

## **Chapter 3: Who gets Australian and Chinese Scholarships?**

### **3. Introduction**

Chapter 2 set up theoretical framework and methods underpinning this research. It was argued that despite their importance and long history, scholarships were an underexplored part of aid. Furthermore, nothing was known about who the scholars were. This chapter is part of a broader study into the differences between Australian and Chinese scholarships to Cambodia. It focuses on the selection process. Given what we think we know about OECD and Chinese aid, I argue as follows: (1) Australian scholarships are focused more on governance, while Chinese scholarships more on growth; (2) Australian scholarships are more meritocratic in their selection of students, while Chinese scholarships more political; and (3) Australian scholarships are more targeted at private sector, while Chinese scholarships more on government sector.

The rest of this chapter is organized as follows. Section 3.1 recaps research design. Section 3.2 reports research findings. Section 3.3 discusses the findings. Finally, section 3.4 concludes the chapter.

### **3.1. Research design**

This section describes the research design. It begins with research questions and hypotheses, then data collection methods, research participants and finally analytical tools.

#### **3.1.1. Research questions and hypotheses**

To understand the differences and the similarities of Australian and Chinese scholarships and their scholars, two research questions were posed:

- (1) How similar are Australian and Chinese scholarships?
- (2) Do Australian and Chinese scholarship programs select different cohorts of students?

The following propositions were posed for the first research question, based on the general perceptions and prior understandings of OECD and Chinese aid (see literature section in chapter 2):

- (1) Australian scholarships are focused more on governance, while Chinese scholarships more on growth.
- (2) Australian scholarships are more meritocratic in their selection of students, while Chinese scholarships more political.

(3) Australian scholarships are more targeted at private sector, while Chinese scholarships more on government sector.

In addition to the propositions above, Australian and Chinese scholarships are also compared in terms of their duration and levels of degree on offer.

For the second research question, Australian and Chinese scholars are compared in terms of their personal characteristics, family background, academic history, professional experiences, past overseas experiences, intention to return to the same employers and future career aspiration. Again, these comparisons are useful for our understanding of the distributional benefits of the two scholarships and the influences of the two scholarships on Cambodian scholars' perceptions of their academic and life experiences in Australia and China and political attitudes.

### **3.1.2. Research methods**

Online and face-to-face surveys were employed to collect the data to answer these research questions and test the propositions. Three sets of survey questionnaires were designed. These survey questionnaires are slightly different from one another in terms of wording, but essentially identical in terms of meaning. The different wordings reflect the status of the research participants. The questionnaires are differentiated on the basis of whether the research participants were alumni, current scholarship recipients or those

who were about to undertake their scholarship. The survey questionnaires solicited data on the characteristics of the scholarships and the scholars' personal characteristics, family background, academic history, employment history, past overseas experience, and future plan and career aspirations (see the survey questionnaires in appendix B).

### **3.1.3. Research participants**

Six groups of scholars participated in the online and face-to-face surveys. These groups included 35 Australian Awards Scholarships (AAS) scholars, who were about to leave for Australia in 2016, 100 AAS scholars, who were currently in Australia in 2016, 250 Australian scholarship alumni, 47 Chinese Government Scholarships (CGS) scholars, who were about to leave for China in 2016, 300 Chinese scholars, who were currently in China in 2016, and 250 Chinese scholarship alumni. Online survey questionnaires were sent to all groups, except for the 47 CGS scholars. The 47 CGS scholars were surveyed face-to-face in Cambodia primarily because of the lack of their contact details such as email address and Facebook account. In total, the survey questionnaires were sent to 1,000 Australian and Chinese scholars (615 of whom are Chinese scholars).

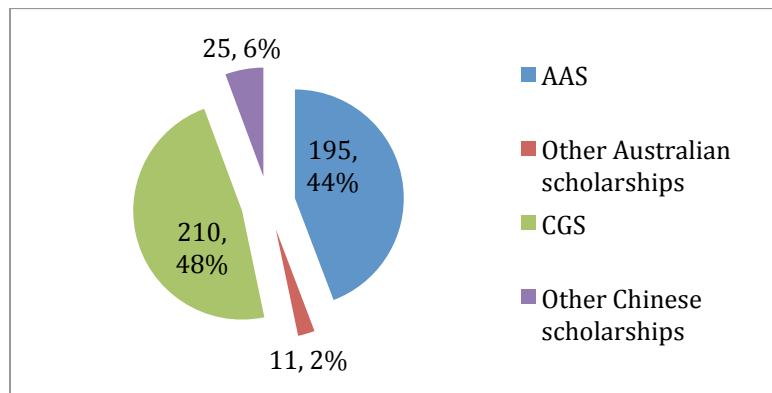
Chinese scholars were less likely than Australian scholars to respond and complete the survey questionnaires. While 54 per cent of Australian scholars returned the completed questionnaires, only 38 per cent of Chinese scholarship recipients did. In total, 44 per cent of Australian and Chinese scholars responded to the surveys.

**Table 1: Australian and Chinese scholarship recipients' surveys**

<b>Research participants</b>	<b>Survey sent</b>	<b>Survey response</b>	<b>%</b>
AAS scholars about to leave for Australia in 2016	35	32	91%
CGS scholars about to leave for China in 2016	65	47	72%
Australia scholars currently in Australia in 2016	100	76	76%
Chinese scholars currently in China in 2016	300	108	36%
Australian scholarship alumni	250	98	39%
Chinese scholarship alumni	250	80	32%
Total	1000	441	44%

Two reasons may explain Chinese scholars' low response rates. First, it may be because of the medium with which the potential Australian and Chinese research participants were contacted. Almost all of Australian scholars were approached via Facebook a few months before they were requested to complete the online surveys. Facebook has personalized the research and improved communications with Australian scholars. The rest of Australian scholars were contacted via email. However, while the 47 CGS scholars were contacted via mobile phone, all current Chinese scholars and about a half of the Chinese scholarship alumni were contacted via emails. Chinese scholars were either too busy or reluctant to talk when called or they could not be reached. Chinese scholars contacted via emails tended to ignore request to participate in the online surveys. The other half of Chinese scholarship alumni were approached via Facebook. Second, it may be because of the political sensitivity of the research topic. A few Chinese scholarship recipients were concerned about the political sensitivity of the questionnaire.

**Figure 1: Surveys' respondents**



The significant majority of the respondents are AAS and CGS scholars. Figure 1 above shows that 44 per cent of the research participants are AAS scholars, compared to 48 per cent being CGS scholars. The rest of the research participants received scholarships other than AAS and CGS. These other research participants received Endeavour Awards scholarship; AusAID-Carnegie Mellon scholarship; Australian university-based scholarship; Cambodia-World Bank Higher Education Quality and Capacity Improvement Project (HEQCIP) scholarship; Chinese provincial government scholarship; Chinese university-based scholarship; and scholarships from Chinese private companies. The HEQCIP scholarship is funded by a World Bank loan to Cambodia for Cambodian citizens to study in Australia. The Endeavour Awards scholarship is another component of AAS but administered by the Australian Government's Department of Education. In this chapter, unless specified otherwise, AAS scholars are referred to those scholars who received a scholarship from the Australian government's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, while CGS to those scholars who received a scholarship from Chinese central government, either through Chinese Scholarship Council in China or through Cambodian Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports and Chinese embassy in Phnom Penh.

In the analysis that follows, for simplicity, I collapsed AAS scholars with other Australian scholarship recipients and CGS scholars with other Chinese scholarship recipients. Doing so would leave me with two groups to compare: the Australian scholarship recipients (or Australian scholars for short) and the Chinese scholarship recipients (or Chinese scholars for short). The numbers of other Australian scholarship recipients and other Chinese scholarship recipients are small, compared to those of AAS and CGS; therefore, collapsing these categories together would not spoil the analyses.

#### **3.1.4. Analytical tools**

I used STATA to analyze the survey data. I performed basic descriptive and inferential statistical analysis to compare Australian and Chinese scholarships and their scholars. Bivariate statistical analysis techniques such as cross-tabulations and Chi-square (chi2) test are the workhorses employed in the analysis. Cross-tabulations allow the researcher to test a two-way relationship between nominal and ordinal variables. In other words, they permit the researcher to count the categories of one variable for each category of another variable. The Chi-squared statistic allows the researcher to determine if two variables are related or have significant relationships. In the analysis that follows, I formulated a number of null hypotheses for the Chi-square tests. The null hypothesis would be as follows: there is no significant relationship between the type of scholarships and the variable of concerns. The alternative hypothesis would be otherwise. In this

research, I want the significance level to be  $p < 0.05$ . Therefore, I will reject the null hypothesis at the 0.05 level if  $p < 0.05$ ; otherwise, I will accept it.

## **3.2. Results**

This section reports findings to the two research questions posed earlier. It is divided into five main subsections. Subsection 3.2.1 tackles the first research question and the first hypothesis. In this subsection, in addition to testing the first hypothesis, Australian and Chinese scholarships are compared in terms of their duration and levels of degree on offer. The following four subsections seek to answer both the first and second research questions and test the last two hypotheses. In these subsections, Australian and Chinese scholars are compared in terms of their personal characteristics, family background, academic history, professional history, past overseas experiences, intention to return to their former workplace and future career aspiration, in addition to testing the last two hypotheses.

### **3.2.1. The focuses of the scholarships**

This subsection seeks to answer the first research question and test the first hypothesis. To recap, I asked how similar Australian and Chinese scholarships were, and I hypothesized that while Australian scholarships were focused more on governance, Chinese more on growth. I collected data on the areas of studies under the two scholarships to test the hypothesis. I also collected data on the duration of the



scholarships and the degrees Australian and Chinese scholar studied under their scholarships to compare the two scholarships.

I found that first, inconsistent with the hypothesis, Chinese scholarships tended to focus more on growth than Australian scholarships, but both scholarships seemed to equally focus on governance. Overall, the data analysis indicated a significant relationship between the type of scholarships and the areas of studies under the scholarships however (Pearson  $\chi^2 = 93.8016$ ;  $Pr = 0.000 < 0.05$ ). Chinese scholarships tended to focus on engineering, the course that is supposed to support Cambodian economic growth, while Australian scholarships more on agriculture, environment, and related studies, the courses which tend to support Cambodian sustainable development. However, both scholarships were similarly focused on economic and policy, the course that aims to support growth and governance reform in Cambodia. Overall, both scholarships were similarly focused on governance, but Chinese scholarships appeared to focus more on growth.

**Table 2: Areas of studies under the scholarships**

			What area are you studying in under your scholarship program?									Total
			Agriculture, Environment and Related Studies	Education	Engineering	Health	IT	Management and Commerce	Economics and Policy	Science	Society and Culture	
What scholarship do you receive?	Australian scholarships	Count	44	12	5	31	5	29	45	10	16	197
		%	22.3%	6.1%	2.5%	15.7%	2.5%	14.7%	22.8%	5.1%	8.1%	100.0%
	Chinese scholarships	Count	6	13	55	14	15	56	54	7	7	227
		%	2.6%	5.7%	24.2%	6.2%	6.6%	24.7%	23.8%	3.1%	3.1%	100.0%
Total		Count	50	25	60	45	20	85	99	17	23	424
		%	11.8%	5.9%	14.2%	10.6%	4.7%	20.0%	23.3%	4.0%	5.4%	100.0%

Pearson  $\chi^2 = 93.8016$

$Pr = 0.000$

Second, Chinese scholarships were significantly longer than Australian scholarships. The data analysis indicated a significant relationship between the type of scholarships and their duration (Pearson  $\chi^2 = 194.9599$ ;  $Pr = 0.000 < 0.05$ ). Table 3 below shows that the significant majority of Australian scholars went to Australia for two years or less. In contrast, a significant majority of Chinese scholars went to China for two years or more. The differences must be attributed to the fact that many Australian scholars went to Australia for their Masters' degree (more on this below). (A Masters' degree in Australia usually lasts 2 years or less.) In contrast, many of Chinese scholars went to China for their undergraduate and Masters' degrees, which usually last 5 and 3 years respectively. Many Chinese scholars typically spend their first year learning Chinese and the rest of their years on their areas of specialization. It is estimated that on average, Chinese scholarships last 3.5 years while Australian scholarships 2 years.

**Table 3: Duration of scholarship**

			How long is your scholarship for?						Total
			<1 year	1 year	1.5 years	2 years	3 years	>3 years	
What scholarship do you receive?	Australian scholarships	Count	1	23	26	143	0	13	206
		%	0.5%	11.2%	12.6%	69.4%	0.0%	6.3%	100.0%
	Chinese scholarships	Count	1	9	0	59	34	129	232
		%	0.4%	3.9%	0.0%	25.4%	14.7%	55.6%	100.0%
Total		Count	2	32	26	202	34	142	438
		%	0.5%	7.3%	5.9%	46.1%	7.8%	32.4%	100.0%

Pearson  $\chi^2 = 194.9599$

$Pr = 0.000$

Finally, while Chinese scholarships were often undergraduate, Australian scholarships entirely postgraduate. The data analysis showed a significant relationship between the type of scholarships and levels of degrees (Pearson  $\chi^2 = 96.3359$ ;  $Pr = 0.000 < 0.05$ ). Table 4 below shows that the majority of Australian and Chinese scholars studied for

their Masters' degree. However, while a significant proportion of Chinese scholars pursued undergraduate degree, none of Australian scholars did. Few Australian and Chinese scholars studied for a PhD degree and other degrees.

**Table 4: Degree studied under the scholarships**

			What is the degree you are studying for?				Total
			Other	Undergraduate	Masters	PhD	
What scholarship do you receive?	Australian scholarships	Count	0	0	192	13	205
		%	0.0%	0.0%	93.7%	6.3%	100.0%
	Chinese scholarships	Count	3	84	138	7	232
		%	1.3%	36.2%	59.5%	3.0%	100.0%
Total		Count	3	84	330	20	437
		%	0.7%	19.2%	75.5%	4.6%	100.0%

Pearson chi2 = 96.3359

Pr = 0.000

To sum up, the analyses in this subsection found that Australian and Chinese scholarships seemed different from one another: inconsistent with the hypothesis, Chinese scholarships tended to focus more on growth than Australian scholarships, but again both scholarships appeared to equally focus on governance. It was also found that Chinese scholarships were significantly longer than Australian scholarships. Finally, Chinese scholarships were often undergraduate, while Australian scholarships entirely postgraduate.

### 3.2.2. Personal characteristics

This subsection seeks to provide some answers to the second research question. The second research question asked whether Australian and Chinese scholarship programs selected different cohorts of students. Therefore, it attempted to compare Australian and Chinese scholars in terms of their gender, age and place of childhood. Again, the

comparisons are useful from the public policy perspective in that it analyzes the distributional benefits of the two scholarships in Cambodia. They are also useful for our analyses of the influences of the two scholarships on Cambodian scholars' perceptions of their academic and life experiences in Australia and China and political attitudes.

First, it was found that Chinese scholars were more likely to be male than Australian scholars. The data analysis indicated that there was not a very significant relationship between the type of scholarships and gender however (Pearson  $\chi^2 = 4.4074$ ;  $Pr = 0.036 < 0.05$ ). As would be expected, the majority of Australian and Chinese scholars were male. However, there were about 10 per cent more Chinese male scholars than Australian male scholars. The result is not significantly different from the data, which I obtained from the Cambodian Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (please see Appendix xxx).

**Table 5: Gender**

			What is your gender?		Total
			Male	Female	
What scholarship do you receive?	Australian scholarships	Count	142	65	207
		%	68.6%	31.4%	100.0%
	Chinese scholarships	Count	179	52	231
		%	77.5%	22.5%	100.0%
Total		Count	321	117	438
		%	73.3%	26.7%	100.0%

Pearson  $\chi^2 = 4.4074$

$Pr = 0.036$

Second, Chinese scholars appeared to be significantly younger than Australian scholars. The data analysis indicated a significant relationship between the type of scholarships and age (Pearson  $\chi^2 = 215.2283$ ;  $Pr = 0.000 < 0.05$ ). In other words, Australian scholars

were significantly older than Chinese scholars at the time they applied for the scholarships. Table 6a shows that two-thirds of Chinese scholars were aged 18-25 years old, while almost all Australian scholars were older than 25. It is estimated that the average age of the Chinese scholars was 23.5 years, while that of the Australian scholars 30.5 years. The same is also true when Australian and Chinese postgraduate scholars' age were compared (see table 6b below). Excluded undergraduates, Chinese scholars aged 24.5 years on average.

**Table 6a: Age**

			What was your age when you applied for the scholarship?				Total
			18-25	25-30	30-35	35 and above	
What scholarship do you receive?	Australian scholarships	Count	11	79	86	30	206
		%	5.3%	38.3%	41.7%	14.6%	100.0%
	Chinese scholarships	Count	165	52	12	4	233
		%	70.8%	22.3%	5.2%	1.7%	100.0%
Total		Count	176	131	98	34	439
		%	40.1%	29.8%	22.3%	7.7%	100.0%

Pearson chi2 = 215.2283

Pr = 0.000

**Table 6b: Age of Australian and Chinese postgraduate scholars**

			What was your age when you applied for the scholarship?				Total
			18-25	25-30	30-35	35 and above	
What scholarship do you receive?	Australian scholarships	Count	11	79	86	30	206
		%	5.3%	38.3%	41.7%	14.6%	100.0%
	Chinese scholarships	Count	88	48	10	4	150
		%	58.7%	32.0%	6.7%	2.7%	100.0%
Total		Count	99	127	96	34	356
		%	27.8%	35.7%	27.0%	9.6%	100.0%

Pearson chi2 = 142.215

Pr = 0.000

Third, Australian and Chinese scholars were similarly predominantly from Phnom Penh and a few provinces around Phnom Penh, although Australian scholars were marginally more from the capital city but also marginally more from the countryside. The data analysis showed that there was no significant relationship between the types of scholarships and the place of scholars' childhood (Pearson  $\chi^2 = 15.3751$ ;  $Pr = 0.052 > 0.05$ ). Australian and Chinese scholars were similarly largely from Phnom Penh and Kandal and Kampong Cham provinces. Kandal and Kampong Cham provinces are more economically developed than most provinces in Cambodia. In comparison to the former places, surprisingly however, a relatively smaller percentage of Australian and Chinese scholars were raised in Battambang city, Siem Reap city and Sihanoukville. It is surprising because these latter cities are the second, third and fourth largest cities in Cambodia.

