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THE *LINGHA* BOYS OF SIEM REAP

A Baseline Study of Sexually-Exploited Young Men in Siem Reap, Cambodia

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Executive Summary

The sexual exploitation of women and girls in Southeast Asia continues to be the subject of much research and remains a central concern among NGOs and anti-trafficking organizations. As these concerns remain central, sexual violence against men and boys is often little understood or acknowledged. This study aims to provide a baseline of information of young men working in the male to male sex industry in Siem Reap, Cambodia. It serves to uncover some of the vulnerabilities of the young men working in this industry in order for NGOs and social service providers to understand them better. Structured interviews were conducted with 50 young men from numerous massage establishments within a 1-km radius of the Siem Reap town center. The vulnerabilities of these young men regarding a number of areas, including financial security, sexual history and health, violence, faith, and future plans, were assessed. This information was collected to determine the needs these young men may have and to provide initial data as a basis for understanding and future research.

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This study serves as one of the few attempts to understand the situation of young males in potentially sexually exploitative careers in Cambodia, and serves as a complement to a similar study conducted in Phnom Penh in 2011.[1] This previous research focused exclusively on sexual exploitation within male to male massage parlors. The present study expands that sampling to males working in both male to male and mixed gender massage establishments (locations having both male and female masseurs catering to both male and female clients). This was done, in part, to provide a broader understanding of the situation of males working in potentially exploitative careers, as well as to provide a comparison of the potential vulnerabilities of men working in both types of establishments. A recent surge in nightclubs, gay bars, and internet chat rooms where young Cambodian men can be "picked up" for paid sex seems to indicate a surge in demand for male sexual service. The research team believes that the data in this study provide merely a glimpse of the "tip of the iceberg." It is their hope that this data will serve to provide a clearer picture of the male sex industry and provoke numerous questions for future research.

Literature Review

A Gender-Exclusive Approach to the Global Sex Trade

Sexually exploited males are visible around the world. They advertise as escorts, masseurs, models, or openly as sex workers. They are found hanging out on street corners, at train stations, and at public parks the world over. Thousands of male sex workers are available in online directories, searchable by physical attributes, services provided, and price. However, despite their global presence, males in the sex industry are often ignored by social services, administrative bodies,

[1]G. Miles & H. Blanch, *What about Boys?: An Initial Exploration of Sexually Exploited Boys in Cambodia* (2011), http://love146.org/wp-content/uploads/drupal_migrated/What%20About%20Boys_Miles%26Blanch.pdf (accessed October 14, 2013).

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mass media, and social research.[2] In a 2008 review of 166 scholarly articles on the global sex industry, 84% exclusively discussed female sex workers and made no mention of males.[3] This is sometimes attributed to a Western worldview, held by those funding such research, which views young men as resilient and able to take care of themselves, while young women seem vulnerable and in need of rescue.[4]

A similar neglect is found in the media discussions of human trafficking. The traditional narrative talks about "women" or "girls" to describe—often in explicit detail—occasions when men enslave and sexually abuse females.[5] The discussion is usually framed as good versus evil in a story about misogyny and the sexual exploitation of women, while ignoring the significant number of male victims of forced labor and sex trafficking. An article in the Utah Law Review suggests that, "to some extent, men and boys have become the victims of this media-driven, socially constructed conception of maleness."[6]

Part of this conception of males may stem from a significant portion of scholarship on the global sex trade which has been led by feminist theorists who take a strong gender-centric approach to this issue.[7] Melissa Farley is a leading expert on prostitution and the global sex trade. In a Cambodian study entitled "A Thorn in the Heart: Cambodian Men who Buy Sex," Farley and her research team describe the social function of sex workers in Cambodian culture. Their research

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[2]Jeffery P. Dennis, "Women are Victims, Men Make Choices: The Invisibility of Men and Boys in the Global Sex Trade," *Gender Issues* 25 (2008): 11–12.

[3]Dennis, "Women are Victims, Men Make Choices," 13.

[4]G. Miles & H. Blanch, *An Initial Exploration of Young Men Who Work in the Male-to-Male Massage Industry in Phnom Penh, Cambodia* (Phnom Penh, Cambodia: Love146, unpublished), 2.

[5]Samuel Vincent Jones, "The Invisible Man: The Conscious Neglect of Men and Boys in the War on Human Trafficking," *Utah Law Review* 4 (2010): 1144.

[6]Jones, "The Invisible Man," 1145.

[7]Ruth Graham, "Male Rape and the Careful Construction of the Male Victim," *Social and Legal Studies* 15:2 (2006): 187–208.

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details the kinds of violence that are perpetrated against Cambodian women in the sex industry by their buyers, brothel owners, pimps, and even police officers.

Furthermore, this research discusses the implications of violent or hard core pornography in Cambodian society. Farley notes that 79% of the men in her study noted that their sexual acts had changed over time and that the majority of these changes were due to a desire to imitate the styles and positions that they had seen in the pornographic materials that they had viewed.[8] While Farley's discussion does little to discuss the men who are exploited in the sex industry, she *does* discuss the dangers that male clients pose to prostituted females as they use hardcore pornography as a kind of "script" for their sexual acts. This raises some important questions with regard to gay pornography and the demand for male sex workers in Cambodian society. Farley notes that nearly 1 in 5 men in the study had viewed pornography depicting adults having sex with boys. Of that 19%, 5% had seen boys under the age of 5, 36% had seen boys age 6–12, and 85% had seen boys aged 13–17.[9] Drawing from Farley's conclusions on the links between hardcore, heterosexual pornography and the abuse of Cambodian women in the sex industry, it may also be useful to ask what impact hardcore, homosexual pornography has on Cambodian male sex workers and men who have sex with men in Cambodian society.

Little has been written about the lives of men used in gay male pornography and its impact on prostituted males. In fact, contrasted to similar discourse on heterosexual pornography, gay male pornography is often viewed as harm-free and even a source of gay male liberation and identity formation.[10] Christopher Kendall argues that gay male

[8]Melissa Farley, et. al., *A Thorn in the Heart: Cambodian Men Who Buy Sex* (San Francisco, CA: Prostitution Research & Education, 2012), 9, http://www.prostitutionresearch.com/Cambodia%20Project%20Final.pdf (accessed October 14, 2013).

[9]Farley, et. al., *A Thorn in the Heart*, 26.

[10]C. N. Kendall & R. E. Funk, "Gay Male Pornography's 'Actors': When Fantasy Isn't," in M. Farley, ed., *Prostitution, Trafficking, and Traumatic Stress*

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pornography and its implications for men who have sex with men (MSM) are just as harmful as heterosexual pornography and its effects on women. Kendall cites a 1985 study which exposes the emotional vulnerability of young men in this industry and discusses the strong, adverse, and sometimes fatal effects that such depictions have on the actors' self-identities. The result is that feminine, soft, or "bottom" men are degraded as "queer" and "faggots" and are dehumanized in the same ways as a woman who is degraded as "bitch," "cunt," or "whore."[11]

A Matter of Choice vs. Victimization

Another consideration within present research is the terminology used to discuss males and females in prostitution. The term "prostitute" was preferred in 66% of the studies dealing with women and in only 25% of the studies pertaining to men. On the other hand, "sex worker" was the term of choice for 75% of the studies dealing with men in the sex industry.[12] In the cited study, it is believed that the term "prostitute" implies coercion and degradation, whereas "sex worker" implies more of an active choice of participation. This seems to imply that women are forced to participate in sexual exchanges, whereas males are not. Female sex work is thought of as degrading and dangerous, whereas male sex work is not.[13] Does this preclude, then, that females in the sex trade are in need of action and activism, whereas their male counterparts are not?

Noted feminist Andrea Dworkin encapsulates the gender-exclusive view of prostitution in a speech entitled "Prostitution and Male Supremacy." She says,

> Prostitution: what is it? It is the use of a woman's body for sex by a man, he pays money, he does what he wants. The minute you move

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(Binghampton: The Haworth Maltreatment & Trauma Press, 2003), 95.

[11]Kendall & Funk, "Gay Male Pornography's 'Actors': When Fantasy Isn't," 95.

[12]Dennis, "Women are Victims, Men Make Choices," 19.

[13]Dennis, "Women are Victims, Men Make Choices," 19.

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> away from what it really is, you move away from prostitution into the world of ideas.[14]

In this framework, prostitution is exclusively understood as a male's abuse of a female. Throughout this and other narratives of its kind, males and females seem to be dichotomized as predator and prey. While this may be true in a number of cases, this kind of discussion is unhelpful and may lead to a greater neglect of males who also suffer from abuse and exploitation.

MSM and Sexual Identity in Cambodia

In Cambodia, there is a significant level of denial that sex between men takes place.[15] Male to male sexuality is often an issue of great shame and discrimination. A 2004 USAID report notes that stigma and discrimination against men who have sex with men in Cambodia cause them to "hide their faces."[16] The report states that consequences of being known as an MSM include violence, ostracism, rejection, and dismissal from employment. Thus, many of these groups are forced to remain underground.[17]

Discussions on sexual identity in Cambodian society are often difficult to have. Sexual identity is a more recent concept coming out of Western thought and scholarship.[18] In Cambodia, the concepts of

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[14]Andrea Dworkin, "Prostitution and Male Supremacy," *Prostitution: From Academia to Activism*, symposium (University of Michigan Law School: Michigan Journal of Gender and Law, Oct. 31, 1992).

