing boredom and having fun. The third largest motivation was anger or punishment. Alcohol was the least common response given by men when asked about their possible reasons for perpetrating rape. Facilitating these rates of sexual violence is a lack of repercussions and legal consequences. Indeed, the study found that the vast majority of men (between 72% and 97%) who had committed rape within the researched countries did not experience any legal consequences. In Cambodia, women's lack of trust in the government, police and judicial system acts as a significant barrier to reporting violence. The lack of justice for survivors of violence in Cambodia will be addressed later in the chapter.

The Partners for Prevention⁵ (2013) report states that rape perpetration has been strongly associated with having more sexual partners, having had transactional sex/having sex with a sex worker and using physical violence against female partners. The aforementioned behaviours are linked to ideas about power, patriarchy and masculinity. Behaving in such a way emphasises heterosexual performance and dominance over women, with the study showing that rape is an exertion of power, as well as a performance of masculinity. Men's own victimisation and/or low socio-economic status (indicated by current food insecurity) were also recognised as being associated.

Alcohol and drugs

The Cambodia Demographic and Health Survey (Cambodia National Institute of Statistics, 2014) showed that women whose husbands get drunk are over six times more likely to have experienced physical or sexual violence in comparison to women whose husbands do not consume alcohol or do not get drunk. Similarly, in Brereton and Vannak Lim's (2009)

⁵ Partners for Prevention are an UNDP, UNFPA, UN Women and UNV regional joint programme for the prevention of violence against women and girls in Asia and the Pacific.

research on men's attitudes towards men, women and violence against women in Cambodia, most of the participants believed that the main cause of violence was consumption of alcohol because it causes them to 'lose control of their mind' (2009; 25). The data indicates that men drink when their wives complain about their behaviour and when they are stressed. Only a small minority of men strongly disagreed with the idea that alcohol and drug use are causes of violence and stated that these were merely excuses that men use. Brickell's (2008) research on gendered experiences of drunkenness and violence in Siem Reap provides further insight into how alcohol consumption intersects with violence against women and post-conflict dynamics. A perceived relationship between alcohol consumption and violence against women was linked to a multitude of post-conflict dynamics; namely a decline in the state of marital relationships and family and employment related issues, as well as the wider past and current political environment of Cambodia. This is problematic because it shows how both men and women in Cambodia understand violence to be a product of external factors such as drunkenness, as opposed to structural inequality.

Poverty and Stress Factors

Yount and Carrera's (2006) findings highlight how resources and social capital can influence intimate partner violence because participating women who had fewer years of education in comparison to their partner/husband and/or a lower household standard of living were at an increased risk of physical and emotional violence from their partner/husband. In addition, women with more children were also at greater risk of violence (Yount & Carrera, 2006). Stress factors have also been linked to males perpetrating violence. The quantitative findings presented in the Partners for Prevention Study (2013) found that 43% of males reported suffering from work-related stress, depression, and suicidal tendencies. Strains brought on by financial insecurity are believed to lead to heightened stress and desperation, which has been linked to perpetration of intimate partner violence. Khmer men typically perceive themselves as the financial provider for their family and this can also be a source of stress (gender roles will be discussed later in this chapter). Participants in the 'Men's Talk' (2009) research stated

that they find it difficult to fulfil the role of provider and highlighted how the assumption that they would provide for the family caused a significant amount of pressure. This is because providing financially is central to a man's sense of pride and identity and a failure to meet this expectation is considered a threat to masculinity. Furthermore, a large proportion of men said that their wives expected them to provide and this was a source of frustration because their wives do not understand this pressure.

The Political Economy

Analyses of violence against women in Cambodia must take into the political economy it is situated within. As True (2012: 7) states, 'a political economy approach attends to the local and global contexts in which violence against women occurs'. By linking the economic, the social and the political, a political economy approach explains how political institutions, the political environment and the economic system influence one another. This is of critical importance to violence against women because, 'the banal, ubiquitous nature of violence destabilises economies and harms their people and social structures' (Moser & McIlwaine, 2004: np).

At the macro-level, war has contributed to an increase in violence against women in Cambodia. During the Pol Pot era, men were required to engage with and partake in the discourses of violence promulgated by the Khmer Rouge. Men's identities changed and masculinity and success were measured differently. Educated men with high-ranking jobs no longer had status and, instead, masculinity was characterised by toughness, power and strength. Former Khmer Rouge militiamen have defined masculinities during the period of conflict with both fear and courage; they feared their leaders and execution, but were courageous and ruthless when dealing with their political opponents (Haque, 2013). When the conflict ended militant masculinity was subject to change and, in post-war Cambodia, the new hegemonic masculinity was measured by a man's ability to make his family prosperous and

educated. The skills men had acquired during the war were no longer of use and many lacked the needed qualifications and/or professional experience required to work a good job.

Haque's (2013) research on patterns of post-conflict transitions of masculinity shows some former soldiers from the civil war have been able to construct peaceful and responsive masculinities amongst a new gender order in post-war Cambodia. Family members, particularly wives, have played an important role in actualising social discourses of masculinity and success by providing advice, emotional support and taking care of the household and children when men moved alone from the rural to urban for work. However, evidence suggests that the violent history of the country has played a significant role in producing men that exercise violence both in the public arena and the private realm (Lilja, 2012).

Connell's (1987) theories about 'fast changing masculinities' are useful for understanding shifts in masculinity and violence against women in Cambodia. Connell (1987) argues that 'hegemonic' masculinity is constructed and re-constructed in relation to a range of subordinated masculinities and femininities that depend upon changing constructions of power, new discourses and identities. Hegemonic masculinity is not fixed but instead varies with time. In Cambodia, constructions of masculinity have been forced to change and adapt in response to situations of conflict, the post-conflict transition and globalisation. Though Connell's (1987) work has been criticised for failing to attend to the complex and context specific relations between constructions of masculinity (McDowell, 2002; Reeser, 2011), it has also been recognised as a useful tool for understanding why men commit different types of violence in a variety of settings (Hickey, 2003).

The narratives of the women presented in the empirical chapters of this thesis raise important questions about how a political environment of corruption facilitates impunity and injustice for women survivors of violence in Cambodia. The Prime Minister of Cambodia has been in

power since 1985 (BBC, 2018). At the time of writing this thesis, he was ‘re-elected’ to his position in 2018, though largely because there was no substantial opposition party participating in the election. Although his party lost in the 1993 elections, he forced a coalition and violently seized power in 1997 (Bennett, 2017). Since, the Prime Minister’s dictator-like leadership has operated under a thin veil of liberal democracy.

In 2017 the civil and political rights environment in Cambodia significantly deteriorated. Since July 2015, Cambodian authorities have detained at least 35 opposition and civil society leaders, with many prosecuted and convicted in trials that failed to meet international standards (Human Rights Watch, 2018). In September 2017, Kem Sokha, the leader of the Cambodia National Rescue Party (CNRP) was arrested on treason charges, namely on the basis that the Cambodian People’s Party (CPP) believed the CNRP was plotting to overthrow the Cambodian government with a ‘colour revolution’ in conjunction with the U.S government. With national elections coming in 2018, and the CNRP making political gains in local elections in 2017, the Prime Minister took drastic steps to block the opposition party from coming into power. In 2017, the Supreme Court ruled to dissolve the (CNRP). This was enabled by the national assembly who passed two rounds of repressive amendments to Cambodia’s Law on Political Parties. The amendments gave authorities the power to dissolve political parties and ban party leaders from political activities without holding hearings or an appeal process. The amendments also contained restrictions that seemingly targeted the CNRP specifically, with provisions compelling political parties to distance themselves from members who have been convicted of a criminal charge. This amendment related directly to the arrest of Kem Sokha and provided justification for the dissolving of the party. In addition, 118 CNRP members of parliament and party officials were banned from political activity for five years (Human Rights Watch, 2018).

Cambodia ranks 161st out of 180 countries on the Corruption Perceptions Index (Transparency International, 2017). There is evidence of government culpability for attacks

on the political opposition, land activists, labour activists, human rights organisations, and public intellectuals. On April 28, 2016, the government's Anti-Corruption Unit took into custody four senior members and one previous member of staff from a leading human rights organisation, the Cambodian Human Rights and Development Association (ADHOC). The members of ADHOC stood accused of bribing a witness in a case that had been brought against Kem Sokha, the leader of the CNRP (Cambodia Daily, 2016). On July 10, 2016 Kem Ley, a popular political commentator and open critic of the Prime Minister and the CPP, was shot dead in Phnom Penh in broad daylight (BBC News, 2016). This was just several days after he had conducted an interview with Human Rights Watch where he had openly discussed a report by Global Witness (2016), which criticised the Prime Minister's nepotism and 'empire'. Though the gunman who shot Kem Ley supposedly confessed to authorities that he had committed the murder, scepticism remains around who ordered the killing and no real efforts were made by the government to identify who was really behind the attack (Phnom Penh Post, 2016). On September 19, 2016, Tep Vanny, a leading land rights activist was convicted and sentenced to six months in prison. Tep Vanny had been at the forefront of a ten-year struggle defending her local community, Boeung Kak, against land grabbing (see work by Brickell, 2014 for academic work on this). Tep Vanny remains in prison at the time of writing. These are just some examples of assaults launched by the CPP against human rights in Cambodia (Human Rights Watch, 2018).

Women are significantly underrepresented in Cambodian politics (Parliamentary Institute of Cambodia, 2016). Increasing women's participation in politics is of significant importance because their inclusion signifies a truly democratic and representative government.

Furthermore, women can bring different perspectives to the political sphere and provide insight into the difficulties faced by women. The Royal Government of Cambodia has made

commitment to increasing the role of women in public decision-making, as reflected in several strategies and programs⁶.

The government have made commitments to increasing women's participation in politics because the political sphere remains largely gendered and dominated by men. Goal five of the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – “achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls” – recognises the importance of women's participation in all decision-making processes (Ministry of Women's Affairs, 2014b). However, women's participation in politics in Cambodia remains weak and this is for several reasons. Women face socio-economic restraints, discrimination based upon their gender and are held back by a common misconception that women are not capable of undertaking roles of political leadership (Parliamentary Institute of Cambodia, 2016). Though Cambodia has seemingly made commitments to address all aspects of gender disparity, the proportion of women elected as Members of Parliament decreased from 21.10% in 2008 to 20.32% in 2013. At the same time, the percentage of women Senators remained stable, standing at 14.75% (Ministry of Women's Affairs, 2015). This shows that little to no progress has been made in terms of women's representation and participation in politics and that women are far-removed from decision-making processes at national and sub-national levels. Instead, most women in politics remain in roles that are traditionally associated with their gender and in positions at lower levels of government.

A report issued by the Parliamentary Institution of Cambodia (2016) identified three major barriers to women's participation in politics. The first barrier is the ‘Masculine Model of Politics’. The traditional gender norms prevalent in Cambodian society block women from

⁶ Rectangular Strategy for Growth, Employment, Equity and Efficiency II and III; National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP) (Update 2009-2013) and (2014-2018); Neary Rattanak III: Five Year Strategic Plan for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (2014-2018); Cambodian National Council for Women Five-Year Strategic Plan 2010- 2014 (CNCW Plan); National Program for Sub-National Democratic Development 2010-2019 (NP-SNDD).

participating in politics whilst simultaneously facilitating men's domination of the political arena. Due to their socio-economic circumstances, women tend to prioritise political issues relating to social security, children's issues, domestic work, and health care. Male politicians do not always prioritise these same concerns and the domination of men dissuades women from even attempting to enter the political sphere. The second barrier is socio-economic conditions. The social and economic status of women in society has a significant influence on their participation in political institutions and decision-making.

Prevalent cultural norms and gender stereotypes have had a negative impact on women's socio-economic status. For example, poverty reduces a woman's ability to participate in politics because their focus is survival and meeting the needs of their family. Furthermore, women have low levels of education or are illiterate and therefore do not have the necessary skills to formally enter the political sphere. In addition, Cambodian women are expected to fulfil their roles as wives and mothers and the responsibility of maintaining a domestic and professional life can be too much of a burden. Finally, there is a lack of confidence and support from society and families regarding women's participation in politics. The traditional belief that women belong in the domestic sphere means that families are unlikely to encourage women to get involved in politics (Parliamentary Institute of Cambodia, 2016). This means that women who do want to formally participate in politics, particularly roles involving leadership, lack the confidence to do so. According to the Cambodian Centre for Human Rights (2013), fear prevents women from contesting elections and attempting to participate in political life.

Attitudes Towards Violence

Research (Yount & Carrera, 2006) shows that more than half of women respondents agree that a husband is justified in using violence against his wife for certain reasons; namely neglect of children (32%) and going out without his permission (30%). In 2009, the MoWA conducted The Violence Against Women Follow-up Survey to assess and record any changes

in awareness and attitudes around violence against women. Data was collected from interviews with 3,040 members of the general public (selected to be nationally representative) and 311 police officers and local officials. The 2009 survey showed that women survivors of violence were reporting decreased levels of spousal violence in all categories of violence. Despite a reported decrease in spousal violence, there was a reported increase in survivors remaining silent. In the 2005 survey, 52% of women stated they would keep quiet and do nothing about abuse. Staggeringly, this figure rose to 81% in the 2009 follow-up survey.

A significant finding of the Ministry of Women's Affairs follow-up survey (2009) was an increased awareness in the Law on the Prevention of Domestic Violence and the Protection of Victims (2005), with the majority of participants stating they were aware of the law. However, the follow-up study highlighted the lack of understanding of domestic violence law in relation to police and local authorities. Approximately 50% of local authorities reported an awareness of the Domestic Violence Law and around 45% of police and local authorities stated it was justifiable for a husband to shoot, stab or throw acid at an argumentative wife. Although the sample of police and local authorities is not large enough to be nationally representative, this finding is deeply troubling. Furthermore, there were discrepancies between what respondents understood as illegal and what was considered acceptable. For example, 1% of male respondents said it was legal for a man to shoot, stab or throw acid at his wife, yet 11% said it was sometimes acceptable to do so. After more specific questioning around when it was acceptable, 51% of all respondents (including females) said attacks are warranted if a partner/wife "argues with [her husband], does not obey or show respect".

Cambodian Law and Policies on Gender Equality and Violence Against Women

This section of the chapter will provide an overview of the relevant international and national policies, laws and conventions that seek to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls in Cambodia. First, the Domestic Violence Law will be outlined. This is followed

second by a summary of the international and national policies that respond to violence against women in Cambodia.

The Law on the Prevention of Domestic Violence and the Protection of Victims (2005)

In 1992 Cambodia ratified the Convention of the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) followed by the Optional Protocol in 2001. In 2005, the Law on the Prevention of Domestic Violence and the Protection of Victims was passed. The Law (2005) defines domestic violence as, “violence that happens and could happen towards:

- 1- Husband or wife
 - 2- Dependent children
 - 3- Persons living under the roof of the house and who are dependent of the households”
- (Article2).

It states:

“The law has the objective to prevent domestic violence, protect the victims and strengthen the culture of non-violence and the harmony within the households in society in the Kingdom of Cambodia” (Article 1).

And:

“This law is in the purpose to establish a legal mechanism to prevent domestic violence, protect the victims and preserve the harmony within the households in line with the Nation’s good custom and tradition and in accordance with Article 45 of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Cambodia, in addition to the regulations in effect” (Article 1).

The Law on Domestic Violence has been criticised for several shortcomings. A 2007 report by The Cambodian League for the Promotion and Defence of Human Rights (LICADHO⁷)

⁷ LICADHO is a national Cambodian human rights organization. Since its establishment in 1992, LICADHO has been at the forefront of efforts to protect civil, political, economic and social rights in Cambodia and to promote respect for them by the Cambodian government and institutions (LICADHO, nd)

highlights how Cambodian laws on domestic violence discriminate against women because of the Law's vague language and failure to define key terms, including violence itself. Vague and undefined language contributes to a lack of implementation. Furthermore, the use of language such as "harmony" has been critiqued because it suggests women should avoid disrupting the atmosphere of a household, even if this means she continues to face violence (LICADHO, 2007). In addition, the Law omits economic violence and does not outline or provide adequate measures to aid or protect women survivors of violence (Brickell, 2015a; LICADHO, 2007). In 2005, the same year the Domestic Violence Law was ratified, a progress report on achieving Cambodia's Millennium Development Goals emphasised that domestic violence was one of the major barriers to achieving gender equality (Ministry of Planning, 2005). Five years later, Amnesty International (2010) urged the Cambodian government to address inadequate law enforcement in cases of violence against women and girls. In 2013, CEDAW expressed concerns about an entrenched culture of corruption within the legal system that negatively affects women's access to justice, as well as public trust (Burns & Daly, 2014) and more recent research has highlighted the pervasive gap between Domestic Violence Law rhetoric and actual practice (Brickell, 2014; 2017).

Despite the implementation of the 2005 Law on domestic violence, "negative attitudes by judicial officers and law enforcement personnel towards women victims of violence continue to impede the effective prosecution of cases" (CEDAW, 2013:4). Structural gender inequalities and discriminatory gender attitudes, customs and traditions, a weak rule of law environment and inadequacy of financial and human resources to support Law training, implementation and enforcement were found to compromise the Law taking root (Brickell, 2014). Indeed, Burns and Daly (2014) have warned of the dangers of urging women survivors of violence to use the criminal justice system in Cambodia because "it is weak and inaccessible to all but an elite". More recent research by Brickell (2017) shows that limited

progress has been made in regard to the implementation of the Domestic Violence Law, suggesting it “has the potential to entrench, rather than diminish, an environment of victim-blaming” (2017: 1358). My thesis further explores this idea, examining how housing women away in private safe shelters that are cut off from the world outside facilitates Cambodian society as a safe space for perpetrators of violence against women.

Appendix 1 outlines the key Law and policies in Cambodia that acknowledge violence against women, as well as places in which there is reference to help seeking and exit routes. As the table shows, the language used throughout the legislation is vague and fails to highlight explicit tools that are available for women fleeing violence. The documents fail to map how goals such as “enhancing social, medical and legal services to ensure quality care for women who experience violence” (Second National Action Plan to Prevent Violence Against Women, 2015) can and will be actualised. Furthermore, there is no mention of women’s shelters except in circumstances of environmental disaster. These concerns about violence against women policies in Cambodia are not unique and, instead, are an echo of previously cited critiques.

Gender (in)equality in Cambodia

Promoting gender equality is a critical component of violence prevention (World Health Organisation, 2013). As such, this section of the chapter will document gender (in)equality in Cambodia, exploring gender attitudes and relations, women and girl’s participation in education and employment, as well as the political sphere. The third Cambodian census is due to be conducted in 2018. This means that census data about demographics in Cambodia are out-dated but the best available. As a result, chapter will draw upon other more recent data that is available across a variety of grey and academic literature and reports. In the 2013 World Economic Forum’s Gender Gap Index, Cambodia ranked as 104 out of 136 countries. This ranking represents significant gender inequalities across a range of areas including economics, health, education and politics. Similarly, in 2017 The Global Gender Gap Report

ranked Cambodia 99 out of 144 countries; 9 places lower than 2006. This disparity cuts across all sectors and men are understood to have more rights in terms of business and decision-making, social and sexual freedom and freedom of movement (Cambodia Gender Assessment, 2010).

Gender attitudes and relations

Societal standards around what constitutes a ‘good Khmer woman’ have their roots in codes of conduct such as Chbab Srei (‘Chbab’ translates as code and ‘Srei’ translates as women). Chbab Srei encourages women to speak and move quietly, as well as never to respond to their husband’s anger (Lilja, 2008; Brickell, 2011). This is because if a woman deviates from the gender norms set out by Chbab Srei they leave themselves open to being heavily criticised and perceived as a ‘bad woman’. It also increases their risk of violence because a woman’s behaviour has often been used as a justification for intimate partner violence in Cambodia (Ministry of Women’s Affairs, 2009). Although Chbab Srei was removed from formal education in 2007, it arguably still plays a role in the representation of gender norms in Cambodia. The admonitions of the code of conduct for women are visible when investigating attitudes towards gender and equality; the 2013 Partners for Prevention study asked participants if they should be treated equally irrespective of gender, to which the majority agreed, however over 95% of participants agreed that a woman should obey her husband and over 80% agreed that a woman’s main role is to take care of the home and cook for the family (Partners for Prevention, 2013). These are gendered roles and ideals that are promoted by Chbab Srei.

A similar code of conduct exists for men, Chbab Proh, translating as code of men. Yet, men are not held accountable to the code of conduct in the same ways as women and have greater freedom to deviate. For example, the code of conduct for men states that they are forbidden to commit adultery, drink alcohol, gamble and behave violently towards others (Cambodia

Gender Assessment, 2014). However, these rules for men are significantly less strict than those for women; men's infidelity is largely tolerated and women are regularly subjected to violence at the hands of male perpetrators. Furthermore, the male code of conduct encourages men to be strong, brave and the main decision-makers. Men are not bound to every part of Chbab Proh and neither does it greatly influence their behaviours, aside from those relating to power and masculinity, which awards men greater power and autonomy. In contrast, women are subordinated because their behaviours are heavily regulated and the gender roles and norms promoted in the code of conduct continue to be pervasive to their everyday lives.

Buddhism and Violence Against Women

The context of Cambodia as a predominantly Buddhist country must be considered when attempting to understand and address violence against women. Compassion and non-violence lie at the roots of Buddhism, yet questions have been raised around whether Cambodian Buddhism contributes to gender inequality, conflict and violence against women (Eisenbruch, 2018) because of the role religious institutions can play in both shifting and defending violations of women and girls rights (Moosa, 2012). Furthermore, the law of karma is promoted; a belief that your current life situation is a result of deeds committed in your previous incarnations. This means women and men often attest the idea that violence is merely a result of karma and there is little that can be done about it (Walsh, 2007). However, scholars have also testified the value Buddhism can bring to conflict management in Cambodia (Hughes, 2001; Gelleman, 2007) and acknowledged the opportunities that some Buddhist temples have given women who have sought refuge from violence (Kent, 2011). Eisenbruch (2018) argues the success of Buddhism's role in shifting harmful gender norms lies with praising the institution and the good they do, as opposed to criticising Buddhism as a conservative force for gender inequality. Indeed, monks and female devotees in Cambodia have promulgated the values and actions of 'engaged Buddhism' – the practice of participating

in nonviolent social and political activism (King, 2005) – and have defended the rights of women (Eisenbruch, 2018).

Recent research by Eisenbruch (2018) in Cambodia provides detailed insight into the eight Buddhist cultural factors, or cultural attractors, that are perceived to propel a person to violence. Ethnographic research was conducted with 102 perpetrators and survivors of emotional, physical and sexual violence against women and 228 key informants from the Buddhist and healing sectors. The research found that blighted endowment (or ‘bad building’, *samnaaj min laa*) was determined by deeds in a previous life (*kam*) and children with a vicious character (*kmeej kaac* or *doṣa-carita*) were perceived as more likely to commit abuse. Particular birthmarks on boys were understood to be portents of the violence they will commit. Astrological incompatibility (*kuu kam*) with a partner was also identified as a risk factor. Vulnerability to violence, as well as its timing, was understood as a consequence of *Kruəh*, or *mishap*, especially when a female’s horoscope predicted a zodiac house on the descent (*riesəy*). The ‘Triple Poison’ (lust, anger and ignorance) was recognised as fuelling violence. Violence is understood to be triggered by ‘Entering the road to ruin’ (*apāyamuk*) by engaging in alcohol abuse, womanising and gambling, which creates confusion and loss of judgement (*mohā*), leading to moral blindness (*mo bañ*). These cultural factors shape the landscape of violence against women and must be considered when understanding it in the Cambodian context.

Marriage, reconciliation and divorce

In Cambodia marriage is still regarded as an important institution, particularly for women (LICADHO, 2017). Statistics from the 2003 Inter-Censal Population Survey⁸ (Cambodia National Institute of Statistics & Ministry of Planning, 2013) show that 81% of women between the ages of 25-29 were married and approximately only 5% of the population remained unmarried throughout their lives. Women marry at a young age and approximately half of Cambodian women are married by the age of 20.5 (Cambodian Demographic and Health Survey, 2005). Although many women have started to work outside of the home over the past decade, a woman's main role in society is still perceived as that of a wife, a mother and a homemaker. In a society where high value is placed on women's sexual modesty, marriage is viewed as the institution whereby this can be protected; even when marriage places a woman at significant risk of harm (LICADHO, 2017).

Article 16.B of CEDAW (cited in The Cambodian Committee of Women, 2007) states that all Cambodian citizens have, "the same right to freely choose a spouse and to enter into marriage only with their free and full consent". However, arranged marriage is still regularly practiced in Cambodia (Jones, 2010). The practice of arranged marriage is perpetuated by highly ranked figures in Cambodian society – senior public officials have been known to arrange the marriages of their children, reinforcing the idea that parents (and/or other family members) should be responsible for choosing their child's spouse (LICADHO, 2004).

Statistics from the Cambodia Demographic and Health Survey (Cambodian National Institute of Statistics, 2014) show that 18% of married women in Cambodia had never met their husband before they got married and 9% knew their husband for less than one month prior to their marriage. Furthermore, only 19% of ever-married women chose their husband. In contrast, 52% of women were not involved in the choice of their spouse and 29% of women

⁸ This is the most recent data available.

chose their husband jointly with someone else. These marriage patterns can provide important insights into women's status in Cambodian society. The statistics show that many women may only play a partial, if any, active role in choosing their spouse, highlighting how little autonomy and control they have over certain aspects of their lives. The lack of involvement in the decision-making process of choosing a spouse may also be indicative of the degree of marital control a woman has within her relationship. Statistics show a correlation between the amount of control a husband exercises within a marital relationship and a woman's risk of violence. The higher the degree of control, the greater the likelihood that a woman has experienced all types of violence, with 42% of women who had husbands exercising high degrees of control reporting experiences of physical and/or sexual violence (Cambodia National Institute of Statistics, 2005).

Marriage in Cambodia can be divided into two types: customary and legal. Customary marriage refers to the process where couples participate in a traditional marriage ceremony. In such instances, couples do not register their marriage or get a marriage certificate and are therefore not considered legally married under Cambodian law (Van Der Keur, 2014).

Customary marriage endangers the rights of women and acts as a barrier to seeking separation and/or informal divorce. This is because women are not protected under the civil codes of marriage and divorce, such as the division of marital property and land. Thus, women who have participated in a customary marriage often find themselves trapped in the relationship with their 'husband' because leaving can result in the loss of all assets acquired post-marriage, presenting being left homeless with no possessions or money as a distinct reality. Furthermore, women may be reliant upon their husband's income to support the household and separation removes this economic support. This is particularly problematic when children are involved. In instances of customary marriage separation, there may be no right to child support because legally the husband is not the father of the children. As Article 993 of the civil code states, "The children are not the legal children of the husband. He will

have responsibility for them only if he acknowledges the children as his own, or the children file a suit of acknowledgment.”

Divorce typically takes place at the commune level⁹ but also sometimes in court. Couples do not get a marriage certificate if they have a customary marriage, thus in these instances the divorce can take place without going to court. For divorce from a customary marriage, couples approach the commune chief who will issue a letter stating the couple is getting divorced. In cases where the couple have children and/or property, the commune chief may be involved in negotiating custody and the division of assets. If this negotiation is unsuccessful at the local level, or the couple are legally married, they must go to the court to get a legal divorce and to get an order for child custody and division of property (LICADHO, 2017). There are no reliable statistics documenting rates of divorce in Cambodia. The General Population Census (Cambodia National Institute of Statistics, 2008) has documented incidences of separation at 0.1% and divorce at 2%. These numbers are very low and do not paint an accurate picture of the frequencies of conflict and discontent in marital relationships. Although the recorded rates of separation and divorce can be attributed to a lack of reliable data (because of limitations of self-report surveys, combined with a lack of formal databases and updated civil registries, as well as customary marriages), it also points to a clear emphasis on harmony and reconciliation in Cambodian culture, as well as the social stigma surrounding women who leave their partner or divorce their husband. This emphasis on harmony and the sanctity of married life is reflected in the Law on the Prevention of Domestic Violence and the Protection of Victims which states its purpose as “a legal mechanism to prevent domestic violence, protect the victims and preserve the harmony within the households in line with the Nation’s good custom and tradition” (Article 1). This clause illustrates the tensions that arise from acknowledging violence against women because of the contradiction between maintaining Cambodian households as harmonious spaces and places, whilst simultaneously

⁹ The structure of Cambodian society is discussed in the methods chapter.

attempting to protect women from the conflict and violence that arises in a disharmonious household (Brickell, 2016; LICADHO, 2017).

Between 2014 and the end of 2016 LICADHO investigated 392 cases of domestic violence. Out of the 237 cases that were closed by the time of the report (2017), 101 ended with the victim deciding to drop the case and returning to live with their violent husband; 69 ended with the couple separating or divorced but with no criminal case being brought against the perpetrator; and 53 ended with a criminal trial. Out of the 101 cases that were dropped, 34% made the decision to return to their husband without the intervention of a public official (police, civil court judge and village or commune authorities); 19% reconciled after a negotiation facilitated by village or commune authorities; 30% reconciled after a negotiation facilitated by police; and 20% were reconciled by a civil court judge during the divorce proceedings. These statistics highlight the significant role that public officials play in the decision-making process of returning to an abusive husband/partner and how the law can be used arbitrarily by men in positions of authority to block women accessing divorce.

Reconciliation proceedings are similar from case to case. LICADHO's (2017) report states that when a woman approaches a village or commune chief or the local police for help with intimate partner violence she is often discouraged from taking any action. Women find themselves being persuaded by officials to give their husband another chance and officials question women about whether they really want to be alone, urging them to consider the impact divorce will have on her and her children. Women are also subjected to victim-blaming because authorities often make suggestion that the woman is equally culpable because she may not have behaved in an appropriate way (for example speaking loudly, not preparing food on time and arguing back). This is in-keeping with other research that has highlighted how a lack of co-operation from public officials regularly undermines women's access to justice (Brickell et al, 2014). This has been linked to perceptions that a woman's behaviour can be a justification for marital violence (Ministry of Women's Affairs, 2006 & 2010). In instances where the police facilitate negotiations, it is common practice for both the

husband and the wife to sign a contract citing the points of behaviour they will change.

Article 75 of the Cambodian Code of Criminal Procedure (2007) requires police to act on a case even in instances when the victim has withdrawn the complaint or there has been a negotiated settlement between the victim and the perpetrator. Nevertheless, the police still practice marital reconciliation (LICADHO, 2017).

Pressure to reconcile is not only exerted by public officials. In Cambodia, the primary source of social insurance is the family. If a woman wants to divorce from her husband then she is seen to be defying the norms of familial harmony and, therefore, is stepping outside of the social and moral order which Cambodian tradition and government rhetoric enforces (Brickell, 2015; Brickell, forthcoming;). This means women are often pressurised by their family members to tolerate their husband's behaviour and are required to forego their own needs to maintain the expected norms of familial togetherness. A common argument used to justify a husband's behaviour (infidelity, use of drugs and alcohol, violence and abuse) is that all men behave in such a way because it is their nature (LICADHO, 2017). These excuses do not only come from in-laws, but also a woman's own family. LICADHO's (2017) research on Cambodia's response to domestic violence found that, in many cases, when violence takes place women flee to find safety with their own family, yet it is her own family that actively persuades her to return to her husband.

Approximately 97.9% of the Cambodian population are Buddhist (Cambodia National Institute of Statistics & Ministry of Planning, 2013) and the values of patience and tolerance lie at the centre of the religion. Women survivors of intimate partner violence in Cambodia often cite these values as a fundamental tenet to managing and/or ending conflict within a marital relationship. Furthermore, if a woman pursues a criminal complaint against a violent partner, they are not perceived as pursuing justice but, instead, as seeking revenge; which is not in keeping with the Buddhist worldview. Many women believe that the violence they experience is a direct result of karma and stems from wrongdoings in a previous life

(LICADHO, 2017). One participant in LICADHO's (2017) research believed her abusive husband had been possessed by a 'bad spirit' and sent him to see a monk. The monk confirmed that the husband was possessed and claimed to send the spirit to an unhappy relative. The woman later revealed that her husband was having a relationship with another woman and that this woman had visible bruising on her face. Although she expressed empathy for her husband's other partner, she also stated she was relieved that her bad fortune had been passed on to another person.

Gender, education and employment

The Khmer Rouge was responsible for effectively destroying the education system in Cambodia. Under the Khmer Rouge, schools were closed down and educated people were killed. Those that were not killed or detained were sent to do agricultural work. This destruction has had a devastating impact on Cambodia's development and the loss of so many educated people remains one of the most significant obstacles for Cambodia to overcome (Booth, 2014). Cambodia is still in the process of rebuilding its education system and, whilst significant progress has been made over the past decade, improvements are still needed, particularly in relation to girls' education and gender equality and mainstreaming.

The Constitution of the Kingdom of Cambodia of 1993 (Article 68) and the Law on Education of 2007 (Article 31) recognises 9 years of basic education as the right of every citizen. Basic education is compulsory and is broken up into primary school (grades 1-6) and lower secondary school (grades 7-9). Pre-school and grades 10-12 are not compulsory, though are strongly encouraged (Booth, 2014). According to the 2014 Education Cambodia Gender Assessment, gender parity in enrolment has been achieved at primary and secondary levels. Furthermore, progress has been made in tertiary education where the percentage of females steadily increased from 33.8% in 2008 to 37.6% in 2011. Although gender parity is improving, there are still gaps between age groups and regions. Girls in rural areas, in

particular from ethnic minorities¹⁰, are generally more disadvantaged than boys. Furthermore, girls' dropout rates remain higher than boys and, particularly beyond lower-secondary school, girls' access to education is limited and completion remains a challenge (Ministry of Women's Affairs, 2014a; 2015).

Cultural constraints still act as a significant barrier to girls' progression in school. Women and girls are considered to be under the protection of their husbands or families and are therefore expected to concede to the wishes and judgements of men within the household. This means that girls must defer to household roles, or join the workforce, if a male within the household asks them to do so (Booth, 2014). This is more so the case in rural areas where absenteeism from school can be attributed to poverty and the need for a child to help generate income. Research has also highlighted a prevalent attitude that women are not considered to be as intelligent as men, thus there is a belief that girls cannot learn as effectively as boys. It has also been stated that parents, teachers and children themselves often believe that girls lack the motivation to do well in school and teachers tend to favour male students. Furthermore, there have been reports that female students have been expected to clean classrooms when they arrive at school (Miske, 2010). These attitudes and behaviours reinforce the traditional gender roles in Cambodian society and act as barriers to girls' educational achievement. Despite girls routinely scoring higher than boys on graduation exams, they are held back by the entrenched system of hierarchy and patronage (Tan, 2007).

Experiences of education have a direct impact on women's employment. Typically, women are employed in lower positions/low-skilled jobs and rarely acquire positions in management. Women are mainly concentrated in a few sectors, which have lower social and economic value. Women are also limited in their employment opportunities because of their domestic

¹⁰ Khmer people make up 90% of the Cambodian population, followed by Vietnamese (5%), with the balance being Chinese, Cham and indigenous ethnic groups sometimes called Khmer Loeu (Cambodia Demographic Profile, 2014).

responsibilities and the care burden, as well as their limited access to resources (including credit and financial services), inadequate education and training programs, lack of government services, disadvantages in social protection coverage and the pervasive general discrimination against women in employment (Asian Development Bank, 2013).