**Table 7: Birthplace of childhood**

			Where did you grow up?						Total
			Phnom Penh	Battambang City	Siem Reap City	Sihanoukville	Another urban area	Countryside	
What scholarship do you receive?	Australian scholarships	Count	87	11	6	1	8	94	207
		%	42.00%	5.30%	2.90%	0.50%	3.90%	45.40%	100.00%
	Chinese scholarships	Count	86	13	6	5	30	93	233
		%	36.90%	5.60%	2.60%	2.10%	12.90%	39.90%	100.00%
Total		Count	173	24	12	6	38	187	440
		%	39.30%	5.50%	2.70%	1.40%	8.60%	42.50%	100.00%

Pearson  $\chi^2 = 14.094$   $Pr = 0.015$

The analysis also indicated that few Australian and Chinese scholars were from rural and remote provinces in Cambodia. No Australian and Chinese scholars were from Ratanakiri, Mondolkiri, Stung Treng and Oddar Meanchey provinces (see the map

below). Few Australian and Chinese scholars were raised in Preah Vihear, Pailin, Pursat, Koh Kong, Tboung Khmom, Prey Veng, Svay Rieng, Kratie, Kampot, Kampong Thom, Kampong Chhnang and Kompong Speu provinces. Except for Kampong Thom, Kampong Chhnang and Kompong Speu provinces, these provinces are either bordering with Thailand or Vietnam. Surprisingly however, there are noticeable numbers of Australian and Chinese scholars from Banteay Meanchey, a province northwest of Cambodia and on the border with Thailand.

**Figure 2: Australian and Chinese scholars on the map**



Map by CartoGIS Services, ANU College of Asia and the Pacific, The Australian National University

To sum up this subsection, the analyses on Australian and Chinese scholars' gender, age and place of childhood found that Australian and Chinese scholars were both different

and similar. On the one hand, Chinese scholars were more likely to be male than Australian scholars. They appeared to be significantly younger than Australian scholars, even for the postgraduate ones. On the other hand, Australian and Chinese scholars were similarly predominantly from Phnom Penh and a few province in the vicinity of Phnom Penh, although Australian scholars were marginally more from the capital city but also marginally more from the countryside.

### **3.2.3. Family backgrounds**

Australian and Chinese scholars are also compared in terms of their family background. This subsection analyzes their parents' annual combined income and occupations. The analyses may shed some light on their social status and political connection with the Cambodian ruling elites.

It was found that first, Australian and Chinese scholars had similar self-reported parents' income, but few were from rich families. The data analysis showed that there was no significant relationship between the types of scholarships and the scholars' parental annual combined income (Pearson  $\chi^2 = 3.1837$ ;  $Pr = 0.672 > 0.05$ ). In other words, Australian and Chinese scholars' parents did not have very significantly different annual combined incomes: most of them had low and middle annual combined income, and few are considered in rich in Cambodian standard. However, the parents of Australian scholars were somewhat poorer than those of Chinese scholars (See table 8 below).



**Table 8: Parents' annual combined income**

			What do your parents earn in a year (if both parents work, give their combined income)?						Total	
			US\$200- US\$400	US\$400- US\$750	US\$750- US\$2,000	US\$2,000- US\$10,000	US\$10,000- US\$50,000	US\$50,000 and above		
What scholarship do you receive?	Australian scholarships	Count	46	30	44	57	16	1	194	
		%	23.7%	15.5%	22.7%	29.4%	8.2%	0.5%	100.0%	
	Chinese scholarships	Count	42	32	60	71	25	2	232	
		%	18.1%	13.8%	25.9%	30.6%	10.8%	0.9%	100.0%	
Total			Count	88	62	104	128	41	3	426
			%	20.7%	14.6%	24.4%	30.0%	9.6%	0.7%	100.0%

Pearson chi2 = 3.1837

Pr = 0.672

Second, Chinese scholars were more likely to have a father who was employed by private sector. The data analysis showed that Australian and Chinese scholars' father had slightly different occupations however (Pearson chi2 = 5.68; Pr = 0.128 > 0.05). The majority of Australian scholars' fathers worked for public sector. In contrast, the majority of Chinese scholars' fathers worked for the private sector. Few Australian and Chinese scholars' fathers worked for local and international NGOs (See table 9 below.) The result implied that Chinese scholars' fathers were in fact less connected with Cambodian People's Party (CPP). This is so because Cambodian public servants tend to be also a member of the CPP by their choice or by defaults, while businesspeople, except for the few business elites such as *Orknha*, are less likely to be members of the CPP.

**Table 9: Fathers' type of workplace**

			What sector does your father work for?				Total
			Public sector	Private sector	Civil society	Other	
What scholarship do you receive?	Australian scholarships	Count	63	52	0	1	116
		%	54.3%	44.8%	0.0%	0.9%	100.0%
	Chinese scholarships	Count	86	109	4	2	201
		%	42.8%	54.2%	2.0%	1.0%	100.0%
Total		Count	149	161	4	3	317
		%	47.0%	50.8%	1.3%	0.9%	100.0%

Pearson chi2 = 5.68   Pr = 0.128

Third, Australian and Chinese scholars tended to similarly have a mother who worked for private sector (Pearson chi2 = 1.79; Pr = 0.617 > 0.05). The majority of Australian and Chinese scholars worked for the private sector. In contrast, less than a quarter of their mothers worked for public sector. Finally, few Australian and Chinese scholars' mothers were employed in local and international NGOs (see table 10 below). The result implied that both Australian and Chinese scholars' mothers were in fact less connected with the CPP.

**Table 10: Mothers' type of workplace**

			What sector does your mother work for?				Total
			Public sector	Private sector	Civil society	Other	
What scholarship do you receive?	Australian scholarships	Count	21	74	1	1	97
		%	21.6%	76.3%	1.0%	1.0%	100.0%
	Chinese scholarships	Count	35	124	0	1	160
		%	21.9%	77.5%	0.0%	0.6%	100.0%
Total		Count	56	198	1	2	257
		%	21.8%	77.0%	0.4%	0.8%	100.0%

Pearson chi2 = 1.79   Pr = 0.617

To sum up this subsection, the analyses of Australian and Chinese scholars' parental annual combined income and occupations found that Australian and Chinese scholars seemed to come from a quite similar social background. First, they had similar self-reported parents' income, but few were from rich families. Second, while Chinese scholars were more likely to have a father who was employed by private sector, both groups of scholars tended to a mother who was employed in the private sector.

#### **3.2.4. Academic history**

This subsection examines Australian and Chinese scholars' prior academic performance and memberships of professional groups, associations and societies to test the second hypothesis. The second hypothesis posited that Australian scholarships were more meritocratic in their selection of students, while Chinese scholarships more political. Data on scholars' previous universities and area of their most recent studies at the time they applied for the scholarship were also collected and analyzed to compare their academic history.

First, contrary to the second research proposition, it was found that Australian scholarships were neither more meritocratic in their selection of students nor Chinese scholarships more political. The data analysis showed that there was no significant relationship between the types of scholarships and the scholars' past academic performance (Pearson  $\chi^2 = 3.7490$ ;  $Pr = 0.441 > .05$ ). Australian and Chinese scholars performed equally well at their last universities. This result implied that both scholarships

selected their scholars based on the scholars' academic performance rather than their political connection and favors. Nevertheless, the analysis also provided some interesting insights. First, not all Australian and Chinese scholars were the top performers in their class. The top 1 per cent of performers accounted for only about one-tenth for Australian scholars and for a similar proportion for Chinese scholars. Second, most Australian and Chinese scholars were in the top 10 per cent of performers. Third, Australian and Chinese scholars who performed less well, for example those in the top 25 per cent and above of performers, comprised about one-third respectively.

**Table 11: Academic performance**

			In terms of your academic performance at your last university, in which category would you classify yourself?					Total
			Top 1% of your class	Top 5% of your class	Top 10% of your class	Top 25% of your class	Other	
What scholarship do you receive?	Australian scholarships	Count	26	55	59	45	22	207
		%	12.60%	26.60%	28.50%	21.70%	10.60%	100.00%
	Chinese scholarships	Count	26	58	73	57	14	228
		%	11.40%	25.40%	32.00%	25.00%	6.10%	100.00%
Total		Count	52	113	132	102	36	435
		%	12.00%	26.00%	30.30%	23.40%	8.30%	100.00%

Pearson chi2 = 3.7490

Pr = 0.441

Second, the comparison of Australian and Chinese scholars by their membership of groups, associations and societies provided further evidence to reject the above hypothesis. The data analysis showed that most Australian and Chinese scholars were similarly not part of groups, associations and societies at the time they applied for these scholarships (Pearson chi2 = 0.0373; Pr = 0.847 > 0.05).

**Table 12: Membership status in groups, associations or societies**

			Were you part of any groups, associations or societies when applying for the scholarship?		
			Yes	No	Total
What scholarship do you receive?	Australian scholarships	Count	48	159	207
		%	23.2%	76.8%	100.0%
	Chinese scholarships	Count	52	180	232
		%	22.4%	77.6%	100.0%
Total		Count	100	339	439
		%	22.8%	77.2%	100.0%

Pearson chi2 = 0.0373

Pr = 0.847

Moreover, if part of the groups, very few Australian and Chinese scholars belonged to the Union Youth Federation of Cambodia (UYCF). UYCF is a powerful youth organization closely linked with the CPP. The analysis also showed that very few Australian and Chinese scholars belonged to Junior Chamber International (JCI) Cambodia, a growing, influential and apolitical community of young Cambodian entrepreneurs. Finally, the majority of Australian and Chinese scholars were members of other less well-known groups or societies such as university student associations, where memberships tend to be automatic at their enrolment.

**Table 13: Groups, associations or societies**

			If yes to question 11, do you belong to one or many of the following groups?				Total
			Student Association	Professional Association	Union Youth Federations of Cambodia (UYFC)	Other	
What scholarship do you receive?	Australian scholarships	Count	17	24	3	3	47
		%	36.2%	51.1%	6.4%	6.4%	100.0%
	Chinese scholarships	Count	47	5	3	4	59
		%	79.7%	8.5%	5.1%	6.8%	100.0%
Total		Count	64	29	6	7	106
		%	60.4%	27.4%	5.7%	6.6%	100.0%

Pearson chi2 = 25.624

Pr = 0.070

Third, it appeared that Australian and Chinese scholars were similarly largely from a few public universities. The data analysis also indicated that there is a significant relationship between the types of scholarships and the scholars' previous universities (Pearson chi2 = 88.8920; Pr = 0.000 > 0.05). Table 14 shows that first, about a half of Australian scholars received their last degree from public universities such as Royal University of Phnom Penh (RUPP), Royal University of Law and Economics (RULE), and Royal University of Agriculture (RUA). Similarly, about a half of Chinese scholars attended Royal University of Phnom Penh (RUPP), Institute of Technology of Cambodia (ITC), and Royal University of Law and Economics (RULE). As is analyzed above, the large percentage of Chinese scholars studying at ITC is due mainly to the large number of Chinese scholars being undergraduates. Second, Panhasastra University of Cambodia (PUC), a leading private university in Cambodia, produced only 5 per cent and 7 per cent of Australian and Chinese scholars, while Norton University (NU) and the University of Cambodia (UC), also leading private universities, produced 6 per cent and 2 per cent of the total scholarship recipients respectively. Third, a small number of Australian and Chinese

scholars received their last degree from foreign universities (FU). Finally, a significant percentage of Chinese scholars received their last qualification from high school (HS). Those who received high school qualifications applied for the undergraduate scholarships.

**Table 14: Last universities**

			Where did you receive your last degree prior to commencing your scholarship program?											Total
			RUPP	RULE	NUM	PUC	RUA	ICT	UC	NU	FU	HS	Other	
What scholarship do you receive?	Australian scholarships	Count	67	25	9	10	23	3	5	19	11	0	35	207
		%	32.4%	12.1%	4.3%	4.8%	11.1%	1.4%	2.4%	9.2%	5.3%	0.0%	16.9%	100.0%
	Chinese scholarships	Count	50	29	14	17	2	42	3	6	8	25	34	230
		%	21.7%	12.6%	6.1%	7.4%	0.9%	18.3%	1.3%	2.6%	3.5%	10.9%	14.8%	100.0%
Total		Count	117	54	23	27	25	45	8	25	19	25	69	437
		%	26.8%	12.4%	5.3%	6.2%	5.7%	10.3%	1.8%	5.7%	4.3%	5.7%	15.8%	100.0%

Pearson chi2 = 88.8920

Pr = 0.000

Fourth, the analysis of the areas of Australian and Chinese scholars' most recent studies found similar result to that of the areas of their studies under the scholarships (Pearson chi2 = 85.9286; Pr = 0.000 < 0.05). Chinese scholars were more likely to study engineering, while Australian scholars to study agriculture, environment, and related studies. Both scholars similarly tended to study economic and policy at their last universities.

**Table 15: Area of most recent studies**

			What area were your most recent studies in prior to commencing your scholarship program?									Total
			Agriculture, Environment and Related Studies	Education	Engineering	Health	IT	Management and Commerce	Economics and Policy	Science	Society and Culture	
What scholarship do you receive?	Australian scholarships	Count	43	27	5	26	8	35	32	9	16	201
		%	21.4%	13.4%	2.5%	12.9%	4.0%	17.4%	15.9%	4.5%	8.0%	100.0%
	Chinese scholarships	Count	10	21	60	9	13	50	44	13	6	226
		%	4.4%	9.3%	26.5%	4.0%	5.8%	22.1%	19.5%	5.8%	2.7%	100.0%
Total		Count	53	48	65	35	21	85	76	22	22	427
		%	12.4%	11.2%	15.2%	8.2%	4.9%	19.9%	17.8%	5.2%	5.2%	100.0%

Pearson chi2 = 85.9286

Pr = 0.000

To sum up, the analyses in this subsection found that Australian and Chinese and their scholars were both different and similar. First, contrary to the second research proposition, it was found that Australian scholarships were neither more meritocratic in their selection of students nor Chinese scholarships more political: both scholarships seemed to be equally meritocratic. Second, it was also found that Australian and Chinese scholars were similarly largely from a few public universities. However, Chinese scholars were more likely to study engineering, while Australian scholars to study agriculture, environment, and related studies. Both scholars tended to similarly study economic and policy at their last universities. This result is consistent with that found in the analysis of Australian and Chinese scholars' areas of studies under the scholarships.



### 3.2.5. Employment history

This subsection seeks to test the third proposition. It was hypothesized that while Australian scholarships were more targeted at private sector, Chinese scholarships more at government sector. Data on the type of Australian and Chinese scholars' previous workplace was collected for this purpose. In addition, data on their employment status, level of professional experience and salary level at the time they applied for the scholarships were also gathered to compare their employment history. But first, it is more logical to begin with the scholars' previous employment status before proceeding to the type of their former workplace.

It was found that Chinese scholars were much more likely to be studying rather than working when selected (see table 16a below). The data analysis indicated a significant relationship between the types of scholarships and the scholars' previous employment status (Pearson  $\chi^2 = 124.7025$ ;  $Pr = 0.000 < 0.05$ ). While almost all Australian scholars reported that they worked at the time they applied for the scholarship, only a half of Chinese scholars reported that. The differences between the two groups of scholars were statistically significant at approximately 47 percentage points. The overall low percentage of Chinese scholars' employment status is due mainly to the high proportion of Chinese

undergraduates who had not worked. The analysis is true even for the postgraduate ones (also see table 16b below).

**Table 16a: Employment status**

			Were you working when you applied for the scholarship?		Total
			Yes	No	
What scholarship do you receive?	Australian scholarships	Count	203	2	205
		%	99.0%	1.0%	100.0%
	Chinese scholarships	Count	121	111	232
		%	52.2%	47.8%	100.0%
Total		Count	324	113	437
		%	74.1%	25.9%	100.0%

Pearson chi2 = 124.7025      Pr = 0.000

**Table16b: Australian and Chinese postgraduate scholars' employment status**

			Were you working when you applied for the scholarship?		Total
			Yes	No	
What scholarship do you receive?	Australian scholarships	Count	203	2	205
		%	99.0%	1.0%	100.0%
	Chinese scholarships	Count	107	41	148
		%	72.3%	27.7%	100.0%
Total		Count	310	43	353
		%	87.8%	12.2%	100.0%

Pearson chi2 = 57.394      Pr = 0.000

Second, the data analysis also showed that Australian and Chinese scholars had remarkably different workplaces before they applied for the scholarships (Pearson chi2 = 80.1620; Pr = 0.000 < 0.05). First, Chinese scholars, if working, were more likely to be

employed by private sector: about a half of Chinese scholars worked for private sector, compared to about one-tenth of Australian scholars. Second, while about a half of Australian scholars had employment in public sector, only a quarter of Chinese scholars were employed in this sector. Third, civil society provided employment to a third of Australian scholars, but to only 10 per cent of Chinese scholars. “Other” workplaces accounted for about 10 per cent of total employment for Chinese scholars, but only 5 per cent for Australian scholars. Overall, the analysis rejected our third hypothesis: Australian scholarships were neither more focused on private sector, nor Chinese scholarships more on government sector. The opposite seems true.

**Table 17: Type of workplace**

			If your were working, where did you work?				Total
			Public sector	Private sector	Civil society	Other	
What scholarship do you receive?	Australian scholarships	Count	86	30	80	10	206
		%	41.70%	14.60%	38.80%	4.90%	100.00%
	Chinese scholarships	Count	36	74	15	13	138
		%	26.10%	53.60%	10.90%	9.40%	100.00%
Total		Count	122	104	95	23	344
		%	35.50%	30.20%	27.60%	6.70%	100.00%

Pearson chi2 = 73.398

Pr = 0.000

Third, Australian scholars were significantly more experienced than Chinese scholars (Pearson chi2 = 140.4892; Pr = 0.000 < 0.05). Table 18 shows that while the majority of Australian scholars had more than five years of professional experiences at the time they applied for the scholarships, the majority of Chinese scholars had between 1 and 2 years of professional experiences.

**Table 18: Professional experience**

			If you were working, how many years have you worked (in your latest and any earlier jobs combined)?					Total
			1-2 years	2-3 years	3-4 years	4-5 years	More than 5 years	
What scholarship do you receive?	Australian scholarships	Count	5	29	35	30	107	206
		%	2.4%	14.1%	17.0%	14.6%	51.9%	100.0%
	Chinese scholarships	Count	78	26	7	14	21	146
		%	53.4%	17.8%	4.8%	9.6%	14.4%	100.0%
Total		Count	83	55	42	44	128	352
		%	23.6%	15.6%	11.9%	12.5%	36.4%	100.0%

Pearson chi2 = 140.4892

Pr = 0.000

In addition, Australian scholars earned significantly more than Chinese scholars (Pearson chi2 = 57.2863; Pr = 0.000 < 0.05). Table 18 below shows that the majority of Australian scholars earned US\$500 or more per month. In contrast, the majority of Chinese scholars made US\$500 or less per month.