[15]Kha Sovannara & Chris Ward, *Men Who Have Sex with Men in Cambodia: HIV/AIDS Vulnerability, Stigma, and Discrimination* (Phnom Penh: Policy Project, January 2004), 4, http://www.policyproject.com/pubs/countryreports/CAM_MSM.pdf (accessed October 15, 2013).

[16]Sovannara & Ward, *Men Who Have Sex with Men in Cambodia*, 5.

[17]Sovannara & Ward, *Men Who Have Sex with Men in Cambodia*, 12.

[18]Chou Meng Tarr, *Study of Contextual Factors Affecting Risk-Related Sexual Behaviour Among Young People in Cambodia* (Phnom Phenh: UNAIDS, 1996), 27.

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"heterosexual" and "homosexual" are still not common distinctions to be made. Tarr notes that most Cambodians "do not consciously reflect on their sexual identity, but rather on themselves as females and males living in Cambodian society."[19] Men who have sex with men are commonly divided into two categories: MSM "Short Hair" and MSM "Long Hair." MSM "Short Hair" are men who identify themselves as men and display common masculine characteristics and appearances, whereas MSM "Long Hair" are men who display more feminine characteristics and who may sometimes fall into a Western "transgender" category.[20] A 2008 UNESCO ethnography of Cambodian male to male sexuality notes that the sexual identity of a man in Cambodian society is not based upon sexual behavior but rather on his having a masculine or feminine character.[21] Thus, it can be possible for a man to have sexual attractions to, and even sexual relations with, other men and, yet, still not categorize himself with the Western concept of "homosexual."

The Cambodian Male Sex Industry

In Phnom Penh, there are reported to be hundreds of "massage" parlors featuring female masseurs who provide sexual services for male clientele. However, there is a growing number of similar services in which young males provide similar sexual services for male clientele.[22] A 2011 study, conducted in Phnom Penh, focuses on male masseurs working in the male to male sex industry. As a precursor to the present study, this report aims to provide an initial understanding of the

[19]Tarr, *Study of Contextual Factors Affecting Risk-Related Sexual Behaviour Among Young People in Cambodia*, 3.

[20]Sovannara & Ward, *Men Who Have Sex with Men in Cambodia*, iv.

[21]Phong Tan, *HIV/AIDS Prevention Programme: Ethnography of Male to Male Sexuality in Cambodia* (Phnom Penh: UNESCO, 2008), 24–26, http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0016/001630/163077e.pdf (accessed October 14, 2013).

[22]Miles & Blanch, *An Initial Exploration of Young Men Who Work in the Male-to-Male Massage Industry in Phnom Penh, Cambodia*, 5.

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vulnerabilities, demographics, and potential resiliencies of the young men in this industry.[23] Of the respondents interviewed, 42.8% have had sex with multiple clients at the same time. 2.2% said that they did this often, or 6–10 times, and 6.7% reported that they did this frequently, or more than 10 times.[24] Additionally, out of the 45 masseurs interviewed, 5 reported that they have "occasionally" been forced to have sex and one stated that he was "sometimes" forced to have sex.[25]

A 2004 Cambodian policy report suggests that indirect sex workers are more common in Phnom Penh than direct sex workers due to discrimination mitigated by direct sex work. An indirect sex worker is a male who will not openly solicit sex but will usually ask for money after sex.[26] These kinds of sex workers may be found in restaurants, parks, or other public areas. They are reported to find clients by striking up conversations which usually lead to the subject of sex.

Male Sexual Abuse

Recent studies have indicated the need for further research into the connection between male sexual abuse and the male sex industry. A Canadian study of male sex workers[27] reports that 70% of the male sex workers studied had a history of sexual abuse prior to entering the industry. Additionally, over 75% had been physically violated and witnessed aggression during childhood.[28]

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[23]Miles & Blanch, *An Initial Exploration of Young Men Who Work in the Male-to-Male Massage Industry in Phnom Penh, Cambodia*, 9.

[24]Miles & Blanch, *What about Boys?*, 15.

[25]Miles & Blanch, *An Initial Exploration of Young Men Who Work in the Male-to-Male Massage Industry in Phnom Penh, Cambodia*, 9.

[26]Sovannara & Ward, *Men Who Have Sex with Men in Cambodia*, 19.

[27]S. McIntyre, *Under the Radar: The Sexual Exploitation of Young Men* (Calgary, Alberta, Canada: 2005).

[28]McIntyre, *Under the Radar.*

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While the sexual abuse of girls has been given much attention in research, studies concerning boys and male sexual abuse are limited. Holmes and Slap claim that the "sexual abuse of boys is common, underreported, under recognized, and under treated."[29] Research in North America indicates that the sexual abuse of boys is less likely to be reported due to fear of punishment, loss of independence, and homosexual labeling.[30] Depending on what group is studied, prevalence of male childhood sexual abuse in North America ranges from 4%–16%.[31] A 2005 study of Health Management Organization (HMO) members in San Diego, California found that 16% of males had been sexually abused before the age of 18.[32]

A number of studies document the negative effects of sexual abuse on male psychological development. David Lisak, in a content analysis of 26 male survivors of sexual abuse, reports that victims experienced common feelings of worthlessness, emptiness, and inferiority which tended to worsen with time to become deeply ingrained negative identities.[33] A 2005 literature review on the psychological consequences of male sexual abuse reports disrupted development of gender identity, self-esteem, and self-concept as common effects of male sexual abuse.[34] Males are reported to cope with the trauma of sexual abuse through denial, self-hypnosis, dissociation, and self-mutilation.[35]

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[29]W. C. Holmes & G. B. Slap, "Sexual Abuse of Boys: Definition, Prevalence, Correlates, Sequelae, and Management," *Journal of the American Medical Association* 280:21 (1998): 1855.

[30]Holmes & Slap, "Sexual Abuse of Boys," 1860.

[31]Holmes & Slap, "Sexual Abuse of Boys," 1856.

[32]S. R. Dube, et. al., "Long-term Consequences of Childhood Sexual Abuse by Gender of Victim," *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* 28:5 (2005): 434.

[33]D. Lisak, "The Psychological Impact of Sexual Abuse: Content Analysis of Interviews with Male Survivors," *Journal of Traumatic Stress* 7:4 (1994): 544.

[34]S. M. Valente, "Sexual Abuse of Boys," *Journal of Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Nursing* 18:1 (2005): 10.

[35]Valente, "Sexual Abuse of Boys," 11.

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Prevalence and Understanding of Sexual Abuse in Asia

In Asian societies, issues of male sexual abuse have also been given little attention. In South Asia, young boys are assumed to be capable of protecting themselves. The existence of male sexual abuse and even male to male sexuality is often ignored or denied. This traditional narrative seems to presuppose that males are not at risk of abuse or exploitation.[36] Thus, societies are less vigilant, cases of abuse are less likely to be reported, and boys may be placed at greater risk of abuse and/or exploitation. These prevalent conceptions of male invulnerability further complicate the issue of male exploitation and abuse because they reinforce the idea that males are "stronger" and thus more psychologically resilient, are able to readily protect themselves, and more easily recover from trauma than adolescent girls.[37]

In Cambodian society, there is an adage which states that women are like cloth and males are like gold. When a cloth is soiled, it is no longer useful; however, if gold is soiled, it only needs to be polished again. Based upon this belief, girls and young women are seen as unrecoverable, and are therefore carefully protected, whereas much less vigilance is afforded to boys and young men and they are not thought to require any serious follow-up in cases of abuse.[38]

Male Sexual Abuse in Cambodia

In 2008, Hilton and associates published a qualitative study of 40 Cambodian boys and young men who had been victims of sexual abuse and interviewed 100 staff members from a range of NGOs about their

[36]J. Frederick, *Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Boys in South Asia—A Review of Research Findings, Legislation, Policy and Programme Responses* (Florence: UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, 2010), 6.

[37]Frederick, *Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Boys in South Asia*, 15.

[38]Miles & Blanch, *An Initial Exploration of Young Men Who Work in the Male-to-Male Massage Industry in Phnom Penh, Cambodia*, 5.

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experiences of working with male victims of sexual abuse.[39] This was the first study of its kind.

Several risk factors emerged from this study, including poverty, loss of a parent and/or sibling, and experiences of domestic violence. Most had very low levels of education and commonly described drug and alcohol abuse within their home lives.[40] Cambodian males who had been victims of sexual abuse commonly described mockery, jokes, and further discrimination from people within their communities when they were discovered to be victims of sexual abuse, which resulted in further isolation and marginalization.[41] Additionally, a number of older boys who identified themselves as men who have sex with men (MSM) described a number of violent accounts of sexual abuse and even gang rape.[42]

In Cambodia, more is known about boys who are abused by foreigners in urban and tourist locales.[43] This is due to current child protection initiatives which focus on such incidents. Stories featuring Khmer perpetrators of sexual abuse against boys are rarely featured.[44] However, *Action Pour Les Enfants* (APLE) reports that child sexual exploitation is more often committed by Cambodian nationals than foreigners.[45]

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[39]A. Hilton, et. al., *I Thought It Could Never Happen to Boys* (Phnom Penh: Hagar & World Vision, 2008).

[40]Hilton, et. al., *I Thought It Could Never Happen to Boys*, 8.

[41]Hilton, et. al., *I Thought It Could Never Happen to Boys*, 9.