Overall women make up 51.4% of the labour force in Cambodia (Asian Development Bank, 2013); predominantly working in the agricultural sector, garment and construction industries and tourism and hospitality sectors. Approximately 75% of women who are employed work in agricultural jobs (Asian Development Bank, 2013). Despite making vast contributions to the agricultural sector, women face greater insecurity than men because they own less land than men in their own name and are they disadvantaged by inheritance laws, land titling systems and their lack of ability to purchase land (due to economic constraints, as well as illiteracy and low-education levels that make it difficult to understand and complete paperwork) (Un, 2011).

Gendered employment indicators suggest that gender equality in the labour market remains a goal, as opposed to a realised objective. Though the share of waged employment for women in the non-agricultural sector has increased, there has been little improvement in overall gender equality. A significant gender pay gap remains with women earning an estimated 71% of male annual earnings (Asian Development Bank, 2013). Furthermore, it must be acknowledged here that women's participation in waged work does not mean that they have control over their own income. Research highlights that a woman's ability to have control over their own earnings, whether partially or entirely, is influenced by levels of education, marital status, age, debt, household composition and social and cultural characteristics (Kabeer, 2012; Asian Development Bank, 2013).

Despite women contributing to more than 50% of household income in Cambodia (Cambodia Country Gender Assessment, 2004), men do not consider women as contributors to family

revenue (Brereton & Vannak, 2009). This can be linked to men's attitudes towards femininity; women are household managers and family caretakers, as opposed to income generators. Despite this, women are still expected to generate income, though this is not perceived as their primary role. When the participants in the 'Men's Talk' research were asked about whether the multiple expectations placed on women were a source of pressure for women, the responses were varied. Some men stated that the expectations placed on women were not a source of stress and that women share the same expectations; in fact, some women choose to fulfil these expectations because "being a good Khmer woman requires her to have all these qualities and behaviours" (Participant in Sreah Village, Siem Reap in 'Men's Talk', 2009: 17). Approximately half of the sample agreed that it is difficult for women to meet all the expectations placed on them and that a husband should help their wife with their duties.

The garment sector in Cambodia employs approximately 600,000 people and up to 85% of those workers are women (CARE Cambodia, 2017b). Women from rural areas aged between 18-25 years of age account for approximately 90% of women working in garment factories in Cambodia (Taylor, 2011). Rural women often migrate to work in the garment industry because of their low levels of literacy and lack of alternative opportunities. For women working in garment factories there is little to no job security, the working conditions are poor, and the pay is low. Furthermore, though women occupy 85% of the garment sector's total workforce, they are over-represented in lower status and lower skilled roles. Under 4% of the female garment worker population holds a line leader or office staff role and male workers are more likely than female workers to achieve promotion because of an intentional preference for female workers for lower skilled jobs (CARE Cambodia, 2017b). All of the women stated that the working conditions within factories were unsatisfactory and the wage was not enough to support a family. In January 2017, two hundred garment workers staged protests seeking their unpaid wages for December 2016. Circumstances like this are not uncommon; garment factory owners are known for going bankrupt and fleeing to avoid

having to pay their workers (Cambodia Daily, 2017), and this disproportionately affects women.

Women working in garment factories have also reported an increased risk of violence. According to a 2012 study by the International Labour Organisation, one in five female respondents reported experiencing sexual harassment or harassment with sexual undertones from their male co-workers and supervisors. Research by CARE Cambodia (2017b) reported that 68.2% of women who participated in the research had been made to feel uncomfortable or unsafe in the workplace and 32.5% of women were the recipients of unwanted leers, noises or gestures. However, women rarely take time off work due to harassment because they cannot afford the loss of pay. Furthermore, women working in garment factories are at an increased risk of rape, sexual harassment and verbal abuse because of working night shifts, unsafe housing situations and a lack of protection from the police. The women who participated in CARE Cambodia's (2017b) research reported feeling vulnerable because of their job and "that men look down on garment factory workers" and "expect them to easily go [to have sex] with men."

Approximately 30% of construction workers in Cambodia are female, yet research by CARE Cambodia (2017a) found that nine in ten women report that they are paid \$1-3 less than men for work of the same value. Furthermore, only 27% of women stated they earn enough to meet daily living costs and one-third of women do not save any money. Three quarters of the female construction workers surveyed by CARE Cambodia (2017a) were married, over 30 years old and had little or no primary school education. Women working in the construction industry in Phnom Penh often migrate from rural areas with, or after, their husband. This is because they are poor and/or have no other source of work near their home. The combination of migrating from the province and an insufficient wage means virtually all women live in company-provided temporary housing (with their husband and/or family), either near or on the construction site..

NGOs in Cambodia

According to a 2012 census, there are 1,315 active NGOs and associations in Cambodia (Cooperation Committee for Cambodia, 2013), though the World Bank has suggested there could be as many as 30,000 small community-based organisations or traditional associations, averaging at approximately three per village (Henke, 2011). The influx of NGOs in Cambodia first began in the early 1990s after the Khmer Rouge regime because Cambodian organisations lacked the funding, resources and capacity to implement effective programmes in the chaotic post-war environment. International donors seized the opportunity to support the transition from war to democracy, converging in large numbers with sizeable budgets (Parks, 2008). The increase in funding opportunities led to a rapid increase in NGOs and, within a few years, several had acquired a reasonable reputation (for example, LICADHO and ADHOC¹¹). However, others lacked capacity and experience and some were opportunistic, hoping to make financial profit (Parks, 2008).

Funding began to decline in the early 2000s when questions were asked about the effectiveness of NGOs in accelerating reforms and, by 2005, there was increasing pressure on NGOs to follow donor priorities in order to maintain funding (Parks, 2008). This environment currently persists with local Cambodian NGOs almost entirely reliant on foreign donors. Cambodian NGOs have faced criticism for their ineffectiveness and this has been attributed to NGO structure, operations and a top-down mode of internal governance. It is argued such models tend to privilege donor relationships and mirror the patronage relationships that are pervasive in the Cambodian political structure. Without any local funding available, NGOs are forced to compete for the same money, whilst donors are able to make increasing demands for their priorities to be met, such as quantifiable short-term impact. The result is

¹¹ ADHOC is an acronym for The Cambodian Human Rights and Development Association. It is an independent, non-partisan, non-profit and non-governmental organization.

many NGOs close, whilst those that remain must sacrifice their autonomy and become increasingly aligned with donor interests, promoting donor views and initiatives. Coventry (2017) highlights how NGOs have also been criticised for their limitations in empowering constituencies; weak governance and poor accountability; the potential displacement of grassroots people's movements by NGOs; and low technical capacity linked to poor critical thinking skills and poor coordination (Merla, 2010; Bañez-Ockelford, 2011; Suárez and Marshall, 2012).

The Law on Associations and Non-Governmental Organisations (LANGO)

In 2015 the Cambodian National Assembly passed The Law on Associations and Non-Governmental Organisations. The act provides a legal framework for the control and restriction of all activities of non-governmental organisations and domestic and foreign associates (LANGO, 2015). LANGO (2015) criminalises all activities conducted by organisations not registered with The Ministry of Interior, who have total control over registration approval. To gain registration approval, groups must be seen as politically neutral. Registration can still be denied if their activities are perceived to “jeopardise peace, stability and public order or harm the national security, national unity, culture, and traditions of the Cambodian national society” (LANGO, 2015:3). Cambodian authorities have offered a number of justifications for LANGO. They have argued the law is necessary because there is no other legislation overseeing and regulating the vast numbers of NGOs in Cambodia. Furthermore, the government has argued that LANGO will “eliminate illegitimate NGOs and prevent illicit organisations from receiving financing from terrorists” (Melbostad, 2015:np). Other supporters of LANGO, typically groups and/or individuals aligned with the government, have cited NGO corruption, a need for increase linkages between donor policy and government agendas and increased transparency as justifications for the law (Curley, 2018).

LANGO (2015) has been met with fierce opposition from citizens, civil society groups and the international community for its content, as well as for the lack of any meaningful inclusion of the public when drafting the law. Critics have argued that the law is politically motivated and inextricably linked to the ever-pervasive control of civil society in Cambodia (Curley, 2018). Leading human rights organisation LICADHO have argued LANGO “reaffirms a culture of control” (LICADHO, 2015: 1), whilst the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (2017) has criticised LANGO for violating international treaties that safeguard political rights in Cambodia. According to critics, “LANGO is inconsistent with Cambodia’s obligations under both international and domestic law, beginning with freedom of association guaranteed by ICCPR Article 22 and the Cambodian constitution Article 42” (Human Rights Now, 2015:4) and “is a continuation of the government’s actions to limit free speech, harass journalists and activists who speak out against the government, and generally tighten the conditions under which the sector can operate” (Curley, 2018:257). Before the law was passed, fears were raised about how the government could “use vague rules about staying politically ‘neutral’ and respecting Cambodian ‘tradition’ to shut down its critics, or prevent them from registering” (Naren & Peter, 2015:np).

When the law was passed, it was argued that the vague language and wording of LANGO could lead to the subjective and arbitrary application of the law, particularly in instances where NGOs and other groups criticise the government (Sotheay, 2015). Indeed, since its ratification into practice, the Cambodian government have used LANGO to close NGOs (including the prominent National Democratic Institute¹²) and independent media organisations¹³. Human Rights Watch (2017:np) labelled the continued clampdown as an, ‘escalating campaign of politically-motivated harassment, intimidation and legal action’. Curley’s (2018) review of English-language press throughout 2016-17 reveals the Cambodian

¹² Since 1992, NDI has partnered with Cambodians, their elected representatives, political parties, and civil society organizations to encourage transparent governance and inclusive political participation.

¹³ The Cambodia Daily and 15 radio stations

government ‘lambasted’ and ‘warned’ NGOs for their failure to comply with the provisions of LANGO and has continuously used the threat of the law in the press to warn civil society groups about their activities. In addition, leading human rights organisations such as LICADHO and the Cambodian Center for Human Rights (CCHR¹⁴) have received stern warnings about their political neutrality (Sokhean, 2017) and in 2017 the Ministry of Interior were instructed to investigate the CCHR because of its connections with foreigners, as well as alleged links to the CNRP (Sokhean, 2017).

Conclusion

This chapter has provided important insights into gender inequality in Cambodia. It started by examining how Cambodia’s violent history has contributed to the country’s current epidemic of violence against women. After, the key data available on prevalence rates, types of violence and attitudes towards violence was documented. This was then situated within an analysis of the different policies and laws to prevent violence against women. The next section outlined gender inequality in Cambodia, specifically education and employment, marriage reconciliation and divorce and Buddhism and gender inequality. This was followed by a discussion of the current political situation in Cambodia, including women’s roles in politics, followed by a discussion on NGOs and the NGO law. Documenting the unique context of Cambodia is central to understanding violence against women and prevention and response services. The next chapter will outline the methods used to conduct this research project.

¹⁴ CCHR is a leading non-aligned, independent, non-governmental organization that works to promote and protect democracy and respect for human rights – primarily civil and political rights - in Cambodia.

Chapter Four: Conducting Research with Women Affected by Violence in Cambodia

This chapter provides an outline of how the research project was conducted. It starts with some key literature on feminist epistemology and methodology, explaining how they underpin and inform the research. After this there is a discussion of the different methods that can be used for conducting research with women affected by violence, followed by why interviews were selected as a method. I then document my fieldwork. First I explain the process of choosing locations and sampling, followed by information on the NGOs that participated in my research. I then discuss gaining access and the dilemmas involved with this. Next, I engage with how I recruited research assistants and the positives and negatives of cross-language research. This is followed by an extensive discussion of the ethical challenges and dilemmas related to my projects. I outline the steps I took to minimise harm for the participants and the research team. This leads into a section on confidentiality and anonymity. After this, I outline the sample and provide relevant information relating to the fieldwork sites. This includes a description of the shelters. I then describe my process of data analysis. The chapter closes with a discussion of reflexivity and positionality.

Feminist epistemology and methodology

This research uses feminist epistemology and feminist methodology to explore the research questions. Feminist epistemology is distinctive from traditional epistemologies because it does not have a single referent. Instead, feminist epistemology is concerned with the ways in which gender influences the conception of knowledge and how dominant conceptions and practices of knowledge systematically disadvantage women and other marginalised groups (Anderson, 1995).

Feminist methodology emerged as a response to traditional methodologies that failed to account for the voices and experiences of women and other marginalised groups. Seminal

feminist researchers have criticised quantitative positivistic methods because they have ignored and excluded women (Oakley, 1974) and applied research findings that are about men to women, failing to take account for the differences that exist between the two (Stanley and Wise, 1993). As such, feminist researchers reject ‘malestream methods’ (Mies, 1983) and, instead, seek to design and conduct research that redistributes or circumvents unequal power relations whilst producing findings that have the potential to transform. As Moss (1993:49) explains, a feminist methodology “involves constructing research for the oppressed, not on the oppressed... [and it] must recognise the ethical implications of the ‘researched’ as ‘objects’ of knowledge” (Unger, 1983; Cook & Fonow, 1990). As a feminist researcher I gave careful consideration to the ethical implications of my research and reflected significantly on my position of power throughout the process. These reflections are discussed in greater detail later in this chapter.

Locations & Sampling

Cambodia is in mainland South-east Asia and borders Thailand, Laos People’s Democratic Republic, Vietnam and the Gulf of Thailand. It has a land area of 181,035 square kilometres. Cambodia’s sub-national administration consists of three tiers: city/province, district/municipality/khan and sangkat/commune (ODC, 2016). The capital city is Phnom Penh, which is divided into two khans and then further subdivided into sangkats. Provinces are divided into municipalities and districts. Municipalities are subdivided into sangkats, whereas districts are subdivided into communes (Law on Administration of Capital City, Province, Municipality, District and Khan, 2008). This doctoral research project was conducted in place in four different provinces in Cambodia: Phnom Penh, Siem Reap, Banteay Meanchey and Battambang.

Four months prior to my fieldwork I spent three months in Phnom Penh conducting Khmer language training at the Royal University of Phnom Penh. This involved attending classes for two hours per day Monday to Friday. During this period I had tried to gain an understanding

of how many women's shelters there were in Phnom Penh, who ran them, and also secure some contacts for when I returned. However, this was very difficult. Cambodia has a significant amount of NGOs and INGOs and there has been no mapping or databases kept of this vast array of overlapping services. Before travelling for my fieldwork I conducted extensive desk-based research about NGOs and INGOs in Cambodia, specifically in Phnom Penh. However, my efforts returned very little beyond the CWCC's website and it quickly became apparent that there were very few women's shelters in Phnom Penh, and across Cambodia. I was already aware of the CWCC and had tried to contact them on numerous occasions during my language-training visit. However, these efforts were fruitless and I had not received any response. I became increasingly concerned that I would not be able to locate enough safe shelters in Phnom Penh to collect data from. As a result, I had to extend my search across Cambodia. One positive that later emerged from this change was the inclusion of all three CWCC safe shelters, located in Phnom Penh, Banteay Meanchey and Siem Reap.

While I was making efforts to contact the CWCC, I was also searching for other NGOs that ran safe shelters. Very few NGOs had websites and there is no mapping of women's NGO services in Cambodia, let alone safe shelters. My doctoral research seeks to address this gap in knowledge. Instead of relying on websites, awareness of services is largely created by word of mouth. To try and gain further information about women's safe shelters I reached out to various NGOs and individual researchers working on violence against women in Cambodia. I was informed by several NGOs about a faith-based INGO (Hagar) and one local NGO (Cambodian Women's Development Agency/CWDA) – both of which ran safe shelters. I contacted Hagar (via email) and the CWDA (using the 'turn-up' technique) and both agreed to meet with me. However, I was unable to secure any participants from either. This is because both organisations had recently decided to close their safe shelters; both cited budget constraints as the reason behind the closures. However, as it is made clear throughout the empirical chapters of this thesis, women's shelters in Cambodia are a life-saving resource and, as such, closure of shelters may have devastating effects.

The final location of research, Battambang, was selected because it was the location of the only other NGO that ran a safe shelter for women affected by violence. I was put in touch with Banteay Srei by a violence against women researcher¹⁵ and advocate whom I met through another violence against women researcher in Cambodia. At the time of research, my new contact was a board member for Banteay Srei and she facilitated my access to the transit shelter in Battambang. Gaining access to Banteay Srei's transit shelter was straightforward because my contact managed the process and, once access had been agreed, introduced me to the executive director of Banteay Srei who was based in Phnom Penh. The executive director then put me in contact with the shelter manager who organised my visit to the transit shelter. Before visiting the transit shelter, I shared all relevant documents relating to the research with the executive director and the shelter manager. Both the executive director and the shelter manager offered feedback on my interview questions and made suggestions for other questions they would like to be included in the interview schedule. The executive director explained that the transit shelter had insufficient funding and therefore wanted the interview data to evidence how valuable the service was for women affected by violence. Soon after the research, the transit shelter closed.

Adjusting the locations of my research had a significant impact on my wellbeing during my fieldwork, as well as impacting the quality of data collected. Instead of remaining in one place, I had to divide my time between four different provinces and there was at least three hours minimum travel time between the locations. This was very tiring and stressful because it required meticulous planning, as well as adapting plans quickly if the NGOs changed the schedule at the last minute. Travelling between different locations required more budget than originally anticipated because I had to cover travel costs and accommodation for research assistants and myself. Including locations outside of Phnom Penh also presented difficulties in relation to hiring research assistants. All the research assistants were university students

¹⁵ For the purpose of anonymity the contact will remain unnamed.

and were unable to travel to different provinces during term time and weekdays, but the safe shelters would not allow us to schedule visits during holidays and weekends. Initially I had intended to work with one research assistant because the research was based in Phnom Penh, but the spread of locations required me to work with three research assistants (one was able to cover two locations). Finding new research assistants was no easy task because everyone I knew resided in Phnom Penh and I did not want the NGOs to provide research assistants because of the conflict of interest. It also meant explaining the project objectives to each research assistant, as well as giving three times as much interview training. These difficulties, as well as other methodological challenges related to working with interpreters and research assistants, are discussed in greater depth in a section on research assistants and language later on in this chapter.

Gaining access

It was during the three months between my language training and fieldwork that I managed to secure a verbal agreement of participation from the CWCC. I was attending the 3rd World Conference on Women's Shelters (2016) in Holland when, by chance, I crossed paths with Pok Panhavichetr – the Executive Director of the CWCC. I explained that I was interested in working with the CWCC and outlined my research objectives and plan. Panhavichetr gave me her business card and urged me to contact her when I was back in Cambodia. This highlights the importance of attending events and networking. Once I was back in Phnom Penh, I persistently attempted to contact Panhavichetr via telephone and email, but this was to no avail. This went on for approximately one month. After one month I acquired the assistance of a research assistant and this helped facilitate gaining access. I had some discussions with my research assistant about cultural norms and how best to proceed and she explained that email and telephone were not always the best way to elicit a response, particularly when approaching the NGOs in English. Thus, the research assistant attempted to contact the CWCC via telephone and email, but in Khmer. However, there was still no response.

Other researchers in the South-east Asian context have cited similar methodological challenges when trying to gain access (Sanders, 2006). My research assistant told me that the only way to overcome the lack of response was to visit the office of the CWCC and try to meet with Panhavichetr face to face. I was unsure about whether this was considered acceptable or whether it would be frowned upon and decrease my chances of access further. However, the research assistant reassured me that it would not be considered impolite and, in fact, was a common way to make contact. Following this conversation, the research assistant and I found the location of the CWCC main office and arranged to go there. It required several attempts of turning up at the CWCC office with a research assistant and speaking with the receptionists at the front desk before I could secure a meeting with Panhavichetr. It was after my third visit to the office, armed with a durian (often referred to as the ‘king’ of fruits in Cambodia) for the CWCC staff, that I finally received a phone call from Panhavichetr. She thanked me for the fruit and we arranged a meeting for the following day. I called the research assistant and asked if she would be able to accompany me to the meeting. However, she was unavailable. I contacted Panhavichetr again and asked her if she was happy to hold the meeting in English, to which she agreed. The next day we met at the CWCC main office in Phnom Penh. Panhavichetr was very welcoming and seemed keen to have the CWCC’s safe shelters included in the research sample. I showed Panhavichetr all the relevant documents relating to the research; a one-page outline of the project, interview questions, consent forms and a copy of my ethical approval. We reached an agreement that I could have access to the CWCC’s three safe shelters to interview any women that were staying there (if they consented to participating).

Panhavichetr told me that she would contact the shelter managers and inform them that I would be visiting, and that these shelter managers would be my points of contact for arranging the interviews. I wanted to get an understanding of how many participants I could get from the CWCC so I asked Panhavichetr if she could estimate how many women were staying in each safe shelter, but she told me she did not know. Instead, I should ask the shelter

managers any questions I had. This was frustrating because I had hoped to leave the meeting with this information and I still felt largely in the dark about how many women there were staying in each safe shelter. Unfortunately, after speaking with the shelter managers, it became clear that there were no more than seven women (six had experienced domestic violence and one had been a victim of non-domestic sexual violence) staying across the three safe shelters, and I would need to find more participants from other NGOs. Nevertheless, these experiences showed me how important it is to persevere when trying to get access, as well as the significance of being prepared. Having all relevant documents with me during the meeting allowed Panhavichetr to better understand my intentions, provided some transparency in terms of questions and objectives and showed that I had carefully considered the ethical complexities of the research.

Upon reflection, I believe there were several key factors that contributed to the difficulties of gaining access:

- Securing a meeting with Panhavichetr was challenging because staffing and scheduling was often not planned far in advance. This meant that when I visited the office relevant staff members were not there.
- Different cultural norms relating to best practice meant I was unable to rely on the usual methods of enquiry (telephone and email). Within the U.K context it would not be acceptable to turn up at an office, however in Cambodia this was a common way to make contact.
- Whilst the CWCC had a spokesperson who spoke English, often the person answering the phones or answering the door did not speak English at all. Although I had been learning Khmer my vocabulary was not wide enough at this point to communicate my intentions. This made it particularly difficult before I had a research assistant. Once I had secured the assistance of a research assistant, making contact became much easier.

- The CWCC is the largest women's NGO in Cambodia. This means that there is an overwhelming amount of work for the CWCC to deal with and they are usually stretched beyond their capacity. As Panhavichetr explained, they have very little time to give to outsiders, particularly in instances where there are no visible gains to be made (e.g. I was not a donor or offering any funding).
- Understaffing meant there were often only a few women based in the office each day. When I did visit the office to secure a meeting with Panhavichetr, the person who was there did not always feel comfortable being a spokesperson for the NGO, or did not have the authority to do answer my queries.
- Although I had previously spoken with Panhavichetr about the research, other staff had no knowledge of the project or who I was. This meant that when I visited the office I was often faced with trying to sum up my research project, and who I was, to staff at the front desk. Each time I visited I interacted with a different member of staff, which meant I could not follow up on whether my previous messages had been passed on. In addition, understaffing at the office made this even more difficult because staff often did not have more than a minute or two to engage with me.

Whilst these factors made it difficult to secure a meeting with the executive director of the CWCC, they were further complicated by time constraints. The executive director of the CWCC explained that the organisation receives an overwhelming amount of requests for interviews each year from researchers and journalists. Thus, the CWCC is (rightly) wary of granting access and interview requests. My lack of reputation and ability to cite a local and known organisation that I was working with further complicated this.

From these experiences, I learned some key lessons in relation to getting access. First, the research process is not always linear and, therefore, more time needs to be allowed for arranging meetings and interviews. Second, it is important to gain an understanding of the specific cultural norms and expectations in relation to working in other international contexts.

At first, I became very frustrated and disheartened by the lack of response from the CWCC. However, once I became aware that changing my approach would produce better results, I adapted and felt less discouraged. This was a valuable lesson to learn and something I will always consider when conducting future research. Third, the difficulties related to gaining access highlight how important it is to work with NGOs, particularly local ones, in their first language. I had the ability to speak conversational Khmer, but at this point it was not developed enough for me to be able to communicate fully with the CWCC. Thus, working with a research assistant significantly increased the ability to secure a meeting with the CWCC; not only because of her ability to communicate in Khmer, but also because of the invaluable cultural insights she could provide (for example, recommending visiting the office). Fourth and finally, researchers need to be aware of their privileged position and must seek to maximise the beneficence of the participants and their communities (discussed in the final section of this chapter).

Gaining access to participants from Banteay Srei was much easier than gaining access with the CWCC. As mentioned previously, a violence against women activist and researcher facilitated the whole process of getting access by getting agreement from the executive director of Banteay Srei., even assisting with chasing up the Executive Director and Shelter Manager from Banteay Srei when their responses were delayed or missing. It was easy to build rapport and I was able to clearly articulate my research objectives and plans.

Furthermore, my contact had an understanding of what a PhD is and how the research process works. Throughout my time in Cambodia, my contact was an invaluable resource, both in relation to understanding violence against women in the Cambodian context and as a dear friend. We had a shared understanding of the logistical difficulties of conducting research with women affected by violence in Cambodia, as well as relating to each other emotionally. Once again, these experiences highlight the importance of networking and interacting with members of the violence against women community, whether local or foreign, to gain knowledge, build contacts and have emotional support in the field.

The NGOs

This section of the chapter will outline the two NGOs that participated in the research.

The CWCC

The Cambodian Women’s Crisis Centre (CWCC) is a local, non-government, not-for-profit and non-political organisation. It was founded and registered with the Ministry of Interior in 1997. The organisation was established by three Cambodian women who identified a distinct need for violence against women services, with the intention ‘to help women help themselves’ (CWCC, nd: np). Initially the CWCC opened a small safe shelter in Phnom Penh; however, within a few days the 25-place refuge was filled and the organisation realised there was significant demand for their services. In 1999 the CWCC opened an office in Banteay Meanchey, followed by Siem Reap in 2001 and Kampong Thom in 2012. At the same time the NGO branched out from social and emergency assistance to legal protection, community prevention and advocacy work. The CWCC’s vision, mission, overall goal and core values are outlined on the next page.

Table 4.1: CWCC Vision, Mission, Overall Goal and Core Values (CWCC, 2019)

Vision	- For women and girls to live in peace, security and dignity and enjoying their universal human rights
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Mission	- To empower women and girls to claim their universal human rights to personal security and to equal participation in community, civil, economic, social and cultural life.
Overall Goal	- To contribute to the empowerment of vulnerable women and girls through protection, prevention and in order to promote a peaceful, gender-equitable and compassionate society
Core Values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dignity: All persons, regardless of their social status, gender, disability or other differences – are living with dignity - Justice: All human beings should enjoy equal access to policies and practices that seek equitable distribution of power, resources and opportunities. - Accountability: Resources and responsibilities for decision-making should be used in ways that are transparent and answerable to donors, constituents and communities

The vision, mission, overall goal and core values underpin and direct the CWCC’s projects and services, including the safe shelter. The CWCC is recognised by government, civil society and international agencies as one of the leading women’s organisation in Cambodia, ‘advocating for the rights of women and children, gender justice and the elimination of all forms of violence against women’ (CWCC, nd: np). The CWCC works to accomplish these goals by contributing to the empowerment of vulnerable women and girls through the implementation of protection, prevention and advocacy projects. The table below outlines the names of the different projects the CWCC runs.

Table 4.1: CWCC Protection, Prevention and Advocacy Services (CWCC, 2019)

Protection	Prevention	Advocacy
Monitoring Project	Community Organising	Communication and Publication
Legal Assistance	Safe Migration and Reduction of Trafficking (SMART) Project	Government Cooperation
Safe Shelter	Anger Management for Men	Information Management
Literacy and Vocational Skills Training	Girls Access to Education	
Reintegration and Repatriation	Skilful Parenting	
	Saving Group	

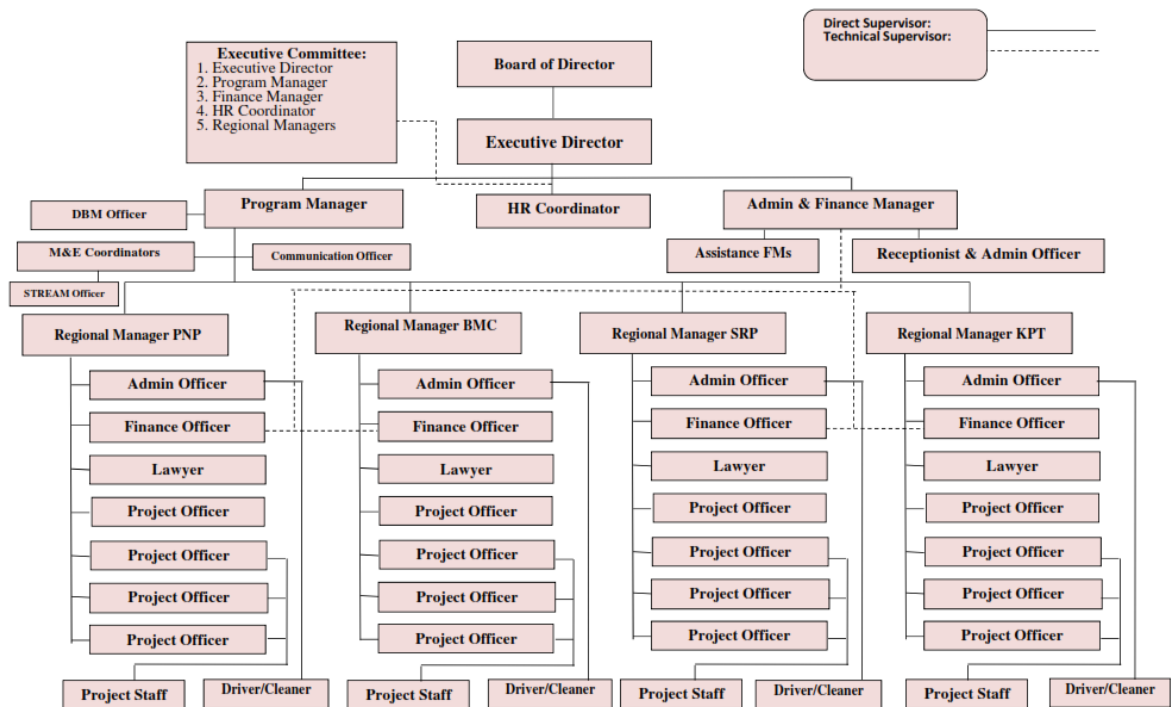
This thesis centres on the protection service of the safe shelter. The main objective of the safe shelter is to meet the immediate needs of women and children fleeing violence, namely a safe place to stay, emergency medical care, clothing and food. Women staying in a CWCC shelter also have access to other protection and prevention services within the safe shelters.

Organisational Structure

The CWCC is a Cambodian-operated NGO led by an executive management team. The executive management team consists of an Executive Director, Program Manager, Finance Manager, Human Resources Coordinator and four Regional Managers. There are 114 paid staff members (70 of which are female) across the CWCC's five offices. In addition, the CWCC depends on the support and involvement of over 600 local and international volunteers. Volunteers are responsible for conducting courses and workshops on violence

against women in targeted communities, monitoring violence in their own communities and directing women to appropriate services. The chart below outlines the structure of the CWCC.

Figure 4.1: CWCC Organisational Structure 2019 (CWCC, 2019)



Partners and Funding

The CWCC works with a variety of local and international partners and is entirely dependent on external funding donations. The CWCC receives donations from an array of sources including international funders such as the United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women and Oxfam, as well as public donations¹⁶. In 2017 the CWCC received \$999,736 from UN Women to improve their service delivery, particularly in response to violence against women and girls with disabilities.

Banteay Srei

¹⁶ See appendix 2 and 3 for a full list of donors

Banteay Srei¹⁷ is a Cambodian non-governmental women’s organisation. Banteay Srei evolved from an Australian NGO (The International Women’s Development Agency) that had been working in Cambodia since 1985. In June 2000 Banteay Srei registered with the Ministry of Interior as a local NGO and began their work in the provinces of Battambang and Siem Riep. The NGO’s vision, mission and overall goals are outlined in the table below.

Table 2.3: Banteay Srei Vision, Mission and Goal (Banteay Srei, 2019)

Vision	A just Cambodian society in which women realise their full potential, are living with equality and dignity, and have their rights fully respected.
Mission	Banteay Srei is a Cambodian women’s non-governmental organisation that empowers women and their families to improve their political, economic and psycho-social situation through mobilising communities for sustainable development, advocacy work for gender justice and engaging men on gender equality.
Goal	Vulnerable women in Banteay Srei target areas are empowered to exercise their political, economic and psycho-social rights to enjoy equitable and sustainable development within the family, community and society.

Banteay Srei’s vision, mission and overall goal direct the projects and services that they run.

At the time of research, the NGO was working with over 12,000 families in villages across Battambang and Siem Reap. Now, with over 20 years of experience, Banteay Srei ‘has

¹⁷ Banteay Srei translates as ‘citadel of women’, and is named after a tenth-century Cambodian temple (Banteay Srei, 2019: np).

become a leading local NGO in the area of building women’s capacity in leadership’ (2019:np) and works with both women and men to bring about political, economic and social change. Banteay Srei facilitates change by employing a ‘rights-based approach’ (2019:np), which they believe equips people with the knowledge and tools they need to find long-term solutions to the difficulties they face. The four programme areas of Banteay Srei are:

- Women’s Empowerment and Leadership Building
- Sustainable Livelihood, Disaster Preparedness and Natural Resource Management
- Community Action Against Gender-Based Violence
- Sustainable Development

At the time of research Banteay Srei had several different projects within their gender-based violence programme. These are outlined in the table on the next page.

Table 4.4: Banteay Srei Projects (Banteay Srei, 2019)

Project	Implementation
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Village Level Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training and supporting volunteers to work in communities, including training and capacity building on legal rights and issues surrounding gender-based violence, as well as counselling skills, which they use to reduce domestic violence in their community.
Emergency and Legal Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency support to gender-based violence survivors • Co-operation with violence against women stakeholders to provide better legal assistance so that women who choose to take legal action are supported and have access to all available Governmental and non-governmental services including legal action in the courts
Safe House Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a safe and supportive environment and shelter to women and girls who are survivors of violence; • Strengthen women’s awareness of the law, particularly the domestic violence law, and their rights, and provide financial and legal support to women who wish to seek redress through the justice system; • Collaborate with NGOs and other relevant agencies to maximise services and assistance available to survivors of violence.
Peace Shelter Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide psychosocial and law counselling to survivors and perpetrators of domestic violence

This thesis centres on the Safe House Project. The Safe House opened in 2005 and, since, had served as a drop-in and transit shelter for women and girls who had had experienced or were at risk of violence. The safe house offered women accommodation and food, transportation,

access to legal, medical and psychosocial services and rights-based and health education. In addition the safe shelter worked in collaboration with the Ministry of Women's Affairs, local authorities and other NGOs (this included referring women to the CWCC when they needed to stay in a shelter for longer periods of time).