**Table 19: Monthly salary level**

			If you were working, how much did you earn per month?					Total
			US\$100- US\$250	US\$250- US\$500	US\$500- US\$1,000	US\$1,000- US\$2,000	US\$2,000 and above	
What scholarship do you receive?	Australian scholarships	Count	42	40	63	51	9	205
		%	20.5%	19.5%	30.7%	24.9%	4.4%	100.0%
	Chinese scholarships	Count	57	56	31	4	0	148
		%	38.5%	37.8%	20.9%	2.7%	0.0%	100.0%
Total		Count	99	96	94	55	9	353
		%	28.0%	27.2%	26.6%	15.6%	2.5%	100.0%

Pearson chi2 = 57.2863

Pr = 0.000

To sum up, the analyses in this subsection found that Australian and Chinese scholarships and their scholars were quite different: contrary to the third hypothesis, Australian scholarships were neither more focused on private sector, nor Chinese scholarships more

on government sector. The opposite seems true. Furthermore, it was also found that Chinese scholars were much more likely to be studying rather than working when selected. This is true even for the postgraduate ones. Finally, Australian scholars were not only significantly more experienced, but they also earned significantly more than Chinese scholars when they applied for the scholarships.

### 3.2.6. Past overseas experiences

Data on Australian and Chinese scholars' past overseas scholarships and overseas travel experiences were also analyzed and compared. It is not unreasonable to postulate that past overseas scholarships are another indicator of good academic performance and that the reasons for and lengths of these overseas studies (and travels) have differing impacts on Australian and Chinese scholars' attitudes. These data are helpful for our analysis of the causal one-year effect of Australian and Chinese scholarships on scholars' political attitudes. Overall, it was found that Australian scholars tended to be more exposed to foreign countries than Chinese scholars on average.

**Table 20: Past overseas experience**

			Have you been overseas before receiving the scholarship?		Total
			Yes	No	
What scholarship do you receive?	Australian scholarships	Count	183	24	207
		%	88.4%	11.6%	100.0%
	Chinese scholarships	Count	96	136	232
		%	41.4%	58.6%	100.0%
Total		Count	279	160	439
		%	63.6%	36.4%	100.0%

Pearson chi2 = 104.4441

Pr = 0.000

First, it was found that Australian scholars were more likely to have been overseas than Chinese scholars (Pearson  $\chi^2 = 104.4441$ ;  $Pr = 0.000 < 0.05$ ). More than two-thirds of Australian scholars reported that they had been overseas, compared to about a half of Chinese scholars. Moreover, the reasons for overseas travels were also significantly different among Australian and Chinese scholars (Pearson  $\chi^2 = 37.3093$ ;  $Pr = 0.000 < 0.05$ ). The largest number of Australian scholars had travelled overseas to work, while the largest number of Chinese scholars had been overseas for the sake of travel.

**Table 21: Reasons for going overseas**

			If so, why?					Total
			Study	Travel	Work	All of the above	Other	
What scholarship do you receive?	Australian scholarships	Count	61	32	66	20	6	185
		%	33.0%	17.3%	35.7%	10.8%	3.2%	100.0%
	Chinese scholarships	Count	47	48	10	12	6	123
		%	38.2%	39.0%	8.1%	9.8%	4.9%	100.0%
Total		Count	108	80	76	32	12	308
		%	35.1%	26.0%	24.7%	10.4%	3.9%	100.0%

Pearson  $\chi^2 = 37.3093$

$Pr = 0.000$

Third, however, Australian and Chinese scholars' total time spent overseas prior to applying for the scholarship was about the same (Pearson  $\chi^2 = 11.2987$ ;  $Pr = 0.023 < 0.05$ ), although Chinese scholars appeared to stay slightly longer than Australian scholars. Table 22 below shows that most Australian and Chinese scholars spent six months or less overseas.

**Table 22: Past total time spent overseas**

			What is your total time spent overseas prior to applying for the scholarship?					Total
			<6 months	6 months	6 months-12 months	12 months-18 months	>18 months	
What scholarship do you receive?	Australian scholarships	Count	137	8	16	8	16	185
		%	74.1%	4.3%	8.6%	4.3%	8.6%	100.0%
	Chinese scholarships	Count	93	16	18	3	22	152
		%	61.2%	10.5%	11.8%	2.0%	14.5%	100.0%
Total		Count	230	24	34	11	38	337
		%	68.2%	7.1%	10.1%	3.3%	11.3%	100.0%

Pearson chi2 = 11.2987

Pr = 0.023

Fourth, the result of the surveys show that few Australian and Chinese scholars received scholarships to study abroad before they applied for the scholarship, and that Australian scholars were more likely to receive a scholarship to study abroad than Chinese scholars (Pearson chi2 = 5.9202; Pr = 0.015 < 0.05). About a quarter of Australian scholars had studied abroad under a scholarship, compared to about one-tenth of Chinese scholars. The majority of Chinese scholars who reported the receipt of scholarships may have obtained them from the Chinese government. It was observed that many Chinese scholars who were offered an undergraduate scholarship went on to study for a Masters' degree in China. Furthermore, it was also noted that many Australian scholars had received scholarships from countries other China. These countries included the United States of America, United Kingdoms, France and Japan.

**Table 23: Past scholarship experience**

			Have you received a scholarship to study overseas before receiving the scholarship?		Total
			Yes	No	
What scholarship do you receive?	Australian scholarships	Count	43	164	207
		%	20.8%	79.2%	100.0%
	Chinese scholarships	Count	28	202	230
		%	12.2%	87.8%	100.0%
Total		Count	71	366	437
		%	16.2%	83.8%	100.0%

Pearson chi2 = 5.9202

Pr = 0.015

### 3.2.7. Future plan and career

Finally, data on Australian and Chinese scholars' future plan and career aspirations was gathered to understand and compare their desired futures. The comparisons are helpful in our understanding of the potential developmental impacts of the two scholarships on various sectors of the Cambodian economy.

First, it was found that Australian scholars were more likely to return to their former workplace than Chinese scholars (Pearson chi2 = 38.5472; Pr = 0.000 < 0.05). The data analysis on Australian and Chinese scholars' intention to return to their previous employer showed that first, more than a half of Australian scholars indicated that they planned to return to the same employers, compared to only about a quarter of Chinese scholars. Second, about a half of Chinese scholars said that they were "not sure," compared to only a quarter of Australian scholars who said so. Third, about one-third of Chinese scholars said "no", while less than one-fifth of Australian scholars said so.



**Table 24: Plan to return to the same employer**

			Do you plan to return to the same employer when you return to your home country?			Total
			Yes	No	Not sure	
What scholarship do you receive?	Australian scholarships	Count	118	36	50	204
		%	57.8%	17.6%	24.5%	100.0%
	Chinese scholarships	Count	43	58	65	166
		%	25.9%	34.9%	39.2%	100.0%
Total		Count	161	94	115	370
		%	43.5%	25.4%	31.1%	100.0%

Pearson chi2 = 38.5472

Pr = 0.000

Second, the data analysis on Australian and Chinese scholars' prospective career aspirations indicated that Australian and Chinese scholars had markedly different career aspirations (Pearson chi2 = 81.4633; Pr = 0.000 < 0.05). First, the majority of Australian scholars preferred to work for public sector in their future career, while the majority of Chinese scholars aspired to work for private sector. Second, Australian scholars were significantly more interested in working for non-profit sectors than Chinese scholars.

**Table 25: Career aspiration**

			Thinking about your aspirations, do you want a career in:				Total
			Public sector	Private sector	Civil society	Other	
What scholarship do you receive?	Australian scholarships	Count	86	45	71	4	206
		%	41.7%	21.8%	34.5%	1.9%	100.0 %
	Chinese scholarships	Count	89	121	13	5	228
		%	39.0%	53.1%	5.7%	2.2%	100.0 %
Total		Count	175	166	84	9	434
		%	40.3%	38.2%	19.4%	2.1%	100.0 %

Pearson chi2 = 74.08 Pr = 0.000

To sum up this subsection, the analyses of Australian and Chinese scholars' future plan and career aspirations found that Australian and Chinese scholars were significantly different. First, Australian scholars were more likely to return to their former workplace than Chinese scholars upon the completion of their scholarships. Second, while the largest number of Australian scholars preferred to work for public sector in their future career, the largest number of Chinese scholars aspired to work for private sector.

### **3.3. Discussion**

The analyses in the result section found that Australian and Chinese scholarships and their scholars were both different and similar in many ways. This section discusses and explains the differences and similarities found in the prior section.

#### **3.3.1. What explains the differences found?**

The analyses in the result section found that Australian and Chinese scholarships and their scholars were different in many ways. Chinese scholars tended to stay in China for a longer period, were more likely to be studying undergraduate, were more likely to study engineering, were more likely to be male, were significantly younger, were more likely to be working, and if working, were more like to be from private sector, were less exposed to foreign countries, were less likely to return to their former workplace when returning home, and were more likely to aspire to be businesspeople than Australian scholars.

These differences can be explained in terms of a number of policy contrasts between the two scholarships, which are discussed in greater details below.

First, that Chinese scholarships were significantly longer than Australian ones may reflect the fact that Chinese scholars tended to be studying undergraduate degree while Australian Scholars to be studying postgraduate degree. The latter fact can be explicable in terms of the differing Australian and Chinese scholarship policies: Australia focuses only on post-graduate studies; Chinese on both undergraduate and post-graduate studies. On the one hand, for example, AAS exclusively sponsors postgraduate studies, in particular those at the Masters degree level, in areas badly needed for the development of Cambodia. Again, Masters degree at Australian universities lasts 2 years or less. AAS also reserved a small number of awards for PhD applicants in the past; however, recently, AAS awards PhD scholarships on a case by case basis. Unlike its predecessor, the Colombo Plan scholarship programs, AAS has never supported undergraduate studies, which usually last four years or more on average, and technical training. AAS focuses on the Masters degree level, perhaps because Australia has attempted to promote its education as exports, requiring citizens of the developing countries to pay for their undergraduate education, or perhaps because it has focused on “advanced skills transfer”, leadership development and governance reforms, which are more appropriate developmentally for the recipient countries, or perhaps because it is more cost-effective. AAS has attempted to produce qualified professionals and probably believed that these

professionals would make more impacts on development outcomes in Cambodia. It is also far less costly to support a Masters scholar than to sponsor a PhD scholar or an undergraduate student. Nevertheless, it is unclear why AAS does not sponsor technical trainings such as Technical and Further Education (TAFE). Furthermore, whether investment outcomes in AAS Masters scholars is better than that in PhD, undergraduate and technical training students is largely unknown. It is worth remembering however that the AAS-Endeavour managed by the Department of Education and Training also supports short-term technical training.

On the other hand, on paper, CGS sponsors both undergraduate and Masters students. These students come to China for at least 5 years and 3 years respectively. It is not clear why CGS offers undergraduate scholarship other than that CGS aims to develop Cambodia's human capital. Maybe, Chinese government intends to expose Chinese undergraduate education to Cambodian students in order to promote the reputation of Chinese education? Maybe China believes that Cambodians cannot afford to pay for their undergraduate education in China? Maybe China attempts to bring young Cambodian scholars to expose them to Chinese culture? Or maybe China does not differentiate the costs and benefits derived from undergraduate and Masters education? However, it is also unclear why CGS does not support PhD research and technical training in China. The Cambodian Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports and the Chinese embassy in Phnom Penh only administer the selection of undergraduate and Master scholars.

However, the fact that five research participants received a CGS PhD scholarship maybe because they continued their PhD studies by applying for the PhD scholarship to the Chinese Scholarship Council in China directly, rather than to the Cambodian Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports in Cambodia.

Second, that Chinese scholarships were more focused on growth (engineering), but both Australian and Chinese scholarships had similar focus on governance (policy), may also be explained by two differing Australian and Chinese scholarship policies: (1) Australian scholarships have priority areas, while Chinese scholarships have none and (2) Australian scholarships select Australian scholars based on the scholars' performance during the interviews, while Chinese scholarships run written tests to select the best students. First, Australian scholarships prioritize certain areas deemed important to the development needs of Cambodia. AAS sponsors Cambodian citizens to study in Australia to develop their capacity in key prioritized sectors important to the socio-economic development needs of Cambodia. These sectors include agriculture, infrastructure, environment, economic and policy and health. The fact that few Australian scholars undertook engineering, Information Technology, and science degrees may be because engineering, Information Technology and science do not appear on AAS's priority list. However, CGS prioritizes all sectors. Another way of saying this is that CGS does not prioritize any sectors. Cambodian students can apply for Chinese scholarships to study any course that they like at Chinese universities.

Second, that Chinese scholarships were more focused on engineering maybe also because of the fact that unlike Australian scholarships, Chinese scholarships run written tests to select the best and brightest students. These tests include mathematic test for the undergraduate scholarships. Students from Institute of Technology of Cambodia are renowned for their high proficiency in math; therefore, as showed in the result section above, they were the major recipients of Chinese undergraduate scholarships.

Third, that Chinese scholars were more likely to be male than Australian scholars can be also expounded by the policy differences of the two scholarships: Australian scholarships have deliberate policy to support female applicants and applicants who are disabled and working predominantly in the provinces, while Chinese scholarships do not have such a policy. The AAS office in Phnom Penh confided that AAS deliberately encouraged women to apply and implemented programs to support women. AAS offered English language supports and internship opportunities for these applicants so that they are better prepared for the scholarships. Moreover, priority would be given to women when men and women performed equally well during the selection process. Despite these efforts, Australian scholars tended to be male rather than female. On the contrary, CGS in Cambodia does not have such a deliberate policy to support female applicants, although the Cambodian Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports indicated that women are prioritized over men when both performed equally well during the scholarship exam.

The analysis of gender also reconfirmed gender inequality in Cambodia and probably reveals the ineffectiveness of the Australian and Chinese scholarship policies to address this inequality. Culturally, Cambodia is still a patriarchal society, where women are treated as inferior to men, and their role in the society is considered secondary. As a result, Cambodian men have more access to all levels of education and to economic opportunities such as the scholarships. The data seemed to suggest that although AAS has over years attempted to tackle the issues, it has failed.

Fourth, the scholarship categories and the eligibility criteria for the scholarships explain the fact that Chinese scholars tended to be significantly younger than Australian scholars. Again, Chinese government sponsors both undergraduates and Masters students (recently, Chinese government significantly increased the scholarships to Cambodia: for example, in 2018, Chinese government awarded about 200 undergraduate scholarships to Cambodian students), while the Australian government supports only Masters and PhD students. In other words, Chinese scholars were significantly younger than Australian scholars on average because of the large proportion of Chinese undergraduates. However, as the analysis in the result section indicated, the same is still true for the Australian and Chinese postgraduate scholarships. Furthermore, the eligibility for the scholarships may also explain the age differences between Australian and Chinese Masters and PhD scholars and, as will be shown in the latter analyses, the differences between the levels of professional experiences and the levels of salary. As described in Chapter 1, the entry barriers for the AAS are significantly higher than the CGS. For example, while CGS

requires no professional work experience to apply for a scholarship, AAS does. To be eligible, AAS scholars need to have at least two years of professional experiences.

Fifth, that Australian scholars were more professionally experienced than Chinese scholars may reflect the consequences of two policies. Chinese scholars were less experienced than Australian scholars, first because of the different categories of the two scholarships: again, AAS focuses entirely on postgraduate studies while CGS on both undergraduate and postgraduate studies. The policy difference resulted in a large proportion of Chinese scholars being undergraduates and in the Australian scholars entirely being postgraduate scholars. Applicants for CGS undergraduate scholarships were largely fresh graduates from high school or in their first or second year of their undergraduate program in Cambodia, and therefore largely they had no prior work experience. Second, it is because AAS requires at least two years of professional experiences, while CGS requires none. Again, anyone can apply for Chinese scholarships regardless of whether they had prior professional experiences as long as they believed that they are qualified and interested in the scholarships.

Sixth, the differences in age, years of professional experiences and types of employments of Australian and Chinese scholars may explain the fact that Australian scholars tended to earn significantly more than Chinese scholars before they applied for their scholarships. It is highly likely that age and years of professional experiences are highly positively correlated with the levels of salary. The older and more experienced one gets, the higher the salary one tends to earn. The prior analyses and discussions on ages and levels of



professional experiences revealed that Australian scholars were significantly older and more experienced than Chinese scholars on average. Furthermore, all other things being equal, local and international NGOs and organizations in Cambodia pay more than public sector on average. The analysis on type of employment indicated that there were significantly more Australian scholars who worked for local and international NGOs and organizations than Chinese scholars. Finally, despite the fact that a significant proportion of Chinese scholars worked for private companies, they were unlikely to earn a lot because most of them were junior.

Seventh, that Australian scholarships were neither more focused on private sector nor Chinese scholarships on government can be explained by another policy difference: Australian scholarships have a quota for applicants from public sector while Chinese scholarships does not. Initially, AAS deliberately attempted to focus on developing capacity in the public sector by awarding the scholarships exclusively to the public sector, but later expanded its focus by inviting applicants from both public and non-public sectors. In recent years, at least 40-50 per cent of the AAS awards are reserved for applicants from public sector, and the rest are open for the non-public sector, which includes the private sector and civil society. The AAS quota system requires that applicants from the public sector compete for the scholarships among themselves. The same can be said about the applicants from non-public sector. However, it can be inferred that competition for the scholarships among applicants from non-public sector were generally stiffer, compared to that for applicants from public sector. This is because there were significantly more applicants from non-public sector than those from public sector,

and applicants from non-public sector had higher English language proficiency than those from public sector. In contrast with AAS, CGS does not have such a quota policy. CGS is open to applicants from all sectors. Again, to put it in other words, anyone who believed that they are qualified and interested in the scholarships can apply for Chinese scholarships. Finally, the fact that applicants from sectors other than public sector were more qualified than those from public sector may explain why CGS scholars tend to be from private sector.

However, it is unclear why Australian scholars were also more likely to be from local and international NGOs than Chinese scholars. In fact, while about one-third of Australian scholars were from civil society, very few Chinese scholars were. Is it because those who worked for civil society were not interested in CGS, or because they can find other scholarships better than CGS? CGS is regarded as less prestigious than AAS in terms of the quality of education and monetary values. Cambodian students perceived quality of Chinese education as inferior to that of Australian education. In monetary terms, AAS is very generous. It provides airfares, adequate monthly stipends, health insurance and the like. CGS is markedly different: applicants have to cover their own international travel from and to China. It has been observed that CGS scholars can barely survive on their monthly stipends. Anecdotal evidence suggested that some students have their family back home send them money to support their living costs in China.