[42]Hilton, et. al., *I Thought It Could Never Happen to Boys*, 10.

[43]R. Renault, *Survey on Street-based Child Sexual Exploitation in Cambodia: Overview of 7 Provinces* (Phnom Penh: Action Pour Les Enfants, 2006); Hilton, et. al., *I Thought It Could Never Happen to Boys*, 8.

[44]Hilton, et. al., *I Thought It Could Never Happen to Boys*, 8.

[45]Renault, *Survey on Street-based Child Sexual Exploitation in Cambodia*.

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Some cultural factors can complicate research seeking to understand the prevalence of male sexual abuse. In Cambodian society, it is common to soothe or show affection to very young male children by touching or kissing the genitals.[46] A 2005 report studied Cambodian boys ages 12–15 and asked about sexual touching before and after the age of 9. The research found that 18.9% of Cambodian boys aged 12–15 admitted to being sexually touched on the genitals after the age of 9 and 15.7% admitted to being sexually touched *before* the age of 9.[47]

Methodology

In July and August of 2012, a questionnaire based survey of male masseurs employed in male to male massage parlors and other establishments (e.g., barbershops) in Siem Reap, Cambodia was conducted.

Survey Instrument

The survey used for this study was previously used in a similar study of male masseurs conducted in Phnom Penh, Cambodia.[48] This survey was adapted from a similar survey instrument developed by Jasmir Thakur (Samabhavana Society) and used with male masseurs in Mumbai, India.[49] Adaptations were made by the researchers to make the survey more relevant to the cultural and economic context of Cambodia.

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[46]Hilton, et. al., *I Thought It Could Never Happen to Boys*; G. M. Miles & V. Sun, *"Stop Violence against Us!": Cambodian Children's Perceptions of Violence*, Part 2 (Phnom Penh: Tearfund, Child Welfare Group, 2006).

[47]G. M. Miles & V. Sun, *"Stop Violence against Us!": Cambodian Children's Perceptions of Violence* (Phnom Penh: Tearfund, Child Welfare Group, 2005).

[48]Miles & Blanch, *What about Boys?*

[49]G. M. Miles & J. Thakur, *Baseline Survey with Masseur Boys in Mumbai*, unpublished report (Mumbai, India: Love 146 & Samabhavana Society, 2011).

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The survey was a combination of multiple choice and open-ended questions and covered the following areas: demographic details; family background and income; issues of prejudice, stigma, and discrimination; migration; sexual identity and sexual history; sexual health; substance abuse; sexual violence and abuse; income generation; spirituality; dignity; future planning.

Massage Establishments and Respondent Recruitment

A total number of 20 massage, spa, and other establishments employing male masseurs (i.e., barbershops, hotels) were included in the study. A field research methodology with purposeful and snowball sampling methods[50] was used to identify the male masseur respondents working within the following types of massage establishments within an approximate one kilometer radius of the Siem Reap town center:

- Massage establishments advertising massage for males by male masseurs;
- Massage establishments that included both male and female masseurs advertising to the general public;
- Other places of employment that include massage services by male masseurs (e.g., barbershops, hotels).

The locations of the massage establishments were determined by identifying available websites and advertisements, general in-person enquiries at massage establishments, and follow-up on referrals provided through previous interviews with participants (also referred to as "snowball/referral sampling.")[51]

[50]J. Overton & P. van Diermen, "Using Quantitative Techniques," in R. Scheyvens & D. Storey, eds., *Development Fieldwork: A Practical Guide* (London: SAGE Publications, Ltd., 2003), 37–56; P. Nichols, *Social Survey Methods: A Field Guide for Development Workers* (Oxford: Oxfam Publications, 1991).

[51]Nichols, *Social Survey Methods.*

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Contact was made with either managers or owners of the establishments and permission was granted for surveys to be conducted with employees during off-peak hours, or through contact with individual masseurs who were informed of the research and invited to participate at a time and venue convenient for them. Care was taken to schedule and conduct interviews with respondents during off-peak working hours or before or after work hours. All survey interviews were conducted in a quiet and private area within the respective massage establishments or at a quiet café/restaurant, seeking to avoid/limit interruption and ensure that others did not overhear the interview. Where survey interviews were conducted away from the respondent's place of employment, drinks and/or snacks were provided. Respondents were not compensated for their participation in the study. No images were recorded during the survey interview process.

Survey Interviews

There were a total of 50 surveys completed. Survey interviews were conducted by two local Cambodians and one expatriate. Interviewers were provided with training to ensure that they provided respondents with respect and used culturally appropriate language before, during, and after the survey interview process. Survey interviews were conducted in pairs to ensure safety and accountability, with each interviewer accompanied by an expatriate researcher who observed the interview and made notes where appropriate. All survey interviews were conducted in the local Khmer language without the assistance of a translator. Interviewers also sought to establish rapport with respondents prior to the survey, providing each respondent with an explanation of the research and its purpose, the personal nature of several questions to be asked of them, their right to choose not to answer any question and/or stop the survey and/or withdraw from the study at any time, and an assurance of anonymity and confidentiality. Two potential respondents declined the invitation to participate in the study. No respondents chose to stop the survey, withdraw from the study, or refrain from answering questions.

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Data Preparation and Analysis

Descriptive analyses of the survey results were undertaken using SPSS 20.0 (SPSS Inc). Thematic analysis was used to explore the responses to open-ended questions included in the survey, with key features of this data coded and sorted in a systematic manner to reflect patterns in the data and inform themes and sub-themes relevant to the questions used in the survey.[52]

Ethical Considerations

Ethical guidelines were adhered to throughout the research process.[53] The respondents were informed about the purpose of the survey before giving consent to participate. The respondents were informed prior to engaging in the survey that they could choose not to answer any question or to stop the survey at any time. Interviewers visited the locations in pairs to ensure safety and accountability. Interviewers sought to establish rapport with respondents by explaining the research and its purpose. Care was taken to ensure that others did not overhear the interviews. All surveys were kept confidential. Respondents were informed that their individual responses would not be given to their employers. No visitors were allowed during the interview process and no images were taken during the process.

Results

Demographics

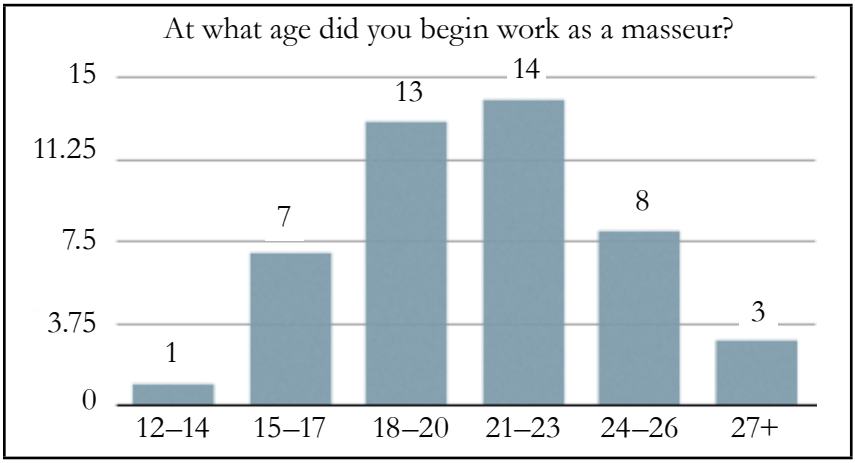
The ages of the respondents had a range of 14 years, the youngest reporting to be 18 and the oldest 32. The median age of respondents

[52]Richard E. Boyatzis, *Transforming Qualitative Information: Thematic Analysis & Code Development* (London: SAGE Publications, Ltd., 1998).

[53]J. Ennew, et. al., *The Right to be Properly Researched: How to do Rights-Based, Scientific Research with Children* (Bangkok: Black on White Publications, 2009); Thomas M. Steinfatt, *Measuring the Extent of Sex Trafficking in Cambodia—2008* (Bangkok: UNIAP, 2008).

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was 23.5 years. A few masseurs appeared to be very young; however, all respondents reported to be at least 18 years old at the time of the interviews. The ages at which respondents reported beginning their work as masseurs ranged 16 years, 30 being the oldest age to start working as a masseur and 14 being the youngest. The median age for the masseurs interviewed was 21 years. A total of nine masseurs indicated beginning work as a masseur before the age of 18. Eight of these started as masseurs between the ages of 15 and 17, and one reported starting at the age of 14. A similar study conducted in Mumbai, India of 77 male masseurs found that 9% of the young men surveyed were aged 10–12 years old and 55% were aged 13–15 years old.[54]



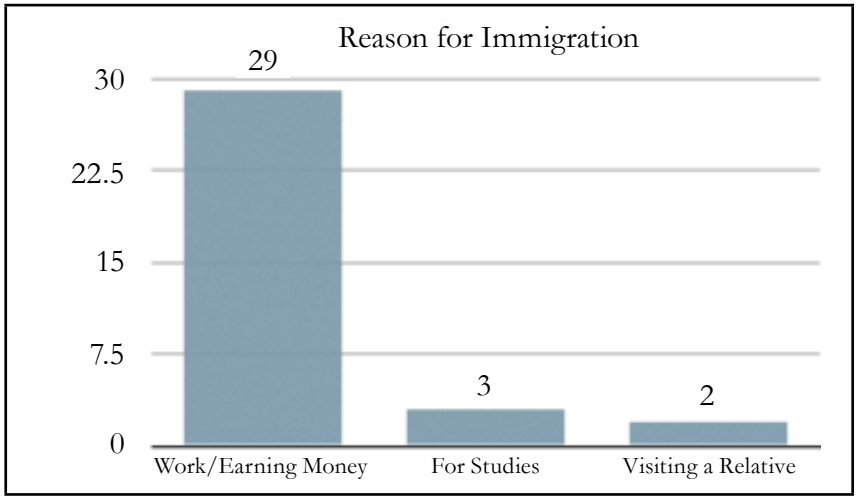
A significant number of respondents indicated that they had only recently come into the massage industry. Of the 50 respondents in the study, 33 (66%) had been working as masseurs for less than three years—nearly a third of which (10 people) had been working for only a matter of months (less than one year). This seems to suggest a high turnover rate among males in the massage industry. Throughout the interviews, a number of respondents seemed to indicate seeing massage work as a source of quick and/or easy income, with many citing tips as an incentive for coming into the industry. In addition to these figures, nine respondents (18%) reported that they had been

[54]Miles & Thakur, *Baseline Survey with Masseur Boys in Mumbai.*

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working as masseurs for 3–5 years, and eight (16%) had been working for more than six years.

