Journalism in Cuba
– An investigation of the professional role based on qualitative interviews with fourteen Cuban journalists

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Abstract
This bachelor thesis, which is also the result of a Minor Field Studies scholarship, examines journalists’ situation in Cuba. The aim is to see the working conditions of the journalists by listening to how they themselves perceive their professional role, what their professional values are and what they see as opportunities and obstacles in their work. A major reason for undertaking this research is the theoretical perspective that emphasizes the importance of journalism studies in developing countries.

The results are based mainly on fourteen qualitative interviews with Cuban journalists. By comparing the results with earlier studies including development journalism and studies about digital media in Cuba the study shows that Cuban journalists’ main duty is to defend the Communist Party. Many of the interviewed journalists experience self-censorship as a problem and blame it on Cuba’s lack of a press law. Even if journalist salaries are extremely low, just like salaries of other professions in the state, the journalists highlight many positive aspects of their job. The education is free and some of the interviewees have opportunities to travel both within and outside the country because of their job. Cuban journalists are well educated, normally have a great passion for their profession and often have a strong desire to improve their work. The technological development in Cuba is slow but changes the conditions for the journalistic work and will continue to have a great influence on Cuban society.

Key words: Cuba, journalism, journalists, media, professional role, values, news, development, communism
Acknowledgements
Thanks to all those interviewed who made this thesis possible: Ángel Tomás Gonzalez, Maria Elena Calderín, Esmerida Marcel, Elisa Beatriz Ramírez Hernández, Susana Del Calvo Penichet, Pablo Rafael Fuentes de la Torre, Helen Hernández Hormilla, Wilfredo Gil Figueredo, Alina Rosell Chong, Danae Àguila Guiterres, Joel Michel Varona, Adonis Subit Lamí, Milton Díaz-Cánter, Diana Valido Cernuda, Maria de los Ángeles González Borges och Roberto de Jesús Guerra Pérez.

Thanks to all those journalists who did not get interviewed but introduced me to the Cuban journalism, especially Maylin Legañoa Peña. Thanks to Junior Gómez Manresa, Lars Palmgren and René Vázquez Díaz who helped me establish important journalist contacts in Cuba. Thanks to Yessika Zoe Abreu Jorge, who really took her role as my contact person in Cuba serious, and helped me through the whole process. Thanks to the Cuban police and Swedish Embassy in Cuba who helped me when I encountered problems in Cuba. Thanks to all friends and acquaintances.

Thanks to Karin Stigbrand, my supervisor who has given me support and helped me all the way. Thanks to Ingvor Krudtaa, my mother who has assisted me both in Sweden and at distance from Sweden during my stay in Cuba. Thanks to Jaime López Valdiviezo and Mathias Bridfelt who helped me with questions about the translation. Thanks to Taghi Khodarahmi, my father who put me in contact with Stephen Edgell, Professor of Sociology, who helped me with the editing on this dissertation and who I would also like to thank. Thanks to Södertörn University, MFS-group and Sida who gave me this scholarship and made this investigation possible.
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List of Acronyms

AIN – National Information Agency
CCP – Cuban Communist Party
CIHPRESS – El Centro de Información Hablemos Press
CUC – Cuban Convertible Peso
CUP – Cuban Peso
GDP – Gross domestic product
ICRT – The Cuban Institute of Radio and Television
MFS – Minor Field Studies
RHC – Radio Havana Cuba
RSF – Reporters Without Borders
UNEAC – National Union of Writers and Artists of Cuba
UPEC – The Union of Journalists in Cuba
1. Introduction

This investigation is both a final thesis in Bachelor’s degree of journalism studies and a result of a Minor Field Studies (MFS) scholarship. MFS enables students at Swedish universities to gather material for a thesis in a developing country. The scholarship is funded by Sida and the purpose is to give students the opportunity to acquire knowledge for developing countries and give institutions the opportunity to establish and strengthen international contacts.¹

I had been to Cuba once before this study was made, in 2009 when I lived on the island for five months as I was studying Spanish and Cuban Communication and Culture Identity at the University of Cienfuegos Carlos Rafael Rodríguez. MFS, the earlier mentioned scholarship, made it possible for me economically, to go back to Cuba and undertake this investigation. This time I stayed in Cuba for eleven weeks.

1.1 Purpose

My purpose is to examine 1) how the Cuban media system works and 2) how the journalists describe their working conditions. Via a number of interviews I have observed the reality for journalists and gained knowledge and understanding about the Cuban journalist role and professional values. There are few studies done in the field, especially Swedish.

The most common views in the western world about Cuba seems to be that Cuba is a poor dictatorship that can stay alive for tourism, where the people are oppressed and dissidents thrown in jail. But there is also another point of view that defends the Cuban system: There is freedom of expression in Cuba and the electoral system is even one of the fairest in the world. It has a civilized society with free medical care and education. The population is extremely poor but compared to other countries in similar economic situation it has several admirable advantages and the statement that people are thrown in jail because of their opinions is a lie. What the Swedish press reports about Cuba is often very equilateral, whether it is for the benefit of the Cuban government or directed strong criticism against the regime. The reason I have chosen to investigate the journalism in Cuba has to do with the interest that this polarized debate raises and makes me even more curious to explore the area. I also think it is timely to draw attention to the topic because the media landscape may be about to change in Cuba just as in many other countries.

Neutrality to my investigation is crucial - I will go in as an observer with a critical eye. It will become difficult to actually see the current situation prevailing in the island state. Trying to

maintain objectivity as far as possible is therefore important.

1.2 Research question
The research question in this essay is: What do Cuban journalists think about their working situation and what do they think about the future of journalism in Cuba? This will be answered by following questions:

- What does the Cuban media landscape look like?
- How do the Cuban journalists describe their professional role and professional values?
- What opportunities and what limitations do the journalists experience?
- What are the journalists’ opinions on what to do about the problems in their work situation?

1.3 Obstacles
I am aware that it can be difficult for journalists to give an honest picture of their work situation. Cuban journalists probably brought up in a different way than journalists in the West. In the same time it is very likely that other sources that this thesis is based on are in opposition to Cuba’s politics. By examining journalist’s way to work with as much neutrality as possible I want to see how the circumstances for them really are.

During my stay I only had a tourist visa. But the job I did actually requires an official permission. To get permission I would first have to get a journalist- or student visa and to get a journalist visa I would have to wait months for an accreditation, something I definitely did not had time to acquire. To get a student visa I would have had to belong to an institution of a Cuban university, which I would have liked, but then I would also have had to study, which I neither had time for. Moreover, it had still not been sure that I would have got permission to do interviews and observations at media houses. Therefore I took a risk when I went down to Cuba on a tourist visa …

Although I have on occasion actually got "caught" and it was explained I could have been expelled from the country because of the job I was doing, no one reported me to the police. However, both Swedish and Cuban friends warned me not to talk about the investigation to someone I did not know. Although I did not go around telling everybody I am a Swedish journalist student, I was always open about it when someone asked what I was doing in the country. At the beginning all went by without any problems but later there were times where I actually got worried not be able to complete my job.