Eighth, that Australian scholars had significantly been more exposed to foreign countries than Chinese scholars may be explained by the facts that Australian scholars were older

and had more successful careers than Chinese scholars, which all are the bi-products of two scholarships' policy differences discussed earlier (e.g., different scholarship categories and differing requirements of professional experiences). There were many more Australian scholars who reported that they had studied overseas under a scholarship and had travelled overseas for work than Chinese scholars.

Ninth, that Australian scholars were more likely to return to their former workplace than Chinese scholars may be expounded by the types of their previous employment. In other words, the result may have less to do with the two scholarship policies but more with those of the applicants' workplace. It is not very surprising that there were many more Australian scholars who indicated that they planned to return to their former workplace than Chinese scholars. The previous analysis showed that there were more Australian scholars than Chinese scholars who worked for public sector. Most Australian scholars who worked for the public sector were required by their home organization to return to the organizations after they returned to Cambodia. Some public organizations required that Australian applicants signed a contract before they left for Australia. Others nominated Australian applicants for the scholarships on the conditions that they returned to the same organization. Australian scholars who said "no" and "not sure" if they would return to their former workplace probably were those who worked for the private sectors and local and international NGOs and organizations. These workplaces did not deliberately require AAS scholars to return, nor did they reserve a position for the scholars after they returned. Usually, Australian scholars from these organizations resigned from their jobs when they left for Australia. Therefore, Australian scholars were

free after they returned home. The fact that the majority of Chinese scholars were from sectors other than public sector may also explain the results.

Finally, that Chinese scholars were more likely to aspire to be businesspeople than AAS scholars may be explained by the scholars' previous career paths and their parents' occupations. The prior analyses suggested that the majority of Australian scholars worked in the government and NGOs/INGOs, and that the majority of their parents were not businesspeople. The opposite is true for Chinese scholars. This result has significant implications for the supplies of skilled human resources for various sectors in Cambodia. Undoubtedly, on the one hand, AAS has produced and will continue to produce more human resources for public sector and local and international NGOs and organizations. It can be argued that this is desirable for the current state of development in Cambodia, when NGOs/INGOs sector is still relevant in the country. However, AAS will only produce small proportion of entrepreneurs for Cambodia, a group that will be more necessary as Cambodian economy becomes more sophisticated. On the other hand, CGS has produced and will continue to produce a disproportionately large number of entrepreneurs in Cambodia and a disproportionately low number of staff for local and international NGOs and organizations. This may be a good thing for the country's long-term development. As Cambodia develops economically, the country needs more entrepreneurs to manage and support the growing economy.

### **3.3.2. Why are policies different?**

The few policy differences discussed earlier are a recent phenomenon. Chinese scholarships appear similar to Australian scholarships in the 1950s under the Colombo Plan. For example, anecdotal evidence suggested that Australia used to offer undergraduate scholarships and also used to have a test to select the best students under the Plan. Australia changed its policies, maybe because it aimed to promote its education as exports and focus on “advanced skills transfer”, leadership development and governance reforms.

### **3.3.3. What explains the similarities found?**

The analyses in the prior result section found that both Australian and Chinese scholars were similar in many ways. They had similar social backgrounds, similar academic qualifications and similar lack of political connection with Cambodian ruling elites. Selection processes and selection criteria explain most of the similarities found.

#### **3.3.3.1. Why did the scholarships not excessively benefit the rich?**

It is often assumed that the rich tends to benefit the most from aid scholarships. This is because the rich are either better connected with the ruling elites, who might distribute the scholarships to the rich’s children in exchanges for their political supports, or their children are better prepared than the non-rich’s children to win the scholarships during the competitive selection processes. However, this is not what the data showed. The analysis of Australian and Chinese scholars’ family background indicated that, while it is

true that the majority of Australian and Chinese scholars were from a few places (more on this below), very few Australian and Chinese scholars were from the rich families. On the contrary, the overwhelming majority were from the low and lower-middle income families: most Australian and Chinese scholars' parents had a combined annual income of less than US\$10,000, although Chinese scholars tended to be drawn from more affluent groups of scholars than Australian scholars did. Second, Australian and Chinese scholars were from very diverse family backgrounds. Although a significant percentage of Australian and Chinese scholars' parents are civil servants and businesspeople, there were also substantial proportions of Australian and Chinese scholars' parents who were farmers. The result is unlike in the 1980s or the early 1990s when scholarships to the Soviet Unions and local universities in Phnom Penh were appropriated for the sons and the daughters of the Cambodian ruling elites and those who were connected with them. Why things have changed now?

The applications of meritocratic principles for the selection of Australian and Chinese scholars may partly explain the results. Again, AAS selects Australian scholars based on rigorous selection processes, which include application screening, English language test and interviews, while CGS squarely on written tests. Both scholarships are open to all eligible Cambodians, regardless of their family background and political background. The rich and the poor alike can apply for the scholarships. Furthermore, it was told (and observed) that the AAS selection processes were transparent and fair. The processes were transparent and fair in the sense that key representatives from the Australian and Cambodian governments and experts from the private sector were involved. Therefore,

the processes were less vulnerable to political manipulation and corruptions. CGS is also merit-based and open to all qualified Cambodians, although the selection processes which included written test may be less transparent. The processes were less transparent and fair in the sense that the written tests are administered solely by the Cambodian Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, and the final decisions were made by the Chinese government. However, the fact that the selection process of the Chinese scholarships is based entirely on the result of the written test rather than on interviews which use subjective criteria to evaluate the applicants may imply that the Chinese scholarships may be more meritocratic than Australian scholarships after all.

Meritocracy asides, it is unclear why the son and/or daughters of the rich were not the major beneficiaries of Australian and Chinese scholarships. All other things being equal, if family's income is generally positively correlated with the children academic performance, one might expect that the two scholarships should have benefited excessively the sons and the daughters of the rich. That the result of this research showed the contrary, is it because the sons and the daughters of the rich in Cambodia in fact performed less well than the sons and the daughters of the non-rich and therefore failed to win the scholarships? Is it because the rich and their children found it more convenient to self-finance their foreign education. Or is it because it is both? It is observed that increasingly, the Cambodian riches send their children to Australia for their foreign education.

These findings have significant implications for future economic inequality, the formation of an elite class in Cambodia and, as a consequence, the role of parents' income in contributing to their children's success. AAS and CGS disproportionately benefited the non-elite class in Cambodia. Given that obtaining education is a pathway to acquiring elite status, the scholarships certainly positively influenced class mobility in Cambodia and narrowed the gaps between the haves and the have-nots. The findings also imply that parents' income and, for that matter class, does not seem to determine who would be selected for AAS and CGS scholarships.

#### **3.3.3.2. Why were the scholars largely from a few urban centres?**

The fact that Australian and Chinese scholars were similarly concentrated in a few economic centres such as Phnom Penh, Kampong Cham and Kandal may be explained by the absence of deliberate policies to support applicants who were originally born and grew up in remote and rural areas. AAS has the policies to support applicants who are female, disabled and predominantly working in the provinces. Nevertheless, it does not deliberately target applicants who was born and raised in the provinces. Similarly, CGS does not have any preferential treatments for applicants from provinces.

Furthermore, the analysis implied that AAS office in Phnom Penh and MoEYS have failed to publicize the two scholarships. The AAS office raised awareness of AAS among potential applicants via weekly radio call-in programs, newspapers, social media and workshops across Cambodia. To a lesser extent, MoEYS instructed its agencies at the provincial levels to announce the CGS.



Moreover, the result reconfirmed the economic inequalities across Cambodian cities and provinces. The fact that Australian and Chinese scholarship recipients were largely from Phnom Penh, Kampong Cham and Kandal, the three major economic centres in Cambodia, were telling. That being said, in the absence of deliberate policies from the Australian, Cambodian and Chinese governments, it is logical that the Australian and Chinese scholars tended to be from these centres: given the educational and other economic resources in these centres, applicants from these centres are more able and better informed and prepared than others from other areas. Nevertheless, it is unclear why Takeo, a poorer province relative to Battambang city, Siem Reap city and Sihanoukville, produced more successful AAS and CGS applicants. To put it in other words, while more economically successful regions overwhelmingly benefited more from the scholarships, Takeo, Battambang, Siem Reap and Sihanoukville and, to some extent, Banteay Meanchey, are clearly the exceptions. The data indicated that, with a few exceptions, the scholarships are most likely to exacerbate economic inequalities in Cambodia, if other corrective policies are not put in place.

#### **3.3.3.3. Why did the scholarships not excessively benefit the elite students?**

The analysis of Australian and Chinese scholars' academic history revealed counter intuitively that Australian and Chinese scholars did not excessively benefit the brightest students and students from the elite educational institutions in Cambodia. It was also surprising however that Australian and Chinese scholars performed equally well at the

last universities, or in other words, that there was no significant difference between Australian and Chinese scholars' past academic performance. Because AAS is considered more prestigious among Cambodian students and private universities in Cambodia are commonly seen as more reputable than public universities, it would be logical to hypothesize that Australian scholars were more academically accomplished than Chinese scholars and tended to be more from private universities than public universities.

However, this is not what the data showed. The result may be explained by the fact that academic performance at the last universities is not the only or key selection criterion. Again, as described in Chapter 1, for AAS, in addition prior academic performance, the other criteria included personal qualities, professional experiences, potential contributions to the development of their home country, and English language proficiency. For CGS, the only factor that is counted is how well the applicants did during the written tests, which include tests in English language proficiency and general knowledge (and math in the case of applicants for undergraduate scholarships). Prior academic performance did not count. Furthermore, given that CGS does not set age limit nor require professional work experiences, it is highly likely that some of the best and brightest Cambodian students may choose to apply for Chinese scholarships as soon as they become available.

Moreover, that the majority of Australian and Chinese scholars were from a few public universities is somewhat surprising. Public universities in Cambodia tend to be considered less well-known than private universities such as Panhasastra University of Cambodia and Norton University because of the poor performance of their academic

staff. Academic staff at the public universities, except for those at the Royal University of Phnom Penh's Institute of Foreign Languages, are poorly paid and therefore do not have real incentives to teach and research. This research suggests that Cambodian public universities receive less recognition than they deserve. Furthermore, it is even more surprising that few Australian and Chinese scholars were from foreign universities, despite the fact that hundreds of Cambodian students travel on scholarships and private funding to foreign countries such as Australia, the United States of America, Japan, China, Russia, Malaysia, Vietnam, Singapore, Thailand and Laos for their high school and undergraduate studies.

#### **3.3.3.4. Why were Chinese scholarships not more political than Australian scholarships?**

Given our prior understanding of the Chinese aid, one would expect that the CPP-led government would distribute Chinese scholarships to the CPP's supporters. However, this is not what the data showed. Previous analyses indicated that first, Chinese scholars were less likely than Australian scholars to be public servant, and the same is also true for their parents. Again, public servants are generally better connected with the ruling elites than businesspersons. Second, it was also found that Australian and Chinese scholars appeared to have similar prior academic performance. The result implied that the selections of the two scholarships are similarly based on merit rather than on political favors. Finally, the research data also showed that few Australian and Chinese scholars belonged to groups, associations and societies. Furthermore, fewer Australian and Chinese scholars were

members of Union Youth Federation of Cambodia (UYFC), an active and powerful youth wing of the CPP.

These results suggested that both AAS and CGS scholarships appeared free from politicization or patronage-politics. In other words, the CPP did not distribute the scholarships to its supporters. For the Australian scholarships, this is not very surprising because the selection of AAS scholars is almost entirely under the management of the AAS office and the Australian Embassy in Phnom Penh. Nevertheless, given that the Cambodian Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports oversees the selection of CGS scholars, the result is of much more of a surprise. The result may be explicable in terms of the fact that the selection process of the two scholarships seems to be meritocratic.

### **3.3.3. What else explains the similarities?**

Differences in Cambodian scholars' attitude also explain the similarities. Some Cambodian students adopt a "first come, first served" policy in relation to their search for a scholarship. These scholars do not seem to care much about the differences between Australian and Chinese scholarships or between these two scholarships and other scholarships. They would apply for whatever scholarships available. However, other scholars are very selective in their search for a scholarship. They would wait and prepare themselves for the scholarships that they prefer. These differences in attitude result in a situation in which both scholarships seem to be competing for the same pool of Cambodian scholars with similar social background and academic qualifications. However, these different attitudes may give China a competitive advantage over time,

given the growing number of Chinese scholarships and their availability at an earlier age. To put it in other words, Chinese scholarships would tend to attract the best and brightest young Cambodian students over time and leave the second best and less bright Cambodian students to Australian scholarships.

### **3.4. Conclusion**

This chapter sought to understand the differences between OECD and Chinese aid. It did so by comparing Australian and Chinese scholarships to Cambodia and their scholars. It was found that the two scholarships and their scholars were both similar and different in many ways. On the one hand, contrary to the general perceptions of OECD and Chinese aid, and what is known about how Australian and Chinese scholarships were administered, it was found that first, Australian scholarships were neither focused more on governance, nor Chinese scholarships more on growth. In fact, Chinese scholarships were focused more on growth, but both scholarships had equal focus on governance. Second, Australian scholarships were neither more meritocratic in their selections, nor Chinese scholarships more political. In fact, both groups of scholars seemed to have similar academic background and a similar lack of political connection with Cambodian ruling party. However, it appeared that Chinese selection process seemed to be rather more meritocratic and less discretionary than the Australian one: it is basically based on exam rather than assessments of leadership and potential. Third, Australian scholarships were not more targeted at private sector than Chinese scholarships. In fact, the opposite seems true, partly because China, unlike Australia, has no government quota. Finally,

both groups of scholars seemed to have similar social backgrounds, more middle-class than the rich. The similarities can be expounded by the two scholarships' application of rigorous, transparent and fair selection processes and criteria and Cambodian students' different attitudes toward their search for a scholarship.

On the other hand, there are some differences. Chinese scholars were more likely to be male, tended to be younger, stayed in China longer, were more likely to study undergraduate courses in China, were more likely to be studying rather than working when selected, were less likely to work for public sector, were less exposed to foreign countries, were less likely to return to the former workplace and were more likely to aspire to be a businessperson in the future. These differences are explicable in terms of a number of key policy contrasts (e.g. Australia only offers postgraduate scholarships).

This research found unexpected results. It is unexpected in that the results defy the conventional thinking about Chinese and Australian aid. The results are however consistent with the idea that Chinese aid today is similar to OECD aid of the 1950s, which stressed filling the “three gaps” of foreign exchange, capital, and skills.

In conclusion, Australian and Chinese scholarships and their scholars were both different and similar. However, to what extent these differences and similarities influence their perceptions of the academic and life experiences in Australia and China and their political attitudes is the subject of Chapter 5, Chapter 6 and Chapter 7.

## **Chapter 7: Australian Scholarships and Influences**

### **7. Introduction**

Chapter 6 explored the consequences of Chinese scholarships on Cambodian scholars' political attitudes. The chapter found that Chinese scholarships influenced Cambodian scholars' political attitudes in ways that Cambodian scholars became significantly more supportive of authoritarianism, somewhat more in favour of government ownerships of businesses and industries and significantly more supportive of China and its development model. However, the scholarships had little influence on Cambodian scholars' attitude toward corruption. This chapter examines the influence of Australian scholarships on Cambodian scholars' political attitudes. Given what we know about Australian aid and culture, I argue that Australian scholarships have the potentials to create a new generation of Cambodian democratic elites.

The rest of this chapter is organized as follows. Section 7.1 and 7.2 recap research question, research methodologies and methods. Section 7.3 presents the quantitative and qualitative analyses of the effects of the Australian scholarships on Cambodian scholars' political attitudes. Section 7.4 discusses the findings found in this chapter against those found in chapter 6. Section 7.5 concludes the chapter.

## **7.1. Research question and hypotheses**

This chapter seeks to answer the complex question of the influence of Australian scholarships have on Cambodian students' political attitudes? In contrast to the four hypotheses in chapter 4, the following four hypotheses were proposed, based on what was known about Australian aid, Australia and its educational system (see section x in chapter 2 for details):

- (1) Australian scholarships significantly increase Cambodian scholars' support for democracy in Cambodia.
- (2) Australian scholarships significantly decrease Cambodian scholars' tolerance of corruption in Cambodia.
- (3) Australian scholars are significantly less supportive of the role of the state in the economy as a consequence of Australian scholarships. And
- (4) Australian scholarships significantly increase Cambodian scholars' support for the Australian development model.

## **7.2. Research methodologies and methods**

This section describes research designs, research methods, research participants and analytical tools.



### 7.2.1. Research designs

As in chapter 4, I used a before-and-after with pre-measurement, natural experiment without pre-measurement and semi-structured, in-depth qualitative interviews research designs to answer the research question (For a detailed description and explanation for the research designs, see chapter 6).

Again, the before- and after- with pre-measurement research design includes the following steps:

1. Cambodian and Australian governments selected research participants.
2. I measured political attitudes of research participants before they left for Australia.
3. Research participants undertook their scholarship in Australia.
4. I measured political attitudes of research participants again after one year.

If the research participants changed their political attitudes between the first and second measurements, I ascribed this difference to the experience of the scholarships.

The natural experiment without pre-measurement includes the following steps:

1. The Cambodian and Australia governments selected research participants in the treatment and control groups.
2. The research participants in the treatment groups undertook their scholarship in

Australia.

3. I measured political attitudes of research participants in the treatment group after they had undertaken their study for one year in Australia. At the same time, I also measured the attitudes of the research participants in the control group before they left for Australia.

I compared the political attitudes of the research participants in the treatment and control groups, and I ascribe this difference to the presence of the scholarships.

Again, both the before-and-after and natural experiment without pre-measurement research designs used the same standardized questionnaires. The survey questions were adapted from Asian Barometer Surveys and World Values Survey. (For the complete survey questions, please see appendix C.)

I also utilized semi-structured interviews with Cambodian scholars to complement the two research designs above. The face-to-face and telephone semi-structured interviews with Cambodian scholars are to gauge more qualitative data with regards to the impact, or the lack thereof, of the scholarships on individual scholars' political attitudes and substantiate the quantitative data.

Following a process very similar to those used with Cambodian scholars studying in China, I utilized the following semi-structured, in-depth qualitative interviews. The interviews centered on these questions.