Nearly half (42%) of respondents reported to have come from the Siem Reap area, either from within the city or just outside of it. Another significant number of respondents came from Kampong Cham (six people or 12%) and Takeo (5 people or 10%) provinces. Four respondents (8%) came from other cities (two from Battambang, one from Phnom Penh, and one from Sihanoukville).



The remaining respondents came from various provincial areas.

Over three-fourths of respondents had immigrated to Siem Reap. A predominant number of these respondents (29 people or 78.4%) had immigrated to Siem Reap for the purpose of finding work or earning money. This is about 20% higher than what was found among masseurs working in Phnom Penh. Furthermore, only three masseurs in Siem Reap (8.1% of respondents) had come to Siem Reap for the purpose of their studies, which is nearly 20% lower than for those working in Phnom Penh. In addition, five masseurs in Siem Reap (or 13.6% of respondents) reported immigrating to Siem Reap for the purpose of staying with friends or relatives.

With regard to living arrangements, 32.7% of respondents were presently living with immediate family members and 12.2% reported

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living with distant relatives. Slightly more than one-fifth (20.4%) of respondents lived with friends and nearly one-fourth (24.5%) lived alone. A predominant number of masseurs had immigrated to the Siem Reap area. Among this group, slightly under one-fourth lived with friends, the same number lived alone, and one-third of immigrants lived with relatives, either immediate or distant. For those native to Siem Reap, over half lived with immediate family members, nearly 11% lived alone, and 6.5% lived with friends.

The educational levels of respondents were diverse. Well over one-fourth (32%) of respondents had completed the 11th grade. A predominant number, 40% of respondents, had a 7th to 10th grade education, 20% had a 5th to 7th grade education, 4% had completed up to the 4th grade, and another 4% had no schooling at all. These figures are somewhat lower than what was found in Phnom Penh where nearly 50% completed the 11th grade; however, they are still slightly higher than the national average.

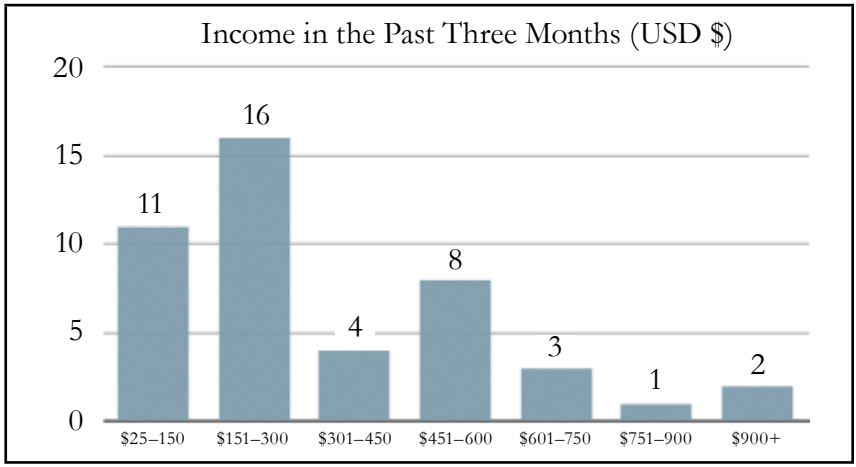
Entering the Massage Industry

The means through which the respondents had come into the massage industry were diverse. The largest group, 40%, stated that they came into the massage industry through a friend. Another 24% said that a member of their family, either immediate or distant, was responsible for their being in the massage industry. A slightly smaller group, 22% of respondents, said that they came into the massage industry after seeing an advertisement. Some respondents cited having friends or family members already working in the massage industry who provided them with free training. A number of others also cited receiving free training at the massage establishment.

Respondents were asked why they became a masseur instead of taking on another profession. As with the Phnom Penh study, low education and lack of skill remain the predominant reasons cited for becoming a masseur. Nearly half of respondents cited that they lacked the education or skills necessary for other employment. A significant portion of these respondents also cited inabilities in speaking English as a factor in entering the massage industry instead of other

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employment in Siem Reap, since massage did not require a great deal of verbal interaction with clients. More than one-fourth of respondents specifically cited financial benefits in being a masseur. Nearly half of those citing financial benefits specified that they came into the massage industry because they could earn tips as a masseur. Lastly, three respondents indicated that they wanted to become masseurs, and another three stated that they came into the industry because it was "easy work."

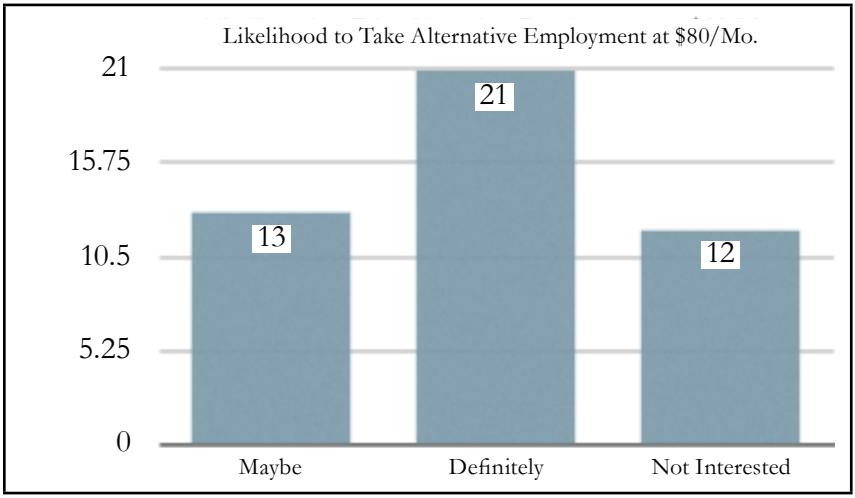


Financial Implications

Income and debt were significant considerations for young men working in this profession. Reported incomes for the last three months ranged from $25 to $3000 with a median income of $300. The mean income over the past three months was $409.59. The largest portion of incomes over the past three months ranged from $25 to $300. A total of 29 people or 60.4% of respondents reported to be within this range. Of this group, 18 respondents or 37.5% of total respondents reported incomes between $151 and $300 for the past three months. This would indicate average incomes to be between $50 and $100 a month. Additionally, 11 respondents or 22.9% earned between $25 and $150. There were 6 respondents who reported three-month earnings of less than $100. Of those who earned less than $100 in three months, four lived with either immediate family or relatives and the remaining

two had sources of secondary income. Additionally, 13 people (27.1%) reported earnings between $301 and $600, four people (8.4%) reported earnings between $601 and $900, and two reported earning more than $900 over a three-month period. The incomes most frequently reported over a three-month period were $300 and $600, respectively.

The range of incomes for the past three months was $2,975. This large number seems to be due to a few respondents who reported significantly higher incomes than others. One respondent, 22, from a male to male oriented establishment, reported a 3-month income of $1,000. This is $700 greater than the average income for this sampling. Another respondent, 24, also from a male to male oriented establishment, reported a 3-month income of $3,000, which is $2,700 greater than the average. Each of these respondents reported that they had met clients for sex. Within the past week, they reported meeting with 6 and 20 clients for sex, respectively.



The average income for an unskilled laborer (in Phnom Penh) was determined to be $80 a month, which is about $20 less than the average monthly income for masseurs in this study. Respondents in this study were asked if they would be interested to take another job which offered only $80 a month if it were offered to them. Nearly half of respondents (45%) indicated that they would "definitely" be interested in taking such a job and over one-fourth (28.3%) stated

that they might be interested. Overall, nearly three-fourths would definitely take, or would consider taking, a job that paid $80 a month as an alternative to their present employment.

Savings and Debts

Respondents were asked about their savings. If they saved money, they were asked where they kept it. 25 respondents, or 51%, reported that they did not save any money. Of those who did save, 11 respondents or 22.4% kept their money in a bank, five respondents or 10.2% gave it to a family member for safe keeping, and one masseur kept his money with his peers. Additionally, nearly half of the masseurs interviewed came from families who had debts to repay. Among the 16 respondents who disclosed amounts, their families' debts ranged from $100 to $2000. The average debt owed was $737 and the median was $700.