The first time I got caught was when a friend accompanied me to the Migration Board to help me extend the time of my tourist visa. As she knew the director of the Migration, we thought it would be easier to quickly extend it with her. But as we sat talking with the director, I suddenly heard my
friend telling the director about my studies, as she did not think about my job as something illegal. The director told me I did not have the right to do journalistic work as a tourist in the country but everything ended with the director signing my papers, if I promise to continue to not do any more interviews. I promised and left. I did not keep my promise.

The first time I was refused to make an interview was with a correspondent for English BBC. The journalist first said that he was willing to be interviewed but after a discussion with his director he changed his mind and canceled the interview.

Furthermore, I had an interview planned with the deputy director of Granma International. I passed the strong military guarded Revolution Square and was stopped by two armed men who wondered where I was going, before I arrived at the giant building where Granma International has its editorial. Then I was warmly received by Granma Internacional’s deputy director. Having introduced ourselves to each other the director wanted to know what faculty I belonged to in Cuba. As usual I answered honestly I worked in the country independently but I also explained about my university in Sweden that had given me a scholarship to undertake this research. The director declared firmly that he could not be interviewed by me. In spite of his clear answer we continued to talk about Cuban journalism for one and a half hours, so I had almost got another interview anyway.

2. Background

Here follows a background about Cuba, its history and today’s situation in the country.

Short facts about Cuba

Inhabitants: 11.2 millions

Official language: Spanish

Capital: Havana (La Habana)

Religion: 75 % Catholics 15 % other religions

Currency: Cuban Peso (CUP) and Cuban Convertible Peso (CUC)

The Republic of Cuba is the largest nation in the Caribbean and is located 145 kilometers off the nearest U.S. coast, between the Caribbean Sea, Gulf of Mexico and the Atlantic Ocean. The state includes the island of Cuba and Isle of Youth (Isla de la Juventud), and 1600 islets, "Los Cayos" which are grouped into archipelagos of Los Colorados, Los Jardines del Rey, Los Jardines de la Reina and Los Cannareos. The capital Havana is located on the main island’s northwestern part.

The climate is tropical - summers are humid and hot, winters are dry and mild. The country has its dry season, la seca, between November and April, and its rainy season, la lluvia, between May and
October. The end of the rainy season is raging and tropical storms such as hurricanes often occur.  

2.1 A short history

Cuba was inhabited around 4000 BC and was in the Europeans' migration in the country inhabited by indigenous peoples. It was in 1492 that the Europeans in direction of Christopher Columbus 'discovered' the country and made it a Spanish colony during the early 1500's. Colonial formalization lasted about 400 years and over time the indigenous population died out, primarily through European diseases. African slaves replaced Indians work, 750 000 African slaves were imported between 1763 and 1862.  

Cuba was changed drastically also when the cultivation of sugar cane was spread out over the island and the country turned into one of the world's largest sugar producers. Slavery's importance declined in the late 1800's but cheap labor was then imported of Asia instead.

Dissatisfaction with the Spanish governance led to revolt and resulted in the Spanish-American War of 1898 in which the U.S. supported Cuban independence from Spain. But soon the U.S. itself occupied the country, and had Cuba in his power until 1902 when the country became an independent republic. However, the American influence was pervasive as the economy and foreign politics continued to be controlled by the U.S. Corruption and abuse of power rested over Cuba for many years. In 1959, when Fulgencio Batista had been the president for nearly seven years, Fidel Castro brought revolution to Cuba and created the hemisphere's first communist state.

2.2 The embargo

Fidel Castro's reforms contributed to an increase in conflict between the U.S. and Cuba, which was exacerbated when Castro began to negotiate and received assistance from the Soviet Union. Therefore, the U.S. imposed a strict blockade in 1962.

The same year, Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev agreed with Fidel Castro to install nuclear missiles in Cuba. This was during the Cold War when Soviet and the U.S. were still in confrontation. The construction was going on without U.S. knowledge and it was not until the nuclear missiles were already in place, photographs from American reconnaissance aircraft revealed what was happening. The missiles were estimated to be available to fire within two weeks, which triggered the so-called Cuban Missile Crisis. In thirteen days there was a conflict between Soviet

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2 Eduardo Torres-Cuevas, Oscar Loyola Vega, Historia de Cuba 1492-1898 Formación y Liberación de la Nación (Havana: Editorial Pueblo y Educación, 2001), 5.
3 Thomas Gustafsson, Kuba Konflikt och salsa i Karibien (Stockholm: Carlsson Bokförlag, 1998), 97.
4 Cuba country profile, BBC, 2012-12-14 http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/country_profiles/1203299.stm#leaders (Retrieved: 2012-09-28)
and the U.S. The world held its breath for something which could have caused a third World War. Khrushchev then agreed to dismantle the ramps in exchange for the U.S. to end the blockade and guarantee security for Cuba.⁶

Despite that cooperation with the Soviet was broken in 1992, the blockade is still going on to this day and continues to have a deleterious impact on the country. The blockade is said to be the main obstacle to Cuba's development.⁷ Since 1992 Cuba has requested annually that the UN General Assembly vote for a repeal of the U.S. embargo against Cuba. In 2011 186 countries voted in favor of repeal. Three abstained and only the U.S. and Israel voted against, but the blockade continues.⁸

In February 2008 Raul Castro took over after his brother Fidel Castro, who had then been the president of the country for four decades. Today Cuba is one of the world's few communist states, a one-party state, still led by President Raul Castro.

### 2.3 Economic situation

In the 50s Cuba had an extremely unequal economy, 25 percent of the total population was illiterate, only 15 percent of rural homes had running water. Afro-Cubans had the worst living conditions and held the lowest paid jobs. Since the Revolution the country has made noticeable progress towards a more even distribution of income, especially in spite of the embargo.⁹

The collapse of the Soviet Union and communism in the early nineties certainly had a huge influence on Cuba and its population, particularly in terms of its economy.¹⁰ Cuba's gross domestic product (GDP) sank by 34 percent between 1989 and 1994. Since the economic crisis was acute Fidel Castro introduced a rationalization program for food, energy and consumer goods. The housing and transportation costs are very low, education and health care free. By rationing living standards for the poorest, Cuba was raised.