Organisational Structure

At the top of Banteay Srei's organisational structure is the Executive Board, which consists of four voluntary members. The board was responsible for delegating the management of the organisation to the Executive Director and ensuring that the NGO is 'solvent, well-run and delivers appropriate outcomes for the public's benefit' (Banteay Srei, 2019:np). At the time of research there were 24 staff members employed by the organisation, all of which were Cambodian and 19 were women. The staff were spread across a Management Committee, Finance Team, Team Leaders, Community Organisers, Counsellors and Housekeeping Staff.

Partners and Funding

Banteay Srei has established valuable partnerships with several donors that they believe share the same vision and goals as their organisation. This includes UN Women and CAFOD¹⁸.

The case for semi-structured interviews

Feminist researchers regularly draw upon a variety of tools for collecting data. Employing a feminist methodology does not bind the researcher to a specific set of methods, but instead allows for the most appropriate methods to be selected depending on the context. This may include quantitative methods and/or a range of qualitative approaches including, but not limited to, life history interviews, semi-structured interviews and more participatory and

¹⁸ See appendix 3 for a full list of donors

creative methods such as body mapping, mobile interviews and multi-sensory research. However, at the root of these different approaches, is the shared belief that women's individual experiences and voices must be centralised and heard. This section of the methods chapter will outline why the data was collected using interviews and will include discussion on the reasons for not selecting other methods.

Feminist researchers have been strong advocates for using participatory methods that seek to redress the power imbalance between the researcher and the participant (Madge et al, 1997; Moss et al, 2002). These types of methods focus on researching with women and other marginalised groups, as opposed to doing research on them (Sharp, 2005). However, while these methods hold significant value, they are not always actionable, particularly in contexts with limited resources and strict time constraints. Originally I had wanted to use more participatory-based methods with the women in my research, but this was not possible due to the limited amount of time I had with participants (implemented by the organisations). I was particularly interested in Photovoice, a participatory action research method that allows individuals to photograph their everyday realities (Baker & Wang, 2006). However, this was not possible because no photography was allowed in the safe shelters. I also considered conducting ethnographic work by spending time in the space of the safe shelter; I offered to volunteer with the organisations in return for access, but neither accepted my offer. This finally caused me to reflect on the method of interviews. Within human geography, there is an increased hesitancy about using interviews for researching everyday life (Hutchings, 2011), however feminist researchers have acknowledged the value of interviewing as a research method (Hesse-Biber, 2006) and, in the context of my research, it seemed to be the most suitable tool for data collection because the organisations were only willing to allow me access for a set period of time each day. In addition, using the well-known method of interviews allowed the NGOs to have a greater understanding of the research process (because they were familiar with the method). Interviews also enabled the NGOs to take

control of the time scheduling, causing minimum disruption to the daily schedule of the shelter and the participant's time.

Semi-structured interviews were selected because they allow for the same questions to be asked to all participants. However, the method also allows for some deviation from the interview schedule and for questions to change order. It was important to be able to deviate from the order of the interview schedule because the participants revealed different information in response to different questions. The interviews started with basic, non-invasive questions that helped to make the participants feel at ease and simultaneously build rapport. The schedule was arranged thematically and grouped together questions on the same subject. Thus, the participants were asked the same questions but in a varied order depending on their answers. In instances where the participant did not understand the question, the question was rephrased and asked again.

The interviews were conducted in Khmer language using female Khmer research assistants. This can be referred to as cross-language qualitative research. The research assistants were provided with the interview schedules two weeks before the interviews took place. This allowed the research assistants to familiarise themselves with the questions and highlight any phrasing that could not be directly translated because of language differences. The questions were piloted with the research assistants, who then provided feedback and helped amend the questions appropriately. All the interviews followed the semi-structured schedule. First, I would ask a question in English and the research assistant would translate to the participant in Khmer. When the participant responded, the research assistant made notes and summarised the respondent's answer in English. Following this system allowed me to give further cues/prompts, as well as gather other valuable information from additional questioning. The research assistants were university students who were sourced through contacts at the Cambodian Developmental Resource Institute. They were selected based upon their gender,

level of English and relevant university studies. All of the research assistants were paid per interview and all of their research travel and accommodation expenses were covered.

Research Assistants and Language

When conducting cross-language research it is important for social researchers to make attempts to learn the local language. Social geographer Filep (2009) states that ‘conducting interviews in multilingual/multicultural settings requires high flexibility of the researcher and solid preparation within the (linguistic-cultural) field’. I was fortunate enough to be able to engage in partial ‘solid preparation’ prior to data collection by studying Khmer language for three months at the leading language university in Phnom Penh. Learning to speak Khmer allowed me to understand large portions of the interviews and communicate in Khmer with the participants. This ability to communicate helped build rapport with the participants, as well as granting a greater understanding of what was being said in the interviews. However, I was unable to speak Khmer fluently and it was still necessary to employ someone to assist with language during the research.

There has been debate in social research about whether those assisting with language merely ‘translate’. This is because individuals assisting with cross-language research do not just translate, but instead ‘interpret’ based upon their positionality, identity and beliefs (Veeck, 2001). After the initial challenges of gaining access, it became apparent that the term ‘interpreter’ did not sufficiently describe everything I needed assistance with. Instead, it became evident that I would need to recruit a ‘research assistant’. This is because employing a local research assistant can be a useful source of cultural knowledge and insight (Kiragu, 2013). Turner (2010) argues that individuals employed by foreign researchers as interpreters typically fill a ‘cultural consultant role’, blurring the boundary between interpreter and research assistant and situating it far from the myth of ‘lone ranger research’ (Geertz, 1983;

Davidson et al, 1996). With this in mind, I felt ‘interpreter’ was an inadequate job title for the three young women that assisted me throughout the research process because they engaged with the research aims and played a role that extended well-beyond that of language interpretation.

I employed three young women as research assistants. Two of the women were still studying in university and one had recently graduated. All were fluent in English. The first research assistant, Ratha, was recruited through contacts at the Cambodian Developmental Research Institute (CDRI). Ratha was 19, lived in Phnom Penh and studied International Relations at the Royal University of Phnom Penh. Ratha assisted with the interpretation of the interviews in Phnom Penh and transcribed all of the interviews throughout the research. Furthermore, she acted as an important cultural mediator and a point of contact for arranging meetings with NGO staff that did not speak English, as well as transporting us to meetings and interviews on her motorbike. I was put in touch with my second research assistant, Yong, by a contact working within the courts in Phnom Penh. Yong was 19 and studying Law at university in Siem Reap. After meeting with Yong, it transpired that she was originally from Banteay Meanchey, the third research site, and would be able to assist me with the interviews there, too. Thus, Yong conducted the interpretation of the interviews in Siem Reap and Banteay Meanchey. Furthermore, Yong’s family in Banteay Meanchey welcomed me into their home to stay during the period of research - conveniently their home was situated five minutes walk from the safe shelter. Yong’s family also helped me recruit my third research assistant, Lina, who was the daughter of Yong’s mother’s friend. Lina was 23 years old, had a degree and had been working in a school teaching English, though was unemployed at the time of the research. Lina’s lack of work commitments meant she was able to travel with me to the fourth and final site of research, Battambang, where she was responsible for the interpretation of all the interviews conducted with Banteay Srei.

Balancing risks and benefits: Ethical considerations for researching violence against women

Conducting research with women survivors of violence involves particular ethical complexities. Research that discusses experiences of violence, or relates to it, has the potential to cause harm to both the participant(s) and the researcher. It can cause re-traumatisation, put participants and the research team at risk of physical harm and can also have significant social implications (for example, women being negatively labelled because they have disclosed their experiences of violence). As such, the research process must seek to minimise the risks for everyone involved (WHO, 1999; Ellsberg et al, 2001; World Health Organisation, 2001; Ellsberg et al, 2005; Garcia Mareno et al 2006). In an attempt to minimise the risks for participants and the research team the research project went through a rigorous ethical process and received ethical approval from the Royal Holloway Ethical Committee. Furthermore, the project followed the ethical guidelines produced by PATH and the World Health Organisation (see *Researching Violence Against Women: A Practical Guide for Researchers and Activists*: Ellsberg & Heise, 2005).

Physical and Emotional Safety

Participating in research and disclosing experiences of violence can put participants and fieldworkers at risk of physical retaliation (World Health Organisation, 1999; Ellsberg et al, 2001; World Health Organisation, 2001). This means that researchers must implement strategies to minimise the risks of physical harm. Specific recommendations are provided in the World Health Organisation (2001) guidelines on putting women's safety first. These are:

- Interviews should be conducted in private
- The survey should not be widely known as a violence study.

- Only one woman per household should be interviewed. Interviewers should be trained to interrupt the interview or change topic if others are overhearing.
- Budgets should be able to accommodate extra repeat visits for rescheduled interviews.
- Interviewer safety should be taken into account, for example team or interviews conducted in pairs.

The strategies from the World Health Organisation (2001) seek to minimise the physical risks for participants and fieldworkers. However, they focus largely on community-based research where the risk of retaliation is far greater than in the safe shelters. In community-based projects, violence against women researchers have recalled experiences where participants and/or fieldworkers have been threatened or harmed because of the research (see Heise et al, 1995; Zimmerman 1995; Health and Development Policy Project, 1995; World Health Organisation, 2001). This is because women participating in community-based research are likely to still be living with the perpetrator of their abuse. Furthermore, in many countries, conducting research within a community requires explaining the research objectives to and obtaining consent from community leaders (World Health Organisation, 1999). This means that consideration must be given to how research studies are framed to the wider community; refraining from referring to the research as about violence, and instead framing it in general terms (such as a study on women's health). Throughout data collection with the CWCC I could talk about the study subject freely inside of their safe shelters. This is because it was safe to do so. However, to any outsiders I framed my project as a 'women's health' study. I was also able to discuss the research subject freely inside the space of Banteay Srei's shelter, which also acted as the local office. The participants from Banteay Srei agreed to define the research as a women's health study if they discussed it outside of the Banteay Srei office. Nevertheless, there was still a potential risk of retaliation for the participants and fieldworkers if anyone related to the research process discussed the content of the study with an outsider.

In addition, there are risks for the participants once they have left the safe shelters if their perpetrator knows about the disclosure of their experiences (though it is unlikely the women themselves would divulge this information). The risks of retaliation were minimal for the participants from Banteay Srei because they had already successfully separated and divorced from their husbands.

The importance of finding a private and safe place to conduct interviews is emphasised in the World Health Organisation (1999) guidelines on putting women's safety first, as well as by other literature on the ethical considerations when conducting research with women affected by violence (Jewkes et al, 1999). In my research I did not need to source physically safe places to conduct interviews. The risk of physical retaliation for both fieldworkers and participants was significantly minimised because the participants from the CWCC were living within the confines of the safe shelters separated from their husbands/partners. Banteay Srei were also happy for their transit shelter/office to be used as a safe space for conducting interviews. This meant all interaction and interviews with participants took place inside the safe shelters. Both NGOs provided a private room that was typically used for group discussions and meetings to conduct the interviews in. The only people in the room were the research assistant, the participant and myself. However, though the physical risks were removed, it does not mean the participants felt emotionally safe. The interviews were being conducted in the organisation's space and this may have dissuaded participants from talking openly about their experiences of living in the safe shelter. Unfortunately, even if a participant or myself had wanted to change the location of the interview, we were unable to do so. This is because the women staying in the safe shelters were not permitted to go outside of the shelter unless it was for a specific visit (such as going to the market to purchase food) and this must be in accompaniment with a member of staff from the safe shelter. The safe shelter staff were also wary of allowing me into any other spaces within the shelter because they are largely private and secretive spaces that outsiders are not allowed into, and they did

not want to compromise the women's safety by showing me too much. Furthermore, I may have disrupted the women's safe space by being an outsider.

To further minimise the risks for participants, all research assistants were required to sign a confidentiality form which stated they would not inform anyone about specific details of the research project. In addition, the participants were made aware of the risks involved with sharing the details of the research with outsiders. Confidentiality was also ensured by not recording any names at any point throughout the research process. This included on the consent form, which was read to participants in Khmer, where women were only recognisable to the research team by a participant number and the place of visit. When writing up, the women were attributed an alternative name and recordings of interviews were deleted soon after they had been transcribed.

Research with women affected by violence must also consider the emotional safety of the respondents and the research team. The disclosure of experiences of violence has the potential to cause re-traumatisation (Ellsberg et al, 2005). Research in psychology suggests this is because talking about experiences of violence can reawaken traumatic memories (Fontes, 2004) and can cause distress, flashbacks, loss of sleep and increased tension (Bergen, 1993). This is in keeping with the WHO (2001) practical guide for researchers and activists, which highlights the importance of adequate training for interviewers; including practical sessions on how to identify and respond appropriately to symptoms of distress and knowing when and how to terminate an interview (WHO, 2001). As part of the training with research assistants I held role-plays and simulated situations of participant distress. This allowed them to practice their interview skills and become accustomed with how to respond appropriately if an interviewee became distressed. However, this brief training could never account for a situation where a participant felt obliged to continue participating.

There is also a need for interviewer biases and preconceptions to be examined. This is because field staff may hold damaging stereotypical views about violence against women (such as victim-blaming) and this can negatively impact the respondent's self-esteem, as well as the quality of data collected (WHO, 2001). In my research a situation occurred where the research assistant's personal views infringed upon the research process. The research assistant was asked to talk to the participant about her children, but the participant was not married. The research assistant told me the participant could not have any children because she had never been married. I asked the research assistant to continue with the interview questions and after the interview I addressed the situation. We discussed her role and I explained that she was only required to directly translate questions and responses. This was a difficult situation because the research assistant had been sincere in her statement and I wanted her to continue expressing herself, but not during the interview process. Thus, I asked her not to deviate from translating the questions and responses during interviews and save her personal opinions and questions for our debrief discussions. This situation highlights the significance of examining fieldworkers' biases and preconceptions prior to collecting data. I had examined the research assistants' preconceptions about violence and the causes of violence however, upon reflection, more time should have been spent discussing other biases. Nevertheless, once the situation had occurred, I recognised the importance of examining other ideas and emphasised to my research assistants that the interview should be a non-judgemental process that our personal views should not infringe upon. In this respect, no other difficulties occurred.

The WHO (2001) states that many women who become emotional during an interview choose to proceed, after being given time to collect themselves. This was the case in my doctoral research where one participant became significantly distressed and began to cry. The participant was told that she did not need to continue with the interview, however she stated, "I want to continue because I want people to know my pain". The dictaphone that was being used to record the interviews was switched off and the participant was given time to gather

herself. When the participant was ready, the interview continued. Evidence suggests that most women affected by violence welcome opportunities to talk about their experiences in a sympathetic and non-judgemental way (World Health Organisation, 2001). As Herman notes, “remembering and telling the truth about terrible events are prerequisites both for the restoration of the social order and for the healing of individual victims” (2015: 1).

Though participation in the research process can aid women’s emotional well-being, the emotional risks for participants must not be underestimated. Participating in an interview requires respondents to be vulnerable and relive extremely distressing events in their lives. If researchers do not handle these situations sensitively women can be re-traumatised and feelings of hopelessness, blame and a lack of self-worth can be reinforced (Jewkes et al, 2002). In extreme instances, a woman’s suicide has succeeded her participation in an interview about her experiences of violence (Zimmerman, 1995). This means there must be post-participation support systems and strategies in place to help reduce emotional harm, for both the research team and the participants.

The World Health Organisation and PATH (Ellsberg & Heise, 2005) guidelines on researching violence against women suggests that researchers have an ethical obligation to provide a respondent with information or services that can aid her situation. In my research, all the women had already accessed the support services available and none of the women disclosed any issues with the services that needed reporting elsewhere. However, in some instances, women needed to be referred for care and support in the form of counselling. Both NGOs had on-site counsellors so I informed them about the research and the possibility of re-traumatisation for the participants. I arranged for the counsellors to be available to discuss the women’s experiences of participation right after the interview, as well as any other time in the future. In addition to formal support, Finklehor et al (1988) state the importance of a supportive social environment for women after they have participated in the research process.

In my research, the women found refuge in talking with one another about their personal experiences (this is discussed in greater depth in Chapter Five of the thesis).

Whilst minimising harm for respondents is a primary concern, researchers also have an ethical obligation to reduce any possible emotional risks for all field staff. Though fieldworkers are exposed to physical risks, the most common risk is in relation to emotional safety (Ellsberg & Heise, 2005). Listening to women's narratives about violence during interviews and the transcription process can have a significant impact on an individual's emotional well-being. Furthermore, analysing the data requires the researcher to submerge themselves in the transcripts, placing a greater emotional burden on them. This means that strategies must be in place to reduce the emotional risks for researcher(s). One strategy is providing all members of the research team with the opportunity for emotional debrief sessions or individual counselling. Furthermore, interviewer training needs to include discussions about violence and members of the research team need to be given opportunity to reflect upon their own experiences of violence (World Health Organisation, 2001).

Emotional support is a vital resource for researchers because it helps rebalance the emotional demands of fieldwork, which, in turn, improves the capacity of researchers and their ability to collect quality data (Jewkes et al, 2000). In my doctoral research I had regular supervisions with my PhD supervisor via Skype. During these meetings I could discuss the emotional strains of conducting the research. In addition, university counselling was made available to me via Skype, both during and after the fieldwork. To help ease the emotional burden for my research assistants, I held debrief sessions at the end of each full day of interviews. These sessions were informal to foster a safe and non-judgemental environment and I encouraged my research assistants to inform me if they were experiencing any emotional difficulties. Having debriefs with my research assistants allowed them to discuss anything they wanted to and provided them with an opportunity to share their feelings and emotions. This was

particularly important because the research assistants were not able to discuss the research with anyone outside of the project because of issues of confidentiality and anonymity.

Confidentiality and anonymity

The Path and World Health Organisation guide (2005) for conducting research on violence against women places focus on research in low-resource settings and presents clear guidelines for protecting the safety of the women participating in the research. Per the guidelines, all the women were provided with information sheets and consent forms before the interview. The participants had low levels of literacy so the research assistant read the information sheet and consent form to the participants to ensure they understood. In instances where the participant was unable to sign a consent form, a fingerprint was provided.¹⁹ It was explained to the participants that they were not required to participate in the research if they did not want to, or were free to withdraw at any point. They were reassured that withdrawing from the process would not affect the care or services they receive. The participants were free to ask any questions about the research process before, during and after the interview and were free to decline answering any questions they did not feel comfortable with.

Confidentiality and anonymity were assured. The only people with access to the interview recordings were the research team. CWCC staff were not informed about any information the participants revealed in their interviews. Research assistants were briefed on the importance of confidentiality. After the interview, the recordings were given to the research assistant for transcription. When the transcription was completed, the file was deleted from the research assistant's laptop. The women were not required to provide their name at any point and fictional names were given to the women for data presentation. I liaised with the shelter staff to ensure the participants could have access to counselling if they felt retraumatised by anything they discussed in the interview. None of the participants chose to withdraw. If a

¹⁹ Fingerprints are commonly used as a form of signature in Cambodia.

participant became distressed during the interview they were reminded they could stop the interview and asked if they wanted to continue. One participant, Thida, had entered the safe shelter just one month prior to the interview and therefore had very fresh memories of her traumatic experiences. This was the case with Thida who became upset during the interview, which was discussed in greater depth earlier in this chapter. Several of the women stated they were pleased to participate in the research because they wanted to share their stories and be listened to.

Data collection

This section of the chapter will discuss the process of data collection. For each NGO I will discuss each individual location of fieldwork, documenting the processes of hiring research assistants, travelling to the field and conducting interviews.

The CWCC

The CWCC has three safe shelters in Cambodia. The safe shelters are in Phnom Penh, Siem Reap and Banteay Meanchey. Overall 8 women shelter residents and 8 shelter staff participated in the research conducted with the CWCC.

Table 4.6: CWCC Participants

Location of safe shelter	Number of women participants	Number of stakeholder participants
Phnom Penh	1	1 x shelter manager, 1 x caretaker

Siem Reap	4	1 x shelter manager, 1 x counsellor, 1 x caretaker
Banteay Meanchey	3	1 x shelter manager, 1 x counsellor, 1 x caretaker

The table below outlines the sample from the CWCC.

The CWCC states the shelter in Phnom Penh can accommodate up to fifty-five persons and the shelter in Siem Reap can take up to sixty people. The shelter in Banteay Meanchey is the largest and can accommodate up to 100 people. During the period of data collection, there were a total of ten adult women spread across the three locations. All of the women aside from Thida had experienced domestic violence. Thida had experienced sexual violence perpetrated by a man who lived in her community. Five of the women had come to the safe shelter with their children, two of the women had left children with another family member and one of the women (Thida) had no children. Living in the safe shelters alongside the women and their children were girls who had been affected by or identified as at risk of violence or child trafficking. Staff at the safe shelters stated the large number of children, and small population of women, was linked to an increase in girls affected by/at risk of violence and/or child trafficking and a reduction in violence against women.

Provinces

Phnom Penh is the capital city of Cambodia. In comparison to the rest of Cambodia, the capital is significantly more developed. Phnom Penh has been transformed since the destruction of the Khmer Rouge and is now a bustling and vibrant city with an array of different cultures, buildings, businesses and opportunities. In addition, many NGOs have based their main offices in Phnom Penh, resulting in a growing international community.

A large proportion of the Khmer population in Phnom Penh are rural to urban migrants that have left their home province to secure educational and employment opportunities (Derks, 2008). Compared to rural Cambodia, Phnom Penh is relatively cosmopolitan and, as a result, less conservative. In the capital, Khmer citizens are afforded greater freedom than those living in rural areas. This is more significant for women and girls who have a greater likelihood of achieving a higher level of education than their rural counterparts (reference this). Increasingly, more and more citizens are migrating from rural to the urban areas to secure higher education and better work opportunities. Women in the capital largely work in garment factories, on construction sites, in the market/selling and in the entertainment industry (as beer promotion girls or in KTV establishments). Though women can and do participate in the workforce in Cambodia, research shows that working in these jobs increase women's risk of violence and abuse, as was discussed in Chapter Two of this thesis (CARE Cambodia, 2015a; 2015b).

Although women in Phnom Penh are still at significant risk of violence, there was only one woman living in the CWCC safe shelter in Phnom Penh at the time of research. As mentioned previously, the CWCC attributed this to an increased priority of working with girls who have been affected by or are at risk of violence and/or child trafficking. However, I would argue that women living in Phnom Penh have access to significantly more services than women in rural areas. The concentrated number of NGOs in Phnom Penh means women can choose which services they access because there is a range of different organisations with a variety of services. For example, a woman in Phnom Penh may be able to choose from an organisation that offers legal assistance, an organisation that offers counselling and an organisation that will work on reconciliation. In comparison, resources and services are scarce for women in rural areas. Therefore, they have a greater need to seize any services or support that is on offer. All the women apart from one stated that living in the safe shelter was a last resort and had not accessed any formal support before contacting the CWCC. This was because they were unaware of other services available, or there were no alternatives. The one participant

which had accessed formal support prior to living in the safe shelter was the participant from Phnom Penh.

Siem Reap province is in the North-west of Cambodia. It is home to the Angkor temple complex that draws millions of visitors each year. These visitors are both foreign and local, with the temples being enshrined with cultural, historical and religious meanings for Khmer people. Siem Reap province consists of 12 districts, 100 communes and 924 villages (Economic Census of Cambodia, 2011). According to research by the World Bank (2013), Siem Reap is one of the poorest provinces in Cambodia.

Banteay Meanchey is a province located in the far northwest of Cambodia. It shares an international border with Thailand to the West (Tourism Cambodia, nd). It has been associated with high prevalence rates of HIV (Kanara et al, 2008) and has a high amount of brothels and sex workers. These characteristics can be attributed to Banteay Meanchey's location as a border province.

The safe shelters

The safe shelters were in rural areas, outside of villages, and set away from any other buildings, but within walking distance of a local market. The CWCC's safe shelter in Phnom Penh was on the smallest piece of land; Siem Reap and Banteay Meanchey had significantly more space. The three safe shelters were very similar in their design, architecture and layout. High walls that you were unable to see over had been built to enclose the space. Each safe shelter had one entrance with a large metal gate that was locked and supervised by a security guard 24 hours a day. Next to the gate was a small wooden hut where the security guard would sign anyone who passed through the gate in and out. Behind the walls, the space opened out to a large yard-like area that served several purposes. Cars and motorbikes were parked. The yard was big enough for the children to run around chase one another. They could also be found in the small play area, usually on the swings. There were seating areas where the women would sit and chat and hand stitch whilst the children played. Other women

could be found getting some exercise by walking around the compound. Planted flowers, vegetables and trees provided the women with the opportunity to do some gardening and brought some much-needed colour to the place: the ground was dry, dusty and yellow and the surrounding walls and buildings were a similar shade. A sign in the middle of the yard read, 'no photos without permission' in Khmer and English. As discussed earlier in the methods chapter, I hoped to use participatory methods such as Photovoice. However, the regulations around taking photographs made this impossible.

All the buildings were set back from the entrance and front wall. Two-storey and yellow with an orange tiled roof, they resembled Khmer school buildings. On the ground floor there were offices for shelter staff, a room that could be used for meetings, group discussions and counselling sessions (which we used to conduct the interviews) and a sewing room.

Traditional paintings of Angkor Wat and aging posters about women's rights and gender roles were displayed on the office and meeting room walls. Off to the side and separate from the main building were individual bucket-operated toilet and shower cubicles. The bedrooms were located on the downstairs and upstairs of the main building.

While visiting the bedrooms of the participants would have provided further insights into the participants' experiences of living in the shelters, the invitation was not extended by the CWCC. I also felt conflicted about asking to visit the participants' bedrooms because I saw this as a violation of the women's privacy; it would be invasive and voyeuristic, and I did not want to put the participants in a position where they felt obliged to say yes. However, on one occasion I was invited by a participant to see her bedroom. The participant, Lina, asked me at the end of the interview if I would like to go with her to her room so she could show me where she lived. This invitation was extended with pride and so I accepted. Lina took me to her bedroom that she shared with her three children and another two unaccompanied children. The room was painted beige but the walls were covered in scribble from the children. There was one window with bars across it. The room was big enough for four mats on the floor for

sleeping and Lina had her own lockable metal box next to her sleeping mat. As Lina showed me her bedroom, a CWCC staff member closely watched us and, after a brief conversation with Lina in the room, the staff member quickly ushered us out.

Banteay Srei

At the time of research, Banteay Srei had one shelter in Cambodia. The shelter was located in Battambang, a province located in North West Cambodia. Battambang has strong links to agriculture and is well-known for being a leading rice-producing province (Economic Census of Cambodia, 2011).

Overall 10 women who accessed Banteay Srei’s services and 3 shelter staff participated in the interviews conducted with Banteay Srei.

Table4.7: Banteay Srei Participants

Location of safe shelter	Number of women participants	Number of stakeholder participants
Battambang	10	1 x service manager, 1 x counsellor, 1 x representative from Ministry of Women’s Affairs

Banteay Srei referred to the shelter in Battambang as a ‘transit shelter’; a safe space to stay for women who are at immediate risk of violence or need easy access to the services Banteay Srei provide. With three bedrooms, the shelter had the capacity to accommodate up to 10 women at a time. During the period of data collection, there were no women staying in Banteay Srei’s shelter. Instead, the participants had all previously accessed Banteay Srei’s services and were not living separated and/or divorced from their abusive partners. Three out

of the ten women had stayed in Banteay Srei's shelter. All the women in the sample had experienced domestic violence.

The 'transit shelter'

Banteay Srei's safe shelter was in the same building as their office which was located on the outskirts of Battambang town. The shelter was situated at the end of a dead-end road opposite a garage where trucks were fixed. The building was two-storey, enclosed with a fence and gate and set back off the road with a driveway and front garden. The entrance to the premises was supervised by a security guard 24 hours a day. In the garden was a seating area where women and their children could relax at any given time. Inside the building there was a small reception area, a kitchen and a meeting room where the research interviews took place. Upstairs were three bedrooms furnished with beds, blankets and an array of pictures on the walls. In a corner of one of the bedrooms were children's toys ready to be played with.

Data analysis

I employed the technique of thematic analysis to analyse the data. This is because thematic analysis provides a highly flexible approach that can be modified based upon the study, whilst also providing a rich, detailed and complex account of data (King, 2004). According to King (2004) and Braun and Clarke (2019), thematic analysis allows for complex examination of the different perspectives of research participants and can reveal similarities, differences and tensions in the data. Data analysis was conducted after the research assistant had transcribed the interviews. I was unable to transcribe the majority of interviews because they were conducted in Khmer, though I was responsible for transcribing four interviews that were in English. I started my in-depth data analysis by coding the interviews, employing both deductive and inductive approaches. First, I identified broad themes that had emerged in the interviews, such as 'experiences of violence', 'freedom' and 'spaces in the safe shelter'. I then went through each transcript carefully and developed a list of codes that were grounded

in the data. I repeated the coding process until all parts of the interviews had been coded and I had a set of wider themes, codes and sub-codes. I chose to complete the data analysis by hand, as opposed to using software, because I was unable to transcribe the interviews myself and I felt this had already compromised my closeness with the data, and using software would only further disconnect me from the women's narratives.

Reflexivity and Positionality

Feminist research requires researchers to exercise reflexivity (England, 1994; Mauthner & Doucet, 2003; Ackerly & True, 2008). This means reflecting on the data collection process and acknowledging how one's own preconceived ideas impact the interpretation and analysis of the data. This section of the chapter will explore why reflexivity is an integral part of the research process. I start with some discussion on literature in geography and beyond about reflexivity. This is followed by considering my role as insider/outsider.

As a researcher, I am responsible for how I interpret the voices of my participants and which parts to select as evidence. Thus, it is imperative to acknowledge my own positionality as a white, Western, privileged woman. Peggy McIntosh (1988) defines 'white privilege' as 'the invisible knapsack', explaining it as, "an invisible package of unearned assets on which I can count on cashing in each day" (1988:30). Simply, the phrase 'white privilege' explains how white people benefit from being white (McIntosh, 1988). Throughout this section of the chapter I examine my positionality as a white, British researcher and how this could have impacted the research process, the data collected and the data analysis. I discuss how I have represented women from a group to which I do not belong and who are oppressed in ways that I am not, with stories that do not reflect my own lived experiences. Furthermore, I interrogate whether I am guilty of appropriating the voices of "others" and colonising them in a manner that reinforces patterns of domination.

Lowe and Short (1998) argue that feminism and poststructuralism have allowed for the creation of a geography that “neither dismisses nor denies structural factors, but allows a range of voices to speak” (1998:8). However, whilst the inclusion of different voices has facilitated a more complete analysis of the complexities of the social world (England, 1994), it has also raised important ethical questions. Wilkinson and Kitzinger’s work in psychology (1996) highlights how scholars and researchers have been responsible for the misrepresentation and scant representation of the Other, stating: “we should only speak for ourselves, and eschew speaking for Others... Others have been too much spoken for and about already”. The seminal writer bell hooks (1990) recognises the dangers of writing about the Other because it can erase the voices of and write anew the narratives of that Other. Furthermore, other post-colonial theorists have argued that the term ‘research’ is inextricably linked to European colonialism and imperialism. For indigenous and colonised people, research has been a significant site of struggle because of the interests and ways of knowing of the West and the ways of knowing and resisting the Other (Smith, 1999). As Tuhiwai Smith (1999) explains, many researchers, academics and project workers often perceive their work as benefitting the ‘greater good of man kind’, yet take this for granted and do not scrutinise if or how they, too are participating in Othering.

Rudisill’s (2017) chapter on women’s activism through storytelling and theatre in India provides an example of research that did not Other. She highlights how the speech of Others may not have been otherwise heard and, in some instances, how Others wanted someone else to speak for them because they felt too close and affected by their own story. Ultimately, in instances where the researcher does not belong to the researched group, the researcher must carefully consider how to avoid Othering and, instead, centralise the voices of the participants and not their own.

There is a wealth of writing in qualitative research about the researcher as an insider and/or outsider. In-keeping with hooks’ sentiment, questions have been asked about whether or not

qualitative researchers should be members of the population they are studying. This is referred to as ‘insider research’, whereby researchers share an identity, language and experiential base with the participants (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). The advantages of insider research have been well documented over time, particularly by feminist social researchers (see Adler and Adler, 1987; Bennett, 2003; Hodkinson, 2005). Adler and Adler (1987) argue that a ‘complete membership’ role can give researchers greater legitimacy in the field and can increase the researcher’s ability to be more rapidly accepted by participants. In the same vein, Roseneil (1993) argues that a role of complete membership makes the researcher ‘empirically literate’ and, as such, being a ‘native’ member of the researched group may facilitate trust and openness, as has been highlighted in insider research (see Krieger, 1987; Brannick & Coghlan, 2007).

However, it has also been acknowledged that being an “insider” can be problematic. As Kanuha (2000: 444) argues:

“For each of the ways that being an insider researcher enhances the depth and breadth of understanding a population that may not be accessible to a non-native scientist, questions about objectivity, reflexivity, and authenticity of a research project are raised because perhaps one knows too much or is too close to the project and may be too similar to those being studied”.

Cautions have been given about privileging the position of insider over outsider in qualitative research. One reason for this is because an insider is already a cultural participant. As an insider researcher, one is not automatically situated outside the problem of knowledge distortion and biased views (Taylor, 2011). Wolcott (1999:137) recognises this, stating ‘there is no monolithic insider view... every way is a way of seeing, not the way of seeing’. Thus, it cannot be assumed that an insider’s values and norms align with that of the research. In addition, insider research presents dilemmas in relation to confidentiality and anonymity.

According to Jacobs-Huey (2002:797), “native researchers must be especially sensitive to the dangers of disclosing cultural secrets or airing what community members may consider ‘dirty laundry’”. This is particularly important when conducting research with sensitive groups who might disclose confidential information that could put participants at risk.

Scholars have argued that ‘insiderness’ and ‘outsiderness’ are not fixed and static positions, but instead are “ever-shifting and permeable locations” (Naples, 1996) with a ‘space between’ that allows researchers to occupy both positions (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). Viewing insider and outsider positions as dichotomous is problematic because it fails to take into account actions and experiences that transcend global boundaries, such as violence against women. Indeed, scholars have warned of researchers assuming totality in their positions as insider and outsider because the boundaries of both positions are permeable (Merton, 1972; Oakley, 1981; Song & Parker, 1995). As such, scholars have argued for a more complex and fluid understanding of the researched/researcher; one that recognises that the self is transformed by the research process (Bhattacharya, 2013).

My position as an insider/outsider was something I reflected on substantially throughout my research. At the start of my research, I firmly viewed myself as an outsider. I am not Cambodian and I live in London in England. I am educated to a high level and conducting this research to acquire a doctoral degree. In contrast, the majority of participants in my research had not been to school after the age of 10 and were illiterate. However, my position as an insider and/or outsider shifted and changed over time and was fluid, as was previously suggested. While the participants and myself had substantial differences, we also shared some similarities. We were all women. Furthermore, we had all been affected by violence. Though my own personal experiences of violence may have differed in practice from the women in my research, I was able to put myself in their shoes and have an understanding of the emotional and psychological impacts of their experiences. This illustrates how insider and outsider are not fixed, but instead fluid and ever changing. However, as Battacharya (2013)

warns, it is dangerous to arrogantly assume that enjoying parts of insider status means you “know” or have more “innate” knowledge of the transnational conditions affecting the participants’ lives. While patriarchy and power lie at the heart of violence, my participants’ experiences had been embedded within their own cultural norms which share little resemblance to my own.