In comparison with male masseurs in Phnom Penh, male masseurs in Siem Reap appeared to be less likely to save money. Three-fourths of male masseurs in Phnom Penh were reported to have some form of savings, whereas less than half in Siem Reap were able to save. The median debt in Siem Reap was somewhat higher than the median debt found in Phnom Penh ($700 compared to $625); however, the range of debt in Phnom Penh ranged from $200 to $20,000, which is much greater than reported by masseurs in Siem Reap.

Six masseurs or 12% of respondents indicated that they were the only member of their family who had income. Nearly half of masseurs indicated that they were earning money along with at least one sibling, another six or 12% indicated that they were earning along with one parent, and ten or 20% reported that all members of their family were earning money.

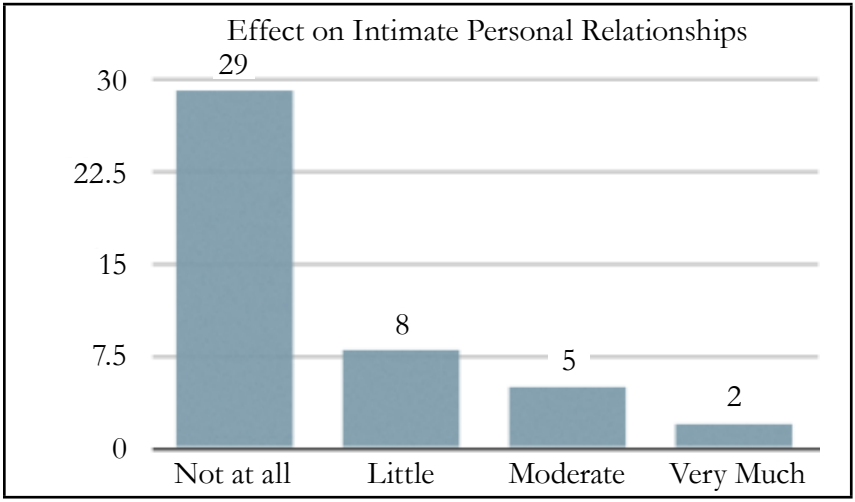
Effects on Relationships

Respondents were asked a series of questions regarding their personal relationships and whether others in their communities were aware that they were working as masseurs. Nearly half of respondents (51.1%) indicated that the people in their communities were not aware

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that they were working as masseurs. A number of reasons were given for this. Nine respondents indicated having shame in telling people that they were working as masseurs. One indicated that people in his community do not like male masseurs because they are associated with prostitutes. Another stated that he does not tell his family, or even his roommates, because he does not want them to talk badly about him. Another cited fears of mockery and laughter if he is found out to be a male masseur. Four respondents indicated that they lie to their families about their profession, or would lie to them if they were asked about it. A number cited half-truths such as telling family members that they are working at a hotel, but not sharing that they are providing massage services. One respondent stated that he does not tell people of his work because it is "not a good job."

The majority of respondents, 86.5%, stated that they have a best friend. A significant portion of this group, 61%, stated that their best friend is another masseur. 9.8% indicated that their best friend is another boy or girl in their village and nearly 30% indicated that their best friend is someone else.



Lastly, masseurs were asked about the extent to which being a masseur affected their intimate personal relationships. A majority of respondents, 68.8%, indicated that being a masseur did not have an effect on their intimate personal relationships. Eight people or 16%

indicated that massage had "little effect"; five people or 10.4% and two people (4.2%) said that being a masseur had "very much" effect on their intimate personal relationships. For those who indicated that being a masseur did affect their intimate personal relationships, interviewers asked them in what ways their relationships were affected. Of those who offered responses, six masseurs cited discrimination. They reported that friends and teachers often discriminate against them, and cited criticism from other villagers. Five masseurs cited that stigma against male masseurs affects their relationships. Of those citing stigma, a number of common themes arose from their descriptions, particularly associated with being a man who has sex with other men, as well as with being likened to prostitutes. One masseur mentioned that he is mocked and laughed at by some people in his community because of his work as a masseur.

While it is true that a majority of the masseurs interviewed stated that their jobs have little effect on their intimate personal relationships, it is important to consider that over half of the respondents have not disclosed to their families that they are working as masseurs. Additionally, of those masseurs whose friends and families *do* know that they are working as masseurs, a number of them cited stigma and discrimination. We do not have enough information to understand this fully; however, it is possible that if their friends and families did know of their professions, masseurs might have stated that their profession had a greater effect on their relationships. It may also be important to consider that well over half of the masseurs who had a best friend indicated that their best friend was also a masseur. If their intimate personal relationships are with others in the massage industry, it is unlikely that being a masseur would hinder these particular relationships.

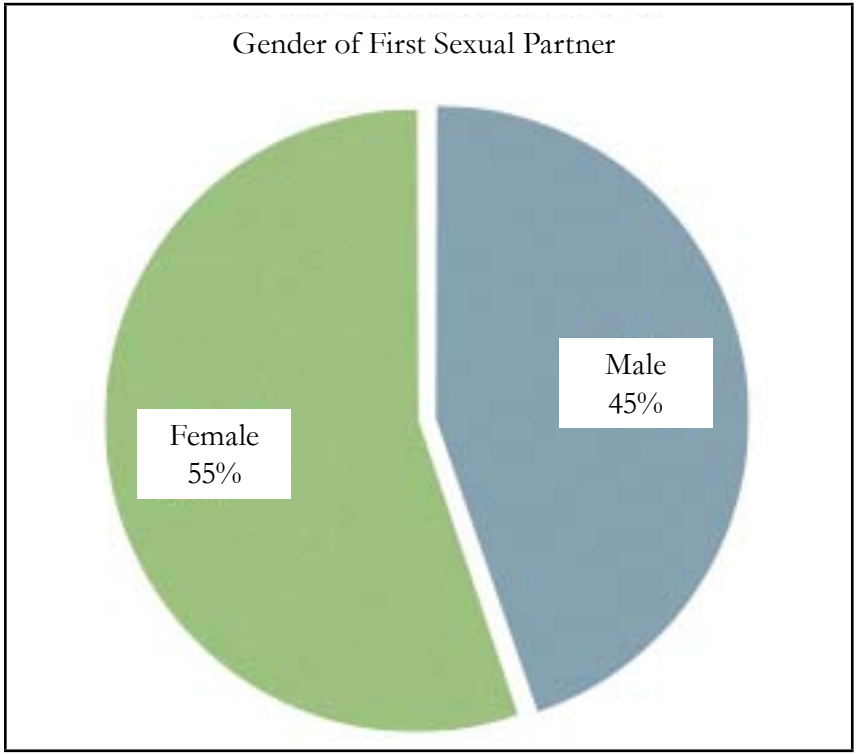
Sexual Experiences

The respondents were asked to identify the gender(s) of people with whom they preferred to have sex. Over one-third, or 40% of respondents (18 people), identified themselves as a "man who likes to have sex with men" (MSM), while 47% (21 people) identified

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themselves as a "man who likes to have sex with women" (MSW). Additionally, 11% of respondents (five people) indicated that they liked to have sex with both men and women (bisexual) and one indicated that he liked to have sex with ladyboys (transgendered males).

In comparison with data from masseurs in Phnom Penh,[55] there is a much higher number of masseurs in Siem Reap who self-identify as MSM. In the Phnom Penh study, only 16.3% of masseurs identified themselves as MSM, while 58.1% identified themselves as men who like to have sex with women, and 20.9% reported liking to have sex with both men and women. It may be interesting to note that there are a greater number of respondents self-identifying as MSM even though only half of the Siem Reap respondents were from MSM establishments, compared to 100% in the Phnom Penh study.



[55]Miles & Blanch, *What about Boys?*

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Masseurs were asked a number of questions regarding their first sexual experience. The ages at which respondents reported having their first sexual experiences ranged from 15 to 32 years old, the median age being 19.5 years old. Seven masseurs, or slightly less than 20% of those responding, reported having their first sexual experience between the ages of 15 and 17. Nearly half of those responding, 44.5% or 16 people, said that they were within the 18 to 20 year age-range when they had their first sexual experience, and nearly one fourth (22.2%) said that they had their first sexual experience within the age-range of 21 to 23 years old.

Less than half of the respondents, or 43.5%, stated that their first sexual experience was with a male. Of this number, exactly half stated that the male was a friend (or boyfriend) and over one-third, or 37.5%, said that the male was a client. Two masseurs in this category reported that their first experience was with a neighbor. Over half, or 57.5%, stated that their first sexual experience was with a female. Of this number, three-fourths stated that the female was a friend (or girlfriend), three (15%) stated that their first partner was a sex worker, and one stated that his first sexual experience was with a female client.

The respondents were asked if their first sexual experience was coerced or consensual. Four masseurs indicated that their first sexual experience had been coerced, and in all of these cases, the sexual experience had been with another male. All respondents stating that their first sexual experience had been with a female stated that the sex had been consensual. This differs greatly from the Phnom Penh study, in which 31.1% of total respondents reported that their first sexual experience had been coerced. Masseurs reported coercion 80% of the time if their partner was male and 17% of the time if their partner was female.

Over three-fourths (76.2%) of those immigrating to Siem Reap reported that their first sexual experience happened in Siem Reap. Including all respondents, a total of 81.8% reported having their first sexual experience in Siem Reap. Of those remaining, three, or 9.1% of total respondents, stated having their first sexual experience in the village, and one stated that his first experience was in Phnom Penh.