When Fidel Castro came to power he abolished private ownership and companies were nationalized,¹¹ but in recent years, the formation of cooperatives has increased and self-employment has been encouraged by the Cuban Communist Party (CCP). In search for a new income stream, the Cuban government established the tourist industry. Although tourism now accounts for over half of the country's foreign exchange earnings, a major disadvantage is that prostitution has increased

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¹⁰ Kuba, Globalis, 2010-01-10 http://www.globalis.se/Laender/Kuba (Retrieved: 2012-11-04)
significantly in tourist areas and that class differences have increased. Those who can live off tourism live far better than those who cannot.\(^\text{12}\)

Cuba is known for its state welfare system where all education is free and schooling for nine years is compulsory. Almost a third of the population is studying full- or part-time at universities and higher education establishments. Since the revolution in 1959, a campaign led to illiteracy becoming more or less extinct. Some sources show that only in one single year, 1961, the illiteracy rate went from nearly 40 percent to below 4 percent. However, it has to be said that the literacy rate describes the proportion of persons between the ages of 14 and 44, whom the government believes capable of learning how to read but anyway the Literacy Campaign has been effective.\(^\text{13}\) Cuba is also the country in Latin America that has invested most in education and the quality of teaching is high, including a genuine teacher training. The teaching profession is therefore of great status and also has a large number of Cuban teachers in development projects in other developing countries.\(^\text{14}\)

Health care, including dental services, is free of charge and prescription drugs are free or sold at a very low price. As a result of the embargo the country had a lack of drugs but today Cuba has developed its own pharmaceutical industry which improved the availability of medicines. Cuba is said to be the most medically dense country in the world\(^\text{15}\) and the relief work of Cubans who work in other countries is large. Furthermore the welfare system also includes health and accident compensation, parental leave and pensions.

The positive image of Cuba's political situation is often due to the above points that the welfare system brought. Benefits that the CCP and Socialism have brought to the country are also social security and more equality.

There are reasons why the Cubans could feel discontent with their life-situations considering the poverty and limitations in society. To be able to travel abroad has been a lengthy and expensive process for the Cubans as they needed to obtain an exit permit for leaving the country.

But there could also be reasons for the Cubans to feel hopeful. Several reforms made in recent years have increased the independence of the Cuban people. Recently the government announced the removal of the need for permission and invitation letter for the Cubans who want to travel. From January the 14\(^{\text{th}}\) of 2013 all they need for leaving is a valid passport and for most countries a visa. Although the reform is positive for the population, there are still some restrictions that limit people from travelling abroad. Leaving the country is now easier, but to get a visa in another country is


\(^{13}\) Mark Browning, Cuba, Press Reference \(\text{http://www.pressreference.com/Co-Fa/Cuba.html#b}\) (Retrieved: 2012-11-10)

\(^{14}\) Claes Brundenius, Cuba Utbildning, Nationalencyklopedin \(\text{http://www.ne.se/cuba/utbildning}\) (Retrieved: 2012-06-11)

\(^{15}\) Nelson P. Valdés, Bredband, pengar och politik. Kuba, no. 1 (2010), 11.
difficult and today's economic crises do not make the situation easier. Moreover the Cuban government still has the right to limit departures for doctors, researchers and other professionals in order to "preserve the human capital created by the Revolution."\textsuperscript{16}

3. The Cuban media landscape

"In Cuba, no journalists are murdered. In Cuba it is the press who is killed."\textsuperscript{17} Raúl Rivero, independent journalist sentenced to twenty years in prison for treason.

Cuban media is often criticized for its censorship, lack of freedom of expression and freedom of the press. Since Fidel Castro came to power in Cuba the regime has used direct state control of media outlet. But the years before his governing should not be forgotten. The censorship has existed in the Cuban press since 1925 and Fulgencio Batista established a very strong censorship during his dictatorship in 1952 – 1959.\textsuperscript{18}

According to RSF’s “World Press Freedom Index 2011/2012” Cuba comes on 167\textsuperscript{th} place (of 179 listed countries) and the island is black marked on a map which describes the degree of / lack of freedom of expression in the world today. The black marking means ”very serious situation” which makes Cuba rated one of the around 20 countries in the world with less freedom of expression.\textsuperscript{19}

For example, it is forbidden to criticize Fidel Castro or any other member of the National Assembly. According to “World Report 2012: Cuba”, by Human Right Watch, Cubans who criticize the government are subject to criminal charges.

In one of the interviews with Fidel Castro in the book Cien Horas con Fidel, he nails down the critical attitude against the freedom of the press in Cuba and call the Cuban press revolutionary:

“If you call freedom of the press to the right of the counter and the enemies of Cuba to speak and write freely against socialism and against the Revolution, slander, lie and create conditioned reflexes, I would say that we are not in favor of this "freedom". While Cuba is a country blockaded by the rule, a victim of unjust laws /.../ we can not give this "freedom" to our allies enemies whose aim is to fight against the rationale of socialism.”\textsuperscript{20}

Castro also questions press in the U.S.:

“... I wonder: where is the critical spirit in the press of many countries that claim to be more democratic than us? Where is the critical spirit of those journalists and those television channels in the U.S., who have supported, as true

\textsuperscript{17} Thomas Gustafsson, Kuba (Stockholm: Carlsson Bokförlag, 2011), 458.
\textsuperscript{18} Mark Browning, Cuba, Press Reference.
\textsuperscript{20} Ignacio Ramonet, “Cuba Hoy” Cien Horas con Fidel, conversaciones con Ignacio Ramonet, 2006.
spokesmen propaganda, President Bush’s war against Iraq?”

What Cuban media does is not trying to make money. But what they do is trying to educate the people and give them a voice, referring to what journalists said in an investigation about ideology in Cuban journalism. One of its sources says: “I think that there can be freedom of the press in socialism, and even that the freedom of the press could be more effective in socialism than in capitalism.”

Even if the Cuban Constitution prohibits spreading propaganda in the media, it is only in the state-owned media. Actually the law guarantees freedom of expression and press freedom. Therefore it should be free to express oneself as one wish in a non-state media. But article 53 in the Cuban Constitution subordinates and limits the freedom to socialist society. It says that “Citizens have freedom of speech and of the press in keeping with the objectives of socialist society”. Then the law also regulates the exercise of those freedoms and the right is provided by the mass media are state or social property. Thereby private property is not allowed.

Another limitation is that the government owns all mainstream media outlets. This certainly affects the media's contents. Further the Cuban Constitution explains:

“None of the freedoms which are recognized for citizens can be exercised contrary to what is established in the Constitution and by law, or contrary to the existence and objectives of the socialist state, or contrary to the decision of the Cuban people to build socialism and communism. Violations of this principle can be punished by law”.

3.1 UPEC

Most journalists who work for a government-controlled media in Cuba are members of the union of journalists, the Union of Journalists in Cuba (UPEC). UPEC is a nongovernmental organization that was formed in 1963. But among Código de Ética del Periodista, which is the ethic regulations containing duties and rights for the Cuban journalists, the journalists are strictly commanded to follow the editorial politics of each media, namely a patriotic editorial line which defend the nation and the CCP. And since all legal media in Cuba are prescribed by the government the journalists are more or less obliged to follow these principles.