Being reflexive about my positionality forced me to consider how I could attempt to redress the power imbalance between the participants and myself. Feminist researchers have advocated for the demystification of the researcher and, instead, for researchers to ‘give’ some personal details back to the participants, as opposed to just ‘taking’. I believe that revealing intimate details about myself to the participants helped redress the power imbalance. It made it easier to build both trust and rapport with the participants.

During the interviews, I would often be asked if violence against women was prevalent in the U.K and whether women needed to access safe shelters. When I responded yes, the participants were often shocked. Revealing women are affected by violence in the U.K dispelled the women’s preconceived ideas that it is ‘only poor women who get the violence’ (Puthea). Furthermore, highlighting that the same issues existed in my home country helped the women feel at ease and understand Cambodia is not the only place where women are affected by violence. Instead, the participants were able to gain an understanding of violence against women as a global problem, as opposed to unique to Cambodia.

Chapter Five: Causes, Protection and Prevention: Stakeholder Perspectives

‘The purpose of this organisation is to help women and children. The purpose of the shelter is to keep women and children safe. But, for those who come to live in the shelter get not only the safety. They get the skills and we work with the legal sector. There are many attorneys come to work with the victims for their cases. The organisation also provides the healthcare for the victims and the education. The victim can get the education of their rights and the law. If the children come with their mother the organisation will contact the [local] school manager and send them to the school. So, we work with the victims in all parts of their lives. This is because the victims need all these things to stop them facing the difficulties again. When the victims go back home, the organisation will do the assessment in order to find the way to help them. Moreover, the organisation always follows up with the victims [when they leave the shelter]’. (Shelter Manager, Banteay Meanchey)

The data presented in this empirical chapter explores how the CWCC and Banteay Srei work with women survivors of violence from the perspective of service providers. It begins by exploring staff conceptualisations of violence, followed by what they perceive as the causes of violence. The perspectives of CWCC and Banteay Srei staff are discussed as one in this section because there was significant similarity and overlap in their answers. After, the different approaches of the organisation are discussed individually. Starting with the CWCC the job roles, responsibilities and training of staff are explored. This is followed by staff perspectives on the services women receive inside the shelter, namely skills training and counselling. A similar structure for Banteay Srei follows: job roles, responsibilities and training are discussed, followed by the transit shelter and counselling services. The chapter closes with a short conclusion that emphasises the importance of collecting the perspectives of NGO staff.

Conceptualising Violence

The service providers had a nuanced understanding of violence and how it can be conceptualised. The shelter manager from Phnom Penh articulated this:

‘Now, there are four types related to domestic violence. First, it happens by feeling. In this case the victim and perpetrator did not physically fight with each other, but the victim is emotionally abused. Second, it happens physically and affects the body. The victims fight each other. Third, it happens economically and they fight each other because of money. Fourth, it [abuse] happens sexually. These four points are really important in dealing with domestic violence’.

The other staff interviews echoed this narrative. The staff conceptualisations of domestic violence underpin their understanding of what violence is, as well as how it manifests and can be enacted. The excerpt above partially reflects the Cambodian Law on the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Protection of Victims (2005), which acknowledges ‘harassment causing mental/psychological, emotional, intellectual harms to physical persons within the households’ and ‘mental/psychological and physical harms exceeding morality and the boundaries of the law’ (National Law on the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Protection of Victims, 2005:4) as types of violence. However, while the Law (2005) is in-line with contemporary definitions in other global contexts which have extended to include coercion and control, the definition does not acknowledge economic/financial abuse. The staff responses illustrate how there can be significant disconnect between the rhetoric of Law and understandings of violence.

The staff from Banteay Srei and CWCC expressed that the four types of violence they listed seldom happen in isolation and, instead, can occur simultaneously with one type of abusive behaviour often used to reinforce another. This resonates with other research on violence

against women, which has documented how women often experience multiple types of violence within an abusive relationship.

‘Most of the women who come to here have experienced two or three or four types of the violence. The economic is one of the most difficult because it stops the woman from leaving. You cannot live without the money. The husband controls the money and it means the woman cannot leave.’ [CWCC Shelter Manger, Phnom Penh]

Staff definitions of violence are of significant importance because it illustrates how they understand violence, sets the parameters of who they believe qualifies for services, and informs which services must be available for women. As Women’s Aid (2019) note, the majority of survivors of intimate partner violence have experienced economic abuse and the manipulation of money/other economic resources is one of the most prominent forms of coercive control in abusive relationships. Economic abuse deprives women of the material means needed for independence, resistance and escape and, while the Law (2005) fails to recognise this, the CWCC chooses to do so.

When asked about the inclusivity of their services, both organisations responded that it is important to offer services which are open to all women. The Team Leader from Banteay Srei stated:

‘The organisation accepts all the victims. If the victims are involved with any of these types of violence, the organisation will accept them. The purpose of this organisation is to help women and children. If they have experienced any of these types of violence we will take care of them and protect them.’

The CWCC manager from Banteay Meanchey echoed this sentiment. At the time of research all but one of the participants staying in the CWCC shelters was Buddhist. One participant

staying in the Banteay Meanchey shelter was Muslim. The UN Women (2013) shelter guidelines stresses the importance of providing services that are inclusive and open to all women irrespective of sexuality, religion and disability. The shelter manger from Phnom Penh explained that the CWCC strives to be as inclusive as possible by accepting all women:

‘Sometimes we have women from different religions, example Islam. It does not make problems, just those women eat differently from Buddhist. So we make the food they can eat too. Chicken, beef and vegetables. Previously we had one deaf client. We try to find solutions for this woman. We try to adapt. The job of the staffs here is to care for the victims so we must care for all the victims. Not just some’.

However, the same shelter manager also acknowledged that tailoring services to women’s specific needs is costly.

‘It is expensive and we do not have the budget. Example, if we want to make the shelter for women who cannot use their bodies properly. We have an upstairs in the shelter and a woman cannot go up the stairs. But if this happens we can try to change some things... the bedroom can be on the bottom floor. If we need help or we cannot find a solution we can ask to the other organisations that work with this type of woman [women with disabilities]. We can use our networks to find the best solution and make sure they are safe.’

The excerpt above illustrates how the CWCC safe shelters strive to accommodate all women, but budget constraints and the physical design of the shelter can impact who can access their services. As such, the importance of NGOs working collaboratively is notable. According to the shelter managers the CWCC works in alliance with other NGOs - receiving referrals to their services and referring to other NGOs – thus increasing the likelihood of women having access to services that meet their specific needs.

Causes of Violence

The service providers were asked about what they perceived as the causes of violence against women in Cambodia. They both recognised there was no singular cause but, instead, there are multiple causes and facilitators that intersect with one another. Cambodia as a ‘traditional’ society was referred to by both shelter managers. The Phnom Penh shelter manager stated that the values and norms of contemporary society clash with more traditional Cambodian norms, and this is when conflict can arise.

‘I think the first problem is social. Now, there is a modern society and the other is traditional society. Now women want to do like men do and they face difficulties when these two types (‘modern’ and ‘traditional’) meet.’ [Phnom Penh Shelter Manager]

While the Banteay Meanchey shelter manager also cited ‘traditional society’ as a cause of violence against women in Cambodia, it was in relation to gender roles.

‘Cambodia is a traditional society. This means some things are strict. Example, gender. When a woman gets married, she must obey her husband. We cannot change our traditional society in Cambodia.’

The concepts of tradition and gender roles resurfaced on several occasions in the interviews with the service providers from both organisations. The shelter managers from the CWCC were aware that the safe shelters could do little to challenge harmful gender norms, and recognised the importance of using a variety of different strategies.

‘The shelter can reduce the problem but, we cannot eliminate the problem. We use the plan of community-organising and the plan is working. The organisation works with the people at the community and educates them about domestic violence and trafficking. They can learn about the laws. We teach them if they commit the violence what will happen to them and their families and also society. We also teach the village and commune authority about the law so they understand too’. [Banteay Meanchey Shelter Manager]

‘Yes, I think these problems [gender inequality] should be addressed. Now the organisation tries to address these problems in rural areas. The organisation not only addresses the women, but also the men in Cambodia. They will get an education from this. If we address only women, not men, they will not know about these problems. Now the organisation also tries to educate the youth in Cambodia. We have to educate all of the people.’ [Phnom Penh Shelter Manager]

Similarly, staff from Banteay Srei recognised the importance of using a range of strategies to prevent violence against women. The Team Leader explained:

‘If we work only with women we cannot stop the violence. This organisation also works with the men to try and stop the violence. This organisation runs the Peace Centre, it is a place for the men to go. The men can get the services there, it is a peaceful place for them. And we work in the community. The community work is very important because we can educate the community. We can educate them about gender’

The staff from Banteay Srei perceived gender inequality as one of the driving forces behind violence against women in Cambodia. The CWCC staff shared similar views. As they explained,

‘I think most of the husband used drug or drink alcohol. When they need the money to buy drug or alcohol, they did not have enough money to support the family. Moreover, when they used [drugs and alcohol] they did not go to earn the money. This causes the violence in the family.’ [Counsellor, Siem Reap].

‘There are so many causes of the violence in Cambodia. First, because of the civil war taking too long, so men went to struggle in the war. Men went to war to make conflict, men get used to that behaviour, thus when they are angry they will fight their wives. After the war ended, they make a conflict with their wives. Second, they used drugs and alcohol, hence they cannot control themselves. Third, they abuse their wives sexually. When the men watched too many sex movies, they abuse their wives. They watched the sex movies at the coffee shop, but they only have these places in the city [Banteay Meanchey].

Hence, men abuse their wives. Sometimes their wives were sick, but the men still want to have sex with them. When their wives give birth they are really weak, but men still need to have sex with them. On the other hand, if the men cannot have sex with their wives they rape other girls living near their house.’ [Team Leader Banteay Srei]

The excerpts above illustrate how there are a variety of intersectional factors that cause and facilitate violence. When discussing how gender roles can facilitate violence, the Phnom Penh shelter manager summarised how conceptualisations of masculinity do not need to be fixed, and identified potential areas for change.

‘Sometimes, they [men] think they are the main person in the family. They have to control everything in the family. It means that the rights are unequal in Cambodia. That gender is unequal. Gender means that men can also take care of children and cook, they can help to do the housework, take the children to school, they can help to teach their children at night. When their wives are sick, men can help their wives with

their work. But in Cambodia gender is unequal and that makes the problem spread. Sometimes men go to find other girls and make their wives suffer from their conduct. Now we need gender equity in Cambodia.’

The CWCC and Banteay Srei were both doing important work to help create this change in order to reduce violence against women.

CWCC Shelter Managers: Job Role, Responsibilities and Training

Each CWCC shelter had a shelter manager (referred to as Project Officer in the organisational chart)²⁰. The shelter managers were responsible for managing the shelter staff and the overall organisation and running of the shelter. This included managing and monitoring staff schedules and individual women’s cases, administrative duties, financial management, arranging legal proceedings, attending meetings with commune authorities and reporting to the Regional Manager. These management responsibilities are in-line with the UN Women guidelines for shelter management roles (UN Women, 2013).

Both the managers interviewed had worked for the CWCC for a significant length of time (16 years and 13 years) and had experience in a variety of different roles, including counselling and community outreach work. The managers cited their length of work and their experience in different roles as having equipped them with an in-depth understanding of gender, as well as the causes, experiences of and responses to violence against women. As the Banteay Meanchey General Manager explained:

‘When I came to work here for the first time, I learned about gender. I did not know about gender before, but after I have learned... my different jobs and the training

²⁰ At the time of research the shelter manager from Siem Reap was unavailable for interview.

courses taught me many lessons about gender... First, I was a counsellor at CWCC. After I went to the community to teach about gender and violence. All of this helped me to understand the feelings of the CWCC clients. Now I have worked here for 16 years and I am the main teacher about gender' [CWCC General Manager, Banteay Meanchey].

Though neither of the managers had any formal qualifications, they had attended training courses and workshops throughout their professional careers with the CWCC. This included educational workshops about gender and violence and rights-based training. UN Women (2013) cite the importance of hiring staff with relevant skills and qualifications, though acknowledge that this is not always possible. As such, the importance of providing adequate staff training around types of violence, root causes of violence and violence against women laws, resources and services is emphasised. This is because while shelter staff are often advocates committed to ending violence against women, this does not mean they possess all the necessary knowledge and skills that are needed to work with survivors of violence. The shelter manager from Phnom Penh summarised this:

'I came to work here because I want to help women who have experienced the violence. That is why [I came to work here]. But I did not understand about gender and how to help the women. After [attending] training provided by this organisation I can use my knowledge to do my job better. And I can do many different jobs because I have worked here a long time in different jobs. I can do any job in this shelter if it is needed. For example, if another staff member is sick I can do their job.'

The versatility of the shelter managers' skills helped to compensate for the limited amount of staff within each shelter, and allowed the manager to fulfil other positions when needed. The UN Women (2013) guidelines recognise that NGOs running safe shelters may face budget constraints/have limited resources, and therefore it is useful to hire staff with multiple skills.

Doing so has the capacity to maximise the services available in a restricted context, as expressed by the CWCC shelter manager.

CWCC Counsellors: Job Role, Responsibilities and Training

The counsellors in the CWCC shelters in Banteay Meanchey and Siem Reap participated in interviews. At the time of research there was no counsellor in the shelter in Phnom Penh. The shelter manager stated this was because there was only one adult woman staying in the shelter at that time, and therefore it was not cost effective to have a counsellor. Both of the counsellors had worked with the CWCC for a significant length of time. The counsellor in Banteay Meanchey had volunteered with the CWCC until 2008, when she graduated from a psychology degree at the Royal University of Phnom Penh, and was then employed full-time. The counsellor in Siem Reap had previously worked for the CWCC as a ‘caretaker’²¹ and changed to her current role after completing the necessary training in 2001.

The counsellors in Banteay Meanchey and Siem Reap were responsible for meeting with women staying in the shelter for both individual and group counselling. The Banteay Meanchey manager explained:

‘There are four main duties for me to do. First, I counsel with individuals. Second, I counsel with small groups. Third, I counsel with big group. Now we do not have a lot of women in the shelter so we do not have the ‘big group’. Fourth, we have a meeting at the weekend with staff and women together. This is the place anyone can raise the problem if they have a problem. I must attend this meeting.’

²¹ A caretaker is responsible for providing everyday assistance and care to the women in the shelters, for example accompanying them to the market for food shopping.

Individual and group counselling was conducted Monday to Friday. How often the counsellors met with women worked on a case-by-case basis. The Siem Reap counsellor stated:

‘I meet with them depend on their case. If their case is so serious, I will meet them many times in a month. If their case is not serious, I will not counsel with them as much.’

This is in-line with the UN Women (2013) recommendations, which advocates the importance of providing women with counselling based on their individual needs.

CWCC Skills Training

The CWCC’s mission is ‘to empower women and girls to claim their universal human rights to personal security and equal participation in community, civil, economic, social and cultural life’ (CWCC website, nd:np). One strategy the CWCC uses to action this mission is by providing women with different types of skills training inside the safe shelters. As the shelter manager from Phnom Penh explained:

‘The clients in the shelter must learn the skills to be economically independent when they leave the shelter. This will affect if they return to their husband or face the violence again’.

‘There are three skills trainings available for the women who stay in the shelters. First, learn to cook, make cake and make coffee. The organisation has the machines to make coffee and cake in the room [inside the shelter]. This organisation also provides sewing skills and the women can sew the souvenirs. When the victim comes to live here the organisation provides these skills to them. The organisation provides

them with the materials [ingredients, sewing equipment] to do these skills in the shelter’.

The shelter managers cited budget and funding constraints as the most significant barriers to offering other skills training:

‘I understand that the women want to learn the other skills but we do not have the money to provide another skills training.’ [Phnom Penh Shelter Manger]

‘Some clients want to learn the different skills. Example, some women would like to learn make-up and hair. We cannot help them with this because we cannot afford all the materials’ [Banteay Meanchey Shelter Manager]

However, the interview with the Phnom Penh shelter manager revealed there were other factors taken into consideration when deciding which skills training the CWCC should offer.

‘These skills training provided by the organisation is for when the women leave the shelter. This is in preparation for their living after the shelter. We choose these skills for several reasons. First, in Cambodia the woman will work in the market or the garment factory. If the women learn these skills inside the shelter it is possible for them to get a job when they leave the shelter. So, if they do not have these skills it is difficult for them. Second, many clients of CWCC cannot read and write, the education level is low. So, how can they learn a skill like computer. Third and finally, if we let the women choose the skill they want to learn we will face problems. Example, one woman wants to learn the hairdresser skills, another woman wants to learn the computer skills. We need a lot of materials and staff for this. We cannot ensure all the woman can do what they choose. It is not fair. So, it is easier this way.’

The excerpt above illustrates how there is a multitude of factors that the CWCC needed to consider when deciding how to equip women with work-based skills, some of which extend beyond their control.

CWCC Counselling

The CWCC counsellors were understanding, empathetic and patient towards the women in the safe shelters. As the Banteay Meanchey counsellor explained,

‘If the woman comes to stay in the shelter we will counsel with them and try to understand their feelings. We must have patience. We work to give confidence to the women in the shelter and we encourage them. Sometimes at first the women cry and they do not want to join in the meetings. Some women sit alone and like the quiet place. But, after spending a few days [in the shelter], they can laugh. I see changes in the clients after staying in the shelter for some time’.

Both of the counsellors discussed how violence significantly impacts a woman’s mental health, and noted the importance of women receiving counselling.

‘In my job I can see that the violence really impacts on the emotional. Even though they stay here in the shelter, they still remember the entire story [of the abuse they faced]. When I have met them they have told me they have bad dreams about the violence. They thought that they are still in the violence with their husband. They still remember entirely what their husband did to them. They cannot forget. But, when they come to the counselling they can talk and think about their problems. They tell everything to me because I do not judge them. Then, we try to find solutions. After, they can start to think about their future.’

The impacts of violence on mental health have been well-documented, as has the importance of having access to on-going therapy (UN Women, 2013). UN Women (2013) acknowledge

the importance of providing women with non-judgemental counselling and giving women space to make their own decisions. While the CWCC counsellors discussed seeing changes in the women's mental health, they also believed that access to services does not automatically equal change. Instead, their perceptions of whether women would face violence in their post-shelter lives was dependent on the individual woman. The counsellors explained:

‘Some of them will face the violence again. They will face with the violence because they cannot make a clear decision. And they do not know what to do. Some women can make better decisions than before but some women cannot. In this case they still face with the problem. Thus, it is difficult’. [Siem Reap]

‘Some women will leave stronger than before. But some women are not strong enough to divorce with their husband, they will go back and reconcile. If the woman can do the business by herself she will divorce because she can live by independent.’ [Banteay Meanchey]

In addition, the Siem Reap counsellor acknowledged that working with women survivors of violence does little to change men's behaviour.

‘We have to call men and teach them about the violence, I think we have to change the thinking of men. If we teach the women only we cannot solve this problem’

The counsellor's response above echoes the perspectives of the other CWCC staff, who acknowledged that preventing violence against women involves working with men. However, while the safe shelter had limitations, the counsellor from Siem Reap highlighted how the shelter and the services within it can positively impact women's lives.

‘They feel so bad about their problems when they come here. Yet we meet them many times a day; they feel warm and happy in this shelter. The organisation encourages them and they start to trust the organisation. Then they start to tell the organisation about their experiences in the community. And then they begin to understand about their problem because they learn from the organisation. So, this organisation helps women a lot. As a counsellor I give women ideas and help them to make decisions about their future’.

As the excerpt above shows, engaging in counselling can help increase women’s feelings of emotional wellbeing.

CWCC Women’s Stories²²

The next section of this chapter will provide a brief outline of the lives of the participants who were staying in CWCC safe shelters. This information helps to provide context to the empirical data discussed in Chapter Six and Chapter Seven.

Socheata, 33 years old, was the only adult staying in the Phnom Penh safe shelter. Originally from Kampong Cham she had migrated to Phnom Penh with her husband, and it was there that she ‘faced the abuse’ (psychological and economical). After the relationship with her husband broke down, Socheata had been receiving support from a children’s NGO because her three year old son suffered from a health problem, and she was unable to cover the medical costs. This was because her job as a garment factory worker did not bring in enough money. At the time of research Socheata and her son had been staying in the shelter for six months while legal proceedings surrounding her husband’s abuse continued.

²² See appendix 4 for a table of further details

Thida was 22 years old, the youngest participant in the whole sample and originally from a rural village in Dom Deak Province, approximately an hour away from Siem Reap. At the time of research she had been staying in the shelter for a year. This was because of ongoing legal proceedings with the perpetrator of Thida's rape. Thida had never been married and, prior to living in the shelter, had worked in a coffee shop. She missed her freedom and was hopeful that she would soon be able to return home.

Puthea, 30 years old, also came from a rural village around an hour away from Siem Reap. She had come to stay in the shelter with her two children, (aged 10 and 1). Puthea had never been married but had been in a relationship with her husband for nine years, two of which he had been physically, psychologically and economically abusive. Prior to living in the shelter, Puthea had worked on construction sites with her husband. When the abuse became too much to tolerate she contacted Banteay Srei, who had been working in her village. Banteay Srei referred her to the CWCC shelter.

Channou came from a rural village just outside of Siem Reap, was 36 years old and had been married for twelve years. She had three children with her husband, one of which was staying with her in the shelter. The other two were staying with family members. Channou's experiences of violence had impacted all aspects of her life; she had previously been employed in a school, but her husband worked for the Ministry of Education and this forced her to leave her job. After, her only option was to sell food items in the market.

Lina was originally from Kampong Cham Province but had been living in Poipet (near the border with Thailand) prior to living in the safe shelter (where she had been for four months). Lina was 29 years old and had been married to her husband for ten years. There were four children from the marriage: three were living in the shelter with Lina and the youngest was staying with her mother. Lina had endured severe physical abuse from her husband and had been forced to flee to the shelter on a moto dup [motorbike taxi]. Lina felt she had no other

options because her husband's violence was escalating and she was unable to support herself and her children on her wage as a garment factory worker.

Maly had been staying in the shelter with her two children for approximately one year at the time of interview. She was 33 and had been married for 8 years, for most of which her husband had been abusive. Maly had previously reported the violence to the police and her husband was arrested, but soon after he was released because of 'health problems'. Thus, Maly fled to the safe shelter when she heard a broadcast on the radio from the CWCC.

Sopheap was 31 years old and had only been staying in the safe shelter for a month. At the time of interview she still had prominent bruising on her face, demonstrating the severity and damage of her husband's violence. Sopheap had been forced to flee to the safe shelter without her three children, who were still staying with her husband. Sopheap missed her children dearly and wished she would be reunited with them soon.

Banteay Srei Team Leader: Role, Responsibilities and Training

The official job title of the manager of the transit shelter was 'Team Leader'. The Team Leader had been in her role for 8 years but had previously worked for Banteay Srei as a Community Organiser and Counsellor.

'I have worked with this organisation for a long time. I have experience in many different roles and I have a lot of knowledge about violence. This is how I became the Team Leader of the safe house'.

Although the Team Leader did not have any formal qualifications, she had completed training in counselling and management skills. The everyday management of the safe shelter and the staff was the responsibility of the Team Leader, and this included organising and attending

meetings, case management, financial duties and reporting to the Executive Management team.

‘I am responsible for everything here at the safe shelter. I work with the staff to tell them their duties and set the schedule, I work with the women about their cases and arrange meetings with the Ministry of Women’s Affairs staff and the court. If there is a new woman at the shelter it is my duty to come and accept them. Sometimes this is at night time. My eyes are black because I do not sleep enough [...] this week I received a call from a client at 2 in [the] morning and I remained awake all night to deal with this case. But, that is my duty and I am proud to do this work.’

The excerpt above illustrates the difficulties of working in an NGO with limited funding and, as a result, staff. The responsibilities of the Team Leader extended beyond the management tasks identified by UN Women (2013), highlighting how staff in smaller organisations may be required to fulfil multiple roles. The Team Leader’s reference to ‘black eyes’ from a lack of sleep demonstrates she was suffering from staff burnout due to her workload.

Banteay Srei Counsellor: Job Role, Responsibilities and Training

At the time of research there was one counsellor who had been working in the Banteay Srei transit shelter for two years. The counsellor expressed she had pursued employment with Banteay Srei because she had faced intimate partner violence herself. While she did not have any formal qualifications, she had completed training in counselling with victims of violence, case management and child health management. The counsellor worked Monday to Friday and was responsible for counselling with victims of trafficking, sexual violence and domestic violence. In her interview the counsellor explained that Banteay Srei had previously employed two counsellors, however this had changed due to budget constraints.

‘Before we had three counsellors. Then we had two. Now it is just me. The organisation does not have the funding for more than one counsellor. Now I am responsible for all the clients.’

UN Women (2013) the importance of having more than one counsellor for survivors of violence because women should have a choice. The counsellor agreed with this sentiment and expressed it was not ideal to only have one counsellor at the shelter because it reduced women’s choices and increased her workload.

The Banteay Srei Transit Shelter

Banteay Srei’s transit shelter had been running since 2008. It had a team of six full-time staff: a Team Leader (manager), a counsellor, two carers and three 24 hour security guards that worked shifts. There were also two part-time staff from the Ministry of Women’s Affairs. The shelter was accessible to women 24 hours a day, as the Team Leader stated:

‘At the safe house, we cannot close the door. We need to open the door 24 hours a day. If the women and her children need to escape the husband in the day or the night, Banteay Srei can accept them’.

Being open 24 hours a day required more staff, however the Team Leader explained it was important to do so for two reasons: first, because women often suffered extreme violence when, ‘the husband has been drinking alcohol and taking drugs, thus the argument breaks out in the evening’ and, second, because, ‘it is sometimes easier for the woman to leave in the night time.’ This is in keeping with UN Women (2013) recommendations for services, which emphasises the importance of making services accessible at all times.

While the transit shelter acted as an immediate place of safety and security for women fleeing violence, it also provided women with easy access to the courts, legal advice and other services. The Team Leader explained:

‘Another main purpose is to support women in the legal system. Most of the women who access Banteay Srei services are from the rural areas. If there is no safe house the women cannot go to the court. They do not have enough money to travel to court. Thus, the shelter means the women can come to stay here when it is needed. Some women have to ride their bike from the rural area, so it is easier for them to stay here when they visit the court. We have the safe house to help the women and children to use their rights in front of the law’

The transit shelter had the capacity to house three women at a time. Women were allowed to stay in the shelter with their children for 3-5 days. Banteay Srei referred women who needed a longer period of stay to the CWCC shelter. Family members were allowed to stay with the women in the transit shelter, however if a family member was male they were required to sleep outside with the security guard. The Team Leader recognised the importance of family support when fleeing violence:

‘It is important for the woman to have support in this difficult situation. Thus, if they want member of their family to stay here with them, we can accommodate this. We will cover the cost of transportation for up to three people. So example, the woman wants to come with her parents. We will support this. It is important for women to have this support if they need it’.

The experiences of the Banteay Srei participants who stayed in the transit shelter attest to the value of this support. This is explored in greater depth in Chapter Seven, which documents women’s experiences of accessing services.

Banteay Srei Counselling

The counsellor was responsible for counselling with all women who accessed Banteay Srei's services. While she was passionate about her job, the constant need to be available and on-call had impacted her personal life.

'I also work on the weekend. If the women call I will answer the phone. Sometimes, my family nearly have a conflict because I am always to answer the phone. I cannot sleep at night and I must go outside of the house to counsel with the clients because my family is sleeping. My husband stands with me to kill the mosquitoes. I am grateful my family understands about my job.'

The counsellor explained that much of the pressure she faced stemmed from being the only counsellor at Banteay Srei. Furthermore, while her job role was 'counsellor', her responsibilities reached further. Much like the managers in the CWCC shelters, staff at Banteay Srei were required to fulfil a multitude of roles.

When women first came to Banteay Srei the counsellor would conduct an 'assessment' with them, which involved gathering information about their experiences and current mental health and wellbeing.

'When the victim comes to Banteay Srei I will smile at them and tell them they do not have to rush with talking. We can take some time. At first, the women are shy but after some time they begin to talk with me. I have to make a relationship with them. They can tell us everything about their problem. I can see that they are comfortable with me [because] when we are at the police station they cannot tell anything, but

when I have counsel with them they can tell me everything that they have met. It is because they trust me. I do not judge them. This organisation does not judge them.’

The counsellor’s excerpt above illustrates how trust is central to survivors feeling able to speak about their experiences of violence. As UN Women (2013) note, receiving non-judgemental counselling has the potential to help women move forward in their lives and reassert their capacity to make rational and informed decisions. The Banteay Srei counsellor echoed this, and explained how counselling helped increase women’s decision-making capacity:

‘I see that they are stronger than before. When they first came here they wanted the organisation to make the decision for them. But, we cannot make the decision for them. We must just counsel with them and let them take their time before they can make a decision. I want them to make a clear decision, I tell them do not rush. Sometimes when they arrived here they want to get divorced. Sometimes when they arrived here they do not want to get divorced. Most important thing is taking time to make the decision. The organisation gives them the education so they can make the right decision for their happiness.’

Giving women time, space and the information needed to help them make an informed decision illustrates how the counsellor from Banteay Srei understood that women must make their own decisions. Furthermore, survivors were free to access the support of counselling irrespective of their decision, and women were always free to return.

‘If they still need us we will help them. The women can come back at any time. And I can counsel with them face to face or by the telephone. Most important thing is they have the support. When women leave this organisation their life is difficult. The challenge is the family condition, after they leave here they must do all the work to

feed their children, they must make more money without their husband. So, they will be challenged with the daily life. We are here to support them.’

The excerpt above illustrates how the counsellor from Banteay Srei understood that women’s lives are not automatically easier because they no longer experience violence. In addition, the counsellor recognised that women’s journeys away from violence are complex and, as such, women require on-going support.

Banteay Srei Women’s Stories²³

Kunthea was 38 years old at the time of research and came from a small village in Battambang province. Kunthea’s family arranged her marriage when she was 17, and she endured her customary marriage to her husband for 19 years. They had four children together. Kunthea’s husband had been physically, psychologically and economically abusive towards her and so she sought assistance from Banteay Srei, who helped her to get divorced. While Kunthea was happy to live a life free from violence, she had no permanent home and lived under her sibling’s house.

Sony, 44 years old, was from a small village approximately an hour away (on a bicycle) from the transit shelter. Sony had been married to her husband for 18 years and was forced to flee her home when her husband attempted to murder her with a knife and an axe. Sony had three children whom she lived with in her marital home. Sony was one of three of the participants from Banteay Srei that had been awarded the marital home she had shared with her husband by the courts.

²³ See Appendices for a full list of details

Pisey, 49 years old, had been married to her husband for 26 years. Throughout their marriage, Pisey's husband was physically, psychologically and economically abusive towards her. He was also physically violent towards their children. Pisey had accessed Banteay Srei so she could divorce her husband. Pisey had successfully divorced her husband and was awarded the family home, but her situation was exacerbated by Pisey's inability to work because of the life-changing injuries she had sustained as a result of her husband's abuse.

Srey Pich was 46 years old at the time of research and had been divorced for three years. Srey Pich's marriage was arranged by her family. While Srey Pich's husband had not physically abused her, he had been coercive and controlling and this was why she divorced him. After her divorce, Srey Pich found herself in a dire financial situation and was incredibly resourceful; she would make and sell cake, porridge and soup in the market and wash people's laundry for a fee.

Seav Choung, aged 28, was the youngest participant from Banteay Srei. Seav had divorced her husband after four years of marriage because of his financial and economical abuse. Her husband has also committed adultery. Seav Choung had complicated health issues and had to attend monthly appointments at the hospital. As such, she lived with her parents and worked with her sister to make and sell desserts in the market.

Vanna, aged 49, had five children from her relationship with her husband. Vanna had not been legally married to and therefore had to leave the family home because it belonged to her husband. The impacts of Vanna's husband's abuse had been far-reaching and, even after several years living free from violence, Vanna still struggled with her mental health. Vanna's children were an important lifeline for her because they owned a farm where she was able to live and work as a security guard.

Por Sivorn was 37 years old and had been married to her husband for seven years. They had three children together. Por Sivorn's husband had been physically, psychologically and economically abusive towards her and had left her with life-changing injuries that impacted her ability to work. As such, Por Sivorn struggled to keep herself afloat financially. While the courts had awarded Por Sivorn the marital home she had shared with her family, she did not want to stay there because of it reminded her of her husband and his abuse.

Conclusions

The purpose of this chapter was to provide insight into the perspectives of service providers. Doing so provides important context for the subsequent empirical chapters, which discuss the data collected from service users. As the interviews discussed in this chapter show, the NGOs have an in-depth understanding of violence against women in Cambodia and are doing important work to try and manage a complex situation, but their capacity to prevent violence is limited by budget and staff constraints. While the staff want to give women choices about what they want to do with their time, this is not always possible. As such, a one-size-fits-all approach is implemented.

Chapter Six: Women's Experiences of Ontological Security in Cambodian Safe Shelters

This chapter presents empirical data exploring elements of institutional living within the safe shelters and if and how it contributes to the women's ontological security. The chapter explores the experiences of Cambodian domestic violence survivors who live temporarily in safe shelters hidden from their perpetrator(s). It focuses on their narratives of life inside the safe shelter and the connections these have to building or denigrating ontological security: 'the confidence that most human beings have in the continuity of their self-identity and in the constancy of the surrounding social and material environments' (Giddens 1990: 92). The chapter demonstrates how the shelters' exclusive focus on physical safety is to the putative neglect, and further detriment, of women's feelings of wellbeing, independence, personhood, self-esteem, and control. Therefore the women's narratives of the safe shelter are characterised as ambivalent. While the shelter affords physical safety, and women express utmost gratitude given the very real risks to their lives and children, a more-than-physical-safety approach reveals other psychological, social, and emotional dimensions of safety that are important in their time living in the shelter. While there is a growing scholarship in feminist geography which focuses on experiences and impacts of domestic violence on women's safety and bodily integrity (Brickell, 2015; Bowstead, 2017; Datta, 2005; Cuomo, 2013), it is perhaps fair to say there is less written on what protection from such violence allows women to do or to be. This chapter develops this line of enquiry.

Institutional living is often characterised by rules and regulations (Goffman, 1961). These dynamics were present in the CWCC's safe shelters. Throughout this thesis I argue that the

women's ontological security is undermined by the control implemented by the safe shelter and the shelter staff. This is because of several reasons. The women staying in the safe shelters are required to sign a contract of twenty rules when they enter the safe shelter. The rules state what is considered as acceptable behaviour; do not leave the safe shelter unaccompanied, no consumption of alcohol, no in-house conflict between residents and a responsibility for the daily maintenance of the safe shelter space, including cleaning and cooking, are some of the stated rules. These rules are to be followed daily and the women must adhere to the safe shelter schedule. Deviating from the rules and/or schedule can result in a written warning. Women who receive regular written warnings (though the amount remained unspecified by the staff when asked) will be asked to leave the safe shelter. A woman can return to the safe shelter three times in total. After three stays, a woman is no longer eligible for support.