- A. Tell me about your thinking on the following subjects. I want to know first what you think about the topic and then whether your life in Australia has influenced your thoughts on each of these statements:
1. Cambodia should aspire to be a democracy.
  2. Corruption is a big obstacle to development in Cambodia.”
  3. The government should be very involved in the economy.”
- B. Tell me about your thinking on these countries as models for Cambodia. I want to know first what you think about them and then whether your life in Australia has influenced your thinking in relation to the suitability of these countries as models for Cambodia.
1. Australia
  2. China
  3. Singapore
  4. United States

### **7.2.2. Research methods and research participants**

Surveys and face-to-face and telephone qualitative interviews were employed to collect the data. Surveys were used for both the before and after and natural experiment without pre-measurement research designs.

Two groups of Cambodian scholars were the research participants for the both the before-and-after and natural experiment without pre-measurement research designs. In the before-and-after research design, Cambodian scholars of 2016 and 2017 academic years were the research participants. An online survey was sent to 11 (of the 45 Cambodian scholars) of the 2016 intake in early June 2016, and again to 23 (of 50 Cambodian scholars) of the 2017 intake in early January 2017, a few weeks before they were about to leave for Australia for their studies. Data collected from them was constituted the baseline data. Of the 34 Cambodian scholars, 32 responded and completed the survey. The same group of scholars were contacted and surveyed again after they had been in Australia for one year. Again, 32 Cambodian scholars completed the survey.

For the natural experiment without pre-measurement research design, post-departure Cambodian scholars of the 2016 and 2017 intakes and pre-departure Cambodian scholars of 2017 and 2018 intakes were the research participants. The same online survey was sent to 50 Cambodian scholars of 2017 and 2018 intakes via Facebook messenger, when the Cambodian scholars of the 2016 and 2017 intakes were surveyed for the second time. These 50 Cambodian scholars had won their Australian scholarships in 2017 and 2018, were about to leave for Australia at the time of the survey and were now the control group. 35 Cambodian scholars responded and completed the survey.

Semi-structured, face-to-face and telephone in-depth interviews were utilized to collect qualitative data. I employed stratified and convenient sampling methods to select the interviewees. The research participants were selected in ways that represented different

geographic locations in Australia, reputations of the Australian universities, major studies and gender. Furthermore, while Cambodian scholars who had repeatedly participated in the surveys were specifically targeted, they were also selected based on their availability and willingness to participate in the interviews. However, during my fieldwork, I also interviewed a few Cambodian scholars who had not participated in my surveys, but were willing to talk with me on short notice.

15 Cambodian scholars were interviewed from early January to the end of February 2018. Of the 15 Cambodian scholars, 7 were females and the rest are males. All were doing their Masters degree from a range of universities and studying various subjects from agriculture, environment, banking and finance to public policy. 7 were from Canberra, 4 from Melbourne and 4 from Adelaide. Canberra, Melbourne and Adelaide were selected because they had received significant numbers of Cambodian students and provided different lifestyle, economic conditions and climates. Except for one interview, all interviews were one-to-one meeting. 7 interviews were conducted face to face. The rest were telephone interviews. The interviews lasted on average 45 minutes. All interviewees gave their answers spontaneously as they were interviewed. The interviews were conducted in Khmer, and all were audio recorded. The recorded data were all transcribed and translated into English. Again, in most cases, the interviewees' original views were preserved and translated verbatim. In a few instances, when they were reorganized to make them more coherent, their original meanings remained intact.

### **7.3. Australian scholarships and influences**

This section reports the quantitative and qualitative analyses of the one-year impact of Australian scholarships on Cambodian scholars' political attitudes. These attitudes included support for democracy, the reduction of corruption, the role of the state in the economy, and the Australian development model. Two different data sets were analyzed, given the weaknesses inherent in the research designs (see section 4.2 for details). These data sets were drawn from the before-and-after and the natural experiment without pre-measurement research designs. Given that the attrition and replacement rates in the before-and-after research design were extremely low, a panel data set was not necessary. The first data set is drawn from the before-and-after research design and included all Cambodian scholars who participated in either the first round of the survey or the second round of survey, or both, as a unit of analysis. The last data set was extracted from the natural experiment without pre-measurement research design. The analyses of the three data sets were followed by the qualitative analyses. As discussed in the research designs section of this chapter, the analyses of the three data sets together with those of the qualitative data were utilized to generate more robust results.

#### **7.3.1. Australian scholarships and attitudes toward democracy**

This sub-section reports the quantitative and qualitative analyses of the one-year effect of the Australian scholarships on Cambodian scholars' attitudes toward democracy. Given what is known about Australian aid, Australia and its educational system (see again section x of chapter 2 for details), it was hypothesized that Australian scholarships should

have significantly increased Cambodian scholars' support for democracy in Cambodia. In this research, again, in the surveys, to measure the scholars' support for democracy over time, the scholars were confronted with a number of survey questions on democracy (see appendix C for the list of questions). The questions were adapted from the Asian Barometer Survey. One of the questions was to ask the scholars to reveal their preference for a form of government most suitable for Cambodia. It is worth reiterating that although this research seeks to track the scholars' attitude toward democracy over time, it does not attempt to measure how much the scholars understand about democracy. Nevertheless, a few questions to measure the scholars' understanding of democratic concept were, in fact, also included in the questionnaires. The analyses that follow take the scholars' understanding of democracy for granted. Therefore, the analyses loosely attempt to measure how much Cambodian scholars support democracy, regardless of what meaning they attach to the concept of democracy. However, given the scholars filled in the online surveys, they were given plenty of time to deliberate on the questions and their responses.

Likewise, in the qualitative interviews, to measure their support for democracy and how much Australian scholarships influence their attitudes, Cambodian scholars were approached via a context statement: Tell me about your thinking on this subject. I want to know, first, what you think about the topic and then whether or not your life in Australia has influenced your thoughts on this topic:

1. "Cambodia should aspire to be a democracy."

#### *7.3.1.1. Quantitative analyses*

Hypothesis 1: Australian scholarships significantly increase Cambodian scholars' support for democracy in Cambodia.

Null hypothesis 1: Australian scholarships do not significantly increase Cambodian scholars' support for democracy in Cambodia.



**Table 7.1. Support for democracy**

			Which of these three statements is closest to your own opinion?				Total	Person Chi-S		
			STATEMENT 1: Democracy is preferable to any other kind of government.	STATEMENT 2: In some circumstances, a non-democratic government can be preferable.	STATEMENT 3: For someone like me, it doesn't matter what kind of government we have.	Don't know		Value	Df	A Si
d	2016 Scholars Pre-departure	Count	16	10	1	2	29	5.167	3	
		%	55.2%	34.5%	3.4%	6.9%	100.0%			
	2016 Scholars Post-departure	Count	20	4	3	5	32			
		%	62.5%	12.5%	9.4%	15.6%	100.0%			
	% Change		7.3%	-22.0%	6.0%	8.7%	0.0%			
t ol	2017 Scholars Pre-departure	Count	18	13	1	1	33	8.523	3	
		%	54.5%	39.4%	3.0%	3.0%	100.0%			
	2016 Scholars Post-departure	Count	20	4	3	5	32			
		%	62.5%	12.5%	9.4%	15.6%	100.0%			
	% Change		8.0%	-26.9%	6.4%	12.6%	0.0%			

The two analyses showed contradictory results. The before-and-after analysis seemed to reject the hypothesis (Person Chi2 = 5.167; Pr = .160 > .05). The support for democracy had been increased, but not significantly. However, the treatment-and-control group analysis accepted it (Person Chi2 = 8.523; Pr = .036 < .05): Cambodian scholars had significantly increased their support for democracy after they had stayed in Australia for one year. Nevertheless, both analyses consistently showed that that Cambodian scholars tended to become less supportive of a non-democratic government but also appeared more pragmatic and reluctant to express their political views. It is not clear why Cambodian scholars became more indifferent about the form of government best suitable for Cambodia after they had been in Australia for one year. However, perhaps they became more reluctant to reveal their preference for different political regimes, because they were concerned about their personal security after they return to Cambodia. The Cambodian government has been cracking down on its political opponents and dissenting views, especially after the June 2017 local government election. Overall, the analyses indicated support for democracy had been rising. Nevertheless, given the inability of the research designs to attribute the rise in support to the presence of Australian scholarships, the qualitative analysis below is necessary to add more insights and to substantiate the quantitative analyses.

#### *7.3.1.2. Qualitative analysis*

The qualitative analysis largely confirmed the quantitative analyses in the preceding section. In principle, most Cambodian scholars believed that Cambodia should aspire to be a democracy; however, they were also doubtful if the country could and should be a

[liberal] democracy now. Some scholars also believed that other forms of government such as authoritarianism could also be an alternative to democracy in the short to medium terms, provided that the government had good leaders. Furthermore, while very few scholars believed that democracy was the only alternative, very few also believed that Cambodia should follow authoritarianism. The analysis however indicated that Australian scholarships had a limited influence on Cambodian scholars' thinking on democracy.

First, many Cambodian scholars believed that Cambodia should be a democracy at the end of the day. However, only some of them believed that democracy was the most suitable form of government for Cambodians in all circumstances or, to put it in other words, that democracy is the only preferred possibility. Cambodian scholars cited a range of freedoms as the key virtue of democracy. For instance, AS8 explained as follows:

Cambodia is not yet a democracy. Freedom of expression is almost zero. I'm afraid to express myself; to express my true feeling. I can't criticize individual leaders. There are examples where people got killed when they expressed their opinions. There are lots of examples. I am traumatized. I think the view is correct. It is in line with my thoughts. We should strengthen freedom of expression. Take America as an example, when the new president [Trump] got elected, people who disliked the new president can draw cartoons to mock him. In Cambodia, we can't do that. Our leaders would arrest or handcuff anyone who dares to do that without thinking whether it is right or wrong. The nationalists are traumatized, dispirited.

AS14 agreed and argued that democracy was good in all circumstances. Good leaders should not be used as pretext for postponing democratization:

Democracy has many meanings. For me, a country should follow democracy, because in a democracy, there is rule of law and freedom for the people. This is what we want for our country. Democracy is necessary even if Cambodia has good leaders. If the leaders love the country, they cannot discard democracy. Because if they love the country, they should think of the collective, social benefits derived from democracy. So for me, no matter how good a leader is, democracy is more important than the leader. The good leaders cannot be too dictatorial. They must listen to the views of others and their people. And only democracy can ensure that the voice of the people can be heard.

AS10 concurred and suggested that democracy was the best form of government despite the fact that Cambodians were not very well educated.

It is necessary to have a democracy. It fits with Cambodia. Other regimes are not very suitable for us. Communism is not good for Cambodia. There is no incentive. In communism, everything is common. People are lazy because of the lack of incentives. Cambodia should aspire to be a democracy despite the fact that Cambodians are not very well educated. The idea that we should postpone democratization in Cambodia is just a pretext. If we don't do it now, when should we do it?

AS12 agreed. He explained at some length as follows:

Cambodia should aspire to be a democracy. Democracy gives rights and power to the people. I don't like dictatorship, because it limits people's rights. But sometimes, it is difficult to say that we should follow American or Australian democracy. Maybe, it is not right, because our people are different from their people. American democracy has developed over a long time. So its elections are effective. People should have the rights to vote and there should be a free media. Democracy is in disadvantage when people who are not very well educated cannot make rational choices. They can choose wrong leaders. But even then, democracy is still more preferable. We should follow democracy while also educating the people.

AS7 also believed that democracy was good for Cambodia. Nevertheless, he was not very optimistic that Cambodian democracy would mature in the short to medium term.

We should aspire to be a democracy. I don't study a lot about other types of political regimes, but I grew up in an environment in which democracy is a commonly mentioned word. Maybe, I am biased towards democracy. I also see other countries' experiences, whether big or small where the benefits are more widely and equitably spread among their citizens. But I am not optimistic that in this transitional period, we can transform Cambodia into a democracy right away.

It takes time and resources, both human resources and financial resources. But as a goal, we should aspire to be a democracy. As long as we are committed, it is good, and opposition to democratic progress is not good. Communism, according to my reading is not very bad. But according to real life experiences, communism in practice is bad. I don't say it is bad in theory. But according to experiences, when countries change regimes, millions of lives are lost during the struggle.

Second, the analysis suggested that Cambodian scholars who supported democratic processes were not convinced that Cambodia was ready for a Western style liberal democracy in the short to medium terms. Their opinions were based on the current context in Cambodia. This context included a large proportion of Cambodians being poorly educated and having polarized domestic politics. Furthermore, they believed that the form of government best suited to the country's current situation was the one in which the government and its leaders were benevolent, and certain freedoms were restricted. AS2 explained in great length as follows:

Democracy is a big concept. If we were to measure it on a scale from one to ten, I don't think Cambodia should aspire to be ten, but I want Cambodia to be more open to the freedom of the speech and free and fair elections. But because I don't follow politics and leaders closely, I don't have much to say. I want Cambodia to follow democracy, even if we have a strong leader that develops the country: I want to give an opportunity to other leaders to lead the country. If one leader is not good, we can vote him or her out in the next election. If we are too democratic

(level 10), we will become chaotic. We cannot consult the people all the time; sometimes, we need to take an authoritarian approach to decision making. Some decisions need opinions from the people. For example, on lesbian marriage, we need opinions from the people, because it affects their lives directly. But if we need to sign a trade deal with a foreign country, we don't need to consult the people whether we should sign the deal. But people should be able to express their opinions even if they are not consulted.

AS3 agreed and went on to say that a [liberal] democracy was not right for Cambodia now. He argued as follows:

Hmmm... It depends. Now we are following democracy. But to be a fully democratic country, we need certain elements to support it. But now, we have lots of issues: poverty, inequality, health problems and the like. For me, now, what we need is a stronger role to be taken by the government. So whether it is a liberal democracy or illiberal democracy is not important. The most important thing is that we are going in the right direction: that is, the government is playing the right roles in strengthening education, reducing poverty to a low level, but not leaving a lot of people around the poverty line. It is difficult to answer. Although at the end of the day, we want to be a liberal democracy, we don't necessarily want it now. We cannot be a fully democratic country now because other countries will endanger our country. For example, if they create NGOs or labor unions in the country, they might make unrealistic demands for higher wages. Cambodians are

not very educated; they will side with these NGOs or labor unions, creating instability and dampening the country's industrial competitiveness. We should become a democratic country, but we do need time to deal with current issues.

AS4 concurred:

I think whether Cambodia should or should not be a democracy should be based on our actual situation. First, I want to know who is the leader and how educated he is. If we have a leader like Lee Kuan Yew, I think we should not be too biased toward democracy. Because when we have many people with diverse views, there are problems. There is a saying: too many people spoil the cook. If we have too many uneducated people, how can they listen to each other? So we need to ask about the leader. If we have good, competent leaders, we should not be too fixated on the idea of democracy. When I read and listen to the ways Lee Kuan Yew led Singapore, I thought his approach was sound. Even if he was a little strict, but in a short time, he was in control of the country and led Singapore to success. So I think, Cambodia cannot find stability these days because the leaders want to listen to the people and think that people are the big boss. We should not be too fixated on democracy, autocracy or any leaders. We should look at and assess the real situation and decide which regime is good for the country.

Likewise, AS5 supported many of these ideas:



Democracy in Cambodia has limits. But for a country to be a (full) democracy, it requires the people to participate in society and politics. But our people have limited knowledge (education) and the media does not play its role in providing factual information. So the people, with a weak media, cannot fruitfully participate in society. Cambodian youth has potential and is a large percentage of the population. But many Cambodian elders have a limited education. For me, I don't fully understand the meaning of democracy, but the view that Cambodia should be a (full) democracy is not very good. Cambodians have a limited potential to participate in the country's politics. As you know, there are many political parties quarrelling with each other. So if we are too free to mobilize to protest, it becomes chaotic. It is pointless. Freedoms of movement, assembly and association are basic rights in a democracy. For these rights, I think if we restrict them a bit, it would be good also. We cannot follow Western countries. They have advanced technologies and development. Their people are well educated. They have almost everything; so their democracy is progressing. Some countries don't need democracy; they can be developed if they have good leaders.

As AS5 suggested, a few Cambodian scholars believed that while democracy is a good form of government, they also believed that in some conditions, a non-democratic government could be preferable. For example, AS9 said:

We are following democracy now, but it is not a real democracy. If we are not a real democracy, it is better to be a communist country. If the government is

clever, govern like China. I support this. Why? All the people need to do is to live a simple life. If the government can protect the country's territorial integrity, national interests and natural resources and create jobs and employment, I would support a communist government. Even if I am being educated in a democratic country, sometimes, I think of the national interest, people's interests and the economy. If a communist government can develop the country and create no chaos, I think it is okay to follow communism. If they can be like China, it is good. Westerners recognize China. But if they were governing like North Korea, it would be a big loss for the country.

AS13 concurred:

I think that for Cambodians and Cambodian culture, following democracy is difficult. Communism is good given our political situation now. Now, we are democracy in cover, but in practice, we are communist. It is challenging for us now when we are neither a democracy nor a communist state. We cannot develop ourselves. Why? It doesn't mean that the government doesn't want to develop the country, but for the political leaders and political parties, what is more important for them is their internal issues. If the government moved towards democracy, the government and the ruling party would be committing suicide. So the ruling party has to think hard. About corruption, it is not that the government doesn't want to tackle it, but it cannot, because corruption is systematic; it has become a network. For example, if Samdach Hun Sen wants to arrest a corrupt Okhna, where do he

and his party get the money from to support the party and the next election campaign? You know how much each commune spends to promote the party during the local election? If the party enforces the anti-corruption law on its subordinates, then how can its subordinates have money to support the party? Or even worse, the subordinates may rebel against the party. This is disastrous for the party. The government would collapse [commit suicide]. The government needs to think about itself and its supporters. If we move to communism, they don't have to think about these issues. The subordinates are all below them, would have to follow them, and cannot rebel against them. In that way, we can make quick progress. And some people come to demonstrations to collect money from the organizers. There are some organizations that distribute money to people who attend demonstrations. Like some factory workers, they demonstrate for the right causes, but sometimes, their motivations are unreasonable, and this causes economic slowdown. Investors look at Cambodia this way: if there are too many demonstrations, they will avoid Cambodia as an investment destination. Workers don't understand this. They demonstrate because some unions push them. If they have good reasons to take action, they can do it. Like in Australia, during Australia Day, demonstrators came to protest. But the police said, the protest had to be peaceful, if it was not, they wouldn't tolerate it. So protestors protested peacefully in the place allowed for by the police. Here both protestors and the police respect the law. So in summary, given the condition of Cambodia and the people's low knowledge, if we move to communism, there will be more benefits

for the country. Now, we are caught between democracy and communism. For me, being in the middle is not good.