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21 Ibid. (my translation).
24 Cuba country profile, BBC.
3.2 Cuban News Agencies

Cuba has got two news agencies. National Information Agency (Agencia de Información Nacional, AIN) focuses on national news but presents news stories in both English and Spanish. Cuba's official news agency is Prensa Latina which provides information specifically for developing countries both to Cuba and Latin America. It also publishes several magazines: Periódico Orbe, Avances Médicos, Negocios en Cuba, La Calle del Medio, The Havana Reporter and Cuba Internacional which is directed at the foreign audience. The agency was founded in 1959.

3.3 Newspapers

Gazeta de la Habana was the first newspaper in Cuba published 1782, followed by the first magazine Papel Periódico de la Habana eight years later. The publications at this time were operated under Spanish press laws. With establishment of the Republic of Cuba in 1902 the journalism went in to a time of prosperity - at least a dozen dailies flourished in Havana.

In 1965 the Cuban president Fidel Castro announced that the CCP newspaper Granma would be the only nationally distributed newspaper. Granma is an amalgamation of the two earlier radical but independent daily newspapers Hoy and Revolución. The remaining newspapers would be published weekly or closed. The situation is still the same: Cuba's only daily newspaper is Granma but there are two other national newspapers, also owned by the state: Trabajadores and Juventud Rebelde, which are distributed weekly. And in each province of the island the local branches of the CCP publish regional and digital newspapers (appendix 4).

In the collection of material for this research I had the opportunity to visit Granma International, which I will now present in more detail.

3.3.1 Granma International (International newspaper)

The official newspaper of the CCP, Granma, is also available as an international edition, Granma Internacional (Granma Internacional) which was first published in 1966, then named Granma Weekly Summary. Today it comes out once a week in Spanish, French, English, and Portuguese and is distributed in Italian and German monthly. News on the Internet is updated daily, also in Turkish.

The newspaper is usually fifteen pages long, has a content with national and international news,

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27 Mark Browning, Cuba, Press Reference.
28 Mark Browning, Cuba, Press Reference.
30 Gustafsson 2011, 450.
sport and culture news and other sections called “Our America” and “Specials”. Common contents in the broadsheet newspaper are official announcements of the Cuban government, declarations by President Raúl Castro and other leaders of the Cuban government and different articles to defend and advance the socialist revolution. While slightly thinner newspaper Granma can be purchased for 20 centavos in the currency Peso Cubano (0.008 dollars or five Swedish pennies), Granma Internacional is sold in hard currency for 0.50 CUC (0.50 dollars or 3.50 Swedish crowns).

Granma International has its editorial in a building next to Granma at famous Jose Marti Memorial at the Revolution Square. The area is heavily guarded as the offices of former President Fidel Castro are located in the area. Granma International has approximately 50 employees, of which about a dozen are journalists.32

3.4 Radio-stations
Cuba was one of the first countries in the Americas to have radio and television services.33 The central editing radio and television in the country is The Cuban Institute of Radio and Television (Instituto Cubano de Radio y Televisión, ICRT) which was established in 1962. Private ownership of broadcast media is prohibited which result in only state-owned broadcast media.34

There are 96 radio stations in the country35 which can be divided to four different levels: international, national, provincial and municipal. The government operates six national AM/FM radio networks: Radio Progreso, Radio Reloj, Radio Rebelde, Radio Musical Nacional, Radio Enciclopedia and the radio station for tourists Radio Taíno. The official Cuban international short-wave radio service is Radio Havana Cuba.

On the basis of research and visits in the editorials, I will introduce two of Cuba’s most important radio-stations.

3.4.1 Radio Rebelde (National radio station)
Radio Rebelde is considered by the regime as the most important nationwide radio station.36 It has got the mission to be eminently informative with the assumption to be the radio station of the revolution. When Che Guevara set up Radio Rebelde in 1958 the restrictions on the Cuban press had increased. The broadcasts therefore became a vital source of communication for the aims of the 26th of July Movement led by Fidel Castro. Today Radio Rebelde broadcasts 24 hours a day with a

34 Cuba country profile, BBC.
36 Gustafsson 2011, 451.
varied program of national and international music, news, news reports and live sport events.\textsuperscript{37}

The broadcast station is located at the fourth floor in the facility of \textit{The Cuban Institute of Radio and Television} (ICRT), in the center of Havana, where it has its office with about 15 reporters and 60 employees in total.\textsuperscript{38}

\textbf{3.4.2 Radio Havana Cuba (International radio station)}

Since Ernesto Che Guevara set up \textit{Radio Rebelde} the leadership of the guerrilla had a desire of creating a radio station that would be able to communicate “the truth about the Cuban Revolution to countries around the world”.\textsuperscript{39} Fidel Castro announced the beginning of Cuba’s international radio \textit{Radio Havana Cuba} (\textit{Radio Habana Cuba}, RHC) in a speech during the funeral of the victims of a bombing on April 16th, 1961. He then described the broadcast station as "A friendly voice that travels around the world" and continued:

“And do they think they can hide this from the world? No! Cuba has a radio station that is already transmitting throughout Latin America and is heard by countless brothers and sisters in Latin America and the rest of the world. We are in the age of radio and the truth can travel far and wide!”

Broadcasting in nine languages: Spanish, English, French, Portuguese, Arabic, Quechua, Guarani, Creole and Esperanto, RHC can be heard in many countries on shortwave frequencies and in the whole world on the Internet. The programming includes news, music and features.

\textbf{3.5 TV-stations}

The national public service television is \textit{Televisión Cubana} which broadcasts through the five national channels: \textit{Cubavisión, Tele Rebelde, the Educational channels} (\textit{Canal Educativo} and \textit{Canal Educativo 2}) and \textit{Multivisión}. There is also an international TV broadcast channel, \textit{Cubavisión International} and since the 20\textsuperscript{th} of January 2013 it is possible to see the Venezuelan channel \textit{Telesur} in national TV, various hours a day. It is the first time for half a century that the Cubans can legally watch foreign TV.\textsuperscript{40}

When doing the investigations in Cuba I got the opportunity to visit \textit{Canal Habana}, a channel I will now present.

\textbf{3.5.1 Canal Habana (Provincial TV-station)}

Over and above the national channels there is one TV-center in each province of Cuba. The TV-

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item[37] About us, RHC http://www.radiohc.cu/ing/of-interest/about-us.html (Retrieved: 2013-03-05)
\item[38] Pablo Rafael Fuentes de la Torre, interview by Nima Krudtaa, 2012-12-19.
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\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
center in the capital is *Canal Habana* which was founded in 2006 but has a background since 1990 when transmissions were made from the channel, then called *CHTV*. Its slogan is “From the capital to all Cubans” (“Desde la capital de todos los cubanos”) but the channel is mainly broadcasted in the capital, even though it can sometimes be seen in other provinces as well. It is often mentioned as one of Cuba's best TV channels since it is innovative, more critical and a "young" channel. Its main tasks are to develop and satisfy the needs for information, education and entertainment for various audiences in accordance with the principles of the socialist revolution. Among the varied programming the channel has a news program called *Habana Noticiario* and the informational-cultural program *Hola Havana* which deals with various topics on a national level. The channel also sends sport, music, humorous and children's programs and its foreign programming is mainly based on series and soap operas. *Canal Habana* is situated in Vedado in the center of Havana.