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It should be noted that the masseur's first sexual experience is assumed to mean their first experience of sexual intercourse. The research instrument did not specify other sorts of sexual experiences, encounters, or even abuse that might have happened throughout the respondent's childhood. For future studies, questions such as this might be useful in order to understand better the complexities of the sexual histories of the men working in this industry.

Respondents were asked if they had visited a prostituted female within the past three months. Very few indicated that they had. Of the 50 respondents interviewed, four masseurs (8.2%) stated that they had and 45 indicated that they had not. One masseur declined to answer this question. This is significantly different from the numbers reported among masseurs in Phnom Penh[56] which found 31% of respondents having visited a female sex worker in the past three months. Although a larger sampling would be needed to determine a conclusive pattern from this dataset, it is interesting to note that not all of those visiting a female sex worker within the past three months self-identified as a man who likes to have sex with women. This was a pattern suggested in the study on male masseurs in Phnom Penh. In the study, 28.5% of respondents self-identifying as homosexual (or exclusively MSM) had also visited a female sex worker in the past three months. Miles and Blanch question whether there could be other reasons for visiting a prostituted female other than pleasure. More research is needed to determine what these alternative reasons could be. For example, might it be possible that some MSM masseurs felt a need to affirm their masculinity to themselves or their male friends by visiting a prostituted female?

Sexual Experiences as a Masseur

Respondents were asked a series of questions regarding their sexual experiences with clients. Kinds and frequencies of experiences were diverse. Masseurs were asked about the number of clients that they had met last week for sex. Responses ranged from 0 to 20 clients within the past week. The median number of clients was 1.2. Of those who

[56]Miles & Blanch, *What about Boys?*

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had sex with clients within the past week, three masseurs had sex with only one client, five had sex with two to four clients, four masseurs had sex with five to seven clients, and one masseur (noted above) reported having sex with 20 clients.

Nearly three-fourths of masseurs indicated that they had not had sex with their clients within the past week. It is important to note, however, that within this context, the question of having sex with clients implies just that: penetrative sexual intercourse. A number of masseurs who denied having sex with their clients within the past week also mentioned providing other sexual services, such as masturbation, which would typically be done following the massage.

There was a strong contrast between masseurs working in male to male oriented massage establishments and masseurs working in mixed gender massage establishments. Over half of respondents working within male to male oriented establishments, or 12 people, reported having sex with clients in the past week. Conversely, only 3% of those coming from mixed gender massage establishments reported having sex with clients in the past week. Similarly, respondents were asked about the number of clients they met for sex within the past day. Six people, or 12% of total respondents, reported having sex with clients in the past day. All of the respondents were from male to male oriented massage establishments.

Respondents were also asked how often they had sex with multiple clients within the past three months. Eight people or 16% of total respondents indicated that they have had sex with multiple clients at the same time. Three respondents indicated that they did this "often" and others gave specific numbers. One masseur, who did this with some frequency, indicated that he had done this about 45 times in the past three months, and another indicated that he had sex with multiple clients 10 times within the past three months. Once again, there was a significant difference between the male to male and mixed gender massage establishments. All respondents reporting to have sex with multiple clients at the same time were from male to male oriented massage establishments and no respondents from mixed gender

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massage establishments indicated having sex with multiple clients at the same time.

Additionally, respondents were questioned about how often they and another male masseur have had sex with one client at the same time in the past three months. About 80% of respondents indicated that they had never done this. One masseur, from a mixed gender massage establishment, indicated that his manager does not allow the masseurs to do this; however, if arrangements are made with the client, they can provide this service in another location. A total of eight respondents indicated that they and another male masseur have had sex with a client at the same time within the past three months. Four masseurs indicated that this has happened 1–2 times and another four indicated that this has happened 3–5 times. Once again, all of the masseurs who reported to have provided this kind of service within the past three months were from male to male massage establishments.

There were a number of masseurs who stated that they have never had any sexual experiences with their clients. While this may be true for many respondents, it is also important to note that some of these figures may be inaccurate for a couple of reasons. It is possible that, due to the nature of the services provided and potential pressures from management, some masseurs may choose to leave some parts of their work undisclosed. Additionally, there seems to have been some confusion among a number of respondents as to what is meant by "sex" or "sexual experiences." Towards the end of data collection, it was noted that a number of masseurs interpreted "sexual experiences" and/or "sex" to mean exclusively penetrative intercourse. Interviewers found that a number of masseurs denied having any sexual experiences at all; however, when this term was broadened to include fellatio ("oral sex") and masturbation, a number of masseurs then responded in the affirmative. Interviewers are uncertain of the extent to which this confusion occurred or if it could have had an effect on the figures reflected in this and other variables dealing with "sex" and "sexual experiences."

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Sexual Education and Health

Respondents were asked to name a few of the modes of transmission for HIV. This was to determine if the masseurs recognized the connection between sexual relations and HIV/AIDS. Nearly all respondents (98%) cited "sex" or "sex without a condom" as a mode of HIV transmission, and one respondent cited "semen" as a mode of transmission. 26 respondents (56.5%) specifically mentioned "sex without a condom" and one mentioned "sex," with the exclusion of oral sex, as a mode of HIV transmission. A large number of respondents also cited "blood" and "shared needles" as additional modes of HIV transmission. This is somewhat better than the national average. A 2009 UNICEF report states that 45% of Cambodian youth aged 15–24 are able to correctly identify the major modes of HIV transmission. Slightly more than one-third of respondents (16 people or 34.8%) stated that they knew someone who was presently living with HIV/AIDS. HIV/AIDS has a 0.5% prevalence rate in Cambodia with an estimated 63,000 people presently living with the disease.[57] Of the masseurs interviewed for this study, 17 people or 34% stated that they know someone who is presently living with HIV/AIDS.

In addition to their knowledge of HIV transmission, respondents were asked about their usage of condoms. Nearly three-fourths (72.9%) of those interviewed, or 35 persons, indicated that they had previously used a condom. However, accounting for the fact that 3 masseurs reported to have not yet had sexual relations, slightly over three-fourths of those reporting to have had sexual relations (77.8%) stated that they have used a condom. Of this same group, 63.9% stated that they have used a condom in the past week, and 54.5% had a condom with them at the time of the interview.

[57]Gesa Kupfer, *Assessment of the HIV/Reproductive Health Programme "Health for Future Work"—Cambodia* (UNICEF/WDA/H&M, October 2008–January 2009), 17, http://www.unicef.org/evaldatabase/files/Cambodia_2009-005_-_Final_Assessment_Health_for_Future_Work_Cambodia.pdf (accessed October 15, 2013).

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While those who report to use protection are in a majority, nevertheless, nearly one-fourth of respondents stated that they have never used a condom. A number of this group also reported having experienced coercive sex, and one of this group reported having rashes, ulcerations, or lumps in his anal/genital area within the past six months.

Substance Abuse

Masseurs were also asked about their use of addictive drugs and alcohol. Only one respondent gave verbal indication of using any addictive drugs. The only illegal drug that was acknowledged to be used was "ice" or crystal methamphetamines. It is probable that a number of respondents were not comfortable with sharing details of drug usage, particularly without having stronger rapport built between the respondent and interviewer. For example, in one interview, a respondent arrived with glossy, red eyes and other notable indicators of drug usage; however, when questioned about drug usage, the respondent denied any previous experience with addictive substances apart from alcohol.

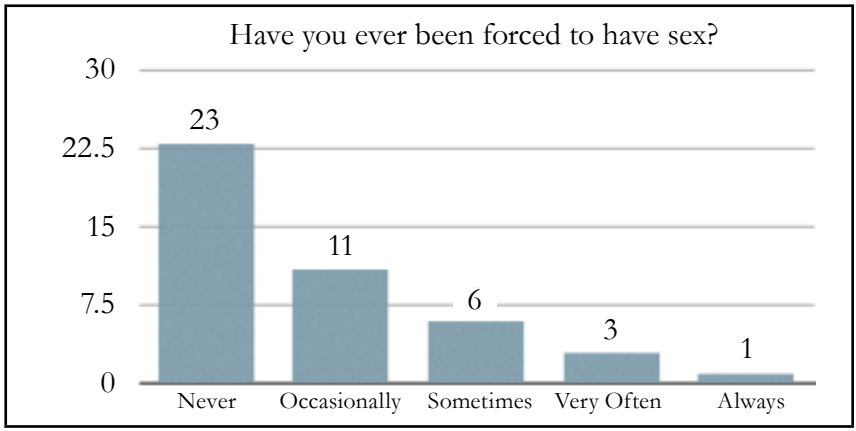
In addition, no masseurs indicated using Viagra or "poppers" while having sex with clients. Some, however, admitted to using alcohol during sex with their clients. Among respondents from male to male establishments, two respondents said that they "sometimes" used alcohol during sex with clients and one said that he "occasionally" did. Among those from mixed gender massage establishments, one "occasionally" mixed alcohol and sex with clients and one did this "sometimes."

Experiences of Violence

Respondents were asked a series of questions regarding experiences of violence from police, bullies in the community, and their clients. Of these three groups, experiences of violence from clients were the greatest in number. Only one respondent indicated that, within the past three months, he had "sometimes" experienced violence from police. Additionally, two respondents indicated that they had experienced violence from bullies in their communities within the past three months; one indicated that this had happened "sometimes" and the

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other indicated that this had happened "very often" within the past three months. Only one respondent stated that he had "occasionally" experienced violence from clients within the past three months. However, with regards to sexual violence from clients overall, the frequencies were much greater.