The analysis also found that Australian scholarships had a limited influence. Most Cambodian scholars suggested that their time in Australia had a little influence on their attitudes toward democracy, but was helpful in reinforcing their prior beliefs about the political system most suitable for Cambodia. This is so because most Cambodian scholars had already been exposed to foreign countries and their cultures through prior academic exchanges and/or study trips. AS1 said, “I think being in Australia is very helpful for my understanding of democracy in practice. It is affecting my thinking. I have become more confident about democracy because I see democracy with my own eyes; democracy in action.” AS2 agreed: “Being here is influencing me to some extent. It helps me to think more critically, because I see what is happening in Australia.”

AS7 supported these ideas:

My prior thinking based on my prior reading and listening is confirmed when I’m here. Yes, Australia does exactly what was written in the books about what democracy is. I see that most democracies are making progress. But we cannot copy and paste democracy here to Cambodia. Contextualization is important.

AS8 explained:

I think yes, but because I am used to working with and being exposed to Westerners and going to foreign [Western] countries on a scholarship, my thinking has been changed for a long time. My life in Australia allows me to further interact and exposes me to Australia and allows me to learn even more about Australia and democracy. For example, Australia is a developed country. I'm not too sure how democratic Australia is, because I cannot measure it, but if compared with Cambodia, Australia is far ahead of us in term of democracy. But I think my experience changes me. I have become more supportive of democracy. I see that Australia is developed and I want Cambodia to be as developed as Australia. Australia is very good at law enforcement, like road traffic law enforcement. A fine is fine, regardless of who the violators are. In sum, I see that a country with democracy, with freedom of expression, is developed. I'm thinking how and what I can do so that Cambodia is developed and has more respect for human rights.

On the other hand, some Cambodian scholars said that their Australian scholarships did not change them at all. AS11 said: "I think my time in here does not influence my thinking at all. Because, before, I came here, I also took field visits to China and other countries. So I understood what to expect. I can compare democracy and communism." AS12 agreed: "There is no impact on me. I always think that democracy is good. I am not involved in Australian politics. I only see that Australia has more freedoms and rights and development than our country. I always believed in democracy."

AS15 concurred:

My view has not changed. Maybe, it is because I study economics, or because I have been to France already. But France is not really a democracy; it's more like a social democracy. Or maybe of my past backgrounds, I used to work with foreigners (Westerners) and was exposed to the idea of democracy.

To sum up, the qualitative analysis suggested that most Cambodian scholars supported democracy but that Australian scholarships seemed to have limited influence on them. The analysis added a few other insights. Democratization in Cambodia is dependent on time and context: many Cambodian scholars were convinced that given the Cambodian context, it might not be the right time for the country to adopt democratic processes and ideals.

It was also observed that like Cambodian Chinese scholars, some Cambodian Australian scholars seemed to display a limited understanding of democracy as a political concept. They also appeared to misunderstand communism. Communism was equated with authoritarianism. The lack of understandings of the two concepts is understandable given that none of them majors in political science and that media in Cambodia, for example *Radio Free Asia*, often label the Cambodian government and the Chinese government, for that matter, as communist governments. That being said, it was inferred that when Cambodian scholars mentioned communism, they meant a non-democratic or one-party state regime. They did not really understand communism.

Furthermore, it became apparent that most Cambodian scholars' views on political regimes and the influence of scholarships on their views were uniform across geographic locations, fields of study, and age. That is, the range of views and the effect of the scholarships on their perceptions seemed similar among Cambodian scholars in Canberra, Melbourne and Adelaide; and among those who study public policy, agriculture and environment and those aged 26 and 35. This seems to suggest that Australian geographical location has no impact on the scholars' thinking, nor have the fields of study such as public policy, which are normally laden with democracy and human rights related theories and concepts. However, one major exception was found: female scholars tended to be more in favor of democracy and thought that democracy was the right form of government in all circumstances. It is unclear why this is so and, although this is of some significance, it is outside the scope of this research. However, again, when it comes to the magnitudes of the influences, the scholarships did nothing but to reinforce their prior support for democracy.

Overall, both qualitative and quantitative analyses generated quite consistent results. The analyses are quite consistent in that while the qualitative analysis supported the before-and-after analysis, they tended to contradict the treatment-and-control-group analysis. The latter analysis found a significant influence of Australian scholarships on Cambodian scholars, while the former two analyses found weak influence. However, given that the result from the treatment-and-control-group analysis is not robust, overall, it could be

concluded that Australian scholarships appeared to have a limited influence on scholars' perceptions of the relevance of democracy for their country.

### **7.3.2. Australian scholarships and attitude toward corruption**

This sub-section reports the quantitative and qualitative analyses of the one-year causal effects of Australian scholarships on Cambodian scholars' attitudes to corruption. Given what is known about Australian aid, Australia and its educational system (see again section x of chapter 2 for details), it was hypothesized that Australian scholarships should have significantly increased Cambodian scholars' support for reducing corruption in Cambodia. In this research, in the surveys to measure the scholars' support for combating corruption over time, the scholars were confronted with a number of survey questions on corruption (see appendix C for the list of questions). One of the questions asked the scholars to reveal how important it was to reduce corruption in Cambodia. It is worth remembering that although this research seeks to track the scholars' attitude toward corruption over time, it does not attempt to measure how much the scholars understand about corruption. Therefore, the analyses that follow take the scholars' understanding of corruption as a given. That being said, the analyses loosely attempt to measure how much importance Cambodian scholars attach to combating corruption in their country, regardless of how they define the concept. However, again, given the scholars filled in the online surveys, they were given plenty of time to deliberate on the questions and their options.



Likewise, in the qualitative interviews, to measure their support for reducing corruption and how much Australian scholarships influenced their attitudes, Cambodian scholars were approached this way: Tell me about your thinking on this subject. I want to know first what you think about the topic and then whether your life in Australia has influenced your thoughts on this topic.

1. “Corruption is a big obstacle to development in Cambodia.”

#### *7.3.2.1. Quantitative analyses*

Hypothesis 3: Australian scholarships significantly decrease Cambodian scholars’ tolerance toward corruption in Cambodia.

Null hypothesis 3: Australian scholarships do not significantly decrease Cambodian scholars’ tolerance toward corruption in Cambodia.

**Table 7.2: Support for combating corruption**

			How important a priority should it be for Cambodia to reduce corruption?		Total	Person Chi-Square		
			Very important	Fairly important		Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Before and after analysis	2016 Scholars Pre-departure	Count	29	1	30	0.002	1	0.963
		%	96.7%	3.3%	100.0%			
	2016 Scholars Post-departure	Count	31	1	32			
		%	96.9%	3.1%	100.0%			
	% Change		0.2%	-0.2%	0.0%			
Treatment and control group analysis	2017 Scholars Pre-departure	Count	31	2	33	0.318	1	0.573
		%	93.9%	6.1%	100.0%			
	2016 Scholars Post-departure	Count	31	1	32			
		%	96.9%	3.1%	100.0%			
	% Change		3.0%	-3.0%	0.0%			

The two analyses rejected the hypothesis. The Cambodian scholars had not become significantly more intolerant of corruption (Person Chi2 = .002; Pr = .963 > .05 for the before and after analysis and Person Chi2 = .0318; Pr = .573 > .05 for the treatment and control group analysis). In fact, Cambodian scholars seemed to be somewhat less tolerant of corruption after they had been in Australia for one year. The analyses above however also showed that the overwhelming majority of Cambodian scholars believed that combating corruption was a top priority for Cambodia. Nevertheless, again, given the problems of attribution in the research designs, it was not possible to definitively attribute the change in Cambodian scholars' attitude to the presence of Australian scholarships. Therefore, the qualitative analysis below aims to substantiate and add deeper insights into the quantitative analyses.

#### *7.3.2.2. Qualitative analysis*

The qualitative analysis largely validated the quantitative analyses above. It was found that almost all Cambodian scholars believed that corruption was a big obstacle to the development of Cambodia, while a few believed that corruption is an issue, but not the only issue that stifles development in the country. It was also found that again, Australian scholarships have done little to influence Cambodian scholars' views toward corruption other than to reinforce their prior beliefs.

First, corruption was seen as the major roadblock to development for a range of reasons. These included widening the gap between the corrupt rich and the uncorrupt poor,

creating social injustice, creating inefficiency in the government, and removing incentives for good performers. For example, AS1 argued that when there was corruption, there was no fairness. “It is good for those who are corrupt but very bad for those who are not and suffering. There is no justice in the corrupt courts. Corruption widens the gaps between the rich and the poor.” AS2 agreed, “Corruption makes the rich richer and richer and the poor poorer and poorer.” AS5 concurred. “Cambodian culture does not acknowledge the intellectual and is selfish. When looking at Cambodia, it is sad, very sad. Corruption is everywhere. Social injustice is everywhere. It is very sad.”

AS15 explained why corruption was bad for the education sector.

Eliminating corruption in the education sector is important, because we need human capital. Strong human resources help other sectors. But if students can bribe their teachers to get a high score, then it demotivates them to study hard. So we lose skilled human resources.

AS4 went on at some length to explain why corruption was toxic in Cambodia. She compared a corrupt country to a rotten table, which cannot last long. She further explained:

Look at Cambodian ministries. When we are poor, from the countryside, we have no support, and if we depend on our ability, we are not likely to succeed in a ministry. But the son or daughter of ministry leaders who have no experience and

competence can make rapid career progression and become our boss. This is one of the problems that hinder success. If they are corrupt and powerful, they will shut us up. We cannot say anything or change anything.

AS3 agreed. He explained that talented people chose to work for NGOs and the private sector and not for the government because there was so much corruption and nepotism in the government. He also compared a corrupt government to broken pit without a bottom. He confided:

When the expense and revenue system is broken, it is like a pit without its bottom. On the revenue side, if the government earns 100 but loses 50 to corruption, it loses its financial capacity to develop the country. On the expenditure side, because of corruption, the spending can be either too high or ineffective. Constructing a good quality road may cost about US\$200million, but due to corruption, the cost can be inflated to over US\$500million. We lose US\$300million that could have been used for building bridges and schools. Sometimes, the corrupt officials just build a poor quality road.

AS12 added: Whenever there is corruption, everything else is not effective. Governance, including rule of law and law enforcement, is not strong as a result. It negatively affects society and the economy. It discourages good direct foreign investment. So the end game is the underdevelopment of the country.

Second, a few scholars suggested that while corruption was a problem, it was not the only problem blocking development. AS8 put it this way: “Corruption is a big obstacle to development but it is not the only one factor. Lack of government participation in the economy, poor human resources and lack of democracy are the other factors.”

AS9 concurred by explaining that,

I think that it is only half right. Why? In China, the new president focuses on eliminating corruption. He killed about 20,000 corrupt officials who embezzled state revenues, created cronyism and stalled Chinese development. Because of corruption and cronyism, competent people cannot find employment in the government. But corruption is not the only problem. Political instability can also be an obstacle.

It was also found that Australian scholarships have not only reinforced but also somewhat increased Cambodian scholars’ critical thinking on corruption. AS3 said that being in Australia influenced his thinking: “My thinking patterns have changed now. I am more committed to reducing corruption and to improving productivity.” AS8 agreed. “In my daily life, I can see what an uncorrupt country is like. I see that everyone respects the rules and the officials. In Cambodia, people don’t respect the rules and the officials, because, for example, they can bribe the officials when they violate the traffic laws.” AS7 had similar views. “Being here shaped my thinking to some extent. I found that

everything here is transparent. We can access public information. The Australian system discourages people from engaging in corrupt practices.” AS12 also changed his views when he saw that Australian public servants did not demand under the table payments. “For public service fees in Cambodia, the public servants overcharge. But in Australia, no, there is no such overcharge. They charge according to the published fee.”

A few scholars also believed that their time in Australia broadened their understanding of corruption. AS4 understood that Cambodia and Australia have somewhat different forms of corruption. She explained:

Before I came here, I saw corruption in Cambodia. But when I came here, I saw that corruption also existed in Australia. I was like a frog in a well, when I was in Cambodia: I cannot see the outside world. But when I came here, I realized that corruption existed everywhere. Who says that developed country has no corruption? But their corruption is different from ours. For example, for international students, to work as a cleaner or an unskilled office worker, we need connections with the right people. I see that people with the right connections get jobs. But I observe one major difference: despite the connection, the people who are hired through networks must also be competent and able to do the job.

To sum up the qualitative analysis, almost all Cambodian scholars believed that it was a top priority to combat corruption in Cambodia. Cambodian scholars, both male and female, studying various fields of study from Canberra, Melbourne and Adelaide had

similar opinions about the urgency of reducing corruption. However, it was also observed that younger Cambodian scholars were more eager and more optimistic that corruption could be removed than their older fellows. This maybe partly because eradicating corruption in the country now may improve their working lives as they are still young and have a longer lifespan to benefit from an uncorrupt system and because they are more energetic than their older fellows who seem to have become more used to corruption and are more likely to accept the status quo.

Overall, the qualitative analysis validated the quantitative analyses. Most Cambodian scholars supported reducing corruption in Cambodia, but they also believed that Australian scholarships had a limited influence on them. This is so because most of them were mature and highly exposed to Western debates on corruption and corruption itself before they pursued their studies in Australia.

### **7.3.3. Australian scholarships and attitudes toward the role of the state in the economy**

This sub-section reports the quantitative and qualitative analyses of the one-year impact of Australian scholarships on Cambodian scholars' attitudes to the role of the state in the economy. Given what is known about Australian aid, Australia and its educational system (see again section x of chapter 2 for details), it was hypothesized that Australian scholarships should have significantly decreased Cambodian scholars' support for the role of the state in the economy. In this research, in the surveys, to measure the scholars'



support for the role of the state in the economy over time, the scholars were confronted with a number of survey questions on the government ownership of businesses and industries. (See appendix C for the list of questions.) The questions were adapted from the World Values Survey. One of the questions asked the scholars to reveal their preferences about the economic regime that they thought best for Cambodia. It is worth remembering that although this research seeks to track the scholars' attitude toward the role of the state in the economy over time, it does not attempt to measure how much the scholars understand about the state and the role that it can play in the economy. Therefore, the analyses that follow take the scholars' understanding of the state as a given. That being said, the analyses loosely attempt to measure how much support Cambodian scholars attach to different economic regimes, regardless of how they define these regimes. However, again, given the scholars filled in the online surveys, they were given plenty of time to deliberate on the questions and their responses.

Likewise, in the qualitative interviews, to measure their support for the role of the state in the economy and how much Australian scholarships influence their attitudes, scholars were approached this way: Tell me about your thinking on this subject. I want to know first, what you think about the topic and then whether your life in Australia has influenced your thoughts on this topic:

1. The government should be very involved in the economy.

#### *7.3.3.1. Quantitative analyses*

Hypothesis 2: Australian scholars are significantly less supportive of the role of the state in the economy as a consequence of Australian scholarships.

Null hypothesis 2: Australian scholars are not significantly less supportive of the role of the state in the economy as a consequence of Australian scholarships.

**Table 7.3: Support for government ownership of businesses and industries**

		(1) Private ownership of business and industry should be increased OR (10) Government ownership of business and industry should be increased										Total	Value
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
holders parture	Count	8	3	4	2	2	2	0	3	2	3	29	10.1' 2
	%	27.6%	10.3%	13.8%	6.9%	6.9%	6.9%	0.0%	10.3%	6.9%	10.3%	100.0%	
holders parture	Count	4	4	4	2	5	1	4	2	0	6	32	
	%	12.5%	12.5%	12.5%	6.3%	15.6%	3.1%	12.5%	6.3%	0.0%	18.8%	100.0%	
% Change		-15.1%	2.2%	-1.3%	-0.6%	8.7%	-3.8%	12.5%	-4.0%	-6.9%	8.5%	0.0%	7.65'
holders parture	Count	5	5	5	2	7	3	0	2	1	3	33	
	%	15.2%	15.2%	15.2%	6.1%	21.2%	9.1%	0.0%	6.1%	3.0%	9.1%	100.0%	
holders parture	Count	4	4	4	2	5	1	4	2	0	6	32	
	%	12.5%	12.5%	12.5%	6.3%	15.6%	3.1%	12.5%	6.3%	0.0%	18.8%	100.0%	
% Change		-2.7%	-2.7%	-2.7%	0.2%	-5.6%	-6.0%	12.5%	0.2%	-3.0%	9.7%	0.0%	

The two analyses rejected the hypothesis. Contrary to common belief, Cambodian scholars had not become significantly more supportive of the private ownership of businesses and industries. In fact, the opposite seemed true: Cambodian scholars seemed to be somewhat more in favor of the government ownership after they had stayed in Australia for one year (Person Chi2 = 10.172; Pr = .337 > .05 for the before and after analysis and Person Chi2 = 7.653; Pr = .569 > .05 for the treatment and control group analysis). Nevertheless, again, given the limitations of the research designs, the change, albeit small in magnitude, cannot be attributed to the presence of Australian scholarships. Therefore, the qualitative analysis below attempts to shed more light on the quantitative analyses.

#### *7.3.3.2. Qualitative analysis*

The qualitative analysis below closely matched the quantitative analyses in the previous section. It was found that Cambodian scholars were divided as to how much the government should be involved in the economy. However there was some common ground among all of them: the economy should not be left entirely to private individuals. It was also found that Australian scholarships seemed to have had limited influence on Cambodian scholars' thinking on the role of the government in the economy. Their views indicated no significant changes.

First, some Cambodian scholars believed that the Cambodian government should be very actively involved in the economy. In other words, they thought that the government should own some crucial businesses and industries. They cited revenue generation for the

state, economic self-sufficiency from foreign imports and independence from a ruthless private sector as their major explanations. They looked mainly at China for this economic model. But they argued that to do so, the government must be able to get rid of corruption and improve its managerial capacity. AS5 suggested:

I support the idea that the state should be involved in the economy 100%, but it then becomes socialism or communism. If Cambodia can do that, it would be good. But we can only achieve this if the government is not corrupt. Specifically, I want the government, but not like during the Pol Pot era, to create social enterprises or retail cooperatives in the community with both the people and the state having shares in them, and the state should have its officials to manage them. In agriculture, the state should be very involved, like finding good quality fertilizers and organic fertilizers. In general, the state must be very active so that the country makes progress. For Cambodia, if I were a leader, I would adopt this model. But to do that, we must prevent corruption. We need to build this system from scratch. For human resources, I think that we have enough but some further improvement is needed. The state should pay for training. In general, the state should run business and know everything about the economy. But our government these days destroys everything, including our natural resources. But if we want to develop the country, we can still do it. I think that the model (I am suggesting) is good although it is more like socialism or communism. Like Bill Gates said, 'To save the world, we need socialism.'