### 3.5.2 TV versus Cuba

*Radio y Televisión Martí* is broadcasted from the US. Dissident journalists operate on the island reporting by telephone, e-mail and letters to other countries' media outlets with a varied rate of success. For instance, by phoning reports to the U.S. propaganda apparatus *Radio Martí* in Florida, the stories go back into Cuba when the signal can get around the Cuban government’s jamming. Neighboring countries' programs compete with Cuban programs as they can easily be seen and heard in Cuba. The function of censorship in the broadcast media is therefore limited.

### 3.6 Internet

Cuba is one of Reporters Without Borders' "Enemies of the Internet" and as a result of the U.S. embargo the Cubans are excluded from social media like *Facebook* and *Twitter*. Since 2009 it is not possible to use *Microsoft Messenger* (MSN) and the Cuban web site *Cubadebate* was blocked on *Youtube* in 2011. A very small percentage of Cubans have access to the Internet, the costs are very high, the bandwidth low as well as the net is affected by censorship. Less than two percent of the population has access to the World Wide Web. Once again Cuba is ranked in the bottom of a list. *Freedom on the Net*, a guide made of *Freedom House*, measure each country's level of Internet and digital media freedom. By examining three

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46 Internet Enemies Report 2012, RSF.
categories: Obstacle to access, limits on content, and violation of user rights Cuba is, before Iran, placed as the second last country.47

Private citizens are prohibited from buying computers or accessing the Internet48 without special authorization and the Cuban government maintains more than 300 websites dedicated to the press and official institutions.49 Internet is not permitted to the independent press and it is likely that the government increases the level of control and harassment directed to it.

To prevent unwanted information from outside of the country most access is to a national intranet which consists of an in-country e-mail system, a Cuban encyclopedia, and websites that are supportive of the government.50

Digital media has started to play an important role in society. Official institutions define the deployment of the Internet as a way to help building a civil society. But to Cuba's own democratic aspiration the government perceives the Internet as a threat.51 It has become trendy to write rebellious posts and get them out internationally on the web by saving texts on computers and then use illegal Internet connections to publish them52 or by sending them to acquaintances in other countries that can help the bloggers to reach out at the net. Cuban bloggers are said to be seen by the government as bigger threats than “traditional” dissidents.53 Reporter without boarders even writes that the authorities “have gone as far as to call the Internet "the great disease of 21st century" because it feeds its users with "counter-revolutionary" information."54

3.7 Journalism education

To become licensed journalist the Cuban students have got to study five years in one of the seven journalist schools which are located in following provinces: Camagüey, Piñar de Río, Holguín, Villa Clara, Santiago de Cuba, Matanzas and Havana. All schools have the same basic curriculum but have some smaller differences in each region. Anyone who wants to study journalism must take an entrance examination. The minimum value required to get in varies from year to year but it is often very high, around 98 to 99 of 100.55

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49 Mark Browning, Cuba, Press Reference.
51 Christina Venegas., Digital Dilemmas : The State, the Individual, and Digital Media in Cuba. (News Brunswick: Rutgers University Press), 185.
53 Internet in Cuba, Wikipedia.
54 RSF http://ar.rsf.org/article.php3?id_article=10611 (Retrieved: 2012-11-15)
55 Maria de los Ángeles González Borges, interview by Nima Krudtaa, 2012-12-13.
After graduation, the students are placed in to various workplaces to make Social Service (Servicio Social), a job that all Cuban university students must do in exchange for having free university education. A group from the CCP organizes so the students are placed in different medias which are in need of workers, but also by trying to match the students' own requirements. Social Service is completed in two years and in parallel the graduated students also have got to go through another process - they are assigned a mentor, a journalist in the workplace, who makes up a plan and a rotating schedule for the student. The job serves as a complement to the academic educational preparation.  

4. Theoretical framework and earlier theories

"In the modern world, journalists must take various cultures into consideration" 57

John C. Merrill, Global Journalism.

The author of Global Journalism describes how the world is booming of various journalism cultures. His discussion is relevant in the context of examining the Cuban press. Why? When talking about journalism culture some of its main ingredients that Merrill emphasizes as follows: Freedom, National security, Economic development, Moral philosophy and Democratic proclivity. Studies in journalism culture try to determine whether the country and media companies in question, have got these ingredients or not. When researching a country that is said to have an extremely low level of the above aspects, it is important to keep in mind what the points actually mean and who decided their definition:

“For example, multiple meanings can be read into the term press freedom. Intellectual classes, at least in more liberal rhetoric, seem to be in favor of press freedom. For one thing, it sounds good: talk about freedom and democracy tends to put one on the bright side of a darkening world.” 58

Merrill illustrates how hard it is to find freedom cultures and he compares the worldwide descriptions of press freedom to a cacophony of mutterings:

“Our press is free to support the politics of the state. We have a free press: one that is free to ignore the will of the people. Our press is free of social pressures and tradition. Our press is free but we have codes of ethics. Our press is free except for various press laws. Our press is free but limited by advertisers. Press freedom belongs to the people, not the press. Freedom of the press belongs to the press, not the people. Our press is a democratic press. Our press cannot be free and democratic. Our press is free from vulgar and immoral material. Our press is free from profit-hungry entrepreneurs. Our press is free from global media oligarchies and greedy plutocrats. And on and on we could go.” 59

This chapter presents theories that are relevant to this study. The theories emphasize the

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57 S. De Beer, C. Merrill, 9.
58 Ibid., 10.
59 Ibid., 10.
importance for the investigator to be aware of the differences in different media systems and journalism cultures, when making researches in a country where she has not been educated. The theories also encourage studies in developing countries and indicate how journalists' circumstances change with the technical development.

4.1. Advocacy journalism and Development journalism

The genre of the journalism which is intentionally non-objective because of political purpose is called advocacy journalism and is the opposite of the “gatekeeper” model.  

Waisbord, author of *Advocacy Journalism in a Global Context*, explains “the persistence of the “journalist” model of advocacy journalism is found in the political economy of the press.” He means news organizations are “likely to act as vehicles for promoting their political interests” as long as governments and politicians have power of the press economies. “As long as basic political-economic conditions are missing, keeping reporting above the political fray is not feasible”, Waisbord continues. He even says it is “unthinkable that journalism is anything but advocacy journalism” in these situations where the weakness of market and public funding are economically dependent on political favors.

Waisbord encourages to further studies in advocacy journalism:

“Engaging with questions about the professional identity of journalists and the impact of global efforts on local news is important not only to understand contemporary advocacy journalism and its contributions to social justice, but also to inform current theoretical debates in the field of journalism studies. Comparative research on advocacy journalism can shed light on journalistic practice and norms in a globalized world.”