Respondents were asked about previous experiences of sexual violence from clients. Nearly half (43.7%) of the respondents reported the number of times they were forced to have sex with clients. Six respondents indicated that this happened "sometimes" (between 1–5 times); 11 respondents indicated that this happened "occasionally" (between 5–10 times); three indicated that this happened "very often," and one reported that when sex happened with clients, it had always been against his wishes.

Ten of the 21 masseurs who reported having sex against their wishes stated that they attempted to refuse their clients' sexual advances. A number of masseurs cited clients "having strong sexual urges" and becoming angry when the masseurs did not cooperate with the clients' sexual advances. One masseur recounted having a client pull his hair in order to force the masseur to provide sexual services; another cited being stripped of his clothes and having fellatio performed on him against his wishes. A number of respondents cited instances in which they were only forced to masturbate clients or provide oral sex, while others indicated full-on sex against their wishes. One masseur reported that some clients ask him for sex while others simply force him to

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have sex. Others indicated bribes or other offers given to masseurs for their compliance. One respondent recounted a job offer, made by two foreign clients demanding sex, to work in a foreign country in what resembled an attempt at human trafficking.

While nearly half of the respondents reported being forced to have sex, when asked if they were aware of other young men in the massage industry who were being forced to have sex against their wishes, only one-fourth of respondents, or 11 people, indicated that they were aware of this. This may be due to the fact that these young men are working in a closed working environment, where sexual acts may happen and masseurs may even be paid for sexual acts performed; however, all of these services fall under "massage" and further services may not be openly acknowledged as such. These figures are strongly contrasted with a similar survey conducted in Mumbai, India with street-based masseurs (as opposed to the parlor-based masseurs in this study). In the Indian study, nearly 100 percent of the masseurs interviewed had faced violence from the police, 47 percent from gangs, and 42 percent from clients. Violence from members of their communities was almost unanimous.[58]

Faith and Dignity

Respondents were asked if they had a faith or system of beliefs. Nearly all respondents (96%) reported to be Buddhist and one stated that he was a believer of both Christianity and Mormonism. Two respondents initially reported to be Buddhists, but then added that they were followers or at least partial-believers in the doctrines of Christianity as well.

Nearly two-thirds of respondents, or 29 people, stated that they pray or worship every day. When asked how they feel after visiting their places of worship, nearly half of the respondents stated that they feel "happy." Slightly over one-fourth of respondents stated that visiting their places of worship made them feel "refreshed"; others mentioned

[58]Miles & Thakur, *Baseline Survey with Masseur Boys in Mumbai.*

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feeling "relaxed" and eight stated that they just felt "normal." Some additional comments seem to give some insight into the understanding or function of faith in the lives of some of the respondents. One masseur added that visiting his place of worship makes him feel that he is "looked after." Others indicated a desire for future blessings. One respondent stated that he hopes to earn good merits, and another said that he would be willing to offer sacrifices if God would be able to help him.

Interviewers asked the masseurs what the word "respect" meant to them. There were no answer choices given and respondents could respond however they wished. This question often took a bit more time to process than the other questions in the survey. Several respondents did not provide a response and four responded that they did not know. Among those who did respond, a few themes became apparent. Nearly 60% of those responding described respect in terms of words and actions that others might show to them. A very common response was that being respected means that they are valued or shown value. Others cited facial expressions and being polite in speech. Over 10% of those responding cited being listened to and being understood as ways of being shown respect. A number of respondents cited love and acceptance and a few singled out non-discrimination and being provided with opportunities and assistance to better themselves.

Lastly, respondents were asked what they could do to increase their sense of value or self-confidence. Once again, there were no answer choices given and respondents were free to respond however they wished. Over one-third of responses to this question were along the lines of getting a better or more respectable job, getting an education, or learning specific skills. More than one-fifth of responses had to do with being a good person, being nice, or generally doing good in life. Nine respondents, or slightly less than one-fifth, mentioned needing to have respect for themselves and/or others to increase their sense of value as a person. Some respondents indirectly cited the need to develop a sense of self-respect by communicating their insecurities. One stated that he wants to show people that he is a "real man" and not *katuey* (ladyboy) and that this would help him to increase his sense

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of self-confidence, while another cited wanting to avoid having a girly attitude and behavior. Further qualitative research on the self-identity and self-respect of people in this industry may be needed to further understand issues of shame or discrimination that may be compounded within somewhat enigmatic self-evaluations such as these.

Present Skills, Future Plans

The masseurs were asked a series of questions regarding their present skill sets, future goals, and plans for reaching those goals. These questions were asked primarily in order to help NGOs develop more focused initiatives for young men in these contexts to find alternative and sustainable employment. Respondents were asked if they presently had a second job or another source of income. 14 respondents described a variety of jobs that they undertook to supplement their income. Jobs were quite diverse. Three respondents described supplementary incomes having to do with their work as masseurs. One stated that he sleeps with customers as a way of supplementing his income; another is "on call" providing massage services for hotels, and the third stated that he teaches others how to do massage. Some other responses included two respondents working as motor taxi drivers, cleaning houses, and making small animals out of clay (presumably to be sold). When asked about the time spent working these secondary jobs in the previous week, only seven of the initial 14 indicated that they had worked at all.

Respondents were then asked what skills they would like to learn if they were given the opportunity. The respondents were given no choices and were free to answer with any skills that they wished. Their answers were diverse and many respondents gave multiple answers. Most commonly, respondents wished to be able to learn another language. Of the 12 people who responded in this way, nine stated that they wanted to learn English. Additionally, two people wanted to learn Chinese, two wanted to learn Thai, one wished to learn Korean, and one wished to learn Japanese. Using a computer was the second most common skill that respondents desired to learn, followed by mechanical and business skills, with each having eight responses.

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Following this were electronics (seven people), hairstyling/cosmetics (six people), design (five people), and cooking (three people). Lastly, farming was a desired skill that had two responses.

More than one-fourth of respondents indicated that they see themselves in some type of business within two years' time, either as an owner or manager. Three respondents or six people saw themselves as a hairstylist or makeup artist. Other responses included NGO work, farming, tour guiding, and repair/mechanical work. Two people indicated that they saw themselves leaving Cambodia within the next two years. Lastly, 10% of respondents indicated that they do not really know what the future holds. One stated that he has never really thought about the future. Another stated that he does not want to make wishes about what is to come because these are only dreams.

Discussion

Divergent Markets: Male to Male Massage vs. Mixed Gender Massage

There is a clear distinction between male to male and mixed gender massage establishments in this study. Each category seems to cater to its own particular market and similarly seems to recruit a slightly different demographic of young men to work as masseurs. Respondents from each setting were found to have their own unique sets of vulnerabilities which should be considered.

Within male to male massage establishments, sexual services are implied and masseurs are often overtly sexualized. In some establishments, masseurs stand shirtless behind a glass showcase, identifiable by number, as clients browse for the masseur of their choice. Entrances to these establishments are often discreet or covered to allow clients to enter and exit without being easily noticed. Phallic symbols are often ubiquitous within these establishments, found in the artwork on the walls and as trinkets decorating shelves and tables within the business. A primary symbol that is common to these establishments is the

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lingha, which has been interpreted as a religious symbol of male creative energy or a phallus. This symbol carries particular relevance for the Siem Reap area, and has been commonly found among the historic ruins of the nearby Angkor Wat temples which lie only three kilometers north of the modern city of Siem Reap. Male to male massage establishments are usually well-connected, commonly known within LGBT circles, and advertised within local LGBT bars and restaurants.

Mixed gender massage establishments do not overtly sexualize their masseurs, or directly imply sexual services. These businesses typically advertise by having their masseurs stand outside the establishment and call to potential clients passing by on the street, often handing out fliers that detail the services that they can provide. Inside the establishment, simple massage services, such as foot and hand massage, are often provided in an open area in the front part of the business. Other types of service, such as full-body, back, and oil massages, are provided in the back or upstairs portion of the building, often in private or semi-private, air-conditioned quarters. While masseurs from mixed gender establishments reported providing sexual services to clients, as well as having penetrative sex with clients, these services seem to be less frequent and do not seem to be acknowledged or even implied within the establishments.

While there are particular vulnerabilities and concerns that can be raised with each type of massage establishment, there are several factors that seem to indicate greater distress and vulnerability among male masseurs working in mixed gender massage establishments.

Upon analysis of the research data, respondents from mixed gender massage establishments reported significantly lower occurrences of sexual intercourse with clients; however, they were far more likely to have been forced to have sex against their wishes. While 12 masseurs (54% of male to male masseurs) from male to male establishments reported having sex with at least one client within the past week, only one masseur from a mixed massage establishment reported the same within the past week. On the other hand, 15 masseurs from mixed gender establishments (62% of the mixed gender category) reported

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times in which they were forced (or coerced) to have sex against their wishes, while only 6 masseurs from male to male establishments (28% of male to male masseurs) reported the same.

Similarly, those who reported that massage work has a great effect on their intimate, personal relationships all came from mixed gender massage establishments. Some indicated physical violence, such as the pulling of hair, and many indicated bribes or other compensation in exchange for sexual services. A predominant number of masseurs in mixed gender massage establishments who reported to have been forced to have sex against their wishes also reported that they had tried to reject the clients' sexual advances. This resistance does not seem as prevalent among masseurs from male to male massage establishments. Presumably, since sexual services are implied, sex with clients is not unexpected or uncommon.