This chapter is divided into two main parts. In the first section entitled 'unfreedom of movement outside of the shelter' I focus on how women try to counteract their spatial severing from family and community through a range of different strategies, from choosing to share space to using mobile telephones to interact with the world outside of the shelter. In the second part, women's experiences of co-inhabiting the shelter bedrooms and kitchens take centre stage. There is discussion and analysis of the day-to-day time scheduling, the women's role as mothers and sharing space. In this section, the analysis also hones in on the presence, but more often, absence of possessions in bedroom spaces and questions what significance decoration and bareness holds in women's embodied interactions with their confined surroundings. These are predominant themes which survivors identified as factors supporting or further thwarting markers of ontological security including safety, constancy, daily routines, privacy and having a secure and trustworthy base for identity construction (Padgett, 2007; Hawkins and Maurer, 2011). While I am conscious that an individual's ability to achieve ontological security is contingent on a range of domains, including work (Hiscock et al, 2001: 55), in this chapter I focus on daily life living with other survivors and the prospects

for ontological security in the shelter, rather than after it. The data suggests that a woman-centred approach that is informed by individual experiences and needs is best suited to facilitating feelings of ontological security.

Unfreedom of movement outside the shelter

Thida was twenty-two years old and the youngest woman in the sample. Out of all the women, Thida was the only participant that had survived non-intimate partner sexual violence. Thida had never been married but had been raped in her community by a man she knew. Although she had attempted to report her rape to the police, ‘they did nothing with my [her] problem’, and the perpetrator was still living within her community. Thus, it was not safe for Thida to stay at her previous home. Thida’s experience of the police is not an exception, it is the norm – Khmer women often feel they cannot rely on local authorities and the criminal justice system (Ministry of Women’s Affairs, 2009; Brickell, 2017). This lack of confidence is rightly justified. As discussed in Chapter Three, the MoWA’s (2009) follow-up survey more than one third of local authorities (including police) felt a husband was justified in using violence if a wife argued with her husband, did not obey him or did not show respect. Research by Brickell (2017) further suggests that domestic violence law has the potential to entrench, as opposed to diminish, an environment of victim blaming.

The women are responsible for the day-to-day upkeep of the safe shelter. They must participate in tasks such as cooking and cleaning, all of which must be completed at specific times. The time scheduling of the women’s day-to-day living removes the women from the decision-making process of basic daily tasks, including what and when to eat, when to sleep, how to mother children and when to engage in skills training. This shares synergies with experiences of formal incarceration where space and time are analytically inseparable from one another, otherwise referred to as ‘TimeSpace’, and past, present and future are viewed

through 'each successive now' in a context where (clock) time moves on, but space is fixed (Moran, 2012).

It can be argued here that the women are experiencing a control a coercion that is different to but shares similarities with their previous relationships. Several of the women highlighted that the rules and regulations of the safe shelter were reflective of their experiences at home. This is because, in their previous homes, the women were entirely responsible for the running of the household and were the primary caregivers for the family. As Bowstead (2011) notes, when a woman is affected by intimate partner violence, no aspect of her life is her own. This is because the power and control exercised by her partner becomes internalised and forces a woman to regulate her own conduct. At present, the CWCC'S safe shelters produce similar internalisations of regulating behaviour. However, they should be working to reconfigure the women's negative perceptions of home that have been created based upon their past experiences, as opposed to reinforcing the home as a place of coercion, control and gendered responsibility.

Before coming to stay in the safe shelter, Thida was living with her auntie so she could work in a coffee shop. Prior to living with her auntie, Thida had lived with her adoptive mother. Thida spoke of her family fondly, 'we are a good family; we have a lot of love and take care of each other', and her memories of home were positive. Thida was the only participant whose experiences of home had not been characterised by violence, as she explained 'I never had the violence in my home. My family never fought with each other. My family has love'. Thida's previous experiences of home are of utmost importance to understanding her feelings of ontological insecurity within the safe shelter. In comparison to the other participants, Thida had lived a stable home life. Although she had moved home several times, all the homes she had lived in were supportive and loving. Thida recognised that her experiences of home were different from the other women and that her past informed how she felt about staying in the safe shelter:

‘Here I am alone. The other women have their children. They had to come here because their home is not safe. It is different for me. It is not that I do not have anywhere to go. I have a home and I love it there. I miss my family so much. But my community, the man is still there. So, until my case is finished, it is not safe and I must stay here’.

Thida’s constructions of home were complex: home is a place with family, love, and support and, most importantly to her, freedom (seripheap). It was this freedom, alongside living close to her family, which defined home for Thida. Although Thida said she felt like the safe shelter was like a home because she lived with a lot of people (‘it is like living with my family’) and because of her length of stay (‘I stayed here a long time’), the lack of freedom was what differentiated it from feeling like her home.

Thida’s lack of autonomy and freedom is in line with findings from other research into women’s shelters and temporary accommodation. In Deward and Moe’s (2010) research that explored homeless women’s narratives of surviving in a shelter, one woman referred to the space as ‘like a prison!’ Similarly, other research has explored how the bureaucracy and institutionalisation within temporary accommodation fits with various tenets of Goffman’s (1961) ‘total institution’, particularly in regard to the impact this has on the deterioration of personhood and loss of autonomy (Stark, 1994; Van der Horst, 2004; DeWard and Moe, 2010). As Stark (1994) attests, shelters become a type of total institution when ‘the role that the individual assumes as shelter resident blocks his or her ability to pursue the most basic human roles – those of friend, lover, husband, wife, parent and so forth’. Thus, here it can be argued that the CWCC safe shelters blocked Thida’s ability to pursue some even her most basic human roles.

For Thida, living in the safe shelter felt like being denied her own freedom and sacrificing her independence had a direct impact on her feelings of ontological security. The continuity and order that she had previously experienced had been interrupted so she could be physically safe. Thida stated:

‘We have a schedule for the cleaning, cooking and skills training. We must keep the shelter clean and take care of our rooms... Some rules are simple like at home. For example, we cannot drink [alcohol] or take drugs, we must cook and clean. The hard rule is about the freedom. We cannot go outside and we are not allowed visitors here. This is the only rule I do not like’.

Thida was asked to define what she meant when she spoke about freedom. Her response was:

‘Freedom, it means I can go anywhere or do anything with my friends. In the shelter, I cannot go out alone and I must go and come back on time. Here I do not have freedom because I must ask the permission if I want to go out. I can go anywhere, when I stay at home’.

The women were not allowed to leave the shelter alone and the location of the shelters was supposed to remain secret. Visitors were not allowed to come to the shelter. This was because of the threat of the women’s perpetrators finding them. The safe shelter manager from Banteay Meanchey explained,

“We have changed the location of the shelter many times. The man can find their way here. Yes we try to keep the location of here secret but we cannot always do that. The husband can find out through many different ways. We have the security to help if the husband comes. Before some men have come with weapons like knife and gun. They

say they will not leave until their wife comes with them. In situations like this we must call to the police.”

The UN Women (2013) module on women’s shelters lists safety as a key guiding principle and acknowledges that keeping shelter locations secret can help achieve this. However, in their research on women’s shelters in the U.S, Haaken and Yragui (2016) argue that keeping the locations of shelters secret is damaging to the women who access them, particularly women of colour. This is because, while the creation of female-only spaces is important, it draws the boundary too rigidly between ‘good women’ and ‘bad men’. It overlooks the fact that poor women endure abusive treatment within a wider social terrain, as opposed to just from their male partners. In addition, it does not allow women to create a strong ‘holding space’ against violence committed by men and, instead, imposes a siege mentality that is isolating (Stout & Thomas, 1991; Haaken & Yragui, 2016). Indeed, feelings of isolation related to the secrecy of the location and the regulation of the movement were spoken about by all of the women in my doctoral research. One participant named Channou explained how the strict regulation of the women’s movement limited their opportunities to leave the closed space of the shelter:

“Most importantly I am safe. My husband cannot reach me here. There is security and the big gate so nobody can enter. But it is not like home because of this. Home should be an open place...I want more freedom. I do not think he will come here. He does not care about me. So I think I can go outside. It is safe. But I am accustomed to rules...before I do not go out much. My husband controlled everything about my life...inside here I take exercise around the yard or speak to the other women rather than go outside.”

Channou’s narrative shows how her own perceptions of whether she was safe were not being considered by the CWCC. Channou felt safe enough to move outside of the safe shelter but

was not being allowed to make her own decisions. This conflicts with the guiding principles of the UN Women (2013) shelter module, which states that shelter programmes should be reflective of women's voices and, in turn, promote women's empowerment and right to self-determination.

In the interviews with the CWCC shelter staff, all of them cited safety as the reason behind the strict regulation of the women's movement. The risks associated with women travelling outside of shelters have been identified in Wright et al's (2007) research on women sheltering in South Africa. The research recorded that abusive partners would often place demands on the women to see their children. Feeling guilty and unable to travel, the women would arrange to meet their partner at the local shop, which would allow him to figure out the shelter was located nearby. In addition, partners also found out the location of the shelter from their children's schools and other individuals in the local community. While there are very real risks for women staying in shelters, it must be questioned where the boundaries of freedom are drawn. The risks are higher when shelters are local services and are being accessed by women from those communities. However, as Channou mentioned, she believed there was very little likelihood of her husband coming to find her and would feel safe going out of the shelter. This illustrates how women's risks need to be assessed on a case-by-case basis, as opposed to being subjected to blanket rules. The risks for some women may be far greater than for others. Furthermore, the risks may not remain statically fixed, but could increase or decrease over time.

In research on women's refuges in the U.K context, Bowstead (2015) highlights how women distinctively access services across local authority boundaries to reduce the risk of being found. A digital map of 1,165 women's journeys seeking refuge in London (produced by Nissa Ramsay in collaboration with Women's Aid) visualises this, showing how women crossed between different boroughs to find a safe place to stay. As such, Bowstead (2015) argues that women's refuges should be considered, planned and funded as regional and

national services that are hosted locally, as opposed to framed as local services. However, in Cambodia, the combination of scant coverage of services and poverty means the majority of women do not have access to a local service and/or do not have the money or resources needed to make the journey to another province.

While safety remained the utmost priority for the women staying in the CWCC shelters, the interviews show how their spatial confinement, isolation, and lack of agency over this echoes the coercion and control experienced in the abusive relationships they are trying to break free from. Channou desires more 'freedom' and in her interview she expressed her frustration of not having more control over her visits outside the shelter. These are what Haaken and Yragui (2003: 50) describe as 'border tensions' in shelter provision, which includes 'the problematic question of how to draw physical and social boundaries between safe houses and the wider community'. Cambodian safe shelters define these boundaries without any consultative route for women to discuss their individual circumstances and differential risks in the vicinity of the shelter.

At the point of interview, Thida had been staying in the safe shelter for one year. When asked about when she would leave, Thida explained that the CWCC had helped her file a complaint with the court about her perpetrator and she was waiting for her case to finish, but she was unsure about when this would be. This left Thida in a state of limbo. Furthermore, her uncertainty was fuelled by the ambiguity surrounding her perpetrator and whether he would be punished. When Thida was asked about where she would like to be living at that current time, she responded:

'I am only here because my community is not safe. If I could choose, I would stay there'.

When Thida refers to safety, she is talking about her physical safety and the risks associated with her perpetrator. If her perpetrator were no longer living in the community, Thida would feel comfortable enough to return home. However, because Thida's community (as well as wider Cambodian society) was acting as a safe space for her perpetrator, Thida was forced to leave her home and seek out the 'safe space' of the shelter. This shunning of Thida to the isolated space of the shelter pushed her experiences of violence back into the private realm, further defining Cambodian society a safe space for perpetrators of violence. In addition, the above statement from Thida illustrates how she traded-off her freedom and, in turn, some of her ontological security for physical safety. Thida's experiences are in keeping with findings from other research into temporary accommodation. In Paradis et al's (2009) chapter 'Better Off in a Shelter? A Year of Homelessness and Housing among Status Immigrant, Non-Status Migrant and Canadian-Born Families', the authors explore how the participants engage in trade-offs like Thida: overcrowding in exchange for food security; regimentation in exchange for safety; lack of autonomy in exchange for access to services.

Here it can be argued that Thida was physically safe in the shelter but was forced to make a choice between autonomy and access to safety and services.

Scholarship by Kabeer (1997) acknowledges this dilemma, questioning how trade-offs between different types of deprivation can be reconciled with tackling the deeper structures of subordination. This is especially so when this may go against women's expressed priorities and, potentially, even make the terms of their trade-off bleaker in the short-term. For the women in the CWCC shelters, their utmost priority was safety and this could only be achieved by staying in the shelter. However, in the long-term, being isolated in the shelter does nothing to challenge men's perpetration of violence. As Haaken and Yragui (2016) argue, isolating women in an undisclosed location can magnify women's fears about violence because it makes men appear boundless in their powers. I would go one step further than this and argue that hiding women away in shelters fails to challenge men's behaviour and, instead,

further entrenches the idea that women are responsible for violence. Nevertheless, without access to the shelters the women would not have been able to find physical safety.

The women had different strategies for dealing with the isolation they felt when living in the shelters. Thida explained how she used sharing a typically private space (her bedroom) as a coping mechanism for dealing with her lack of freedom and separation from the world outside. She stated that even if she had a choice, she would choose to share her bedroom with others staying in the safe shelter because it mirrored her previous home life.

‘It reminds me of living with my family before... I share my room with some of the other children and it stops me feeling lonely’.

However, Thida also explained that she only wanted to share space within the safe shelter because of the restrictions placed on her movement and socialisation. In her future home, Thida wanted her own space. The excerpt below illustrates how Thida adapted and used the strategy of sharing space for dealing with her isolation inside the safe shelter.

‘No, no... please do not confuse the situations. Here, yes... I like to share. I cannot see my family, I do not have freedom to go outside or to see my friends, so sharing is a good thing. But on the outside, outside the safe shelter, in the future... I want my own place. I will not need to share because I can go out and see my friends and family, I will not be so alone like I am here’.

Thida had very little control over her day-to-day living and reported feelings of boredom. Staying in the safe shelter restricted Thida’s capabilities. Examined within Nussbaum’s (2005) framework of capabilities, Thida had little opportunity to do and be what she valued. Thida wanted to practise make-up and beauty skills but the safe shelter did not provide her with the opportunity to do so. As Goffman (1961) stated, total institutions emphasise

conformity to rules and, therefore, have little respect for autonomy and individuality. Instead, residents find themselves reduced to a child-like status whereby they are fully reliant upon the shelter for all their basic needs. To dispel her boredom, Thida liked to spend her time playing with and caring for the children staying in the safe shelter.

‘Do you know about Khmer culture? When you are the oldest you must help take care of the younger members of your family. It is like that here – they are like my younger siblings. They call for me, “Ming! Ming”. It means auntie in Khmer. When they have a question, they can ask the answer and when they are sleeping and have a bad dream they can come to me to feel better. I like the responsibility! It feels good knowing I can help them feel good’.

Interacting with the children gave Thida feelings of purpose and helped her assign meaning to her life inside of the shelter. Thida expressed how she found it difficult to relate to the other women staying in the safe shelter because she was younger and had different experiences of violence from the other women. Thus, socialising with the children made her feel wanted and needed and granted her a type of socialisation that was somewhat reflective of her life outside of the safe shelter.

The only time the women travelled outside of the safe shelter was to visit the market (in a group accompanied by a care taker) or to visit their hometown. Some of the women reported visiting their hometown between 1-3 times during their stay, whereas others were unable to return because their perpetrators were still living in their community. For several women, their families were unaware they were staying in a safe shelter. This was because they did not want to worry their families and/or because they feared their perpetrators would find out where they were staying. As such, another way Thida and the other women negotiated their isolation and maintained relationships outside of the shelter was by relying on their mobile

telephones. This was in similar ways to Filipino migrant mothers who use their mobile telephones to maintain long-distance intimacies (Parrenas, 2005; Madianou & Miller, 2011).

None of the women had Internet or social media access. However, they all had old-style Nokia mobile telephones on pay-as-you-go that enabled them to make and receive phone calls (some of the women were illiterate and could not text message). The women described their mobile phones as one of their most important possessions, but the devices could not fully mitigate the unfreedom that women expressed in the interviews. Nevertheless, the women's mobile phones were an important tool for negotiating the physical barriers between inside and outside the safe shelter. The use of mobile telephones within the safe shelter allowed the women to remain part of a social community in the same way mobile telephones enable young people to 'take their entire social community wherever they go' (Oksman & Turtianinen, 2004: 332). Thida explained how, even though she was physically separated from her younger sister, she could maintain contact:

'I have a younger sister and she lives in a different province from my parents because she is studying. My parents are old and they know how to call, but they cannot send text messages. Even though I am here I can still check on my sister, make sure she is okay and she is not in trouble'.

Thida's mobile phone allowed her to fulfil her duty as an older sibling in the same way as she would if she was living outside of the safe shelter. In Wilding's (2006) research into virtual intimacies between families communicating across transnational contexts, scheduling times for lengthy telephone calls was crucial in the process of children bonding with their migrant mothers. Similarly, the women in the safe shelters reported scheduling phone calls with their families for the weekends so they would have enough time to talk in detail and for a substantial amount of time. Thida commented on how important it was for her to schedule a time where she could talk for at least an hour with her family:

‘It is hard because they are at work during the week so the weekend is the only time we can really talk. I really look forward to the weekend because of that! It is hard being away from my family but at least I have a telephone. If I did not have my telephone, then how would I talk to them? If I did not have my telephone I would be alone’.

Geographical research has documented how mobile telephones have opened new spaces for social interaction that previously did not exist (Green, 2002; Kasesniemi & Rautiainen, 2002; Jones et al, 2003). In the CWCC safe shelters, the women’s mobile telephones enabled them to create their own alternative ‘third’ space that did not physically exist within, or outside of, the safe shelter. The finding is in line with Kopoma (2000) who made similar suggestions in her research into the role of mobile telephones in urban spaces. Kopoma (2000) argues that mobile telephones bring new life to public spaces, thus creating a ‘third place’ for interaction outside of the home and work. While the CWCC shelters were a private place, the women’s mobile telephones brought new life to their restricted and otherwise controlled space, blurring the line between the realms of private and public.

Other women echoed the value Thida placed on her mobile phone. Another participant named Lina, 29 years old, used her phone regularly to maintain contact with one of her children. Lina was staying in the safe shelter with three of her four children and had left her son living with her mother. Lina was unable to return to visit her son because of safety concerns. As such, the only way to contact her son was by calling her mother. She explained,

‘I call when I can, when I have money on my phone. It is the only way I can speak with my son. I can make sure he is behaving and he will not forget who I am. I always tell him, ‘Mummy (m’dai) will be back soon, Mummy misses you’. He

doesn't know where I am... My mother says I am away working... he is too young to understand... but he knows I will come back to him'.

Lina missed her son dearly and made it clear it was not an easy decision to leave him behind. Having a mobile telephone gave Lina comfort and granted her insight into her son's life.

'Yes, it was so hard to leave him. But at least I have my telephone and I can speak with him that way. It makes me feel good to know how he's doing. Otherwise I would worry so much'.

Lina's mobile telephone allowed her to engage in the surveillance of her son. As Green (2002), mobile phones have brought surveillance, traditionally associated with the state and corporate bodies, into the realm of personal relationships. Lina's contact with her son via her mobile telephone granted her an active role in the performance of her role as a mother. Lina's telephone also connected her other children with their grandmother and their younger brother. Lina did not want her children to forget their younger brother whilst they were staying in the safe shelter. Being able to message and call him brought happiness to her children and helped maintain the familial bond.

'They love it when we call. They all gather around the phone with excitement. Sometimes they fight because they all want to talk at the same time. I must tell them to be patient and wait their turn. But they love it, they love speaking with their brother and their grandmother. It stops them forgetting'.

Lina's experiences were in line with findings from Parrenas' (2005) research on absent Filipino mothers mothering from afar. Parrenas' work illustrates how mobile phones enabled physically absent Filipino mothers to still 'mother', but from a distance. For the women in Parrenas' research, exchanging daily text messages meant the mothers could still act out their

role of ‘mother’, even if they were unable to be physically present. The use of the phone in instances such as Lina’s allows women to stay in contact, functioning as Castelain-Meunier (1997) argues in the context of divorced and separated fathers from their children- as a kind of umbilical cord linking the two in a form of virtual parenting. For Lina, the mobile phone was a powerful device used to maintain the sense of one’s identity as a mother and the continuity of care this required. Indeed, the women in the CWCC safe shelters harnessed the mobile phone much like migrants: ‘to manage the uncertainty of their lives and to achieve some form of ontological security’ (Harney, 2013).

A Trade-off: Safety and Security for Stigma and Shame

Puthea was 30 years old and had been living in the safe shelter in Siem Reap for eight months. Puthea had come to live in the safe shelter with her two children because her partner had been physically, emotionally and economically abusive.

‘My husband fought me and he did not give me money. He went out with another girl. He abused my feelings, he said bad words to me and shouted at me. And, he hurt me physically. He would try to fight me and he damaged my hand. He made it so bruised I could not use it. That made more problems because I could not do construction work because of my injury’.

Puthea’s previous home had been characterised by the abuse she had experienced. She had reported the physical, emotional, and economic violence for the past two years of her nine-year relationship to the police, but they took no action. Not held accountable, her husband went on to damage her hand so severely that she could no longer work as a construction labourer to support the family’s needs. Puthea then took the difficult step of contacting Banteay Srei, a Khmer NGO that works with women survivors of violence but does not have a long-term stay safe shelter. She was then referred to a CWCC shelter so that she could pursue a court-sanctioned divorce and legal division of land ownership without risk of

retaliation. Like Thida, the CWCC had helped Puthea file a complaint. However, Puthea faced uncertainty about when her case would be finished, “I have waited seven months already”. As such, Puthea found herself in a state of limbo where time and space were suspended and she was unable to move forward with her life. As Abdi (2005) argues in his research with Somali refugees in Dadaab Camps, living in limbo results in wasted human capacity and deprivations of human dignity.

When Puthea came to the safe shelter, she had little time to consider what she should bring because her main priority was getting her and her children safe, ‘most important is [here] I can feel safe’. Puthea was asked why she felt safe in the shelter and her response referred to the tangible characteristics of the space:

‘Here is the security. This place is a secret and he [partner] cannot come here. We have the security guard and the other staff. No visitors are allowed. The walls are high and nobody can look inside’.

However, like the other women, Puthea was aware she had engaged in a trade-off by sacrificing her freedom for safety. When probed further about feelings of safety, Puthea stated:

‘I did not have the safe feeling in my home before. But one thing [about here] is it is safe but we do not have freedom. We do not talk with people outside and we cannot go outside alone. So, I feel safe but I know this is not a normal place’.

Puthea was asked to explain what she meant by ‘normal’, to which she responded:

‘Here is a place for the victims. They must make it safe. There has to be rules but I want to live like normal people. I want to see the outside. When I am living in my own place I talk with other people who live close by, my friends. I miss that...we do

not go out to visit other people. We stay in here with the other women and children and staff. It's nothing like my life outside. It is not like a normal place so I do not feel like I am normal. I am different because I stay here. It's like being cut off from the outside world.'

While Puthea feels a sense of physical protection from the security of guards and fences around her in the shelter, she no longer has freedom. Not only this, but eight months into her stay and uncertain when the legalities will conclude, she voices fear and a lack of confidence about going out alone and functioning in 'normal' society in the future. Research by Bowstead (2015) into why women's refuges are not local services in the U.K context highlights that women access services, namely refuges, across local authority boundaries because of the fear of being found by a perpetrator. However, all of the women in this thesis lived in the same province as the shelter and this curtailed their ability to move freely outside given the threat of meeting or being identified by their partners who would then know their whereabouts. This is problematic because it reinforces the fear and insecurity that are inextricably linked to the uncertainty that everyday violence produces (McIlwaine & Moser, 2004). Unable to move freely outside of the shelters, the women found themselves isolated and living in a state of limbo and uncertainty until the courts reached a decision about their case. In addition, the women expressed concerns about how such restrictions on their movement would affect their lives once living outside of the safe shelter. As Puthea explained,

'This is not how you live on the outside. I feel worried I forget how to do that... because I did not go outside alone for a long time. So, I am scared about going outside alone in the future. I do not feel confident with that'.

Instead of living in fear of violence and abuse from her partner, Puthea had anxiety about how she would be able to cope after living in the safe shelter. As Giddens (1991) argued, when the

conditions of ontological security are breached, anxiety comes ‘flooding in’ and acts as a serious threat to personal identity. Due to the conditions of Puthea’s living arrangements, she did not feel equipped to live an independent life after leaving the safe shelter.

The women’s narratives highlight how the denial of freedom and autonomy has negated the practical services and support she received from the CWCC. Her stay in the safe shelter had the opposite effect of building confidence, self-esteem and decision-making capacity.

Matheson et al (2015) noted that a woman’s journey after leaving an abusive relationship is often marked by an erosion of sense of self, and it can only be through extended periods of change that aim to rebuild self-esteem, mental-wellbeing, self-efficacy and self-identity that a woman’s perception of self can be transformed. Puthea’s restrictions on her freedom and choice reinforced her experiences of violence and status as ‘abnormal’ and a victim, and did not seek to change her perception of self. Similarly, another participant named Lina, expressed how being chaperoned reinforced feelings of stigma and shame.

‘We can go to the market together and with one [member of] staff. When we go there I am sure some people think we are bad wives, or bad women, because we faced the violence...’

In Cambodia censure from the community acts ‘as an extremely strong deterrent to divorce, particularly for women... a woman is marked for life, as a disgrace to her family, as an unfit marriage partner, as “used goods”’ (Ledgerwood 1996: 181). Women who experience domestic violence in the country often fear what they believe to be tantamount to ‘social death’ should they leave the relationship (Brickell, forthcoming). In fact, Cambodia’s National Survey on Women’s Health and Life Experiences (Fulu, 2015) established that although 90 percent of women beaten by their partners needed medical treatment, nearly half did not try and receive any help at all. This is because Cambodian domestic violence victims who dare to defy norms of familial harmony and togetherness to divorce, or else leave, are de

facto stepping outside the social and moral order which Cambodian tradition and government rhetoric reinforces (Brickell, forthcoming; see also Brickell, 2015a).

When Lina was asked why she believed other people judged her and the other women as ‘bad’, she echoed these findings:

‘That is the thinking. I would like to change what they think but I am not allowed to do anything outside of here. And, anyway, they do not talk to us because they do not think we are normal like them. They can recognise us because we are together in one group and with the staff’.

Women survivors of violence in Cambodia regularly face stigma, shame and victim blaming. This is related to the patriarchal structure of Khmer society where violence is considered an acceptable form of punishment for disobedient partners and wives. Research by Brereton and Vannak Lim (2009) found that 100 per cent of men questioned (Khmer) thought men who use violence are bad and perpetrators should be punished, yet 54 per cent agreed that a man is entitled to be violent if his wife disobeys him. Although rape is understood to be criminal, women and girls are still blamed for putting themselves in vulnerable positions. Furthermore, perpetrators often continue their lives without social stigma, whereas survivors are marked as useless or worthless and must live their lives compounded by shame and guilt (Brown, 2007).

A famous Cambodian proverb that translates as, ‘men are gold, women are white cloth’ implies that if gold is dropped in dirt, it can be polished; whereas cloth remains stained. The proverb illustrates why Puthea was sure she was being judged – the women had been stained and everyone knew it. Existing research has established multiple grounds on which women are judged and the perpetration of domestic violence initially justified. In spousal relationships, these revolve around gender norm violations including: preparing unappetising food; failing in motherly duties and housekeeping; being sexually unavailable; and arguing

too much (Brickell, 2015; 2017). The internalisation of this sentiment was strongly evident across the interviews. Socheata, another participant, explained:

“They know about us when we go to the market. All the people around here know about this place and they know why we stay here. They [local people] know we are not allowed to meet with people outside so they are afraid to talk with us.”

When questioned about whether the women were permitted to talk with people outside of the safe shelter, another participant named Socheata responded with uncertainty,

“It does not really happen because we always have the caretaker with us. We are in a small group together so we just stay in the group. If someone tried to speak with us I think the organisation staff would handle it. Of course people say hello, but we never stop for long enough to talk. I can see people are not sure about talking with us.”

The women’s experiences connect with the significance that Giddens (1990) accords to shame in threatening ontological security. Shame, Giddens writes, ‘bears directly on self-identity because it is essentially anxiety about the adequacy of the narrative by means of which the individual sustains a coherent biography’ (1990: 65). Feelings of inadequacy and humiliation have strong links to integrity of the self in which shame works to ‘strip ontological security that agents develop in their attachments to routines’ (Steele, 2008: 55). Given the infrequency of public outings combined with their stigmatized experiences when they do make it out, the women spent most of their time isolated in the shelter.

Padgett’s (2007) research on ontological security among persons living with mental illness in a ‘Housing First’ approach in the United States found that the study participants’ engagement in everyday activities such as grocery shopping, cooking meals and entertaining friends at home offered them parity with their non-mentally ill peers. In the same way, the women staying in the CWCC safe shelters longed to be treated with equality and perceived as

'normal' by people in the local market and community. In Padgett's (2007) research, the participants experienced ontological security because of the conditions of their housing which allowed them to address the question of 'what's next?'. The women staying in the safe shelters were not afforded this same 'luxury'. However, despite concerns about living independently, the women longed for freedom and envisaged it as a fundamental part of their lives in the future. As Puthea explained,

'I do not want to live the same as I lived before. I want to have freedom'.

The women placed value on having their own freedom and autonomy. However, to achieve these desires they must be granted access to opportunities and support that enhances capabilities and their ability to achieve what they value. Puthea was aware of what she wanted for the future but did not possess the capacity to imagine how she would action her ideals. As a women's organisation, the CWCC should be working to reduce the stigma and shame directed at women survivors of violence, yet the women's segregation from the local community, restrictions on movement and inability to go out unsupervised reinforced the prevalent attitudes surrounding women and violence. Everyday interactions are vital to an individual's health and feelings of normality and interaction with other people can build self-esteem and enhance decision-making capacity. That these visits were chaperoned and their purchases limited to food for cooking in the shelter reduced the capacity of their market visits to instil a sense of freedom and personhood. Another participant, Sopheap, clearly expressed how the lack of movement outside of the safe shelter curtailed her feelings of ontological security at all times.

"I feel happy when I am made up. I really enjoy make up. But I cannot do it here. It is sad for me...before I came here I would feel happy when I went to the market to buy some clothes, and make up to use at home. I felt like I was a princess when I went shopping. I cannot do that here because I must obey the rule of the shelter. We cannot

go out alone and if we go with someone then we can only buy food for cooking.

When I see clothes and make up in the market I want to buy them. But I have no money...inside here we do not get money to buy something for ourselves.”

Like other women, 31-year-old Sopheap left her home suddenly and had to abandon the majority her possessions. Without the means or license from the shelter to buy clothes and make up Sopheap felt her life had been reduced to the bare essentials without freedom of self-expression. This was felt keenly given that Sopheap previously earned a monthly wage in a garment factory. That taking pride in one’s appearance and feeling special (for Sopheap like a princess) is part of the rebuilding process has been identified in research with domestic violence survivors living in US shelters (Neuman Allen and Wozniak, 2010). But living in the shelter, becoming financially dependent and unable to take control of everyday mundane decisions had brought a diminishing sense of confidence and bodily integrity over how the women look and feel. In the next section of this chapter, I reflect on the unfreedoms that Sopheap and other women encountered inside the safe shelter.

Everyday Unfreedoms in the Shelters: Time Scheduling

“I am so far from my own place. We live inside here and I feel lonely. I want to talk with more people, to have more freedom...to do stuff I choose. We have rules here I have to respect. Sometimes I do not want to respect the rules and do something I choose. But I can’t. If I do not respect the rules I cannot stay here.” [Thida]

A recurrent feature of the interviews with the survivors living in the shelters centred on the everyday unfreedoms that they faced and, connected to this, the myriad rules which govern it. The time-space of the shelter is dictated to women by its staff without any consultative functions or flexibility. The women were always required to complete their daily tasks and follow the time schedule, irrespective of their physical or mental state that day. As Maly and

other participants in their interviews noted, the punitive affect and logic of the shelter rules means that if they are not adhered then women must leave.

Many interviewees felt they were again engaged in a trade-off between control over their own time and access to services and support. Instead of being granted time to focus on their emotional wellbeing and healing processes, women were consumed by their daily duties. The timing of these duties was set out by a schedule that dictated when the women would visit the market to buy food, cook, clean, engage in skills training and sleeping times. The proportion of their time spent on cooking, cleaning, and childcare also reinforced gender norms and responsibilities tying women to the social reproductive work of the family. Socheata identified this:

“Sometimes I feel like I do not want to cook at that time or sew but I think actually it is like being at home. We have to do the same at home with cooking, cleaning, taking care of children. In tradition in Cambodia this is the way for women. If I complain the organisation will think I am not grateful for their help. I do not want that.”

Feeling indebted to the CWCC was a recurring theme throughout the interviews. The women expressed a desire to receive more assistance from the CWCC (ranging from help with childcare to learning a different skill), but they did not want to compromise their safety and security. Puthea explained,

‘The schedule is about cooking times, cleaning and sewing times. So, we all must complete our tasks. If anyone makes a problem [with the schedule], the shelter will not allow them to stay here. Sometimes it is hard. If I stay at my home, I can choose when I do my cooking, cleaning and sleeping. Here I do not have a choice about that. This is the rules of the organisation... we cannot choose the time we do it [tasks]’.

A reluctance to discuss the disadvantages of services has been recorded in other research on women's shelters (Wright et al, 2007). While it cannot be proven, the participants from the CWCC seemed unwilling to discuss the shortcomings of the services. The women's repetitions of feelings of indebtedness may be indicative of this unwillingness. Refusing to critique services illustrates how the women did not want compromise the safety and security they were so dependent upon. Participants also acknowledged how rules inside the safe shelters helped reduce any chances of conflict. Socheata stated,

“Yes, I understand those rules. If we do not have rules how can they control everything inside the shelter? We need the rules and schedule so we do not fight one another. If we do not have the rules maybe we will all try to do everything our own way. The shelter wants us to do the same things at the same time.”

Socheata's narrative highlights why she believes the rules minimise conflict in the shelter. In Wright et al's (2007) research on the experiences of women sheltering in South Africa, conflict was minimised by enforcing a policy of communal eating. This is because of the high costs of electricity and because food was a source of disagreement in the shelter. In Wright's research, the shelter manager explained that some of the women who could afford to buy food would share, whereas others would not. However, the management of the shelter was also 'a very flexible, evolving process, directed at meeting the social needs of its community' (Wright et al, 2007:88). The adaptation of the rules and policies of the shelter had a positive impact on the women's experiences and, in turn, contributed towards their ability to shift towards positive decision-making and independent living.