AS11 agreed:

It is a sensitive question. But I think the government should be very actively involved in the economy so that it generates income and improves other systems. But to create industries and enterprises is a high risk for Cambodia at this stage. It is possible, but challenging. It is easy for a communist country like China. The Chinese government has more than a hundred large companies, like cigarette and other environmentally unfriendly industries. But these industries generate lots of revenue for their government to develop other weak sectors like education and health. In Cambodia, it is possible, but challenging in terms of management and who gets what: there will be a lot of fights within the government itself. I think that we have a lot of resources, but why don't we manage them or rent them to someone to manage for us and make sure that we get the benefits from the rent and taxes. Why would you sell the land to foreigners or local people, and then collect only a small amount of tax. This is the thing that needs to be fixed.

AS9 concurred:

This idea is more applicable in a communist country. Like in China, all big, strategic and important businesses and industries are managed and owned by the government. Like banks: The Bank of China also exists in Cambodia. The government owns the bank. Other industries like mining are owned by the government not by private companies. That is why Chinese government is rich.

They are smart. Take machine assemblies as another example. Like Holden in Australia. Now Chinese companies buy the company, assemble the car in China and sell it to other countries. The government owns 70 per cent of the Chinese economy. That is why it is rich, and it can give billions of dollars in aid to Cambodia. China is clever in managing its enterprises. But there are risks. Its transportation companies earned billions of dollars. The risk is severe corruption because China is big. Company' managers embezzled money by always reporting a loss. The managers were arrested after Xi Jinping came to power. For Cambodia, we can have state-owned enterprises, but there must be very good, experienced and qualified managers. If we can achieve this, it would be good. The government would not only be rich, but also develop the economy and create plenty of jobs for the people. Look at China, it has lots of people, but its people can find employment. We must have strong anti-corruption laws, not like our current anti-corruption law. I'm not sure if we can do it. But I support the government owning enterprises. If the enterprises owned by the private sector, they can withdraw from the country, so it is risky for the people who will lose jobs and the government that levies taxes. If we can copy the Chinese model, I support it 100%.

Second, a few other scholars believed that the state should own only economic sectors that have natural monopoly characteristics or in order to promote competition or that Cambodia should adopt a public-and-private joint ownership of businesses and industries.

AS15 argued for government ownership of industries that generate high deadweight losses if left for the private sector.

When I studied economics, more weight was placed on the free market and privatization. But there was also mention of government intervention in certain sectors, like water, electricity and energy. For example, in a town or a city, there cannot be many private companies providing the same electricity, because the nature of the industries does not allow many companies to build their own power grids and lines. This can be done through a private monopoly, or by the government itself. So it can be messy and difficult to manage if many companies provide the electricity, and there can be conflicts. The same also applies to the water sector. There cannot be many private companies building water pipelines in the same area. This is inefficient. So it requires public bidding for such projects through a public procurement system. In Australia, I'm not sure if the government or the private sector should own these sectors, but the government should invite private sector to bid in order to select the best bidder and service providers or sub-contractors. The government has the role to create criteria to select the private companies/ sub-contractors that ensure quality service and social welfare for the people. But in economic land concessions in Cambodia, when Try Pheap companies or Chinese companies failed to implement the agreements in the economic land concession and thus failed to give due benefits to the local people, the government should take back the land and manage it instead. The companies



come only to exploit the land and timber without generating income for the country and its people.

AS12 also argued that government partial ownership of businesses and industries were also good to promote competition. He explained:

I don't support government full ownership of businesses and industries. This is against free trade. But I support government ownership of certain businesses and industries to promote competition with private sector. For example, if the private sector sells gasoline, the government should also sell gasoline too to compete with the private sector on price. If the private sector sells at too high a price, the government can sell at a lower price, forcing the private sector to lower its price.

AS13 also indicated that he would support public-private joint ownership of businesses and industries. He explained as follows:

I have limited ideas on economics. But I see that local people don't support local products. So if we want to grow our industries, it will be difficult. Our people just want foreign products, like Thai products. If we keep importing, we cannot grow. If we want to grow, we need to build local products. State-owned enterprises cannot do it alone. Joint ownership is good. If the government wants to fully engage in businesses and industries, what I'm concerned about is the impact. For example, if the government succeeds at running a particular industry, what is the

impact on the already existing private industries? They will collapse. What happens to them and their workers? I think the government should not be involved. But if the government jointly owns the industries, it is good. Like in Vietnam, if Honda wants to open factories in Vietnam, it must give certain percentage of shares to the Vietnamese government. This is good for the government and the company: the government gets more taxes and revenues, and the companies are more favorably treated [by the government] than other companies.

However, the majority of Cambodian scholars believed that the private sector should be the driver of economic growth, while the government should play facilitator and regulatory roles by providing a favorable business-friendly environment and level playing fields. They argue for this economic model, chiefly for economic incentive reasons.

AS1 argued as follows:

No, I don't think that the state should be very involved in the economy. I prefer a market economy or private sector led economy. We should give people the options and opportunities to develop businesses. In that way, we can also attract more foreign direct investment and foreign technologies. Plus, there will be more local initiatives, and thus development, when the private individual participates in the economy. When the government is involved, there is no initiative and innovation.

AS10 concurred:

I think that the state should have some role but not to own the economy entirely. We should privatize enterprises. The state should play a regulatory role, for example, determining the rules of the game and ensuring that the private sector follows the rules, like free competition, quality of products and rule of law. If the state is too involved, the economy becomes communist. Then there is no incentive for the private individuals, which leads to free rides.

AS6 agreed.

I don't agree with the idea that the state should be very involved in the economy. First I think that it is against the principles of international laws like the WTO laws, which require privatization. Second, it will create problems such as corruption. Third, the state-owned enterprises will not be effective. To be effective and beneficial for the country, the business or the economy should be left to the private sector, so there will be more competition. This would generate more benefits for society. The private sector is more effective. The state should act as supervisors, ensuring that the private sector follows the laws and pays the due tax.

Likewise, AS3 supports a regulatory role for government. He explained:

I think in a market economy, the government should be the coordinator or facilitator. It should not create its own factories or industries; it should promote privatization and specialization by private individuals. When the government is too involved in the economy, there are government failures: the state-owned factories are not profitable, because they are employing too many people, are poorly managed and corrupt. But the government should coordinate the market to prevent market failures and distortions. For example, if there are a lot of inflow of foreign capital, the government has a role to manage the flow, so that it doesn't flow too much, causing troubles in the domestic economy. The government has the role to manage price manipulation. If we allow the market to function freely, the producers can increase the price of [rare] products and the price might also fluctuate too much. The government has the role to stabilize prices to prevent chaos in the market. The government also has to protect and prevent violations of workers' rights. In short, the government should be the coordinator; it cannot be too involved in the economy, so that the market functions efficiently.

The research also indicated that Australian scholarships had limited influence on Cambodian scholars' thinking on the role of the government in the economy. Again, this is so maybe because they have already been exposed to foreign countries' economic regimes and thoughts prior to their Australian scholarships or because they are mature with their economic thinking pretty much well established. For example, AS7 said:

Yes, being here influences me to some extent. Before, I thought that the government should do everything, like being the arbitrator, coordinator, leader, pusher and supporter in the economy. Now I think that the government should give some autonomy to the private sector, not fully controlling the economy. Maybe the reading and lectures in here affected me. Before, I have some ideas but not much confidence in expressing my views. Now I have more ideas and confidence because I can base my reasons on past experiences and theories I learned here.

AS15 supported this view:

I think that experiences here changed me to some extent. I used to talk with Cambodian residents here, who say that in Australia, the government also allows foreign companies to invest in its mineral sector. Before, I thought that the mineral sector is fully managed by the Australian government. But they said that the government ensures that the company pays due taxes to the government for the benefit of the people.

About one-third of the scholars believed that their scholarships did not influence their thinking at all. AS8 explained why:

I don't think that it affects my thinking at all because I don't focus on economics here, but on disabilities. And I have always thought this way since I studied for

my bachelor's degree. I studied agricultural economics and worked in economic areas. I have thought about it before but it is not influential. And I don't know much about the Australian economy, and I'm not sure what it depends on, maybe mining. And the politics and economy of Australia are not very well known unlike those in the US and Europe.

AS5 had a similar response.

I don't think that my time in here has changed me. I had this thinking when I was in Cambodia. When I am here, I just put my ideas onto paper in the form of business plan. I want to create organic rice cooperatives. I want people and the government to create cooperatives in the communities with both partners having their share. Their children, when well educated, should manage these cooperatives.

To sum up, the qualitative analysis found a divergence of views on the role of the state in the economy. It also indicated the inability of the scholarships to increase the scholars' support for the private ownership of businesses and industries. The findings seemed universal among Cambodian scholars across the three Australian cities, fields of study, and gender. Cambodian scholars, from Canberra, Melbourne and Adelaide, both male and female, and young and old, seemed to have similar opinions about the issue and reported having been little influenced by the scholarships. Fields of study did not seem to matter at all. Again, the fact that most Australian scholars were aged 26 and above may

explain why the scholarships failed to influence their thinking. Cambodian scholars appeared to have developed firm positions on the topic prior to arriving in Australia, having been exposed to foreign countries and their economic models at an earlier age.

Overall, the qualitative analysis largely confirmed the quantitative analyses. Australian scholarships appeared to have had a limited impact on Cambodian scholars' support for the private ownership of businesses and industries.

#### **7.3.4. Australian scholarships and attitude toward Australian development model**

This sub-section reports the quantitative and qualitative analyses of the one-year causal effects of Australian scholarships on Cambodian scholars' attitudes to the Australian development model. Given what is known about Australian aid, Australia and its educational system (see again section x of chapter 2 for details), it was hypothesized that Australian scholarships should have significantly increased Cambodian scholars' support for the Australian development model. In this research, in the surveys to measure the scholars' support for the Australian development model over time, the scholars were confronted with a question on various development models (See appendix C for the question). The question was adapted from the Asian Barometer Survey. It asked the scholars to reveal their preferences for the various development models that they thought best for Cambodia. Again, it is worth remembering that although this research seeks to track the scholars' attitudes toward these models over time, it does not attempt to measure how much the scholars understand about these models. In fact, in the literature, while the Chinese development model appears in scholarly debate (see Williamson 2012

for example), other models including Australian and Singaporean models seemed to have attracted little scholarly attention. In other words, it was not clear if there were such things as an Australian development model or for that matter Singaporean model of development. Therefore, the analyses that follow assume that the scholars have a limited understanding of the models discussed. That being said, the analyses do attempt to measure how much support Cambodian scholars attach to each of these models, regardless of their understandings. However, again, given the scholars filled in the online surveys, they were given plenty of time to deliberate on the questions.

Likewise, in the qualitative interviews, to measure support for the Australian development model and how much Australian scholarships influenced their attitudes, Cambodian scholars were approached this way: Tell me about your thinking about these countries as models for Cambodia. I want to know first what you think about them and then whether your life in Australia has influenced your thinking in relation to the suitability of these countries as models for Cambodia.

1. Australia
2. China
3. Singapore
4. United States

#### *7.3.4.1. Quantitative analyses*



Hypothesis 4: Australian scholarships significantly increase Cambodian scholars' support for the Australian development model.

Null hypothesis 4: Australian scholarships do not significantly increase Cambodian scholars' support for the Australian development model.

**Table 7.4: Support for Australian development model**

		In your opinion, which of the following countries, if any, would be the best model for the future development of Cambodia?							Total	Percentage	
		United States	Australia	Singapore	China	We should follow our own model	None of these	Other		Value	
Total	Count	2	8	11	0	6	0	2	29	5.465	
	%	6.9%	27.6%	37.9%	0.0%	20.7%	0.0%	6.9%	100.0%		
Male	Count	0	10	12	2	6	1	1	32	5.092	
	%	0.0%	31.3%	37.5%	6.3%	18.8%	3.1%	3.1%	100.0%		
% Change		-6.9%	3.7%	-0.4%	6.3%	-1.9%	3.1%	-3.8%	0.0%		
Female	Count	2	10	13	0	4	2	2	33	5.092	
	%	6.1%	30.3%	39.4%	0.0%	12.1%	6.1%	6.1%	100.0%		
Total	Count	0	10	12	2	6	1	1	32	5.092	
	%	0.0%	31.3%	37.5%	6.3%	18.8%	3.1%	3.1%	100.0%		
% Change		-6.1%	1.0%	-1.9%	6.3%	6.7%	-3.0%	-3.0%	0.0%		

The analyses above rejected the hypothesis. Cambodian scholars had not significantly increased their support for the Australian development model (Person Chi2 = 5.465; Pr = .486 > .05 for the before and after analysis and Person Chi2 = 5.092; Pr = .532 > .05 for the treatment and control group analysis). However, the analyses consistently showed that Cambodian scholars became somewhat more supportive of the Australian development model after they had been in Australia for one year. It was also found however that the Chinese development model appeared to gain more support from Cambodian scholars. Again, given the limitations in the research designs, the change, albeit small in magnitude, cannot be attributed to the presence of Australian scholarships. Therefore, the qualitative analysis below attempts to shed more light on the quantitative analyses.

#### *7.3.4.2. Qualitative analysis*

The qualitative analysis in this section supported the quantitative analyses above. It was found that about a third of Cambodian scholars approved of the Australian development model, and that Australian scholarships appeared to have had a limited influence on them. It also confirmed that Cambodian scholars' views toward different models of development were very divided, especially between those who supported Singaporean and Australian models. It appeared that Singaporean and Australian models received wide support among Cambodian scholars who had already been in Australia for one year. The Chinese model however appeared appealing to only a few Cambodian scholars, while none of Cambodian scholars believed that the American model of development would be good for Cambodia. Some Cambodian scholars also preferred "our own model of development."

First, about one-third of Cambodian scholars believed that Australia was a good model for Cambodia. They cited Australian physical infrastructure, public service and welfare system as their key rationales for this choice. AS1 explained why she chose the Australian model: “After being in Australia, I found that Australia has good infrastructure and public services, especially in the area of public health. I think Cambodia should follow Australia.” AS2 agreed mainly because Australia had good healthcare and social protection systems.

I prefer Australia as a model. The Australian healthcare system is good. The rich and the poor can access the system. They need not be worried. The state provides free healthcare to people when they get sick. Even the homeless people are taken care of by the state. Australia is an open society. I don't know much about Australian politics, but people are free to express themselves; if they don't like any politicians, they speak out and freely. Australian youth participate in politics a lot. They are not afraid like Cambodian youth.

AS7 concurred:

We should choose Australia because there are many things we can learn from Australia. The first is about jobs and skills forecasts. Australia can predict what kind of skills they need for the next ten or twenty years. We need to learn about that, so that we can train our people with the right skillsets for the economy. Second is the social protection system. We should learn from Australia whether or not we can do it. Look at the Centrelink system. We can

learn a lot from Centrelink. The welfare system in here is good. We cannot learn from it all, but a few areas are good. We should learn about all levels of education from Australia, not only higher education. College here works very effectively. Most Australians don't want to get a degree from a university but from a college. There is not much difference in salary between someone with a college or a university degree. And the cost of university studies is very high. Some people work almost their entire life but have not yet earned a bachelors degree.

AS9 chose Australia mainly on the basis of population. He explained:

I would choose Australia as a model for Cambodia because Australia has a similar population total as Cambodia. China and the US have huge populations; Singapore is too small (to be useful models). All countries have good points, but Australia is better because it is more similar to Cambodia in terms of population. The Chinese economic system is good, but China is a communist.

Other scholars believed that there were a lot of lessons Cambodia could learn from Australia. AS8 explained in some details:

I don't know clearly about the four countries. Australia has lots of national revenue, such as that from minerals and low corruption, and there is an equitable distribution of wealth from national resources through subsidies and welfare. Cambodia should learn from Australia in these areas. Cambodia has

lots of natural and cultural resources. For example, we could have collected a lot of revenue from the sale of tickets for Angkor Wat temple, but we just don't know where the revenue has gone. We should have used the money to help the poor and the elderly to access healthcare such as free vaccines. Doing this could reduce illness and mortality rates.

However, about two-thirds of Cambodian scholars decided not to support the Australian model. They did so mainly because they believed that Australian liberal democracy was inappropriate for Cambodia; that the Australian economy was not very successful and that Cambodia and Australia were culturally different. For instance, despite being positive about Australian agricultural policies, AS5 chose not to adopt Australian development model. He argued as follows:

Australia follows a free market economy, but when it comes to agricultural produces, there are few foreign imports. It doesn't mean that Australia closes its market, but Australia uses certain reasons that can justify its ban of foreign imports. The Philippines cannot export its banana into Australia. But in Cambodia, (relating to the import and export of agricultural produces), our people cannot compete with neighboring countries, but the Ministry of Agriculture officials say because we follow free markets, we cannot ban imports, even though they lack quality or are contaminated with chemical substances which harm people. I don't agree with their pretexts that because we support free markets, we cannot ban imports. If it is possible, we can learn from Australia and apply what is learned to Cambodia, especially about the

import and export of agricultural produces. I'm very interested to learn how Australia can do this.

I like Australia, but I wouldn't live here: we have different cultures. Asian culture is non-aggressive. Here, people have freedoms; sometimes they are too free. After coming here, I learned a lot about Australia. I also know Singapore through childhood education. Australia is new for me. If we can develop Cambodia like Australia, it would be good. But it requires a civilized mindset and knowledge, and we are different and far behind Australia, so we need a strong government (leader). We can learn from Australia about combating corruption.

AS6 agreed.

Australia is succeeding because its people have a high level of knowledge compared with Cambodians. If we allow too much freedom in Cambodia now, we will face problems. In general, I don't know much about Australian systems. So I cannot comment on it much. But I think in the near future, the Australian model would not fit with Cambodia. But over the next 20-30 years when Cambodians are more educated, the Australian model would be good. In the shorter term, I would rather choose Singapore.

Likewise, AS9 didn't support the Australian model:

Australia is a good democracy. But there is no policy continuity from the current leaders to the next. This is not good. For example, one prime minister is very successful in implementing solar power policy, but failed in other policies, so he is replaced and the new prime minister terminates all of his policies, including solar power. It costs a lot in terms of money and time. The new leaders don't respect the old policies. For instance, in Queensland, the new prime minister halted the solar power projects when he was in office.