The term “development journalism” refers to two different types of journalism. One involves journalism in the duty of the government. The government participation can help journalists get important information to spread throughout the nation. The governments can help educating their citizens and organize cooperation on major development projects. However, the government can also restrict freedom of speech for journalists. Since the reporting on certain issues has impact on the “development” of the nation, the journalists are controlled of the government. Thereby important information can be hidden from the citizens. If media within a developing nation has a corrupt government and citizens are taught that the media news are reliable sources, the journalism is used as a propaganda tool. Development journalism has “long been belittled or neglected by

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61 Ibid., 374.
62 Ibid., 382.
the journalism research community”. Xu Xiaoge, assistant professor at Nanyang Technological University in Singapore explains that there is always “a gap between what the press is expected to be, and do in society, and what it actually is and does. This gap is vulnerable to changes in social, economic, cultural, and political conditions and situations.”

The second kind of development journalism is that it can be used as a tool for social justice. As the journalist may find strengths and weaknesses in the media system of the nation in question he can “inform the rest of the world about important issues within developing nations” by speaking for those who cannot. Those who support development journalism highlight the need of information about family planning, health and agricultural developments to improve the lives of people in developing countries.

Development journalism has often been used by repressive regimes to justify government control of the press. It was appropriated by government leaders such as the Philippines' Ferdinand Marcos, Indonesia's Soeharto, Malaysia's Mahathir Mohamad, and Singapore's Lee Kwan Yew. The regimes encouraged the press to showcase economic and social development but prevented them reporting on things that would undermine this positive view. During the cold war there was a great debate between the U.S. and the Soviet Union about the proper role of the press in society. First, there were “those who supported a “free” and commercial press system versus those who supported a “controlled” one. Development journalism was seen by many Western commentators as being stuck somewhere in the middle” according to Journalism Encyclopedia.

Earlier studies in development journalism show that journalists in Ethiopia (where development journalism is practiced) take it for granted to focus on “positive development efforts, educating people, and generally supporting the national interest”. The research shows this also means “neglecting critical stories, avoiding oppositional voices, and hiding information from the public”. One of the interviewed reporters in the investigation says:

“We have to broadcast positive news to the public. The public wants that news. That is development journalism. Some of the people want to hear political news. But the majority wants to hear positive, development news. And that's what I want to.”

4.2 Journalists values and professional role

Journalist's own experiences and values depends on social origin, education but also a professional
role, professor Gunnar Nygren writes in *Nyhetsfabriken*. The professional role involves both the journalist's conscious values and unconscious norms and habits formed during his work life\(^6\) and there are no special rules regulating the profession. Rather, it is something you are socialized in to when working on an editorial.\(^7\) Nygren believes that there are many similarities but also many differences in the basic values of the various roles within the journalistic profession.\(^8\) According to *Global Journalism* the political and cultural settings have a great influence on the norms in journalism in the country and the conditions of journalists vary a lot in technological and other aspects.\(^9\) In *The Global Journalist in the 21st Century* studies of journalists in 21 different countries are exposed and one part of the studies is defining the journalist's professional values, including roles and ethical standards.\(^{10}\) The findings show that there “probably is a fairly universal desire for more freedom among journalists in various parts of the world”.\(^{11}\) The analysis also describes what journalists in the different countries rank as the most important roles in the journalistic profession. These were: report news quickly, provide analysis of events, be a watchdog of the government, provide access for the public, provide entertainment and report objectively. Of all material and information the authors made an important conclusion:

“Overall then, it seems that at least some journalistic role perceptions are associated with levels of press freedom across nations. It is clear, however, that any such association will heavily depend on a country's political, social, and cultural system.”\(^{12}\)

One thing that is made clear by researchers in *Journalism Education in Countries with Limited Media Freedom* is that journalism education is not equal to the media system.\(^{13}\) The editor of the book, Beate Josephi, concludes that “journalism education and media system are not linked in any systematic way. Historical factors, such as earlier colonial ties, play a role in the education [.../ as does the actual political situation.”\(^{14}\) The editor highlights journalism education is becoming increasingly similar around the world and describes “that the Western paradigm of a media informing citizens, acting as watchdog of government and commenting on societal affairs, is trending to become universal.”\(^{15}\) Even if many of the journalists in the countries investigated in the

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\(^6\) Gunnar Nygren, *Nyhetsfabriken: journalistiska yrkesroller i en förändrad medievärld*, (Lund: Studentlitteratur, 2008), 34
\(^7\) Ibid., 53.
\(^8\) Ibid., 54.
\(^9\) S. De Beer, C. Merrill, 147 – 148, 151.
\(^11\) Ibid., 536.
\(^12\) Ibid., 539.
\(^13\) Josephi, 253.
\(^14\) Ibid., 254.
\(^15\) Ibid., 254.
book, experience poor pay and poor conditions “this has not stopped the ideals of journalists being the guardians of good governance and agents of participatory”. 79

4.3 New media technologies

Research indicates that through new media technologies the communication in Cuba is going through a change. In Digital Dilemmas, the author Christina Venegas explains that new technologies “open new social, economic, and political opportunities for Cubans by advancing the speed of communication, expanding its scope, and increasing its forms.” But, she explains, there is one limitation which obstructs the juncture of digital media technologies with this changing society that presents important components of globalization. The U.S. embargo which blocks Cuba's economic, trade and communications development. It restricts “the potential for increased democratization of Cuba realized through social improvements”, Venegas writes. 80

Nygren also indicates in his project Journalism in change that “Information and communication technology (ICT) changes the conditions for all kinds of activity in the society”. 81 Hence, when changes occur in the media and journalists’ conditions changes, it will certainly also be reflected in Cuban society.

The transitions in technology provide more researches through databases and Internet sources, a faster news feed and opportunities for dialogue and interactivity. 82 For instance, the Internet is described as the most open medium in Russia where media freedom remains curtailed. 83 But the technical progress also challenges some of the basic truths of journalism so that the journalist’s role is questioned when journalists no longer have a monopoly on making a selection of news to present to their audience. On the net, the public is given a stronger position and journalists rather get a role that guide the flow of information than a gatekeeper role. 84 New technology leads to increased speed by providing access to data and resources, but also changes the perception of truth requirement in journalism as the risk of plagiarism and factual errors increases. 85

5. Method and material

In this investigation I have used two methods. For getting a picture of the media situation in Cuba I made researches in official material, went through documents, books, articles, earlier investigations

79 Ibid., 259.
80 Venegas, 74-75.
81 Gunnar Nygren. Journalism in Russia, Poland and Sweden – Traditions, cultures and research. (Stockholm: Journalistik, Södertörn University, 2012), 5.
82 Nygren 2008, 68.
83 Josephi, 201.
84 Nygren 2008, 77.
85 Ibid. 78.
and obtained information from some Cuban media houses and then summarized the information to a background section which can be found in “3. The Cuban media landscape”.