However, while rules can help to reduce conflict, it can also be argued that the CWCC's control over the women's time mirrors the same coercion and control they had experienced in their previous homes. The women drew parallels between their responsibilities in the shelter and their previous homes. As Dobash and Dobash (1980) argued, not only do women who

have experienced violence need time out from the abuse, but they also need to be free to choose what they do with that time. The strict time scheduling of tasks removed the women from decision-making processes and therefore does not enhance their capability to manage their own time effectively and efficiently – a skill they will need in their future homes. Thus, here it can be argued that the safe shelter curtails the women’s future capabilities because it enforces gendered responsibilities, but does not allow the women to control their own decision-making. This is problematic because Khmer women’s identities are strongly tied to household management.

Mothering in Public

The CWCC safe shelters have only three full-time members of staff: a shelter manager, a counsellor and a caretaker. The amount of adult women staying in the shelter was very low, however the shelter was also populated by the participants’ children, as well as young girls who had been identified as at risk and/or experienced violence. According to the UN Women (2015) shelter guidance, the CWCC did not have an adequate enough number of staff in the shelter. This has a direct impact upon the provision of services. Due to the lack of staff, the women do not have access to childcare and were solely responsible for the care of their children. As well as their own children, the women found themselves providing care and support for the unaccompanied girls staying in the safe shelter. In their interviews, the women spoke of how it was difficult to be responsible for the day-to-day maintenance and running of the safe shelter while also fulfilling their roles as mothers. Channou, explained:

“Sometimes it is hard because I do not have a private place to be with my son. But I stay here for free so I cannot expect to have everything how I want it. That is the organisation’s decision...I sleep with my child and share everything with the other women and children. We stay together, eat together and share everything. On the one hand, this teaches us all to share. But on the other hand, I miss having my own space. Either I cannot be alone with my son, or I

cannot take time away from him. I must always stay with with him and take care of him. If I were at home, I could ask my relatives to help me...if I had my choice I would stay alone.”

Confinement to the shelter and the lack of private space within it meant that Channou and her child either could never be alone together, or she did not have any relief from parental duties. The need for women to do everything together and be ever conscious of sharing also posed additional burdens to the women. As Heath and Scicluna (2017: 53) write, ‘living in close everyday contact with non-family members (non-kin) in shared living arrangements necessitates an often extraordinary degree of physical and emotional intimacy, whether actively sought or not’. Sharing of responsibilities, resources, and also space were forms of emotional labour undertaken in the shelter. For many women this meant putting collective needs before their own for fear of friction and disagreement otherwise.

The way the women should mother their children was dictated by the rules in the safe shelter and the lack of private space meant the women were mothering under the watchful gaze of the shelter staff. Boxill and Beaty (1990) label this as ‘public mothering’. Public mothering can have negative effects on the relationship between a mother and child because they are not able to interact in private. The women reported feelings of being overwhelmed with responsibility and suffered from tiredness because there was always a task to complete.

Furthermore, there was no time for self-care. Puthea explained:

‘Sometimes it is difficult because I have the tasks to do, so it is hard with my children. Moreover, I must spend all my energy to care for them. I do not have time to do something for myself. I would like more time’.

In Wright et al’s (2007) research on women’s experiences of sheltering in South Africa, the participating shelter was designed around families and appeared to give equal attention to both the mothers and their children. The women and their children could access a social

worker and counsellor. The women reported how these were vital services. There was also a crèche that cared for the women's children free of charge. This allowed the women to have some time alone for self-care, as well as go to work. In the CWCC shelter, Puthea explained how she was unable to deal with her trauma because she did not receive any childcare support:

'I would like more help with that. If I have help with my children I can take more time to relax and fix my emotional [wellbeing]. Now I do not have time to think about that. I just take care of the children and do the schedule'.

When a woman is staying in a safe shelter she is likely to experience a wide range of emotions that her child will be exposed to. In her work on understanding the needs of shelter users, Strensand (2005) argues that safe shelters should assist women with childcare. The shelter workers that were interviewed in this research posited that a lack of childcare can hinder a woman's steps towards healing and independence because all their time is consumed by caring for their children all day, every day. Without assistance with childcare, residents find themselves with little respite or time to themselves. Furthermore, the children who accompanied their mothers to the safe shelter had been impacted by their previous experiences of violence within the home, as well as the disruption caused by leaving their previous homes, and needed specialist care and support. Research has noted this and states children have been known to exhibit signs of emotional trauma and stress (Choi and Snyder, 1999). Several of the participants mentioned their children were exhibiting behaviours that related to stress and disruption. However, the mothers felt unable to give the levels of care and support needed to their children because their time was consumed by completing their assigned daily tasks.

Co-habiting in the Safe Shelters

All but one of the women staying in the CWCC safe shelters had no access to private spaces. Instead, they shared their bedrooms, bathrooms and the kitchen. There was up to six people (a mix of women, their own children and unaccompanied children) staying in one bedroom. When the women entered the safe shelter, they were assigned a bedroom based upon where there was space. None of the women could choose their own room or whom they stayed with.

The only participant that wanted to share a bedroom was Thida. This was because of the circumstances surrounding Thida's stay (as discussed earlier): she was the youngest woman and did not have any children. In addition, the other women were there because of intimate partner violence, whereas Thida had never been married and had experienced violence as a one-off event in a public space. Thida liked sharing a bedroom because it reflected the previous dynamics of home.

'I feel good. I like living with many people. It is like living at home. Moreover, I am alone here. So, it feels good to share the bedroom with the other women and children'.

Thida liked sharing her bedroom but also stated that she would choose to share a bedroom, even if offered her own room.

'I would choose to share. Some of the women, they don't like that we share. It is the policy so we cannot choose. But if we could choose, I would still like to stay with the other people. I share my room with some of the other children. It stops me feeling lonely.'

In contrast, all of the other women expressed a desire for their own bedroom. This was because they wanted greater privacy and to live alone with their children. However, several women stated they felt unable to ask for a private space because they were already indebted to the organisation and needed to show respect. The different opinions from the women about

sharing space highlights the need for an individualised approach that considers the women's previous experiences and imaginations of home, as well as their current wants and needs (that may differ from how they would like to live outside of the safe shelter).

Maly, 33 years old, was the only participant fortunate enough to have her own bedroom. This privacy was key to Maly's feelings of ontological security because it afforded her privacy.

Maly had her own bedroom because the room was only big enough for her family, not because of any preferential treatment. She had been staying in the safe shelter with her children for just over a year. Maly was eager to exit the safe shelter but was unable to leave because the courts had not finished processing her case. Maly was frustrated about the delays relating to her case, but had managed to cope with staying in the safe shelter for an extended period of time (stays in the safe shelter are typically 6 months) because she had her own private bedroom, though she could not lock it.

‘Fortunately, I have my own room and it is a small room. If it is big, I have to stay with the other people... I can feel happy because I have my own private room.

Nobody can enter in my room. My case is taking too long, but I have my own room so I can live here longer’.

Maly's previous home had been characterised by violence and abuse. These experiences of violence had a direct impact on how Maly defined home, as well as the characteristics she now sought from accommodation:

‘Home is safety and security. We did not have that before - me and my children. I cannot call here my home because it is temporary, but it is like what I want a home to be like. It is safe.

We can be alone and we are safe... if I did not have my own room, I cannot stay here’.

Maly identified safety as her main priority for housing. However, she also identified privacy as being a central tenet of why she was able to stay in the safe shelter [‘I have my own room so I feel comfortable to stay here... without it I cannot stay here’.] Without such privacy,

Maly would not feel comfortable seeking refuge in the shelter and possibly would not have stayed there. This illustrates how the women's ontological security is multifaceted and, in instances where it is compromised, women may not access vital services. Maly's statements share synergies with research into the architecture and design of homeless shelters in the United States. Davis (2004) explains how poorly maintained shelters with inadequate space makes individuals less likely to use the space. As a result, the shelter becomes a last resort, with only the most desperate of individuals willing to stay there.

Research into temporary accommodation has repeatedly advocated for the benefits of residents having access to both private (bedroom, bathroom, kitchen) and communal spaces (outside areas) (Sprague, 1991; Kellett & Moore, 2003; Datta, 2005). Having access to spaces that are typically private in a normative home can be key to creating feelings of independence and control and communal spaces can act as sites of socialisation. While these findings are based on Western case study research, in Cambodia what is classed as the 'normative home' deviates from these ideas however with it being common for extended families to be living in one house and sharing sleeping spaces. Withstanding this, when the all-female shelter staff were asked about the women sharing bedrooms, they consistently acknowledged that it was not ideal. However, the shelter manager from Siem Reap stated there was no possible alternative due to budget and space constraints.

In research into the role of hostels and temporary accommodation, Busch-Geertsema and Sahlin (2007) posit that sharing spaces such as the bathroom and kitchen increases the risks of in-house conflicts in comparison to homes that are self-contained or where residents have agreed to share space based upon friendship or family relations. Negotiating space and carrying out typically private tasks in a collective sphere was challenging for the women when they first came to stay in the safe shelter. For Lina, her initial difficulties related to issues of judgement and trust:

‘When I first came here it was difficult because I am used to living alone with my family. Here everyone can see everything and it’s easy to judge or criticise. It’s not bad after you’ve been here for some time, but at first you don’t know who you can trust’.

Maly had similar feelings as she was fearful of being subjected to judgement in the same way she had been by her husband and his family:

‘You do not trust at first because you don’t want to be judged. You feel embarrassed because of your problems. How can we know we are not being looked down on? When our husbands and families’ have already looked us down on.

Given that shame ‘bites at the roots of self-esteem’ (Giddens, 1984: 55), women were particularly sensitive to further judgment in the safe shelter. Other women and staff were an audience, a ‘moral community’, through which shame had to the potential to be experienced. However, after some time, sharing space became normalised and the expectation of being shamed by the other women living in the safe shelter dissipated. In her interview, Thida explained that the women were patient with one another and avoided recreating the dynamics of conflict they had experienced in their homes.

“We know we have to be patient with one another. We have come from the problems; we do not want to argue or fight one another. We have to be kind.”

Once the women had overcome feelings of judgement, they were able to seek comfort, advice and solace from one another. Socheata was asked how she felt about living with the other women, to which she responded:

“I can say I feel good about that. We share the problem that we had faced to each other. We share with each other the ideas of how to find the solution with our problems. Some cases are really similar to my case. We feel like we escaped from the domestic violence. So when we stay here we get safety. The women are the same as

me... if I stay outside my trouble cannot be solved. And I will meet with some problems.”

Sharing solidarity with the other women was a recurrent feature throughout the interviews and all of the women echoed Socheata’s sentiment. For example:

“We can help each other. We do not go outside a lot so at least we have each other. We can support to each other and give each other love. For me, I left two of my children behind. That is so hard for me, but it is best for my children. But, sometimes I feel bad and I miss them. I can talk about that with the women.” [Channou]

“The other women in here also faced this problem. We talk to each other and share our stories. We feel so so sorry to each other. We hug and cry with each other. We talk about our experience to each other. Moreover, we try to support and encourage each other” [Sopheap]

Socialising with the other women provided opportunities to meet women who had faced similar difficulties. This gave the women affirmation that they were not alone and that their problems were not a result of their own behaviour. This is particularly important because many of the women cited an inability to disclose their situation to other people in their community prior to coming to the safe shelter. In instances where they did speak to family members, friends and law enforcement about what was happening, they were often silenced or dissuaded from seeking help.

At the time of research, Socheata was the only woman staying in the shelter in Phnom Penh. In her interviews, she fondly spoke of times when other women were staying in the shelter. Socheata explained how she had felt happier when other women had stayed in the shelter and now, as the only adult, she had nobody to interact with.

‘Now, there are no other women here. There are just children. When other women stayed here I really liked it. It was like a family! I never had experience like that before. We could share stories and ideas, help one another. Now I am the only adult here... there is nobody for me to talk with. Sometimes I feel lonely. When I think about my problem, there is nobody for me to share it with. I miss the other women sometimes’.

In keeping with other research on sharing spaces in temporary accommodation (Sprague, 1991; Kellett & Moore, 2003; Datta, 2005) Socheata described how the kitchen acted as a site of socialisation for her and the other women because they would prepare food collectively on a daily basis. Cooking was a source of enjoyment for the women and therefore created an upbeat and happy atmosphere that facilitated the women’s interactions.

‘Every day we would cook together. That was our duty but we enjoyed it. We could laugh and joke and share stories. I realised there were many cases like mine. It was never quiet in the kitchen!’

The women’s narratives of finding comfort with one another inside the shelter illustrate how they themselves can contribute to building individual resilience as a collective. For years, the women’s voices went unheard but, by living with one another, they are able to share their stories and be listened to. It also raises important questions about the ontological security of women like Socheata, who is not only cut off from the outside world, but also isolated within the shelter because she is the only adult there.

Decoration and Bareness

The women were asked about whether they decorated their bedrooms in the safe shelter. All of the women stated they did not, however several explained they would like to if they could.

This shows how despite the fact the women in the CWCC shelters were safe from violence; they were not safe to be themselves.

There were several barriers to the women decorating. First, sharing private spaces (such as bedrooms) prevented the women from feeling like the space was their own and acted as a barrier to the women decorating. Discussing the sharing of bedrooms, Lina highlighted, for example, that the placement of objects, photos and furnishings would involve negotiating a space for each woman and could lead to unwanted conflict and arguments. As a result, she minimized her own desire to engage in decorative practices so as to avoid any chances of conflict:

‘We share our rooms. So what if I want to decorate but another woman does not want to? Or I choose to post pictures the other people in my room do not like. We do not want to fight and we do our best to avoid problems. We want a peaceful place. So it is easier if we do not decorate because then there is nothing to disagree about’.

Second, the women had reservations about decorating their bedrooms because the shelter was a temporary place of stay. All the women were waiting for the courts to process their cases and reach a decision, but none of the women knew when this would be. As such, the women were uncertain about when they would leave the shelter. Lina made this point,

‘I do not know when I have to leave here so I do not want to decorate my room. This is just a temporary place’.

Other women echoed Lina’s sentiment about the bare walls reflecting the impermanency of their stay. Even Maly who had her own bedroom stated that she had no desire to decorate, despite it being her own private space. This was because she did not want her children to view the shelter as home. Instead, not decorating allowed her to see the safe shelter as an

impermanent place. Not decorating was a way of asserting agency and control amid the limbo of uncertainty about when she would leave.

‘In my home, yes... I think it will make my home feel beautiful and calm... But here, no. This place is just temporary and we do not know how long we will stay here. I do not want my children to think this is their home because when we leave they will not understand and they will be upset. Posting pictures will make it seem like we are staying here and I do not want to think that and I do not want my children to think that. We will leave when my case is finished’.

The women’s feelings about the walls reflecting the temporary nature of the safe shelter is in keeping with findings from research by Parrott (2005) into the material culture of hope for patients in a medium secure psychiatric unit. Parrott’s (2005) research explored how residents relate to their accommodation through the decoration of their personal space. In some cases, patients refused to decorate their bedrooms (although they were free to do so) because of a perception that fixing objects to the walls symbolised being fixed in the institution. Many of the residents did not consider it their home because the unit was a transient place, and neither did they wish to make the place feel like a home. Instead, the affirmation of temporality through a lack of decorative practices asserted the confident belief that their exit would be imminent and they would soon return to a place they considered to be home: a place that they would choose to decorate because it was their home.

In the same way participants in Parrott’s (2005) research stated they would decorate their future homes, Maly expressed how she would engage in decorative practices in her future home because it would “make home feel beautiful and calm”. Similarly, Puthea expressed how she had never decorated her past homes and had no desire to decorate her shelter bedroom, but would like to decorate her future home.

“I do not have something to decorate with. I do not want to decorate in here and I did not decorate in my home before. I just came to here with some documents like birth certificate for my children and some clothes. One more thing, why would I decorate? I am a farmer, there is no need to decorate my home like people who live in the city or like a rich family! But in the future, yes, because I have the hope for my future. That one day I can make the good life for my children. I think it will feel so peaceful and it will make our home beautiful” [Puthea]

Puthea equated decorating with the urbanised and wealthy. As a farmer, she did not fit into these social groups. However, her desire to decorate in the future was linked to her hopes and aspirations. Practices like decorating did not fit with Puthea’s current perception of self, but were a goal to strive towards. In addition, Puthea mentioned how decorating would instil a sense of peace in her future home. Calmness and peace in relation to decoration were also mentioned numerous times in the interviews with other women who wanted to decorate their bedrooms in the shelter. Channou expressed how she would like to add pictures of a natural view, trees or forest and that it would make her feel ‘fresh and happy’. Similarly, Socheata wanted to decorate with paintings, as she explained,

“It looks so nice right? It can make a relaxed environment for my son and me, and he can feel happy when he sees pictures. With some paintings or pictures of fresh views. I think photographs are nice but one thing is I would not want to put photos with my husband. Just photos of my family and my son. I do not want to think about him [husband] or remember him any more. I want to forget him because he forgets us already. He cannot give me anything good so why should I think about him? If we have something to nice to look at... if the place is more fresh... I think we can feel better in here”.

Socheata was in favour of decorating her shared bedroom and had clear ideas about what she would (and would not) like to see on the walls. This was a reflection of her circumstances and

current personal identity. Socheata believed that having paintings of scenery and photographs of her family would contribute to creating a therapeutic environment for her and her son. In addition, Socheata's affirmation that she did not want to see photographs of her husband was a reflection of how she was moving on from her relationship with him. Puthea expressed a similar sentiment about photographs of her husband, explaining "most photos are with my husband so that will make me feel bad". As Bal (2009:230) asserted, family photographs can represent 'the family as both affective haven and prison, as the familial as a denial of otherness'. For the participants, photographs with their abusive husbands reminded them of the prison they were seeking to break free from.

Socheata's response also aligns with ideas about decoration in other forms of temporary accommodation. For example, research on experiences of student housing in the U.K (Thomsen, 2007) found that students highly appreciated being able to personalise their room through decorative practices because it helped create a sense of home. Similarly, research by Moore et al (1995) on experiences of being homeless in London shows how residents of squats were able to express their personal identity by decorating their accommodation, thus feeling more at home. The squatters were freer to decorate their personal space in comparison to individuals living in formal accommodation such as hotels and hostels. In these spaces, rules dictated the residents could not decorate. In my doctoral research the women also cited rules and the ambiguity surrounding them as other reasons for not decorating.

"But, I do not know if the organisation permits us to do that." [Channou]

"If we can decorate I think it is nice. But, I do not know if we can do that. Nobody does the decoration so I do not know if we can. I do not want to ask to them

[CWCC]. I must respect the rules." [Thida]

For one participant, Sopheap, interior design and decoration were hobbies that she was keen to engage with.

“This place belongs to the organization, so I cannot decorate the room. I think it will affect the other people. Maybe they do not want the decoration. I want to decorate or design my room. I would like to do that here. Even if there are many people and it can be hard to organise... I can design it and put everything in order. It's my skill... When it looks beautiful I feel happy. I get the warm feeling; you know? Because it looks so beautiful! I can feel relaxed and I can enjoy using my skill.”

While Sopheap was aware of the conflicts that could arise from decorating, she was also eager to use her skill. It was difficult for the women to feel a sense of purpose or valued while living in the shelter, but engaging in decorative practices (and other hobbies) has the potential to help the women reconnect with their sense of self. However, the strict rules of the shelter blocked Sopheap's ability to enact her own identity and personhood. Of relevance to this argument is Gunter's (2000) work on private home spaces, which discusses how details of design make personal identity statements. He noted that the types and arrangements of furniture, floor covering, art, plants, electronic equipment, lighting, colour and a variety of decorative artefacts that we use in our homes help to create a sense of personal identity. In addition, Sopheap's desire to pursue her own hobbies shares synergies with other research on women's shelters. For example, in research on women's shelters in the U.S (Welcome, 2010), residents were asked about what they would like to spend more time doing in the shelter, to which all responded personal interests and hobbies. Similarly, Smith et al's (2010) research on coping strategies for women survivors of violence found that engaging in activities (such as arts and crafts), both alone and with others, acts as a release for women and can help reduce stress.

Socheata also had a desire to engage in her pre-shelter-life hobbies. Socheata expressed a passion for make-up and clothes and revealed how not having access to these items left her feeling as if she was not herself:

‘I love doing make-up and choosing my clothes! Here, I cannot do that. I did not have time to think about bringing those things but I wish I had. That is what makes me who I am. At home, everyone knows I love fashion and making myself up. Right now, I am not me. Actually, I am embarrassed to go back there [hometown] because I am different. Before I was beautiful, now I am not...’

Socheata was able to connect engaging with make-up and clothes to her personal identity. Without these items, it was difficult for her to construct and maintain the self-identity she had pre-safe shelter. Socheata was unable to engage with practices that would help enhance her ontological security. Like Socheata, many of the women had come to the shelter without any possessions. When the women arrived they were each given a mat for sleeping on, a bed sheet and a metal box for their possessions. Some of the women had time to pack official documents (birth certificate, identity card) and/or clothes when coming to the shelter. Others had only the clothes on their back. One woman came to the safe shelter without any shoes. For many of the women, their metal storage box remained empty because they had no possessions to keep inside.

However, for a participant named Nipha, the metal box was a home for her most prized possession: a photograph. Out of all the women, Nipha was the only participant that had a photograph. It was of her family and she kept it locked away in her metal box in her shared bedroom. For Nipha, having a safe place to lock away her photograph was significant because it gave her assurance that her photograph was safe. Research indicates that meaningful items of personal value can help to comfort residents living in temporary accommodation (Lewinson, 2010) and, as Lewinson (2010) noted, this small item of personal value helped comfort Nipha. In her own words:

‘I really love photos, I can abandon everything but my photos, particularly my old photos. But my husband burned my clothes and my photos. I have only a small

photograph of my family, and I really love it. When I look at it I feel happy. But I don't even know if they allow me to stick it in my room or not'.

Nipha's photograph was 'a portable kit of images that bears witness to [a family's] connectedness' (Sontag, 1977:8) in the same way as it was in periods of mass industrialisation and urban migration. However, Nipha's uncertainty about displaying her photograph illustrates the lack of control she had over her own decision-making processes. She wanted to display her photograph but felt unable to do so because she was living under the ruling of the safe shelter. Nipha expressed how her photograph gave her feelings of normality and helped her remember an identity that was not characterised by violence. It projected a future self because it allowed her to imagine a happy, secure and reliable family without violence. Rose (2003) notes in her work on family photographs and domestic spacings that family photographs can play an important role in transforming a house into a 'home'. Photographs can also stretch domestic spatiality beyond the walls of the home and bring the presence of the person in the picture into the home. In Nipha's case, her photograph connected her to her parents, bringing their presence and the positive feelings associated with them inside the walls of the safe shelter.

Research conducted by Pable (2012) in Florida, America argues that the inclusion of possessions in temporary accommodation can assist with psychological recovery and reengagement with society. Pable argues that shelter designs should embrace the importance of residents' possessions. In Nipha's case, there could be psychological benefits to having her photograph in constant view, yet this was restricted by an uncertainty of whether she could do so and the potential jealousies and tensions that might arise if she did. Across the interviews then, possessions held an ambivalent position in women's lives in the shelter, as sources of tension yet comfort, as present reminders of home life, or absent presences of a hoped for future in the after-life of the shelter.

Conclusions

This chapter's primary purpose has been to offer valuable insights into women's safe shelters as emotionally safe spaces, and to shift discussions away from focusing on the physical safety of women and give attention to women's emotional wellbeing. In the first section, there was an exploration of how the women's lack of movement outside of the shelter impacted them, as well as how they negotiated these boundaries. This included virtual intimacies sustained through contact by mobile phone. The chapter then moved on to discuss the everyday unfreedoms inside the shelter, including the structuring of time, the women's roles as mothers, the sharing of space and decoration and bareness in the shelter.

The data reveals that the participating organisation, the CWCC, places focus on physical safety, yet gives very little consideration to the women's emotional safety – framed here as ontological security. While women need immediate physical safety, their emotional wellbeing must also be considered when constructing a safe space because the focus on efficiency, rules and regulations compromises the women's ontological security and healing processes.

Shelters in Cambodia are commonly viewed as the 'last resort' by survivors because of their separation of women, literally and metaphorically, outside of 'normal' society. Despite a strengthening of women's legal rights in the country, Cambodian society persists as a safe space for perpetrators and it is domestic violence survivors who are spatially excluded from it to ensure their safety from injury and even murder. By sequestering women away to undisclosed locations, intimate partner violence is once again shunned out of public view and, instead, becomes privatised to and hidden inside the shelter. As such, women embody isolation and shame much in the same ways as they did in their violent homes.

Just as Sen (1995: 125) affirms the general existence of 'systematic disparities in the freedoms that men and women enjoy', these injustices are manifest in women's shelter stays.

First, they describe being ‘cut off’ from the outside world and judged when they do enter it, and second, their interviews demonstrate how their bodily integrity is compromised by a non-negotiable onus on rules. On this latter front, survivors are too often being excluded from decision-making processes in the shelter and treated as passive recipients of physical safety. So while women were safe from domestic violence, survivors did not feel freedom to express themselves, their needs, and identities in the shelter. Best practice guidelines to enable this were also not followed given resource and space constraints. In their guidelines, UN Women (2013) note for example, that where possible, ‘facilities should have space and infrastructure which allows for individual privacy, reflection, expression as well as collective activities’. This includes, inter alia, a bedroom for each woman with her children, a bathroom shared by no more than two rooms/women; and adequate storage for women’s belongings such as on-site storage units.

In conclusion, the design and running of safe shelter provision in Cambodia does not necessarily afford freedom from violence, but rather a punitive safety from it, which curtails women’s freedom of movement and autonomy further. Making the argument that safety and freedom are not coterminous, this thesis contributes to recent feminist scholarship in geography and aligned disciplines focused on the significance and workings of safe space for marginalised groups. The chapter complicates singular viewpoints of safe spaces as enabling environments, which can challenge oppressive forces both inside and outside of their walls. Thus, I argue that granting women greater freedom, autonomy and inclusivity in decision-making processes is key to facilitating ontological security. This thesis calls for geographers (and beyond) to give greater focus to women’s safe shelters as a safe space, taking into consideration how spaces are constructed – in both tangible and intangible ways.

Chapter Seven: Enhancing Choice and Capabilities for Women Survivors of Violence in Cambodia

“I want to talk with more people, to have more freedom...to do stuff I choose. We have rules here I have to respect. Sometimes I do not want to respect the rules and do something I choose. But I cannot. If I do not respect the rules I cannot stay here.”

The quote above from Thida emphasises her desire to be able to choose. Sen (2005) argues that individual choice is what lies at the heart of development and it should be the aim, the principle and the primary outcome itself. This chapter draws on Sen’s (2005) concept of ‘unfreedoms’, using Kleine’s (2010) Choice Framework to operationalise the capabilities approach. The findings in this chapter are taken from interviews with women who accessed services at two local women’s NGOs in Cambodia. Whereas the previous empirical chapter focused on unfreedoms for women living in CWCC safe shelters, this chapter examines the different services provided by the CWCC and Banteay Srei. While all of the sample from the CWCC stayed in a safe shelter, only 3 out of 10 women who accessed Banteay Srei chose to have a short stay (up to one week) in the transit shelter. The chapter continues the survivor-centred approach of the first chapter by centralising the individual narratives and experiences

of the participants. The data reveals that the women's capabilities were significantly diminished by their experiences of violence. It also shows that the participating NGOs, in their current form, are not well equipped enough to raise all capabilities. Instead, while some capabilities are enhanced, others are diminished or left unaddressed. The intention is not to compare the different organisations and their services, but to explore the different approaches implemented by NGOs that provide violence against women services in Cambodia.

The structure of this chapter is as follows. First, women's experiences of counselling are explored. Next, the focus turns to skills training and the different approaches the organisations implement to enhance women's economic independence. This is followed by a section on housing and home. For the women staying in the CWCC shelters, this includes their conceptualisations of home and their aspirations and concerns about their future homes. The narratives with the participants from Banteay Srei hone in on their current housing situations. The chapter closes with conclusions.

Counselling

Research has made clear links between women's experiences of violence and increased rates of depression, trauma symptoms and self-harm (Cascardi et al, 1999; Golding 1999; Humphreys & Thiara, 2003). In addition, research in psychology has indicated there are variations in the rates of women's depression depending on where they access services. For example, depression was found to be higher in refuge populations in the USA in comparison to women in Accident and Emergency and psychiatric patients (Cascardi et al, 1999). In the UN Women (2013:11) guidelines on shelter services it is stated that counselling and therapeutic support should "develop survivor understanding of the typically complex dynamics associated with abuse and leaving situations of violence, as well as assistance to overcome the traumatic effects of it." With this in mind, this section of the chapter will explore the women's experiences of counselling with the two different organisations.

CWCC

In the CWCC shelters the women would meet with a counsellor on-site. The amount of times the women met with a counsellor varied. The shelter counsellors explained this was because the women were assessed on a case-by-case basis. The counsellors in the CWCC shelters perceived their work as providing on-going support and advice to women about their experiences of violence and their current situation, as well as how to move forward. The counsellor in the shelter in Banteay Meanchey had completed a qualification in counselling. However, the counsellor in the shelter in Siem Reap had no formal qualifications. It was normal practice for each shelter to have one counsellor that worked full-time and was available to meet with shelter residents during the week. However, at the time of research, there was no counsellor in the shelter in Phnom Penh. The shelter manager stated this was because there was only one adult staying in the shelter at that time (Socheata) and therefore it was not cost effective to have a counsellor on site. Socheata described how she had met with a counsellor when she first came to stay in the shelter and this had been a positive experience:

“Talking with her helps me. I can try to find the good way. She helps me to stay strong and remember the positive things and that my child needs me. I cannot give up because my child needs me. I want to get divorced from my husband and the organization can help me with that. First, she [the counselor] checked if I want to go back to my husband or get the divorce. I told her I wanted to get the divorce. She accepted my choice. She told me if I can resolve these problems then I should go back to my husband because it is best to be a family. And my children need a family. But I told her I cannot resolve these problems. I am afraid if I go back my husband will abuse me with the violence and not just the words.”

The quote above from Socheata highlights how several constraints were placed on her freedom of choice. Socheata wanted to divorce her husband and was aware this would be

possible with the assistance of the CWCC. This is because her contact with the CWCC increased her social capital and could help her navigate the structural conditions surrounding divorce. When the counsellor asked Socheata about whether she wanted to get divorced she was granted a glimpse of, as Kleine (2010) defines it, a ‘use of choice’. Socheata was able to experience this use of choice because the CWCC had increased her agency by providing her with a range of resources. However, the counsellor had also advised Socheata that she should try to resolve the situation with her husband because it is ‘best to be a family’. This shows how the actual achievement of choice is dependent upon the structures it is operating within and how these can conflict with one another.

As Socheata’s quote shows, while the CWCC is a structure that has the capacity to help women get divorced, the delivery of services is subjective and does not always exist outside of the dominant discourses present in society. In this case, the counsellor was promoting the Cambodian norm of keeping the family together and maintaining harmony. This is in line with Kleine (2010) who identified discourses as a structure that impacts individual degrees of empowerment and, in turn, capabilities. While Socheata was not swayed in her decision about divorce, the experiences of other women documented later on in this chapter illustrate how dominant discourses can impact degrees of empowerment and a woman’s ability to freely choose.

In her interview, Socheata explained how she had struggled with decision-making prior to living in the shelter. This was because her trauma and the fallout from her separation with her husband continuously clouded her judgement. In her writing on violence and capabilities Nussbaum (2005) explains how women’s emotional development is blighted by the fear and anxiety that surrounds violence. This fear and anxiety seeps into all aspects of everyday life and curtails a woman’s ability to reason practically. Though separated from her husband, Socheata had been living in fear of him and his new partner for several months because they had verbally threatened her about violence. However, removed from all the sources of anxiety

present outside of the shelter, Socheata was able to focus on her emotional wellbeing. As Socheata's narratives show, the counsellor facilitated growth in her capacity to practically reason and make decisions about her future. Counselling increased Socheata's sense of self-efficacy because it helped her believe she could pursue a future without her husband; it allowed her to envisage how she could use and achieve her choices. However this capability was only momentarily enhanced. Without the counsellor around, Socheata felt ambivalent about her ability to 'stand alone':

“Before, there was a counselor in the shelter. I do still need the counselor so I would like to have some more time with her. The counselor helped me to make decisions. Talking with her helped me a lot because I could talk through my emotions and try to find solutions to my problem. The counselor helped me to believe I can stand alone and I do not have to stay with husband. Now I am not sure how to do that because I have not talked with her about that. I am scared for the future”.

Socheata's narrative illustrates how sense and use of choice can be fluid and contingent on timing and context. Accessing the counsellor had given Socheata confidence in how she would pursue a life without her husband, however her degrees of empowerment were altered when the staffing of the CWCC shelter changed. These changes had occurred because of the influence of wider structures in society. As the CWCC shelter manager explained, there had been a significant shift in media, government and funder attention towards focusing on young girls at risk of violence and trafficking. As a result, the CWCC were required to change their focus in order to secure funding and align with dominant discourses and Socheata was left without access to a vital service that could help enhance her capabilities.

In addition, while Socheata stated that she felt able to 'stand alone', this was only when she had been accessing counselling services, highlighting a contradiction and her dependency on the counsellor. Kleine (2010) defines agency as possessing a variety of resources, both material and non-material, and these resources are impacted by structures. Socheata had

access to the resources cited by Kleine (2010) and therefore had increased agency in some capacity. However, Socheata's agency was also curtailed because the type of counselling she had received had created feelings of dependency, therefore reducing her agency and ability to act independently and make her own decisions. This illustrates how the structure of the CWCC and the lack of training for staff working within the safe shelter impacts women's agency, degrees of empowerment and capabilities.

Research has documented how counseling programs are most effective when they are engaged with for longer time periods (UN Women, 2013). Socheata recognised this need for further counseling but expressed that she felt it inappropriate to ask the shelter manager because "I think it is not respectful to ask. They are already helping me so much." Feelings of indebtedness were a common theme throughout the interviews, but Socheata was the only participant to mention it in relation to counseling. These feelings of indebtedness are further explored later on in this chapter.

Like Socheata, other women reported positive experiences of counseling. They stated it reduced their levels of anger and stress and helped them to feel calm. These findings are in line with other research that suggests individual counseling while staying in a shelter can support women's self-esteem and ability to cope (Campbell et al., 1995; Garza, 2002; Bennett et al., 2004; Lyon et al., 2008b; McNamara et al., 2008). Of importance here is Sopheap's experience of counselling. Sopheap had been staying in the shelter for one month at the time of interview and expressed how the counsellor was the most valuable service for her.

"My favorite service is the counselor. When I met with the counselor, I feel a release from my troubles. The organization encourages me and gave good advice to me. They told me that women also can stand alone and can do everything. The organization did not tell me I must get the divorce, but I can choose and I want to get divorce. This is my choice and my freedom. CWCC gives me some good advice. The

CWCC did not tell me to get divorced, but they told me it depends on myself. But, if I want to get divorce, CWCC will support me. I feel supported with my decisions”.