Second, while about one-third of Cambodian scholars supported the Australian model, more than one-third of the Cambodian scholars believed that Cambodia should follow Singapore as a model for development. They cited the country's strong, visionary leaders, strong anti-corruption law enforcement and good education system as their rationale. AS3 explained in some length:

For me, developing the country is a critical issue. I want Cambodia to follow Singapore. For me, I focus more on national leadership. Cambodia is neither democratic nor communist. In Cambodia, the structural environment is fragile. We don't have enough human capital, financial capital and natural resources. (In fact, we do have some natural resources, but they are poorly managed.) It would be good if we have a strong leader; a leader who has vision and a clear strategy to lead the country and lead the people and a system in which leadership from the ministries down to the village levels is strong and effective. If leaders at these levels are good, people will follow them. Leaders are important. It doesn't matter whether Cambodia follows democracy or a non-democracy, as long as leaders serve the people and put national interests



first. I don't know Singapore very much, but it is a corruption-free country; their leaders care a lot about their people. They focus on developing their economy and cultivating people's discipline. Cambodia should learn from Singapore, which is very small and successful. Cambodia is not very large. Cambodia should adopt what Singapore has achieved, for example disciplining its people. For economic development, discipline is very important. Second, although Singapore has some corruption, it is very small. The Cambodian government should be cleaner, less corrupt and pay decent salaries to its officials. Singapore has no natural resources. Cambodia has resources such as forests and gold. Singapore has very good service sectors, such as ports and financial services. If we manage our resources well, and the government is less corrupt, investors will come to invest in Cambodia. Revenues from our natural resources are more than enough to develop the country.

AS4 concurred.

I don't know much about other countries; nor do I know much about Australia, America and China. But I think we should follow Singapore because I know more about Singapore. But we cannot follow the country completely, the people at the top are too controlling; sometimes people at the bottom lack freedom. But I don't want us to too free either. Too free is just like what we are today. I want Cambodia to follow the middle path. The good thing about Singapore is that the country is small but well governed. And I don't think Cambodia is big, compared to Australia or America. Australia is big but not

very populous, so easy to govern. Like I said from the beginning, what I focus on more is the leader and the people. If our people are educated, we can turn to democracy overnight. But today we cannot depend on them. That is why our country has regular protests and demonstrations. Cambodians are easily provoked, based on what they hear, for example on Facebook. But I think, in our current situation where we face lots of problems, even if the leader is not very good, we should follow our leaders. Let him or her be more dictatorial, if he or she is a nationalist. Leading the country wouldn't be easy either because of our history; there are many big leftover messes from previous regimes. I think if the incoming leader is a nationalist, we can postpone democracy for certain period; we should follow him or her first. So let him think of the people and put the country in good order first and ensure that the people are educated or at least everyone attends school; then we can move to democracy.

AS6 supported this view:

For a model to be followed, I prefer the Singaporean model. In a democracy, when people are poorly educated, the country will be a mess. People who lack knowledge and information will just be gullible, and their decision-making will be based only on other people's opinions. They wouldn't have critical thinking ability. They would go to left or right according to other people's opinions. When people lack knowledge, they will cause problems for the country. I like the Singaporean system, because I like its law enforcement. If we look at Singapore's corruption index, human development index and rule of law, Singapore is first in the world. But its people lack rights. The

government restricts its people's freedoms. Some countries accuse Singapore of violating its people's rights. But Singapore did so because it thinks that some of its people lack knowledge. Lee Kuan Yew said Singapore could not become what it is today, if it had followed Western style democracy, because the majority of its people didn't understand how to lead a country and were not as educated as their leaders. If we talk about leaders, that leader must be very knowledgeable and very visionary so that they can lead the general public and so that they can lead the country's development fast. Some Cambodian leaders said they would follow the people's will, but I don't support this saying, because many people in Cambodia (and some students too) don't have the knowledge. If we have leaders who have knowledge and vision and enforce the law equally, I think that the country can be developed faster. I think Lee Kuan Yew applied this philosophy. We see that Singapore can transform itself from a third-world country to first-world country within a human's lifetime; that is amazing. There are accusations of human rights violations, but if over-respecting rights can lead to chaos, we should also restrict rights for certain period of time. Like the rights to protest any time and anywhere.

Third, a minority of Cambodian scholars was also of the view that the Chinese development model may be good for Cambodia. They reasoned that it was not bad to follow a non-democratic country with benevolent leaders. AS13 argued: "I think we should follow China, I'm not sure why, maybe because China is a communist country and can have its people follow the government policies."

AS9 seemed to agree:

In China, even if it is a communist state, leadership change is possible, not through universal elections, but elections within its top committee members. China has a good leader, with clear vision and knowledge. There is policy continuity in China. If the new leaders are good, it is good for the country. Cambodia can also follow China. If the leaders care more of their people's interests than other country's interests, and their people are happy with them, we can follow China. Even if China is a communist, their people have sufficient rights in their daily lives and have plenty of jobs.

However, most Cambodian scholars did not choose the Chinese development models, primarily because China is a non-democratic country. Nevertheless, some of them believed that Cambodia could learn a lot from the Chinese economic model. For example, AS6 said: "I cannot accept China, because it is purely communist. A lot of people's rights are restricted and there are still lots of issues in China."

AS3 concurred:

China is also good in terms of economic policies. They can succeed economically in a short time, almost surpassing western countries. China is communist. Communism is too cruel: no freedom and there are life sentences imposed in China. Cambodians are used to democracy. There can be chaos politically if we follow China. China is too communist.

AS15 agreed:

Chinese people are hardworking and smart. They like saving and doing business. They are more keen and enthusiastic, compared with Cambodians. These are the good characteristics. But the Chinese political regime is authoritarian. This is because China has a lot of people; if they had democracy there would be unrest. So we cannot copy the Chinese political regime, but in terms of an economic development model, we can learn something from China.

Fourth, no Cambodian scholar believed that the American model of development was good for Cambodia. They cited the country's inability to control guns and its liberal democracy in supporting their opinions. For example, AS9 put it this way:

America is too free and too democratic. I acknowledge that America is a superpower. Their leaders are either rich or highly educated. But the American development model is too risky because the people have the right to carry guns. So, as you know, there are cases of mass shooting in many states. Why do the people have the right to carry the guns? Why can't the police prevent shootings and insecurity there? Why? This is telling about the American model. The problems of mass shooting drag on from one president to the next and cannot be resolved. Why is that?

Fifth, the remainder of the Cambodian scholars (less than one-third) believed that Cambodia should develop its own model of development by picking and choosing the best lessons from these four countries and other successful countries. AS11 suggested:

Cambodia should have its own nation-building model. Of course, Cambodia can look at other nations and learn from them. Just as looking at other persons' good points and trying to be like them, but you also need to look at yourself so that you know what is best for you and suits you and your people and what your people can do.

AS8 agreed. She explained: "I don't know specific details about the economic and political systems of the four countries. But I know that these four countries are famous. We should extract the good points from each country. We should adopt the best fits for Cambodia"

On balance, Cambodian scholars more positive about Australia after coming to Australia; however, the scholarships have done little to increase their support for an Australian development model. Their experience has reinforced their prior perceptions. They cited the Australian welfare system as the key motivation behind their choice. For instance, AS1 said: "I always thought that Australia is a good country, but coming here reinforced my thinking, making me more confident about my prior choice." AS7 agreed: "Before I had only read and heard about Australian public and welfare services, but now I see and use these services I know their quality. This shapes my thinking."

AS8 concurred, saying:

The Cambodian government should subsidize its healthcare system. I just want the government to implement this policy in the same way as the Australian government does. I think I have changed in this regard. When I saw Australian government policies, I wanted the Cambodian government to implement them. I also wanted Cambodia to have transparency, freedom of expression, and free and fair elections like Australia.

However, the remaining one-third of Cambodian scholars are of the view that Australian scholarships have had either no influences or decreased their support for Australian and western development models. For example, AS9 said:

Even if I am studying in a democratic country, I want Cambodia to follow a communist development model. We should try to follow communism so that we can prosper. We can change the regime to communism only if the leaders think of the people's interests first and protect our national integrity. If our leaders want to lead the country towards communism I would support it but on a number of conditions: the leader must have vision, love the people more, and think of the people first like the leaders of China and Singapore do. Cambodia now is so free that there are a lot of thefts. There are few robberies in Singapore and China. If our current model is not working or cannot help the country to prosper, we should change the model. From an economic perspective if one variety of rice cannot provide a good yield, the variety is changed. The same thing applies to leading a country. If one model is not

working, the politicians [leaders] should change the model. They should be flexible. We have been following democracy for some time, but we should learn from other countries. If democracy is not working, we should modify it, just like China and Singapore did.

Similarly, AS15 confided:

I think I have changed. Before, I thought we should follow Western or Australian development models or Japan. But now I am here, I think every country has a different context, history, culture and leadership style. When I listen and read about China, Singapore and Australia, I changed. We cannot adopt everything from every country; we need to learn from the good aspects of each country. Before, I thought that China is communist and dictatorial, but when I look at its economic governance and leadership styles, I think we can learn something from it, especially on its economy or economic transition. Even Vietnam, in terms of economic transition, we can learn something from it.

AS13 also believed that coming to Australia has decreased his support for the Australian development model.

I think that my time in Australia has had some influence on my thinking. I learned a lot about Australia, especially its weak points. I used to admire Australia before I came here, but coming here, I now realize that Australia has nothing: no local or national brands, no products that can compete with



imported products. Australia is too dependent on its extractive industries. Australia is going in the wrong direction. It is not a very successful economy.

As we have already seen, Australia scholarships seemed to have had mixed impacts on Cambodian scholars' attitudes towards the Singaporean model. On the one hand, AS3 confided, "Singapore is good. Last year, I never thought about what kind of political system we should adopt. Now, I have more information. Second, I can map the four countries' situation. So it helps me think better." On the other hand, AS11 argued, "Experience here changes me a lot. If you asked me last year, I would choose Singapore or another country that I like. Once you learned more about the country, you change your perceptions about that country."

To sum up this qualitative analysis, it was found that Australian scholarships had limited influence on Cambodian scholars' attitudes towards Australia and its development model. It was also observed that there appeared to be some relationship between gender and support for a range of development models. Cambodian male scholars seemed to have support the Singaporean model more than their female fellows, while female scholars tended to consider that Cambodia should either follow Australian or our its own model of development. However it was also observed that those who supported the Singaporean model tended to support a government with strong, benevolent leaders. However, apart from gender, Cambodian scholars, both young and old, studying all fields of study from Canberra, Melbourne and Adelaide seemed to have a fairly similar position on development models. The Australian model seemed to find support from about one-third of Cambodian scholars in all three Australian cities. Furthermore, the influence of the scholarships on their thinking on

the topic seemed to be minimal. This was so regardless of the scholars' age, gender, places of study and fields of study and despite the fact that Cambodian scholars were overwhelmingly impressed by some aspects of Australian governance and development outcomes, including the rule of law, low corruption, good public services and welfare systems. Furthermore, it was also found that Cambodian scholars generally lacked a deep understanding of Australia and its development model. Many scholars were very candid about this during the interviews.

Overall, the qualitative and quantitative analyses generated quite consistent findings. Australian scholarships appeared to have had limited influence on Cambodian scholars' support for Australia and its development model.

#### **7.4. Discussion**

This section discusses the findings of this chapter in the context of the findings of chapter 4. It was found that first, while Australian scholarships had somewhat increased Cambodian scholars' support for democracy, Chinese scholarships had quite significantly decreased support for the political regime. Second, while Australian scholarships had somewhat increased Cambodian scholars' support for the Australian development model, Chinese scholarships had quite significantly increased support for the Chinese development model. Third, while both Australian and Chinese scholarships had increased Cambodian scholars' intolerance for corruption, Australian scholarships seemed to have had more impact than Chinese scholarships. Finally, while both Australian and Chinese scholarships had increased Cambodian scholars' support for the government ownership of businesses and industries, Chinese

scholarships seemed to have been more influential in this area than Australian scholarships. The next section discusses what might explain these differences and similarities.

First, on democracy, it was found that while most scholars believed that ultimately, Cambodia should become a democracy, very few of them seemed to believe that democracy should be the option in the short to medium term. Many Cambodian Australian and Chinese scholars seemed to be of the view that in some circumstances, alternatives to democracy would be preferable. However, there were significant differences as to what Cambodian Australian and Chinese scholars thought these alternatives should be. For example, while many Cambodian Chinese scholars tended to have a difficult time determining whether democracy or a non-democracy was a better form of government and then ended up believing that Chinese form of government was the better alternative; very few Cambodian Australian scholars did. Instead, most Cambodian Australian scholars tended to have no difficulty in believing that an authoritarian form of government would be a more acceptable alternative to democracy, provided that the government and its leaders were competent and concerned for the good of the people. The differences found may be explicable chiefly due to the fact that many Cambodian Chinese scholars had been directly exposed to China, its authoritarian form of government and the current achievements which this typical form of government has been able to deliver to the Chinese, while Cambodian Australian scholars lacked this experience.

It was also found that Australian and Chinese scholarships had a range of influences on Cambodian scholars' support for democracy. First, while Cambodian Australian

scholars had become somewhat more supportive of democracy as a result of their Australian scholarships, Cambodian Chinese scholars had become quite significantly less supportive of democracy and more so of the Chinese form of government as a consequence of their Chinese scholarships. This finding is consistent with my prior suggestion: Cambodian scholars, unsurprisingly, tended to be influenced by the environments in which they found themselves. However, what was surprising is that Australian scholarships seemed to have had less influence than Chinese scholarships. That is, while many Cambodian Chinese scholars seemed to have become significantly more positive about the Chinese form of government, few Cambodian Australian scholars appeared to have become significantly stronger supporters of democracy. This might be because Cambodian Australian scholars tended to be significantly older, had more independent viewpoints and had been more exposed to foreign countries' political regimes than Cambodian Chinese scholars and, as a consequence, were less easily swayed by their recent experiences.

Second, it was surprising that Cambodian Australian and Chinese scholars had similar attitudes towards the role of the state in the economy, despite the fact that one group of scholars was studying in a country whose economy is largely run by the private sector and the other in a country where the state stills plays a significant role in the economy. Both Cambodian Australian and Chinese scholars were divided as to whether businesses and industries should be largely owned by the state, with a little more than a half of them being pro-private sector and about the other half being pro-government; however, again, both groups of scholars argued that the Cambodian government was currently not doing enough to support the economy and that the economy should not be left entirely to the private sector.

However, Chinese scholarships were significantly more influential than Australian scholarships in stimulating pro-government views among Cambodian scholars. Again, age and prior exposure to foreign countries may explain the difference. Cambodian Australian scholars were significantly more mature and exposed to the outside world than Cambodian Chinese scholars; therefore, rather than drastically changing their attitudes, Cambodian Australian scholars may have had their prior beliefs reinforced as a consequence of their Australian experience. Furthermore, Australian scholarships may have exposed Cambodian scholars to some of the poorer aspects of the Australian economy such as its dependence on extractive industries, which are environmentally un-friendly and unsustainable in the long term, its protectionism in the agriculture sector and the absence of strong local manufacturing industries.

Third, Cambodian Australian and Chinese scholars had very similar attitudes towards corruption, although it seemed that Australian scholarships tended to have had a stronger impact on Cambodian scholars' views. Both groups of scholars suggested that corruption was a major obstacle to the development of Cambodia. While most Cambodian Chinese scholars had a hard time attributing their scholarship experiences to their views on corruption, many Cambodian Australian scholars believed that their study and socialization in Australia had either reinforced their prior beliefs or rendered them more aware and critical of corruption. Corruption is not a popular topic in China, and Western broadcasting, online and social media such as Google and Facebook are restricted in China. The fact that Cambodian Australian scholars tended to study more social science related fields than Cambodian Chinese scholars may be another explanation.

Finally, on development models, it was found that on the one hand, Cambodian Australian scholars seemed to be more supportive of Australian and Singaporean development models than Cambodian Chinese scholars do. On the other hand, Cambodian Chinese scholars appeared to be more in favor of Chinese and Singaporean development models than Cambodian Australian scholars. The Singaporean model seemed most popular with both Cambodian Australian and Chinese scholars, in spite of the fact that none of them are studying there. In fact, few of them, if any, may ever have studied in the country before their scholarships to Australia and China, given that Singaporean government only offers a limited number of scholarships to Cambodia every year and that Cambodian Australian and Chinese scholars were unlikely to be able to self-finance their study in the country as the analyses on their family backgrounds in chapter 4 showed. However, it was also found that Australian scholarships had less influence than Chinese scholarships. To put it in other words, that there were more Cambodian Australian scholars than Cambodian Chinese scholars supporting Australian development was not because of the scholarships. Australian scholarships had done little more than to strengthen Cambodian scholars' prior attitudes toward Australia and its development model. In contrast, Chinese scholarships had quite significantly increased Cambodian scholars' positive attitudes toward China and its development model.

Furthermore, while Chinese scholarships seemed to have significantly decreased Cambodian scholars' support for the Australian development model, the Australian scholarships tended not to have significantly reduced Cambodian scholars' support for the Chinese development model. (In fact, the opposite may be true: a few Australian

scholars seemed to become somewhat more positive about China and its development model after they had been in Australia for one year.) Furthermore, Australian scholarships appeared to have reinforced whatever position the scholars may have prior to their study in Australia. Again, the differences found may be explicable in terms of age differences and prior work and study experiences and despite the fact that Cambodian Australian and Chinese scholars seemed to be overwhelmingly positive about their life and academic experiences in both countries.

## **7.5. Conclusion**

This chapter offers insights into and explanations for the influence of Australian scholarships on Cambodian scholars' political attitudes. It was found that the scholarships have somewhat increased Cambodian scholars' support for democracy, eradicating corruption and the Australian development model. However, surprisingly, the scholarships have slightly decreased Cambodian scholars' support for private ownership of businesses and industries. Overall, it appeared that Australian scholarships have had a limited influence on Cambodian scholars' political attitudes. The scholarships' inability to significantly change Cambodian scholars' political attitudes in ways that are conducive to democratic development in Cambodia is, perhaps, explicable in terms of their maturity: Cambodian scholars were either older, more highly exposed to Western countries' political and economic institutions, or both, when they undertook their scholarships in Australia. Chapter 9 discusses the implications of these findings for Cambodia, Australia, China and the literature. It also summarizes the key findings of this dissertation.