To find out about information about Cuban journalists’ professional roles, values and what opportunities and limitations the journalists experience, I undertook qualitative interviews with fourteen Cuban journalists. These facts are presented in the chapter “6. Results”. Some of the interviewees are more heard in this thesis than others, mainly because there is not enough space to present the stories of all fourteen journalists, but also because many answers are quite similar.

5.1 Source criticism

In order to evaluate the veracity and assess reliability in the information, source criticism is used as a method in this thesis. When it comes to the informants and interviewees I have chosen to report what they say but make clear that their statements are individual opinions, assumptions and beliefs. However, in the case of written sources, independent, neutral sources are primarily used, just as Metodpraktikan, the book that I mainly used when it comes to application of the method, recommends. When several sources give consistent information, reliability gets stronger and they are preferred to use. 86

Primary sources are more reliable than secondary sources. All oral sources used in the research- and results section are primary sources. Tendency means the sender has an interest, that it is a biased source. Tendencies should always be minimized or complemented by at least one independent source or a source with opposite motivations. 87 As many of the sources in this thesis could be biased I have constantly compared different sources to each other. The reason I have been using biased sources is because it does not exist black and white answers when it comes to some of the controversial topics covered in this dissertation. In these cases it is therefore of importance to present both sides of the issue. A further discussion about this can be found in “8. Discussion”.

5.1 Qualitative interviews

Qualitative interviews primarily mean that the interviewer asks short questions that often results in long, descriptive answers. Benefits of the interview include great opportunities to get unexpected answers and also to do follow ups. 88 Metodpraktikan encourages the use of interviews when the researcher aims to find out how people perceive their world. With interview surveys the researcher

87 Ibid., 322.
88 Ibid., 283.
Thus, interview surveys are not based on source criticism, but on people’s perceptions or beliefs about different incidents that cannot be judged to be either "true" or "false". *Metodpraktikan* warns on own prejudices about how people "should" respond and describes how difficult it can be getting so close to the interviewees that the researcher successfully can capture their true thoughts and opinions. ⁹⁰

Finding interviewees first started with a contact at the international radio station *Radio Havana Cuba* where the journalist Yessika Zoe Abreu Jorge worked. I got to know her when she was on a mission in Sweden and she agreed to help me with my investigations when arriving to Cuba. Yessika Zoe Abreu Jorge acted partly as my informant and helped me to establish further contacts with other journalists. Trying to cover all types of media but in the same time find a limit for my work, I drew up a matrix so that I could make a selection of journalists to interview more easily (appendix 1). I tried to find at least one interviewee per medium (TV, radio, newspaper and web) on communal, provincial, national and international level. Furthermore I also tried to find other sources – people from magazines, news agencies, journalism teachers at university-level and journalist working for foreign media but all participants had to be active in the Cuban journalism sector in one way or another. I choose to not interview any independent journalists” since I was warned both in Cuba and Sweden not to do so. Through friends, acquaintances and the journalists I interviewed on *Radio Havana Cuba*, a methodology also called 'snowball sampling', I was helped to find more interviewees. Most interviews took place in the capital Havana but some were also made in Cienfuegos, a city in the southern coast of Cuba.

Parts from all fourteen interviews are reported in the results. Longer excerpts from some selected interviews can be found in the appendix (appendix 7 and 8).

**5.2 Analyzing the material**

The interviews lasted between thirty minutes up to three hours, but usually took about an hour. As all interviews were made in Spanish, I recorded them to be able to transcribe audio to text format and make changes or additions to my notes in case I had misunderstood or missed important information during the interviews. No interviewee chose to remain anonymous even if they certainly were offered that opportunity.

After the data collection stage had been completed, I analyzed the material by first reading through all the interviews and highlight important statements and valuable information for the

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⁸⁹ Ibíd., 286 (my translation).
⁹⁰ Ibíd., 291.
* Independent journalist in this content means a journalist who is not working for the Cuban state.
essay. Then I created a matrix, a document where I put answers and quotes that I had picked out, and marked them in different colors. This technique is based on a method by Professor Jan Trost's. The advantages are that you get ideas during the time reading through the material which you can then use in the analysis. The underlines also make it easier to find patterns and facilitate the work when the responses are compared to each other, but it is then significantly to ask the same analytical questions to all interviewees. All questions are reported in the end of this dissertation (appendix 6). Last but not least I compared the responses in the matrix with the facts that I have presented in my background. Out of that I wrote the results and the conclusions.

5.3 Methodological shortcomings

As lone researcher in a, for me, foreign country, I encountered some obstacles along the way. Although Cubans, especially my friends, were very helpful, it was certainly my responsibility to get the interviews and undertake them.

Above all, a difficulty was to do observational studies at the editorials, a method I had planned to undertake since I thought it could lead to unexpected, unique findings. Sometimes I was suddenly invited to an editorial, so I went even if I was not prepared. Sometimes I was invited to get to do editorial studies, but repeatedly something happened and they, or I, could not make it. Anyway, I am very pleased to have had the chance to see the work of journalists, although I never managed to be a "fly on the wall", which is desirable in these kind of studies. For the reason I did not get what I expected out of the observational studies, I do not count it as a method in this thesis.

The language barrier was also a problem to take into account. Since Spanish is not my native language I had to fight extra hard with the accuracy to not let it accidentally change something in the content. All interviews were, as earlier mentioned, recorded and transcribed so I could translate and analyze them with calm. Even if the language was a difficulty the thesis managed to avoid linguistic related problems.

Ethical considerations have been a very important part of this work. The biggest issue has been the publication of names. What does publishing the interviewees' names bring to this essay? What might be the consequences for the interviewees if I publish their names? What might be the consequences for me if I publish their names? Although all interviewees agreed that their names are published – do they take any risks that they themselves are not aware of? One possibility is that the openness journalists have shown is an indication that they embellish their image of their work, or exclude opinions that they have, but may not want to stand for officially. My guess is that the

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91 Jan Trost, Kvalitativa intervjuer (Lund: Studentlitteratur, 2010), 154.
respondents have given honest, open answers. Not just because they have given me that impression by speaking with a tone that is compelling and seems honest, but also because many of the interviewees actually have given information that is critical to the regime. And those who have not given answers that criticize the party are probably just very faithful to their country and honestly believe in their system. As shown in this research, journalists in Cuba are intermediaries of the party and it is therefore not surprising if they defend it.

After consultation with my supervisor and consideration of the methodological literature, I decided to publish the source names because 1) the sources actually accepted and perhaps even expect that their names will be published, 2) I think it lifts the essay, gives a greater credibility and greater proximity to publish the names of the sources. 92

5.4 Concepts

What do I mean by professional roles and professional values?

By professional roles I mean what is reflected in the profession – the journalism, the expected function of a member of the profession. More specifically: How Cuban journalists appreciate or see the importance of the social role of working and if they experience autonomy in their work-life. Some possible journalistic roles could be: Report news quickly, provide analysis of events, be watchdog of government, provide access for public, provide entertainment, report objectively. 93

Professional values describe the importance for the media and the audience about the performance of the journalist. More specifically: What beliefs about work ethics do Cuban journalists hold in their work life. What opinion do the Cuban journalists have about accuracy and independence, and with what ethics and norms are they educated? For example to not reveal the source, publishing names, freedom from bias and to hear both sides.