The CWCC counsellor in the Banteay Meanchey shelter remained impartial and encouraged Sopheap to make her own decisions about her future. This illustrates how the combination of structures and an adequate resource portfolio can facilitate women’s choices and, in turn, enhance capabilities. The impartial advice of the counsellor allowed Sopheap to make her own decisions based on relevant and accurate information. As Sopheap stated, her ability to choose was her own freedom and, as Sen (1987:2) writes, ‘freedom of choice is quite central to leading a good life’. Sopheap’s narrative also highlights how there needs to be clear guidelines about delivery of services across the CWCC shelters. As discussed later on in this chapter, other women’s narratives show significant discrepancies between counselors and the advice they received.

Feminists have advocated for the use of ‘peer counselling’ in shelters because it can be a vehicle for empowerment (Murray, 1988). Peer counselling places women at the centre of their experiences and acknowledges they are the experts and know their situation better than anyone else. It discourages counsellors from dominating power relationships and solving a woman’s problems for her. Instead, it is a peer counsellor’s job to “get her in touch with those answers” needed to live an independent life (Murray, 1988; 82). Peer counsellors are dissuaded from encouraging the choice of one option over another, for example staying or leaving a partner. This is because assuming a role of advisor has the potential to reproduce a relationship of power and control similar to the one being left behind. While Sopheap had not engaged with peer counselling specifically, the placement of herself at the centre of her decision-making made her feel in control and supported with whatever route she chose. This is in line with Kleine’s (2010) suggestion that secondary outcomes of being able to choose can be non-material and may include having more voice and more autonomy. Indeed, Sopheap’s experiences of counselling had given her greater use of choice, as well as a new

found hope about how she would achieve her choices. In addition, counselling enhanced Sopheap's capability of control over her own environment. This links to Giddens (1991) concept of ontological security whereby a stable mental state is derived from a sense of continuity in one's life. This stable mental state is dependent on an individual's ability to give meaning to their lives. As Sopheap's narrative shows, this meaning is found in experiencing positive and stable emotions and feeling in control of decision-making.

The other women staying in the shelter in Banteay Meanchey echoed Sopheap's narratives of a supportive counseling service. They also reported how the counselor was helping them to understand the law and become better informed about their rights. Much research has acknowledged how raising awareness about rights can act as protective factor against violence (Tomasevski, 1993; Boyle et al, 2009; UN Women, 2013; Stern & Mirembe, 2017) because it enhances women's capabilities of practical reason and affiliation. None of the women staying in the shelter in Banteay Meanchey showed signs of being coerced into returning to their partners/husband. However, the participants in the shelters in Siem Reap and Phnom Penh expressed how the counselor had encouraged them to reconcile their relationships. Again, this highlights how there is a need for specific training and standardised practices for staff as recommended in the UN Women (2013) shelter guidelines. The following example of Lina illustrates this.

When talking about her future with her husband, Lina explained how counseling had changed her desire to get divorced. Lina had been staying in the shelter for four months and, upon entry, "had a high demand to divorce from him [husband]". Lina described how at first she was angry with her husband and, even though she still despised her husband's behaviour, she felt guilty about separating her family.

"When I talk with the counselor I can find the good way. When I first came to here I was very upset and angry. I hate my husband. But, now the counselor tries to help me to find the good way. She uses calm words and I can share with her about my

experiences. First I was in so much trouble with my emotions. But after I have been and consulted her, I can feel better. She said that she doesn't want to see every family is broken; it is so pity for the children. The counselor still reminds me that every family should not break out. The counselor told me that what happened, it is the normal relations in every family. And I should keep calm. If I can have any possible way to mediate the relationship, I must do so. But I hate my husband's behavior.”

Lina’s narrative about the counselor stating violence is normal is consistent with other research on women’s attitudes towards violence against women in Cambodia. The National Survey on Women’s Health and Life Experiences in Cambodia (Fulu, 2015) reported that almost half (49%) of all female respondents agreed that violence against women is justified in certain circumstances (for example not completing household work adequately, disobeying a husband and being unfaithful). Lina’s experiences show how these attitudes continue to be pervasive in Cambodian society, even within violence against women services. Furthermore, Lina’s experiences of attitudes towards divorce are in line with other findings on attitudes about reconciliation and divorce in Cambodia. Research by Brickell (2015) on local reconciliation practices argues that such an intent focus on a moralistic commitment to harmony and the family unit prioritises the perceived interests of the collective at the family, community and national level. This is over women’s individual needs. In the same vein, research (Hayati et al, 2011) on physical and sexual violence in rural Indonesia identified that women are often stuck between choosing to access help and remaining silent for the sake of family harmony. Other research with Asian women living in the U.S has drawn attention to this dilemma, describing how attitudes about harmonious relationships place an implicit value on avoiding conflicts (Yoshioka et al, 2001). This is because it can bring guilt and shame to the family (McLaughlin & Braun, 1998; Root & Brown, 2014). Lina found herself subordinating her own needs and prioritised the idea of maintaining the familial unit, as she explained:

“He called me on my telephone and he asked to see his children. I thought about what the counselor explained me and I told him I want to meet him. I am not supposed to have contact with him. It is the rules of staying here. But he was sorry to me and he knew his fault. He said good words to me. And he asked me to be together. But I am having trouble to decide, because many women who have the same experience as me never want to get back [together]. I try to think about the counselor and what she advised me; we should not break up our family.”

Lina was deliberating about conceding to her husband’s wishes of reconciling and this decision was directly informed by her discussions with the counsellor. Lina had experienced two years of violence at the hands of her husband prior to contacting the CWCC and had often considered fleeing to a shelter. When she did leave, it was because her husband had attempted to kill her with an axe. He also used the same axe to destroy their small wooden home. Lina’s four children, three of whom were staying with her in the shelter, had witnessed these abhorrent events. She explained how witnessing violence, as well as fleeing their home, had negatively impacted the children’s wellbeing. However, in the shelters, children did not have access to support services such as a counselor. Groves et al (2018) describe children who witness violence as ‘silent victims’ that are commonly overlooked and under-recognised. The UN women (2013) guidelines on shelter practices advocates for the benefits of counseling for children who accompany their mothers to shelters. This is to help respond to any effects of witnessing and/or experiencing violence and to build children’s ability to manage the ongoing transitions in their lives. This must be considered by organisations like the CWCC who are housing women and their children.

Lina’s experiences shed light on how there can be variation amongst services within the same organisation. This highlights a need for organisations to implement adequate training schemes and standardised practice guidelines across their different service locations (UN Women, 2013). Furthermore, Lina’s story shows her there is a need to engage with perpetrators,

particularly if reconciliation is encouraged. Lina's husband had faced no legal consequences for his actions and his behaviour had not changed because he was not required to engage with any services or counseling. Research in the Cambodia context on perpetrator programs shows that such services have the capacity to change men's attitudes and behaviour related to violence (Brereton & Vannak Lim, 2008). This is because unchallenged attitudes about power and domination lie at the roots of perpetration of violence against women (Lilja, 2012). Given that Lina's husband had made little attempt to change since her departure, the risks associated with Lina and her children returning were very real.

Banteay Srei

All women that contact Banteay Srei for any type of assistance are offered counselling. Banteay Srei employs one female counsellor with a university qualification, though the manager at the office explained that there were usually two counsellors so women could have a choice of whom they speak to. While none of the women at Banteay Srei spoke of negative experiences with the counsellor, guidelines on violence against women services emphasise the importance of women having access to more than one counsellor (UN Women, 2013). Talking with a counsellor can be a daunting and traumatising experience and therefore women need to be given greater choice about whom they counsel with. The negative consequences of access to poorly executed counselling were recorded in the women's narratives of staying in CWCC shelters. Affording women more choice about whom they counsel with is likely to increase greater degrees of empowerment and, in turn, enhance capabilities. The shelter manager at Banteay Srei highlighted this sentiment and explained that the organisation was in the process of hiring another counsellor so women could have more choice. As the manager stated, "sometimes they [the women] do not like that counsellor. If we have more than one counsellor women who come here can choose who they speak to".

The Banteay Srei counsellor was based in the office on the outskirts of Battambang city Friday to Saturday during working hours. However, in her interview, the counsellor explained that she was also available for crisis calls if a woman was in desperate need. All the participants reported meeting with the counsellor several times (between 3-5) while Banteay Srei assisted them with other services, such as facilitating their divorce proceedings with the court. The importance of counselling was emphasised by the women who described it as a vital service. The women's narratives about counselling were all positive and they centred on changes in their feelings and emotional wellbeing. The participants explained how before they accessed a counsellor they often felt stressed, angry, confused, scared and upset. However, after several sessions of counselling, they found themselves calm enough to 'think clearly' and 'choose the right path [Por Sivorn]'. The women explained how they had often felt silenced or unheard and meeting with the counsellor made them feel as if they were being listened to. For many of the women, it was the first time they had felt like anyone cared about their circumstances.

As an example, Pich, 46 years old, had been married for 17 years before accessing Banteay Srei's services. Pich talked of how she had been a confident person with pride before her relationship with her husband. However, after years of psychological and economic abuse, Pich described how she had felt like she was a slave to her husband because he abused her verbally, controlled her time, refused to contribute to household and family chores and withheld his salary. When she came to Banteay Srei Pich was asked what she wanted to which she replied divorce. Banteay Srei agreed to help Pich and completed an assessment about her situation. She was then offered counselling. This was an invaluable resource for Pich, who explained:

"They counsel with me. They counsel me with everything. Before my husband abused my feelings so bad. They asked me questions about my feelings and guided

me with everything. And they always cared about of my feelings, like I can say everything to release my stress. I feel like they did not judge me, they cared and they listened to me speak. Before that nobody listened to me because we should not talk about the bad in our relationships. It is not our culture. That was so helpful for me and after that counseling I started to feel more confident. My feelings started to get better because of that help. And, one more thing... I can come back to here anytime. I did not need to but I know I can if I want to. If I need the counselor they will provide me with that.. I know I have the support of this organisation to talk about my feelings. That is important to me.”

The importance of counselors providing empathetic and non-judgmental support to women affected by violence has been documented (Sullivan, 2012). This holds particular meaning in situations like Pich’s where strict cultural norms and codes create a culture of silence. Of other significance here is Pich’s ability to return to counseling whenever she felt she needed it. Banteay Srei’s transit shelter and on-site office offered Pich and other women access to a safe space where they were free to discuss their lives and decisions without judgment. Other women also expressed how they were pleased they were affiliated with Banteay Srei because they knew they had somewhere to turn if they needed support. Whereas women staying in the CWCC shelters were required to engage in counseling as part of the conditions of their stay, Banteay Srei allowed women to choose if they wanted counseling. Furthermore, because counseling was not tied to a stay in a shelter, the women at Banteay Srei could continue to access counseling services even after their cases had been resolved by the court. Pich’s narrative above reveals how her capability of affiliation had been enhanced. As Nussbaum (2005) writes a central tenet of affiliation, Pich was able to engage in various forms of social interaction. Counselling gave her the social bases of self-respect and non-humiliation in ways she had not experienced before, and allowed her to understand that her ‘worth is equal to that of others’ (Nussbaum, 2005:80). Such affiliation meant Pich was able to access ongoing support even after the violence had ended and she had divorced from her husband.

The participants from Banteay Srei highly valued the service of counseling. However, they also recognised that counseling alone could not resolve their problems. A participant named Vanna, 49 years old had, summed this up:

“I have to earn the money by myself. And now it is the dry season, so I cannot earn the money. Thus, my children cannot pay attention to their studying because we do not have enough food to eat and sometimes they must help me with other work. Moreover, my children need some materials to study. And they do not have the bicycle to go to study. When I left my home I did not get anything. Some people give some food to me. This organization did not give me anything, when I got divorced. I can only counsel with them. That cannot help me with all my problems. When I left here, I had to make money.”

Vanna’s story shows how the outcomes for other family members and/or dependents must be considered when attempting to enhance capabilities. While Vanna and her children were able to live free from violence, she had sacrificed her economic stability and this had a direct impact on the quality of her life. Furthermore, while Vanna had been able to achieve her choice of divorce, this had left her without a home. Choosing divorce had come at the cost of her children’s choices, too; they were unable to choose their education over work because they needed to earn money to support the family. Banteay Srei had assisted Vanna with her divorce from her husband, but her quote above illustrates how counseling is not always a woman’s priority. Instead Vanna and her children had more urgent material needs that needed addressing. As Laing (2001:2) states in her work on exploring individual and group work approaches with women affected by violence, ‘practice in working with women needs to avoid the pitfalls of... pathologising the woman, assuming that ‘counseling’ alone is a sufficient response to domestic violence, or failing to locate responsibility for the violence with the perpetrator. Avoiding pitfalls such as these requires awareness of the values and perspectives underlying and informing practices in working with women’. This resonates with

Nussbaum (2005) who recognises that women's circumstances are affected by intersectional factors such as education and class, and these impact women's capabilities in varied ways. Thus, just because one capability has been enhanced, it does not lead to all capabilities being enhanced. As such, the next section of this chapter will explore how the participants' access to skills training did (or did not) contribute to enhancing their capabilities.

Skills training

CWCC

In the CWCC shelters the women were required to participate in skills training as a condition of their stay. The training was non-optional and was written into the women's daily schedules. All three of the shelters ran skills training in sewing and cooking. Each shelter had a room filled with sewing machines for the women to learn on and cooking skills were learned through preparing daily meals for the shelter residents and staff. The shelter staff perceived the skills training as a way to equip the women with the skills needed to live an economically independent life after leaving the shelter. As the shelter manager in Siem Reap explained,

“When they leave here they can support themselves. Here the women can learn new skills. They can learn how to sew and how to cook. After they leave here they can find employment with these skills.”

There is truth in the shelter manager's statement about women being able to secure employment from these skills. However, sewing and cooking were not new skills for the women staying in the CWCC shelters. In fact, all of the CWCC participants had previously worked selling foods in the market or sewing in the garment industry. Throughout Cambodian history Khmer women have traditionally dominated small-scale markets selling clothing, vegetables, fish, small cakes and other goods to eat. However, they are typically left out of

market trade involving high cost items such as gold and imported goods and, as such, market work for Khmer women involves high labour inputs in return for very small profit margins (Ledgerwood, 1996). Similarly, women who work in the garment industry are paid low wages and work long hours (CARE, 2017b).

Socheata had previously worked in several garment factories, including factories over the border in Thailand. This was because she had been forced to give up school at the age of 11 (her family did not have enough money to support her studies) and she did not have enough skills to find other employment. When asked how she felt about working in factories, Socheata recalled,

“The hours are so long and the money is so little. And we are Cambodian so we are not treated with respect. The conditions are so bad and we do not have any rights. If we complain or make a problem, they do not care because another person will take the job. Another problem is we are not supposed to cross the border like this. If we have permission, it’s okay, but otherwise it is dangerous. Sometimes I would leave for a long time and I could not take my son. My son had to stay with my family because he could not come with me. This hurt me so much and I felt guilty. But, if I worked in Thailand I can make money to support my son better. It was a hard decision to make.”

The quote above shows how Socheata had to engage in multiple trade-offs to support her family; she even had to risk being caught breaking the law to ensure she had an income. This is not uncommon, with Cambodia reported as the second largest migrant population serving the garment industry in Thailand (Clean Clothes Campaign, 2012). A report produced by the Clean Clothes Campaign (2012) highlights how migrant workers’ rights in Thailand are weakened because their registration status as a migrant worker is linked to the employer. Migrant workers can be deterred from employers that register their workers because it is a

lengthy process. Furthermore, employers often withhold workers' original documents, making it dangerous for them to venture outside of the factory premises. This is because they are vulnerable to extortion by police (Clean Clothes Campaign, 2012). As such, some migrants like Socheata choose to remain undocumented and work in factories with looser regulations, but this means lower wages and an increased vulnerability to exploitation, as well as the potential for being arrested, detained and deported. For these reasons, Socheata did not want to continue working in garment factories or making the dangerous crossing over the border to Thailand. In addition, she explained how the wages from garment factory work had been enough to support her and her family when she combined it with her husband's income, but alone it was not enough. Nevertheless, Socheata felt like she had no other options and would have to return to working in the garment industry when she exited the shelter.

“With sewing and cooking skills only, when I leave here, what will I do? I do not know exactly. I think I will go back [to the factory]. I must make money and support my family. But it is not enough. I feel so scared; I do not want to return to the factory. If I return to the factory my health will suffer”.

Socheata's statement about her health is in line with other research on the garment industry in Cambodia, which has identified the negative impacts of factory work on women's health (Heng & Bajracharya, 2017). Women working in factories face health and wellbeing issues related to social support, occupational safety and health, worker-management relations, nutrition, reproductive health and sexual harassment and violence (The Evidence Project, 2017). Research (Nishigaya, 2002; Webber et al, 2010) has also documented how women garment factory workers in Cambodia are more exposed to HIV/AIDS because they are forced to subsidise insufficient wages with direct or discretionary commercial sex occupations. By forcing women back into the garment industry, the CWCC were putting Socheata's capability of health at risk in the same ways it was prior to her stay in the shelter. These findings share similarities with research in South India on protective and risk factors

associated with violence (Rocca et al, 2009), which concludes that skills and training efforts that intend to help women be secure employment and be economically independent must consider the potential unintended consequences, such as an increased exposure to violence.

Socheata did not see value in sewing and cooking as skills training because these skills could not secure economic stability in her life outside of the shelter. However, Socheata enjoyed participating in sewing because ‘it is relaxing and this is my only skill, so I feel good when I do it’. Other women echoed this sentiment and enjoyed being able to participate in some form of hobby in the shelter. This shares synergies with research on art making in refugee camps, which posits that arts-based initiatives can improve the lives of migrants because it can offer a rare opportunity for self-expression and self-representation (Clair, 2017). Thus, here it can be argued that activities inside the shelter, such as sewing and cooking, can be used as part of a wider holistic approach to care, as opposed to being labelled as tools for enhancing economic independence.

Discussions with another participant named Maly about skills training revealed an unresolved sense of frustration with the CWCC. Maly explained how she did not care about learning cook because she already knew how to cook.

“I do not care about cooking because I know how to cook. Actually, I am sure all women here know how to cook. We are all women and have families; cooking is our responsibility. So, we already know this skill. Moreover, we cannot make good money from this skill. Before I sold food in the market and it is not enough to support my family. So, I think this skill is useless.”

Before coming to stay in the shelter, Maly’s previous source of income had come from altering and repairing second-hand clothes by hand and selling them in the market. This job was a source of enjoyment for Maly because she could ‘take something old and turn it into

something new'. However, Maly had been unable to make enough income from her job because she was doing all of her sewing by hand. She had often dreamed of how owning a sewing machine would be life changing. While married, Maly had been saving to buy a sewing machine but her husband forbade her to do so and called her selfish for wanting to spend money. As Hill and Thay Ly (2004) note, there is an increased tension for rural Khmers between the demands of a changing economy, changes in women's roles and economic opportunity, and Khmer culture. Maly's employment had been a source of tension in her relationship with her husband. When Maly came to stay in the shelter she was excited to learn to sew with a machine. She recalled,

“When I first came to here I thought, I need to make money to support my family but I did not have any good skills, my education level is low. But when I came here they explained that they would teach me skills and I would be able to support my children and myself when I leave here. I would be able to sew with a machine. It was a good feeling, when they told me this. I believed I could stand alone without my husband.”

Unfortunately Maly's excitement was only temporary. At first, the shelter had told Maly she would be provided with a sewing machine when she left and this would allow her to continue her small business, but on a larger scale because she would not be working by hand.

However, Maly had recently been informed that she would not be receiving a sewing machine upon exit from the shelter. She told me,

“But now they said they cannot give me the machine so this skill is useless to me. I do not have the money to buy a machine by myself. I do not know why. That is just what they told me. They did not explain why. I feel really disappointed by their decision. I do not know if I did something wrong. I do not want to ask because the organisation already helped me so much.”

Maly had been given a false sense of hope about her future and what she would be able to achieve. The UN Women (2013) guidelines on women's shelters identify the risks of encouraging false expectations about the services women receive about their future. While women need an empathetic and encouraging atmosphere, they also need to be able to remain realistic about their futures. The skills training had enabled Maly to learn how to sew by machine but an inability to purchase her own machine negated her newfound ability.

Again, feelings of indebtedness were noted in relation to asking questions to the shelter staff. Without any explanation about why she would not receive a sewing machine, Maly was left in a state of uncertainty about whether she had done something wrong and was therefore being punished. The uncertainty surrounding Maly's future economic situation was a source of anxiety for her, as she explained,

“I do not know. I am worried about the daily living, because I do not have my own place to stay and I cannot make enough money sewing by hand to pay for a rented house. I need to find a place to stay but I need to make money to pay for a place to stay. Moreover, I feel disappointed with this organisation because they did not keep their promise. I do not know who I can trust”.

Maly's narrative highlights how there is a significant gap between the CWCCs rhetoric around what their skills training has the ability to achieve and what it actually achieves. Furthermore, it sheds light on the dangers of instilling a false sense of hope in women staying in shelters and shows how teaching skills is only valuable if women can actually action those skills in their future lives. Without the appropriate resources (such as a sewing machine), women are unable to reap the full rewards of the skills they possess. As such, it can be argued that the CWCC offering skills training in sewing and cooking does not enhance the women's capability to live an economically independent life. Instead, women find themselves greeted with the same limited opportunities of employment that they had prior to staying in the shelter.

Several of the women staying in the CWCC shelters expressed how they would like an opportunity to learn different skills, though they felt unable to express these desires because of feelings of indebtedness and voicelessness. The different skills the women wanted to learn ranged from business management to make-up and salon skills. However, the same thing motivated all of the women: generating enough income to support their families. As Channou explained, “I can learn skills here but the skills cannot help me. I want to learn a skill that can make me enough profit.” The women understood money to be at the centre of everything and their greatest motivation for securing enough income was providing their children with security. The women noted how, with enough income, they would be able to meet all their needs: access to stable housing, enough food, water and clothing, medical costs and children’s school fees. Sen’s capabilities approach highlights how freedom to achieve wellbeing is of primary moral importance but this wellbeing can only be achieved if it is understood in terms of people’s capabilities: their real opportunities to do and be what they have reason to value. Forcing women to engage in gendered skills training sets parameters around what they can achieve in the same way as the pervasive gender roles of Cambodian society. Thus, here it can be argued that the CWCC fails to recognise the value of the women’s goals and, by doing so, limits the women’s opportunities to do and be what they value.

Banteay Srei

The executive director of Banteay Srei outlined how the organisation offers various different types of skills training for women who access their services. In her interview she explained that women could receive educational help (such as learning to read and write in Khmer and English) and train in computer skills, administrative skills, business management and hair and beauty, to name a few. This was because Banteay Srei had links with local businesses that could help facilitate the training. In addition, the Executive Director stated that women could also receive small amounts of investment to set up their own business, such as a chicken farm.

The opportunities that Banteay Srei offered allowed women to make their own choices about what to do and be, though still within limits.

However, there was significant discrepancy between what Banteay Srei's executive director claimed women had access to and what they were actually offered. The interviews with women who had accessed Banteay Srei's services revealed that none of the women had been offered an opportunity to learn a new skill or the chance to set up a small business. All of the women were employed in low-paying roles, either working on farms or in the market selling foods. They all reported that since they had divorced from their husbands they had struggled to earn enough money to support their family. Indeed, the majority of the women wanted to learn a new skill that would provide them with a better income. The women expressed varied ideas about what they wanted to learn, ranging from learning to read and write in Khmer and English to salon and beauty skills. Two women wanted investment to set up their own businesses. Several of the women were unable to imagine what they would like to do. A participant named Por Sivorn summed up why:

“I do not have about the alphabet and reading and writing so I am not sure if I could learn something. I always did the same jobs so I cannot imagine about that. I do not have time to dream... just time do. This is the way for women in Cambodia.”

Although Por Sivorn and the other participants from Banteay Srei had divorced their husbands and were living free from violence their senses, imagination and thoughts continued to be crippled by the poverty they experienced. Nussbaum (2005) makes clear connections between violence against women and the ways it cripples women's senses, imagination and thought. The women staying in the CWCC shelters were unable to dream because they were so caught up in dealing with the everyday challenges of keeping their families homed and fed. This highlights the importance of supporting women in all parts of their lives, even after the violence has stopped.

For some of the women their physical ability and health had changed drastically because of the violence they had faced. This further emphasises the need for Banteay Srei to offer women opportunities to learn new skills. Pisey was 49 years old and had accessed Banteay Srei's services because her husband had been physically, psychologically and economically abusive to her and her children and, as a result, she wanted to divorce him. Pisey had four children with her husband, all of whom she was raising by herself. The abuse in her marriage was so severe that it had left her with permanent injuries and scars. Without any specific skills, the only work Pisey could do was 'physical work' but she was unable to do so because the violence had left her in poor health. Her experiences of violence had significantly diminished her capabilities, some of which were irreparable irrespective of the services and support she received.

“I am so hopeless. My health is so poor. I think it could be so useful to me [learning a new skill]. I do not have any skills - I only know how to do physical work. But now my physical state is not strong, so it means I cannot do physical work. If I could learn a new skill I could do other work. But, also it is not simple... I have to take care of my family; so, I would not have time to learn a new skill. “

Pisey recognised the value of learning a new skill. However, when questioned on why she had not asked Banteay Srei about skills training, she responded with the same feelings of indebtedness that were present in the CWCC women's narratives. The quote above from Pisey also reveals another dilemma faced by the women who want to learn new skills – they do not have the time. All of the women who expressed an interest in skills training also reported how they did not have time to participate in any new learning or training. Again, this leads back to the women's everyday pressures of earning enough money to support their families.

“I think if I can have one skill or business for my future then my future will be so much better. I need a new skill for me to learn; then I can earn more money to

support my family. But, if I learn a new skill, I need Banteay Srei to help support my family because I would not be working. But once I have learned a new skill, I can make more money and pay back that money to Banteay Srei. I think that's a good idea."

The quote above illustrates how women are caught in a vicious cycle that cannot be broken without further intervention and support. While the women recognised how much value a new skill could bring to their lives, they did not have time to invest in learning because their lives were consumed by earning money and taking care of the family. Often when the women were asked about free time they responded that this was not something they had access to. If they had any 'free time', it was consumed by finding alternative ways to make money, such as baking cakes and selling extra food.

One participant named Vanna had no desire to learn a new skill. This was because she was already an accomplished seamstress. When Vanna was married to her husband she had a sewing machine and was able to make an adequate income. However, Vanna's husband had drug and alcohol addictions and this made his behaviour volatile. This is in line with research on the nature and scope of intrahousehold and intrafamily violence in the post-conflict context of Guatemala (Moser & McIlwaine, 2001), where alcohol was identified as a critical facilitator of violence against women.

One evening in an outburst of rage, Vanna's husband destroyed her sewing machine. He then he sold all of Vanna's sewing materials for money to fuel his alcohol and drug addictions. Left with nothing, Vanna was unable to continue her work and struggled to make an income.

"I've known how to sew clothes since 1979. And my husband destroyed the sewing machine at home. When I left home, my husband sold all the sewing equipment that so he could buy alcohol and drugs. So, I do not have the money to buy a machine. I also told the commune chief and the police about this, but they did not do anything. I

do not need skills training because I can already sew. I just need the machine. I would be so happy if Banteay Srei can help me with that.”

Vanna’s story echoes so many women’s narratives about the prevalent culture of impunity that surrounds the actions of perpetrators of violence in Cambodia (Brickell et al, 2014; LICADHO, 2017). It also shows how simple the solution can be for some women. All Vanna needed to be economically stable was a sewing machine. Without this one piece of machinery Vanna was stuck and unable to take control of her life. This resonates with other research that has found women who have left abusive relationships face multiple barriers to securing employment because of factors related to money, health, child care and transportation to name a few (Sullivan, 1991).

Vanna’s economic instability seeped into all aspects of her living: without an income Vanna was unable to seek medical help for the injuries she had sustained from her husband; this meant her physical health was deteriorating, which prevented her from getting another job; thus she was unable to pay for a permanent place to live (her husband had been awarded the property and this will be discussed later in this chapter) and had to live under her uncle’s house. The effects of all these factors were devastating to Vanna’s emotional wellbeing and psychological health. As Nussbaum (2000:80) states, “violence and the threat of violence greatly influence a woman’s ability to seek employment and enjoy a rewarding work life” and, as found in Vanna’s case, this spills over into her capability to have control over her own environment. Like Vanna’s story shows, this is not only while violence is on going, but also long after. The next section of this chapter will explore the participants’ narratives and experiences of home.

Housing, Home & Homelessness

CWCC

I am an orphan child so I do not have family to help me. When I first met my husband I did not have any children yet. I rented a house and I stayed alone. Then I went to live with my husband and I worked in the garment factory. We live in the rental house together. Then I was pregnant so until I had a child I stayed at home and sewed some clothes. Then my husband had another girl and did not take any responsibility. I did not have any money. I could not pay for the rent fee two months. He left me to take care of it alone and I could not make enough money to pay the fee. In the end, my husband chose another girl and made disputes with me. I did not have any money to rent the house anymore. Before, my husband earned the money and helped pay for the rent fee. After he left I did not have any supporter, and I meet with the trouble. That was when I went to the hospital for my son and the organization made an interview and allowed me to stay in the shelter. [Socheata]

Evidence suggests that domestic violence is one of the leading causes of housing instability (Baker et al, 2003). Indeed, stories of homelessness and housing instability like Socheata describes above emerged as recurrent themes in the interviews with the women participants in my doctoral research. The women's complex housing histories were not just connected to their experiences of violence, but could also be traced back to their childhoods. All of the women had grown up living in poverty and this had impacted their experiences of housing and home. The women came from large families in rural areas where their parents had farmed or worked in the market to survive. Poverty had crippled the women's families and this had impacted their parents' ability to secure consistent and adequate shelter. Several women grew up with only one parent due to death or marital breakdown. One participant's father had two wives and twelve children, which made it impossible to house everyone. The women's childhood homes were old and damaged wooden huts that were overcrowded because of

multiple children, extended family members and crippling poverty. Most did not have electricity and running water. The majority of the participants moved from house to house numerous times. Often they went to live with other people in the community and family members. Puthea's narrative sums up the instability that was prevalent throughout the women's lives:

Before I came to here I lived with my husband and children. While I was a child, I did not get the education. My home [phteah] changed a lot. My family is big and a lot of children. So, I moved a lot. I stayed with my relatives or someone in my community. My home was simple. We did not have electricity and running water. The house was so old and damaged but we did not have money to fix it. We lived simple like farmers do. Then I bought a home with my husband. It was a simple place but it belonged to me. My house with my husband is like home because it is mine and it was a place for us to live as a family. But also my village area is my home because that is where I am from and that is where I have lived most of my life. I have stayed in many different houses with family members and friends. Even if I do not have a house there, it is still where I think of as home. If I want to feel like I am at home then yes, I would live there [Kampong Cham].

The excerpt above shows how Puthea defined home in multiple ways. For some of the women their experiences of violence and housing prevented them from defining home as anything but a place of violence, confrontation and distress. This resonates with Nussbaum (2005) who argues that violence impacts a woman's capabilities of senses, imagination and thought.

Puthea was one of the participants that was able to imagine and define home beyond material conditions and her previous experiences of violence. In her interview, Puthea explained how she had been able to buy a house with her husband because they had combined their incomes (the dilemmas related to this will be discussed later on in this section). This was the first time she had 'a place to call my own'. Owning her own property and living as a family were key

characteristics of what defined home for Puthea. At the time of research Puthea was waiting for the courts to make a decision about who would be granted control of the house she had bought with her husband. However, she explained that she had no interest in living there because it was stained by her husband's violence and abuse. Puthea was also disinterested because she had very little faith in the court system; she had been waiting for a decision for seven months already. Despite her experiences of violence, the idea of family and love ran all throughout Puthea's narratives of home,

I think what makes a home is the love and atmosphere. It is not about the house or the things inside. You can have lots of photographs and paintings like the rich people but that does not mean they have love. It is who is inside that makes it feel like home. So here, I have my children... so here is our home... for now. Wherever I stay with the love... that is my home.

Puthea recognised Siem Reap, the province where she born and raised, as her home. This was because she had lived there for the majority of her life and described it as 'a place where I get the warm feeling'. Puthea associated her village with love and happiness and the friends and family she had there. When Puthea was asked about where she would live after the shelter she stated, 'I want to go to my hometown. No other place like home.' Several of the other women staying in the CWCC shelters conceptualised home in the same ways, expressing an attachment to multiple places. These findings resonate with research about women's experiences of homelessness, space and domestic violence in South Africa (Meth, 2003). In similar ways as the women in the CWCC shelters, women in South Africa were found not to have one fixed home but instead had 'dual homes' – one of which was typically in a rural area with family ties (Meth, 2003). In my research Puthea's access to dual homes provided her with a support network and the ability to plan where she would go after leaving the shelter. As she explained,

Maybe in the future I will have my own home. First I want to be with my family. I can feel safe there and get help with my children. If I live alone it is hard for me to make profit and take care of my children. If I stay with family they can help to take care of my children.

The narrative above shows how Puthea did not feel equipped to live an independent life.

Fortunately, she had a support network that could help her. Other women echoed concerns about living independently and expressed apprehension about their future lives. The women were worried because they did not know how they would cope without their husband's income. While some of the women were hopeful about being awarded their marital home by the courts, others were not as optimistic. Several women expressed that they had little faith in the courts and the decisions they would make because of their previous experiences with the police, corruption and impunity. The women were very aware that if they were not awarded their homes they would be left without a permanent place to live. This fear was heightened for women who had no family, friends or community to return to. Research and guidelines (UN Women, 2013) on women affected by violence advocates for the benefits of women having access to multiple support networks and acknowledges the dangers for women who do not.

Socheata was one of the participants who did not have a home to return to and had no family or friends that could assist her in her post-shelter life. Prior to living in the shelter, Socheata had been staying in a rented house. She had been renting the house with her husband but he had suddenly fled their home to live with another woman. Without her husband's income, Socheata was unable to pay the rental fee and was kicked out. This was when she came to stay at the CWCC. In her interview, Socheata explained how her anxieties about housing and the future were further compounded by concerns about her son's health and the cost of medical bills.

I am very worried about my future. First, I am worried about my son. I need so much money to heal his disease. The doctor told me if my son wants to do the treatment, I have to go abroad. How can I do that? I do not have enough money for food, how can I get treatment abroad? I am also so worried about where I will live. I want to buy a house because then I do not have to worry about the rental fee. I had so many bad experiences with that. I do not have enough money to pay a rental fee or to buy a small house. I am worried my son's health will suffer because of this. Finally I am worried about having enough money to support my son and myself. I do not have anyone to support me.

Socheata's situation highlights how there is a need for services that can assist women and children who have multiple needs. Research and guidelines on violence against women in other global contexts acknowledges the importance of this (Zweig et al, 2002; Lyon et al, 2008a; 2008b). The excerpt above shows how Socheata was unable to imagine how she was going to cope when she left the shelter because she was stuck in a cycle of interrelated factors that depended on one another. To afford a place to stay Socheata needed a job, but to get a job she needed assistance with childcare. In addition, if she did not enough money to adequately clothe, feed and shelter her son then his health would suffer, increasing the amount of medical treatment he needed and the expense of medical costs. Socheata summed up that she felt unable to 'fix everything at the same time and alone'.