The masseurs coming from mixed gender establishments tended to be slightly younger than those coming from male to male establishments. Five masseurs, or 11%, of those coming from mixed gender massage establishments were in the 18–20 year old range, whereas only 2%, or one masseur, from a male to male establishment was in this range.

Masseurs from male to male massage establishments reported somewhat higher levels of education. A predominant number of masseurs coming from mixed gender massage establishments (26%) had 7th to 10th grade educations and only 11% had completed a secondary education; however, 20% of those working in male to male establishments had completed their secondary education.

Masseurs from mixed gender massage establishments indicated greater economic hardships and came from families who had greater debt. A predominant number of those coming from mixed gender massage establishments were in the $151 to $300 earnings bracket (for three months), whereas a predominant number of those coming from male to male massage establishments were in the $451 to $600 earnings bracket (for three months). Once again, it should be mentioned that this is potentially due to the fact that financial success in the massage

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industry is often contingent upon services provided and tips received. Those masseurs working in male to male massage establishments are statistically more likely to be providing sexual services and thus more likely to receive a greater compensation for the services that they are providing.

The communities of those coming from mixed gender massage establishments were more aware of the respondent's career than the communities of those coming from male to male massage establishments. This could possibly indicate less fear of discrimination among mixed gender masseurs; one reason for this could be that these masseurs are not as strongly associated with male to male sex. Additionally, fewer masseurs from mixed gender establishments self-identified as homosexual; thus, they could be less prone to discrimination from family and community members.

A number of respondents from mixed gender establishments indicated that they provide sexual services, and also meet their clients for sexual intercourse; however, sexual services are not acknowledged or openly implied. Based upon discussion and qualitative data taken from interviews, it seems that most sexual services are quietly negotiated between the client and masseur. Some masseurs indicated that they are often unsure of their client's intentions. A number of masseurs gave reports of clients becoming angry when the masseurs decline to have sex.

Throughout this process, management seems to turn a blind eye. While masseurs from mixed gender establishments have indicated that sex is not allowed while they are at work, some indicated that if customers request, they can schedule to meet them later at their hotels or guesthouses for sex. This raises another concern in that once sexual services are taken outside of the establishment, there are little or no protections for the masseur. Additionally, it may be relevant to ask: Could establishments such as these serve as meeting points for male sex work similar to the way KTV bars serve as meeting points for female sex work?

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Shame/Discrimination

While the young men working in mixed gender massage establishments appear to be the more vulnerable group, both in a demographic sense and with regard to experiences of sexual violence, this should not minimize the vulnerabilities of those within male to male massage establishments. 50% of the masseurs in male to male massage establishments self-identified as homosexual and 18% self-identified as bi-sexual.[59] A number of respondents indicated discrimination or an active fear of discrimination from their families and communities. One reason for this could be that male to male massage establishments have a much stronger association with male to male sex. Thus, masseurs in these establishments may deal not only with the social stigma of being a male masseur, but also with discrimination due to their sexual orientation or society's perception of their sexual orientation. Respondents in these establishments were less likely to disclose their work to their families and communities, which seems to verify a stronger sense of shame and/or discrimination. In a 2004 UNESCO report on the shame and discrimination of Cambodian men who have sex with men (MSM), respondents in the study indicated threats from community members, beatings within the family, and inability to find employment if they are known to be MSM.[60] Further qualitative research would be useful to understand better the social dynamics of stigma and discrimination among male to male sex workers within Cambodian society.

Lack of Skills, Lack of Job Alternatives

Many may argue that these young men (particularly those within male to male establishments) are not victims of exploitation, that they have chosen to offer sexual services to their clients out of their

[59]"Homosexual" and "bisexual" are Western categorizations for sexual orientation and are used here as operating terms for ease of reading. The terms by which respondents self-identified were "man who likes to have sex with other men" and "man who likes to have sex with both men and women."

[60]Sovannara & Ward, *Men Who Have Sex with Men in Cambodia*, 17.

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own accord. However, research data seem to indicate that many careers in this industry are "structurally exploitative." Masseurs may not necessarily be forced to have sex with clients directly (although more than one-fourth reported that this *has* happened); however, the surrounding conditions of their finances, education, family debt/need, and job availability may force them to do things that they would not have otherwise chosen to do.

Upon analysis of the data, a number of notable patterns seem to emerge. Of those who had immigrated to the Siem Reap area, 78.4% stated immigrating to Siem Reap in search of a job. While the education level of respondents was slightly higher than the national average, 68% had not completed an 11th grade education and nearly half indicated that they had entered the massage industry due to a lack of education and/or skills. This seems to suggest the need for more non-exploitative vocational alternatives for such unskilled/low education job seekers, as well as a wider range of skills training or post-secondary options for this same demographic of people.

It is significant that nearly one-third of respondents cited that they entered the massage industry because it offered them the opportunity to earn money quickly—a number cited tips as a major drawing factor of the industry. Although tips are not consistently given, several respondents seemed to indicate that tips are expected in exchange for "special services" or for sexual favors. Upon review of income vs. sexual activity with clients, the two highest earners had also met the most number of clients for sex within the past week.

Recommendations

The authors believe this present baseline data to be a useful, but ultimately insufficient, tool describing merely the "the tip of an iceberg" with regard to the male sex industry in Cambodia. Much more research in this area is needed to understand better the scope and breadth of male sexual exploitation in Southeast Asia. Further qualitative research would be useful to understand better the individual narratives and developments of men in this industry. Very little is known about the

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childhoods and formative experiences of these young men. Research has found that many young men in the sex industry have had histories of childhood sexual abuse.[61] Within Cambodia, Miles and Sun[62] noted that 18.9% of Cambodian boys between the ages of 12 and 15 reported being touched on the genitals after the age of nine. More research on childhood sexual exploitation of males within the sex industry would be useful to understand better the prevalence and implications of this kind of abuse, as well as its impact on development and its connections with the male sex industry.

Male massage is believed to be only one small piece of a much larger puzzle with regard to the male sex industry. Further and more in-depth research would be useful to understand better what additional markets for male sex work exist within Cambodia. Anecdotal discussion with various Cambodian MSMs suggests male sex work to be a thriving industry throughout Cambodia. Most of this work seems to be decentralized and often independent, largely taking place within and around bars, public parks, shopping centers, and other various locales. Online forums and MSM Internet sites indicate a number of public "meeting places" in Phnom Penh and Siem Reap for men looking to discreetly meet other men for sex. These locations could also serve as ideal markets for prostituted males, and a number of them correspond to the male sex work locations indicated in discussions with Cambodian MSMs. Ethnographic research into additional markets such as these would be greatly useful.

Perhaps a significant omission of the present study was an analysis of the clientele seeking sexual services. It is understood that Siem Reap is heavily patronized each year by international tourists. Qualitative data from a number of respondents seem to indicate that masseurs met with a diverse range of clientele, both local and foreign. It would be helpful to understand better the demographics and backgrounds of those seeking sexual services. This would be helpful in order to

[61]McIntyre, *Under the Radar.*

[62]Miles & Sun, *"Stop Violence against Us!"*

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determine what demographic groups and other various factors might be driving the demand for this industry.

A content analysis of the respondents' qualitative feedback reveals a number of patterns which may provide insight into the self-identities developed by those working within this industry. A number of respondents indicated feelings of marginalization and desires to hide their work and their identities. These statements raise a number of questions about self-identity among men working within the sex industry. It may be significant for future research to ask how these young men understand themselves, and how this understanding informs how they develop as people. In addition, it should be asked to what extent sexuality and its surrounding social stigmas inform the development of self-identity among male sex workers in Cambodian society.

Beyond additional research, data from this study indicate a number of present needs for young men working in this industry. Many masseurs indicated that they wish to leave the massage industry; however, they are unable to do so due to a lack of skills and/or education. Free or low-cost vocational and life skills training programs provided by NGOs or local churches would be greatly beneficial for young men working in this industry. Respondents indicated that they had a diverse range of vocational interests. While it would be ideal for NGOs to provide specific training for an alternative career, it is also important to allow these young men a level of choice in their own future work. Among the desired skills most highly cited by masseurs, language and computer skills rank the highest. These skills are significant in that they are often foundational to success in a broad range of careers. Having basic training provided in these areas could serve as a significant stepping-stone or formative base from which masseurs could seek alternative employment in a number of various fields.

This research seeks to provide a basis for understanding the vulnerability of young males who are sexually exploited in the massage industry in order to make them visible and start addressing their needs. While girls have long been viewed as victims, boys are victimized as well. In the current donor climate, it is more difficult to get funding for boys' projects. Are Christian organizations afraid of being seen

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as pro-gay while secular organizations are afraid of being seen as anti-gay such that the sexual exploitation of boys falls through the gap? Not enough research has been done to determine the extent of sexual exploitation of young men and boys, which may be occurring with much greater frequency than we currently assume. For example, in Cambodia, there are hundreds of research studies on women and girls compared to a handful mentioning men or boys, and even when studies talk of sexual exploitation of *children* this really means girls.

Christian organizations need to be at the forefront of providing holistic care for boys and young men. They are human beings with hopes and desires and vulnerabilities and needs that require better understanding in order to serve them. The best way to start doing this is to conduct thorough, careful research.

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