Here it can be argued that the shelter was not increasing Socheata's capability to have control over her own environment (Nussbaum, 2005) because she found herself in the same predicaments as she was facing before she came to stay in the shelter. This shows how the feelings of safety and housing stability the women experience when living in the shelter are only temporary. Sheltering alone or in combination with poorly executed services such as the CWCC's skills training does not prevent the women's future prospects of homelessness. Instead, living in the shelter may have merely delayed the women's homelessness while

simultaneously curtailing their ability to live independently in the future. This is because the pervasive management and structuring of the women's time reduced them to a child-like status whereby they were entirely dependent on the shelter for all their needs. These findings are in line with research about other types of temporary accommodation that has illustrated how governance and rules can negatively impact feelings of autonomy, control, self-identity and decision-making (Stark, 1994; Van der Horst, 2004; DeWard & Moe, 2010). While the CWCC shelters secure women, quite literally, from domestic violence, they do not permit freedom of movement or thought. The functioning of the shelter – its confining tendencies and rigid rules – are interlocking factors stymying women's freedom.

Of relevance here is the experience of Maly. In her interview, Maly explained how she had lived with her husband in a home they had bought together. Her husband had a severe drug addiction and his behaviour was often volatile. Research on intimate partner violence in Cambodia has long drawn links between men's consumption of alcohol and/ addiction to drugs and violence against women (Zimmerman, 1995; Brickell, 2008). While it is understood that alcohol and drugs are not the causes of violence, they are facilitators.

Maly's husband would often abuse her physically and verbally and he sold their possessions for money to buy drugs.

He sold everything in the house. He left only one pillow, mat, and mosquito net for himself. He took the doors and sold it. I had to change the doors to iron. But, there are some rooms in my house and he took the doors inside the house to sell. That house belonged to both of us. He collected all the clothes and burnt it. He took everything from home. I am feeling so hurt. But, I would like to stay at that place again. There is my home. I need to stay there because I do not have any other place to go but I must spend some time fixing it because he broke everything or took it to sell for drugs.

Maly expressed that the marital house was her home because it was the first property she had owned. More importantly, without it, she had no access to stable housing. This acted as a source of anxiety for her. Maly and her husband had been advised by the courts to share the property and sell it or give it to their children. However, Maly did not want to do this for two reasons. First, she needed somewhere for her and her children to stay. If the house was awarded to the children Maly and her husband were not allowed to stay there. If Maly were unable to stay there she would have to rent her own accommodation, which she could not afford. Similarly, if she split the profits of selling the accommodation with her husband then she would have to rent accommodation for her and her children. This was impossible to do with the small income Maly made from sewing second-hand clothes by hand. She stated,

I do not know how to live anymore. I feel it is like I am learning to walk again. I think in the future I do not have a place to stay. When I stay here the organisation helps me with everything. When I leave here I must do everything by myself. It is difficult because when I stay here I cannot make any profit but the organisation provides me with everything. It means I will not have any money when I leave here. But when I am outside [of the shelter] I cannot make enough profit. If I could choose to stay here I would stay here. Then I can get help with everything.

Maly's narrative sheds light on how the controlling environment of the CWCC shelters facilitated dependency much in the same ways as the women's previous relationships. This dependency caused the women to have similar feelings of fear and anxiety about leaving the shelters as they had about leaving their partners. All of the women had been crippled by the fear of leaving their partners for years and only fled because of situations of life or death. While this was the catalyst for finally leaving violence, the complexities of the women's lives means there is a range of factors that contribute to staying, leaving and returning. The women cited economic dependence as the main reason why they did not leave their abusive relationships sooner. As the UN Women (2013) guidelines on shelters note, economic and

housing support significantly affects a woman's ability to leave an abusive relationship. The women staying in the CWCC shelters emphasised the importance of their husband's income in relation to having a stable home and being able to provide for their children. In addition, the women did not want to disrupt their children's lives by removing them from their homes and education. All of the participants stressed the importance of their children getting an education. The women believed this would act as a protective factor against their children having similar experiences of violence. Thus, these are the areas that shelter services need to target adequately. The CWCC can only better understand what women need from services if they listen to their voices, as suggested in the UN Women (2013) shelter module. However, it must be acknowledged that the implementation of a more individualised and survivor-directed approach may be beyond the limitations of the CWCC.

Banteay Srei: Transit shelter

Banteay Srei have been implementing a safe house project in Battambang since 2005. Staff at Banteay Srei refer to the safe house as a 'transit shelter' because it acts as a safe and secure place for women to stay in times of emergency. Women who need easy access to the courts and Banteay Srei's legal services can also stay in the transit shelter. The shelter is located on the same site as Banteay Srei's office in Battambang. It also serves as a drop-in center for women who are using Banteay Srei's other services such as legal advice and counselling.

Only three out of the ten participants from Banteay Srei had used the transit shelter. Two out of the three women had stayed there so they could access the court easily. However, one participant named Seav Choung had stayed in the transit shelter to escape her husband's vicious behaviour. Seav Choung had first come into contact with Banteay Srei in her village when they ran an educational workshop on violence against women. When the violence with her husband escalated to a situation of life or death, Seav Choung fled to Banteay Srei's transit shelter. Seav Choung's husband had attacked her with a knife and an axe and she had extensive injuries that needed immediate medical attention. After taking Seav Choung to the

hospital and paying for her medical fees, Banteay Srei recommended she stay in the safe house. Seav Choung agreed and spent three nights there.

In her interview Seav Choung described how Banteay Srei and the transit shelter had saved her life by giving her a safe place to stay. Seav Choung had felt safe staying in the shelter because it was guarded by security 24 hours a day. Furthermore, she explained how she had been made to feel more comfortable because Banteay Srei allowed her two sisters to stay with her. This gave her a sense of familiarity and security. Furthermore, staying in the shelter gave her time to recover from the injuries she had sustained from her husband's violence. While staying there, Seav Choung was provided with food, clothes and advice from the counsellor and other staff on site. In addition, she recalled how meeting other women there had been 'a release from stress'. This is in line with the findings presented in the previous empirical chapter, where women in the CWCC shelters stated the other women acted as sources of advice and support. Seav Choung described how the women had shared their stories and experiences of violence and comforted one another. From this experience, Seav Choung was able to understand that she was not alone in her struggles. This echoes the women's narratives of the support they found in each other in the CWCC shelters and further highlights the importance of peer support for women survivors of violence (see Chapter Six for discussion of this).

The other seven participants who opted not stay in Banteay Srei's shelter all cited similar reasons for not wanting to stay there. Women did not want to stay in Banteay Srei's shelter because they wanted to remain in their own homes with their children. This is because they did not want to disrupt their children's lives or interrupt their schooling. Furthermore, all nine of the participants pointed out the dilemma of earning an income while staying in the shelter. The women needed access to their homes to be able to make products such as cakes to sell at their local market. Even just a short stay in the shelter of a few days would be economically crippling because the women relied on their daily earnings to buy food for their families.

The women were able to remain in their homes because of Banteay Srei's approach to keeping women safe. Banteay Srei works in partnership with the local police in Battambang. When a woman contacts Banteay Srei about violence, Banteay Srei contacts the police. The police visit the family home and advise the perpetrator to leave to avoid further conflict or, when necessary, the police will arrest the perpetrator. Banteay Srei avoids women having to leave their own homes and, instead, places an emphasis on the importance of holding perpetrators accountable. This approach is less disruptive to women's lives and avoids inadvertently placing the blame on women by forcing them to leave their homes. However, as the next section shows, not all of the women continued to have access to their homes.

Banteay Srei: Housing

All of the participants from Banteay Srei had received help and support with the legal process of dividing the family home. However, only three out of ten of the participants had been granted full ownership of their homes. This was Sony, Por Sivorn and Pisey. Sony described how she was 'so happy' that the court had awarded her the house because she had a safe place to stay with her children.

For women who had accessed Banteay Srei's services but had not been awarded their marital home by the courts, safety was still an everyday concern. In her research on domestic violence and housing in South Africa, Meth (2003) argues that there is often a lack of recognition of the different types of housing forms and how these can impact experiences of domestic violence. In addition, Meth (2003) argues that the home is most often not problematized even though it is assumed to be the space where violence takes place. The assumption that a housing structure equals safety and security means women like Sony are left living in fear of violence in a similar way to life before getting divorced. Something as simple as a lock on Sony's front door would have a significant impact on her emotional well-being and feels of safety. Similar arguments are found in Meth's (2003) research in South Africa. As the UN Women (2013) guidelines on shelters highlights, access to affordable

housing is often one of the most pressing needs for women exiting shelters. This was true for the women staying in the CWCC shelters, who all identified securing access to stable housing as their most pressing need. While the women identified differences in the materiality of their future homes, they all stated that safety was the primary concern.

In contrast to Sony,, Por Sivorn had decided to gift the marital home to her children so they had a permanent place to live. Por Sivorn did not want to stay in the family home because it reminded her of her experiences of violence with her husband. Furthermore, Por Sivorn's husband would sometimes come to visit his children and she did not want to encounter him on these occasions. As a result, Por Sivorn engaged in a trade-off; she rented her own accommodation and felt safe but had to work longer hours to earn enough money to pay the rent. However, she was willing to accept extra hardship in exchange for knowing her children had a stable and secure permanent home.

Of particular importance to is the story of Kunthea. Kunthea had left school at the age of 13 because her parents could no longer afford to send her to school. At the age of 17 her sister arranged for her to get married. Arranged marriages were commonplace among the participants at Banteay Srei; eight out of the ten women had their marriage arranged by a family member. These findings are in line with other research on marriage in Cambodia that has found arranged marriage to be common (Jones, 2010). Soon after the birth of Kunthea and her husband's second child 'he started to have another wife'. This is also resonates with recent research findings on polygamy practices in Cambodia which found that while polygamy is illegal, it is still practiced (Brickell, 2015; Phnom Penh Post, 2017). Soon after, Kunthea's husband became violent. He had attacked her so severely on so many occasions that she was left with permanent scars and unable to move her hand and wrist properly. This impacted Kunthea's ability to work which, in turn, affected her capability to have control over her own environment.

Banteay Srei had provided Kunthea with vital support with negotiating the court process. They also covered the costs of legal fees, provided legal advice and ensured she had transport to get to the court. Despite Banteay Srei's support, the court awarded the marital home to Kunthea's husband. Kunthea and her husband had married under customary law (the process outlined in Chapter Three). Due to this, Kunthea and her husband's marriage had never been officially registered and this impeded Kunthea's rights. Indeed, research on violence against women in Cambodia has acknowledged how customary marriages weaken women's rights and leave them in vulnerable positions. Unable to work and therefore afford to rent somewhere to live, Kunthea found herself living in a precarious housing situation. She explained:

I am so broken. My health is so poor. I do not have a proper place to stay, I sleep under my sibling's house. If I could not sleep there, where would I stay? I do not have a home. Why the law did not judge in the right way? The court did the wrong thing to me. I am so hurt by this decision. Every person needs a home and I do not have one. Now, he lives in that house with his new wife. They control the house and the land. I have nothing.

Kunthea's narrative above highlights how her capability of life had been increased because she had been able to get divorced from her husband and live free from violence. However, this had not enhanced her capabilities of health and control over her own environment. In similar ways but differently, the other women who had accessed Banteay Srei's services had also experienced enhancement of certain capabilities but at the expense of others.

Nevertheless, one thing is clear: all of the women most valued their capability to live a life without violence. As Vanna summed up, 'Banteay Srei has completely changed my life. I can have love in my family and I can live without violence. That is the most important thing'.

Conclusion

This chapter has provided important insights into women's experiences of different violence against women's services and raised important issues relating to resources and capabilities. The findings presented in this chapter reveal that Banteay Srei and the CWCC provide valuable, often life-saving, services to women affected by violence in Cambodia. However, these services cannot fully facilitate women's future independence. Using Nussbaum's concept of capabilities is useful for understanding how women's lives are affected by violence and can shed light on how to increase women's potential. Counselling was identified as source of comfort and support for the participants from both organisations and, for some women; it enhanced their capability of practical reason. However, discrepancies between practice in the three CWCC shelters highlights the importance of implementing training and standardised practice guidelines. Analysis of the women's experiences of skills training (or lack of) raises important questions about the skills and resources violence against women services equip women with. Organisations must consider the actual economic potential of the training in practice and pay attention to women's previous experiences of employment. Furthermore, organisations must consider if the employment opportunities they are exposing women to increase their risk of violence. Finally, the women in the CWCC shelters narratives around home reveal that securing safe, stable and permanent housing was the women's biggest source of anxiety. The examples of housing instability from the participants at Banteay Srei only reinforce the realities of the CWCC participants concerns.

Chapter Eight: Conclusion: Women's Experiences of Domestic Violence Shelters and Services in Cambodia

In this thesis I have analysed the experiences of Cambodian women survivors of violence, responding to a need for programs to be better informed by the voices of survivors (UN Women, 2013). If research is to 'combat the effects of a patriarchal system which has kept us silent when we would speak, which devalues what we would say when we do speak' (Hazel, and cited in Patterson, 2000:5), then women survivors of violence in Cambodia must be given space to tell their stories and have their voices valued. The data presented and analysed in this thesis demonstrates the richness of qualitative interviews and the need to facilitate platforms for listening, particularly in contexts where there is no previously existing data.

Beyond Physical Safety: Ontological Security and Safe Spaces

There is a growing body of literature on violence against women services and women's shelters, but this has largely emerged from contexts in the global north. Very few studies have been qualitative and/or focused on the perspectives of service users, thus failing to articulate the everyday practices and experiences of women who access services and live in shelters. In this thesis I have explored some of the ways in which women navigate the complicated and messy process of separating from their abusive partner, as well as how their decision to leave has impacted their lives. Already existing research has documented how violence against women in Cambodia is widespread and continues to devastate the lives of women and children, yet the small number of women staying in emergency accommodation at the time of my research suggests that very few women in Cambodia access safe shelters. So, although the Cambodian government has made commitments to 'reduce significantly all forms of violence against women and children (Cambodian Millennium Development Goals, 2003:np), the interviews analysed in my thesis reinforce that women survivors of violence continue to face stigma and shame. As such, it is apparent that shelters in Cambodia are commonly viewed as a 'last resort' by survivors, given their separation of women, literally and metaphorically, outside of 'normal' society.

The UN Women (2013) guidelines for best practice highlight how women can face stigmatisation and discrimination if they experience violence. The empirical findings discussed in this thesis show how the safety policies of the shelter, such as staff chaperoning the women to the market, allowed the women to be identified by local villagers and reinforced feelings of stigma and shame. As Sen (1999:126) states, some of the most basic capabilities needed to achieve wellbeing are 'to take part in life in the community, to appear in public without shame'. Women's organisations must be working towards reducing women's feelings of shame, thus enhancing feelings of ontological security and individual

capabilities. Yet, discussions throughout this thesis reveal how rules around physical safety can have the reverse effect. Efforts must be made to allow women greater freedom of movement outside of shelters, where possible, and organisations need to engage with local people who live in the vicinity of a shelter. If women continue to be stigmatised and shamed for the violence they have experienced, Cambodian society will continue to act as a safe space for perpetrators of violence.

Just as Sen (1992: 125) affirms the general existence of ‘systematic disparities in the freedoms that men and women enjoy’, these injustices are manifest in women’s shelter stays. To pursue their legal claims against violent partners, it is women who are effectively excluded from public life and live behind walls and bars that their perpetrator will likely never see. Survivors describe being ‘cut off’ from the outside world and judged when they do enter it, thus showing the lack of entitlement which women have to bodily integrity in mainstream society given the immobility and perceived surveillance they face. The women’s interviews also demonstrate how their bodily integrity is compromised by a non-negotiable onus on rules in the shelter itself. On this front, survivors are too often being excluded from decision-making processes in the shelter and treated as passive recipients of physical safety. So while women were safe from domestic violence, survivors did not feel freedom to express themselves, their needs, and identities in the shelter. Best practice guidelines to enable this were also not followed given resource and space constraints. In their guidelines, UN Women (2013) note, for example, that where possible, ‘facilities should have space and infrastructure which allows for individual privacy, reflection, expression as well as collective activities’. This includes, *inter alia*, a bedroom for each woman with her children, a bathroom shared by no more than two rooms/women; and adequate storage for women’s belongings such as on-site storage units.

Thus, my thesis pushes forward scholarship that singularly frames safe spaces as enabling environments ‘to challenge the forces that oppress’ (Bowpitt et al, 2014: 1255). While

scholarship on safe spaces has argued that safe spaces allow people to be act freely and feel emotionally secure (Lewis et al, 2015), the data in my thesis complicates this one-sided analysis by showing how the safe shelter does not necessarily provision a space to speak and act freely. The ‘degree to which safety is an appropriate or reasonable expectation for any honest dialogue about social justice’ (Arao and Clemens, 2013: 139) is therefore a moot question. On this point, I argue that an almost exclusive focus on physical safety in women’s shelters is to the putative neglect, and further detriment, of women’s feelings of wellbeing, independence, personhood, self-esteem, and control. Scholars have documented the significance of freedom, and my thesis has encompassed these ideas. It has developed the argument that just as domestic violence is an unfreedom hidden within women’s families, there are also unfreedoms that are re-inscribed afresh in safe shelters, which demand greater recognition and action.

On safe spaces, shelters for survivors of violence must consider emotional safety and wellbeing. Studying women’s experiences of ontological security can be productive in thinking about how women give meaning to their lives. As my thesis shows, design and running of safe shelter provision does not necessarily afford freedom from violence, but rather a punitive safety from it which curtails women’s freedom of movement and autonomy further. While ‘safe spaces are traditionally assumed to provide temporary relief from potential threats to ones’ wellbeing within a secure and private physical structure’ (Hassan Nur et al. 2018: 97), my thesis has explored women’s accounts of what this safety feels like, and amounts to, beyond the protection offered from violent partners. As Hiscock et al (2001: 50) set out, ‘people need more than just adequate sustenance and shelter to live happy and fulfilled lives’. They assert furthermore, that ‘autonomy is a mixture of freedom to do what one wants and to express oneself as well as freedom from any need to have one’s actions approved by others and from any need to conform with others’ expectation of oneself’ (2001: 53 emphasis in original). Making the argument that safety and freedom are not the same, my thesis contributes to recent feminist scholarship in geography and aligned disciplines focused

on the significance and workings of safe spaces for marginalised groups. My research has problematized overly celebratory viewpoints of safe spaces as enabling environments which can challenge oppressive forces both inside and outside of their walls.

To ensure women are physically and emotionally safe organisations should be more considerate of, and where possible adaptive to, women's individual expressed needs. This is so survivors can feel greater agency over their day-to-day existence in the shelters they reside in for months and sometimes even years. With this in mind, it is recommended that organisations should work towards the 'aspirational standard' (The Council of Europe, nd) whereby women are permitted visitors. Visitation policies and guidelines can be used to help reduce the risks that can arise from allowing visitors into shelters (UN Women, 2013).

As Chester-James (2004: 586) points out, 'although we should celebrate cases where women can shape the kinds of refuges they and their communities need, the nub of the matter here is that most women and children using refuges are forced to leave their communities behind in order to be safe' (Chester-James, 2004: 586). While women's shelters help women to be safer, the reality is that this safety is only temporary and it does little to challenge the perpetration of violence. Despite the efforts of women's organisations, Cambodian society persists as a 'safe space' for perpetrators and it is domestic violence survivors who are spatially excluded from it to ensure their safety from injury and even death.

From Ontological Security to Capabilities: (Un)freedom to Choose

As I have suggested throughout this thesis, using Gidden's (1991) concept of ontological security helps in understanding women's experiences of emotional safety when living in safe shelters. Chapter Five demonstrates how women experienced ontological insecurity inside the safe shelters because of a lack of freedom: namely freedom of movement, freedom of choice

and freedom of personal expression. As my research shows, staying in a safe shelter has the potential to restrict women's freedom in different and similar ways from their abusive relationships, which limited their capabilities in other ways.

The women's interviews show how safe shelter rules can inscribe themselves on women's bodies. 'Bodily integrity' is an overlooked capability in Sen's vision of freedom and includes 'being able to move freely from place to place; to be secure against violent assault, including sexual assault and domestic violence' (Nussbaum, 2003: 41; also 2005). The safe shelters both help and hinder this view of bodily integrity. While it secures women, quite literally, from domestic violence, it does not permit freedom of movement. The functioning of the shelters – their confining tendencies and rigid rules – are interlocking factors stymying women's freedom. The safe space of the shelter thus provokes 'the possibility of reinscribing relations of domination' (Stengel, 2010: 536). As DeWard and Moe (2010: 122) qualify in their work on women's narratives of homeless shelters in the United States, '...while shelters are distinct from institutions, such as prisons and some mental health hospitals, wherein people are confined against their will and are not free to leave, there is an element of coercion within them. While women were free to leave, this "freedom" was mitigated by the consequences of living homeless on the streets or otherwise without secure access to shelter, food and clothing'. The findings discussed in my thesis expose how unfreedom is imposed in similar ways – coerced even – as a necessary means of ensuring women's safety from their perpetrators. In other words, safety from domestic violence does not mean freedom from it; rather women's safety in the shelter and their adherence to its rules is a continued necessity.

The empirical data discussed in Chapter Six demonstrates how for a woman to achieve her capabilities she must be able to choose because freedom of choice, in and of itself, is of direct importance to a person's quality of life (Sen, 2005). My thesis establishes how ontological security feeds into Sen's capabilities approach, because evidently feelings of ontological insecurity are dependent on levels of freedom or, as Sen calls it, unfreedom. As my thesis

illustrates, unfreedom(s) restrict capabilities when women do not have opportunities to do and be what they have reason to value. It would be unfair to suggest that women's organisations do not want to let women choose who they want to be and what they want to do, but it cannot be ignored that a one-size-fits-all approach fails to account for women's individual needs. If women's shelters are to be enabling environments that allow individuals to challenge the forces that oppress (Bowpitt, 2014), organisations must let women participate in decision-making. As the UN Women (2013) module on women's shelters states, shelters should reflect the voices of survivors and promote a woman's right to self-determination. However, if the voices of survivors are minimised and silenced, this objective cannot be achieved. As such it is recommended that organisations take note of the UN Women (2013) objectives and make greater effort to listen to the voices of women who access their services.

My thesis demonstrates how violence against women services in Cambodia are a life-saving resource and allow women to access their capability of life (Nussbaum, 2005). However, to suggest this is an end-point and significant outcome ignores the impacts of violence and the everyday lived experiences of women after they have left their abusive relationships. My thesis demonstrates how separating from an abusive partner is a trade-off for women in Cambodia. Accessing services and getting divorced means women can live without violence, but without access to a stable income and permanent and safe housing, the capability of life once again becomes compromised because women are at risk of dying from malnourishment, illness and violence once again. When organisations and shelters do not adequately support women, they are forced to engage in trade-offs that can have devastating effects. As such, organisations need to consider how they can better support women in their future lives, thus reducing feelings of anxiety and insecurity and trade-offs they must engage in. As Nussbaum (2005) argues, anxiety can be crippling for women and limits their ability to practically reason. While informal support networks of family and friends can help women access stable housing and emotional help, they cannot do this always. Some of the participants had families and communities they could return to, but others had no informal support network, thus

emphasising the need for adequate support for women both inside shelters and in their transition towards post-shelter lives. These findings are in line with the UN Women (2013) module, which argues that women need access to a variety of services and stages of housing because these have the potential to meet women's complex needs.

While the staff interviews discussed in Chapter Five show that NGOs want to facilitate women's economic independence, the women's narratives illustrate how the skills training on offer does little to enhance their financial capabilities. The empirical data demonstrates that services providers have an understanding of how economic instability can impact a woman's decision to leave and/or return to an abusive relationship, however the skills training they are able to offer is constrained by the limitations they face, namely a lack of funding and staff.

My thesis demonstrates how the choices service providers give women can be limited by the gendered structural barriers that women face in wider society. Kabeer (1997:6) asserts that, 'the normative and allocative activities of the state, of community-based organisations [...], help to shape and reshape gender-differentiated structures of entitlement and disempowerment'. On this point, I argue that the skills training provided by the organisations did little help women push back against the gender inequality they face. The participants in my research were either trained for industries that they had already worked in and/or would not support them financially, but this was because the organisations believed these were the industries where women were most likely to secure employment in the future. For women not staying in a shelter, there was no time to learn a new skill because they were preoccupied with earning enough money to survive. So, even when women had a 'choice', this choice could not be actioned. To action choice women need an existence of choice, a sense of choice and the use of choice (Kleine 2010) but, as my thesis shows, the potential to do so is limited by the pervasive environment of gender inequality, corruption and impunity in civil society, government and the criminal justice system. This underlines the argument that dealing with

violence against women requires the removal of major sources of unfreedom for women, both at the macro and micro levels.

Appendix One: Cambodian Law and Policies on Violence Against Women

Title	Institution	Key content	Coverage of exit routes/ shelter/safety/help-seeking?
Constitution of the Kingdom of Cambodia	Royal Government of Cambodia	<p>Article 31 (rights and freedoms): Every Khmer citizen shall be equal before the law, enjoying the same rights, freedoms and fulfilling the same obligations regardless of race, colour, sex, language, religious belief, political tendency, birth origin, social status, wealth or other status</p> <p>Article 35 (political equality): Khmer citizens of either sex shall be given the right to participate actively in the political, economic, social and cultural life of the nation.</p> <p>Article 45 (discrimination against women): All forms of discrimination against woman shall be abolished...and the exploitation of women in employment shall be prohibited in marriages and matters of the family.</p>	Article 46: The State and the society shall provide women, especially those underprivileged living in rural areas, with opportunities to benefit from assistance for a profession, for medical cares, for their children schooling and for decent living conditions (page 16).

<p>Law on Domestic Violence and the Protection of Victims (2005)</p>	<p>Royal Government of Cambodia</p>	<p>Jurisdiction: Within the household, and includes any form of domestic violence against husband, wife, children or older people</p> <p>Definition of violence:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An act that could affect life (including premeditated, intentional or unintentional homicide) 2. An act that affects physical integrity (including physical violence that may or may not result in visible wounds) 3. Any torturous or cruel act (including harassment that causes mental/psychological, emotional or intellectual harm to persons within the household) or 4. Sexual aggression (including violent rape, sexual harassment or indecent exposure). 	<p>Article 13: Moving the perpetrators from the scene or moving the victims if there is a request from the victims. In any special case the victim can be removed without having a request if there is a necessary reason to do so.</p> <p>Offering the appropriate assistance to the victims in accordance with their circumstances, especially providing the temporary shelter in which safety can be guaranteed and urgent medical assistance</p>
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National Action Plan to Prevent Violence against Women (2008-2012)	Royal Government of Cambodia, prepared by the Ministry of Women's Affairs	<p>Four strategies of the NAPVAW:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Public awareness raising and information dissemination on existing laws; 2. Enhancing social, medical, and legal services to ensure quality care for women who experience violence; 3. Develop and improve policies and laws to enhance the criminal justice response to violence against women 4. Strengthen capacity of government officials 	Nothing specific mentioned
Second National Action Plan to Prevent Violence	Royal Government of Cambodia, prepared by	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Public awareness raising and information dissemination on existing laws; 	Nothing specific mentioned

<p>against Women 2014 - 2018 (2015)</p>	<p>the Ministry of Women's Affairs</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Enhancing social, medical, and legal services to ensure quality care for women who experience violence; 3. Develop and improve policies and laws to enhance the criminal justice response to violence against women 4. Strengthen capacity of government officials 5. Develop a standardised system for data collection and monitoring, analysis and evidence based reporting on VAW. 	
<p>Neary Ratanak IV: Five Year Strategic Plan for Gender Equality and Women's</p>	<p>Ministry of Women's Affairs</p>	<p>Neary Rattanak IV is the five-year strategic plan (2014 – 2018) for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women in Cambodia. This fourth five-year strategic plan (Neary Rattanak IV) is designed to provide detailed action plans to support the transition from project-based to</p>	<p>Nothing specific mentioned in relation to violence, but instead to climate change: Initiatives for program design and activities in response to actual needs, such as personal safety and security, access to water, medication, health</p>

Empowerment (2014-2018)		program-based approaches, with a strong emphasis on building capacity of institutions across government for gender equality.	care and treatment, food, safe shelters and sanitation for women and vulnerable women are incorporated into disaster risk management and response.
Safety village commune/Sangkat Policy Guideline	Ministry of Interior	This document outlines the Sangkat/village safety policies. Violence against women is mentioned: “No prostitute women and children trafficking and domestic violence” “Take action to eliminate any prostitute women and children trafficking, domestic violence for in order to prevent security safety for citizens especially for women and children, away from trafficking, business labor, sexual trafficking, and violence by following firmly the existing law.	Nothing specific mentioned

Appendix Two: CWCC Partners and Donors





(CWCC website, 2019)

Appendix Three: Banteay Srei Partners and Donors



IWDA INTERNATIONAL
WOMEN'S
DEVELOPMENT
AGENCY



(Banteay Srei website, 2019)

Appendix Four: CWCC Participants

Name	Age	From	Shelter	Length of Stay	Level of education	Marital status	Children	Type of violence	Prior occupation	Help sought before shelter	How did they know?
Socheata	33	Originally from Kampong Cham but living in Phnom Penh at time of divorce	Phnom Penh	6 months	Grade 7	Not officially married by law	1 child deceased, 1 child 3 years old with Socheata in the shelter	Psychological and physical	Garment factory worker	None	Took her son to the hospital in Siem Reap where she met an NGO who helped her contact CWCC.
Thida	22	Dom Deak Province	Siem Reap	1 year	Grade 5	Never married	None	Raped by a man living in her community	Worked in a café	Reported the rape to the police but they did nothing	Thida's auntie knew the phone number for CWCC from a radio broadcast
Puthea	30	Rural area of Siem Reap	Siem Reap	8 months	Grade 4	Never married, 9 year relationship	2 children (10 & 1) living in safe shelter	2 years of physical, psychological and economic violence	Construction worker	Reported the violence to the police but the police did nothing about it	Referred to CWCC by Banteay Srei

Channou	36	Rural area of Siem Reap	Siem Reap	6 months	Grade 8	Married for 12 years	3 children, youngest staying in safe shelter, one staying with niece and one with brother	Psychological	Worked in a school but husband was working in Ministry of Education so had to stop working there. Started selling food in the market.	Reported her husband to the police but they did nothing to help her – stated she believed her husband had paid the police	Found out about the Women’s Affairs Network from a friend, who then referred her to CWCC.
Lina	29	Rural area of Banteay Meanchey	Banteay Meanchey	4 months	Grade 5	Married for 10 years	4 children, 3 living in the safe shelter and youngest living with her mother	Physical, psychological and economical	Garment factory worker	Reported her husband to the police but they did nothing. Asked the village chief for a divorce and he referred her to thw CWCC.	Asked other people in her village if they knew where the shelter was but nobody knew. Village chief told her and she took a motorbike taxi to the office in Poipet.
Maly	33	Rural area of Banteay Meanchey	Banteay Meanchey	1 year	Grade 6	Married for 8 years	2 children living in	Physical, psychological	Sold vegetables	Reported her husband to	Word of mouth in local area –

							the safe shelter	and economical	and second-hand clothes	the police, he was arrested but released the next day due to ill health	other local people knew about the CWCC from a radio broadcast.
Sopheap	31	Rural area of Banteay Meanchey	Banteay Meanchey	1 month	Grade 10	Married for 10 years	3 children living with husband	Physical, psychological and economical	Sewed clothes and sold them in the market	Asked village chief for a divorce but didn't receive help, commune chief told her to go to the CWCC for assistance	Commune chief advised her

Appendix Five: Banteay Srei Participants

Name	Age	From	Level of ed.	Marital details	Children	Type of violence	Occupation(s)	Other responsibilities/difficulties	Services received from BS	Housing
Kunthea	38	Cham Kar Russei village (Battambang)	Grade 3	Married at 17 (arranged), divorced at 36	4 female (19, 17, 9 & 4)	Physical, psychological & economical	Selling fried banana.	School fees for children	Assessment, counselling, legal assistance, divorce, court fees, travel costs	Lived under sibling's house because no permanent home
Sony	44	Rung Ampil village (Battambang)	Grade 4	Married at 23 (arranged), divorced at 41	2 males (21 & 14), 1 female (11)	Physical – attempted murder with knives/axe	Owens (& works) 2 hectares of rice fields.	Cares for sister's children and her mother. School fees for children	Assessment, counselling, legal assistance, divorce, court fees, safe shelter, food, travel costs, medical assistance	Lives in marital home (awarded by courts)
Pisey	49	Cheeu Teal commune (Battambang)	Grade 7	Married at 22 (arranged), divorced at 48	2 males (23 & 13), 2 females (21 & 19)	Physical, psychological and economical & physically violent to children. Husband had another wife	Unable to work due to physical injuries sustained from husband's violence.	School fees for children	Assessment, counselling, legal assistance, divorce, court fees, travel costs	Awarded marital home
Srey Pich	46	Samroang Ou Treavillage	Grade 12	Married at 26 (arranged),	2 females (ages unknown)	Psychological & economical. Husband had another wife.	Selling traditional Khmer cake/dessert,	Cares for mother, daughter is sick from accident with a bat (animal) and	Assessment, rights/law education, counselling, legal assistance, divorce, court fees, food (fish	Living with mother. Courts shared the house between husband

		(Battambang)		divorced at 43			doing laundry. Makes mats. Makes porridge & soup to sell.	had to borrow 300 dollars.	sauce, noodles, rice). Asked if wanted help w/ business but did not receive help. Offered sewing training but could not participate because needed to work.	& wife – now husband lives there with new wife. Husband was awarded land/farm.
Seav Choung	28	Kbal Than village (Battambang)	Grade 7	Married at 21 & divorced at 25		Psychological & economical. Husband had an affair.	Selling Khmer desserts (rice, banana etc) with sister.	Health issues – must attend the hospital monthly. Cares for parents.	Assessment, counselling, legal assistance, divorce, court fees, travel costs, safe shelter, small money for food.	Living with parents.
Vanna	49	Bavel village (Battambang)	Grade 10	Married at 20 (arranged)	5 biological children (33, 29, 27, 23, 20), 1 adopted (15).	Physical, economical, psychological.	Works as security at her child's farm. Grows vegetables at the farm and sells them.	School fees for youngest child. Health issues – problems sleeping and with digestion – lost weight down to 40kg.	Assessment, counselling, legal assistance, divorce, court fees, travel costs, safe shelter, food & small money.	Living on child's farm whilst working as a security guard.

Por Sivorn	37	Ou Ta Kam Bei village (Battambang)	Grade 11	Married at 27 (arranged), divorced at 34	3 children (18, 13, 8)	Physical (use of weapons such as axe), economical and psychological. Husband used drugs.	Unable to work due to injuries sustained from husband's violence.	Had to rent a house after leaving her husband – did not have enough money for food. School fees for children. Quality of home – old and dilapidated, leaks with the rain. Health issues related to husband's violence.	Assessment, counselling, legal assistance, court fees, travel costs, safe shelter, medical assistance.	Awarded the house by the courts, gave it to children.
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