To gain a deeper understanding of the journalists' situation and a wider context of their everyday work, I also want to find out what they perceive as opportunities and obstacles in their jobs.

What do I mean by opportunities and limitations?

By opportunities I mean the conveniences or advantages that allow the journalists to develop in the profession, for instance opportunities to further education, travels nationally and internationally, access to technical equipment.

By limitations I mean the disadvantages that create restrictions in the profession of the journalists. Obstacles in the daily journalistic work, both material limitations as transport and technical equipment but also political or subjective limitations in terms of censorship, self-censorship and

92 Esaiasson, et al. 290, 349.
93 Weaver, Willnat, 531.
difficulties with authorities and sources.

What do I mean by media freedom?

By media freedom I mean the right to publish and broadcast without governmental restriction. “Freedom from government control”\textsuperscript{94} is the common definition of media freedom which has enthroned itself largely globally. Freedom House, which is referenced in this investigation and is the organization reporting longest on media freedom, “provides numerical rankings and rates each country's media as "Free," "Partly Free," or "Not Free." Country narratives examine the legal environment for the media, political pressures that influence reporting, and economic factors that affect access to information.”\textsuperscript{95}

6. Results

These are the results from the comparisons and compilations of the interview studies.

6.1 The professional role and values

To be able to understand the Cuban journalists’ professional role it is relevant to first understand the media role in Cuban society. Most of the journalists interviewed believe that there is only one way to make the Cuban media in terms of the political situation in the country; that it must respond to and defend the CCP, the ruling party in the country. The fundamental is to educate, inform and entertain society, according to Wilfredo Gil Figueredo, earlier director of Radio Coco. Those who work for media with an international audience like RHC have the mission to inform the world about the country and campaigning against, for instance, discrimination against women. Joel Michel Varona, journalist at the news agency Prensa Latina, describes the journalist's role as following:

- The journalist’s role is very important and each day it wins more relevance as we make progress in making journalism more critical than it was before. / ... / The main thing that we report is the defense of Cuba - to show the truth of the country. Thus, that we are no hell.

It is extremely complex, if not impossible, to compare the Cuban media system with any other media system in the world, especially because of the situation the country which has prevented it from trading and cooperating with other countries for almost 60 years. Furthermore the Cuban media does not have the same function as media in other countries where they constitute a "fourth estate". Cuba has a single state, the CCP, and therefore the press responds to the party's interests and is also controlled and financed by the party. Or as Ángel Tomás Gonzalez, the only Cuban in the world who is working for Spanish media (the newspaper El Mundo) but is resident in Cuba,

\textsuperscript{94} Beate Josephi, Journalism Education in Countries with Limited Media Freedom (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2010), 2.
describes the situation:

- Cuba is a trench. Journalists in Cuba are not named journalists, they are named soldiers. They are soldiers. With these military terms there is no room for open, diverse opinions, the different views. The soldiers obey orders only. That is the problem with the press here; it is a very complex problem. The press cannot tell reality and the problems of reality because we are in confrontation with the U.S. If you publish it, the enemy takes advantage of it. We live in a consecrated country, like in a trench.

If using the definition of media freedom, “Freedom from government control”\(^\text{96}\), it is obvious that Cuba does not have media freedom as it is no secret that the government owns and controls all official media in the country. But can you draw such a big conclusion by comparing the entire country's media system with the definition of a word? According to Danae Àguila Guiterres, director of information at the local TV-station Telecentro Perlavisión in Cienfuegos, the CCP does not control media even if it works as a counselor with lines in accordance with the country's politics.

Adonis Subit Lamí, specialist in Digital Publishing and Multimedia and editor of Radio Ciudad del Mar, says that the situation of the Cuban media not is a desirable one, but understandable if you look back at the history and contemplate the circumstances the media are in. He explains:

- The fundamentals of the press fifty years ago were to try always to keep the Cuban government information secret to avoid enemies. During the fifties and sixties the journalism was absolute military, a journalism that would defend the revolution, fully committed to the Government. To prevent the enemy from learning what Cuba was doing the only choice was to not publish, in other words censor. With the fall of the Soviet Union, which had been Cuba's main trading partner, Cuba went into a crisis. There was a shortage of paper - media houses had to buy paper for the day. That means the magazine was ready to be printed but there was no paper to print on. The journalists waited for a boat with paper to pass the zones to see if they had a chance to buy it. This was daily work to be able to print the Cuban press, the journalists did not know if they would be allowed to publish or not.

All newspapers that had been published daily had to be published weekly. There was a shortage of everything - electricity, oil, wood, paper, even wood to make coffins to bury the dead. Adonis Subit Lamí describes how tough the work as a journalist was in the nineties:

- It was very hard times when people ate from the ground or did not eat at all. Then you cannot do anything, no journalism. You cannot go to an editorial where there is no electricity - then you cannot send anything, where there is no paper - then you cannot write anything, where there are no pens, where there is no recorder, where there are no batteries ... imagine this for ten years. What are we talking about? A crisis. In every kind of way.

As the wages in the profession were very low during this crisis, or the "Special Period", many journalists chose try to make a living in other ways. Therefore there was a lack of journalists when the country finally recovered. A reorientation of the journalism had to be made. That meant, people

\(^{96}\) Josephi, 2.
with higher education were asked to do tests and fast courses and then be moved to journalism. Adonis Subit Lamí himself was graduated in socio-cultural studies.

By doing this professional shift the country got more journalists fast, but at the same time this also created a de-professionalization of the sector. During the nineties the journalist got used to not write, to not work and many other bad things:

- Journalists got used to make one news report a week - imagine a journalist who thinks his life is to make one news report a week!

By considering all these setbacks, which Cuba had had over the past half century, it gets easier to understand why things are as they are, Adonis Subit Lamí means. But he also explains that in Cuban society today, it is no longer the politics between Cuba and the U.S. that are causing the main problems. Today the problems are subjective. Since you must be very careful about what to publish, because it reflects from a position where your voice that is published is the voice of the government, many journalists choose to do an “uncomplicated journalism”. Adoni Subit Lamí means even the government has criticized the Cuban journalists for not investigate what really needs to be investigated and not saying what needs to be said.

Today the Cuban journalists seem to have a great acceptance by the population. The minimum grade required for admission is very high and the five-year journalism education gives the students a strong basic knowledge and also practical training in various medias. Even if there is a disagreement in the audience of the journalism being made, the interviewed journalists believe the public have a great respect for the journalistic profession. But Diana Valido Cernuda, journalist at the TV-news on Cubavisión, thinks that journalism education looks different comparing to the journalism in practice. She says that “facing all obstacles of the day may not allow you to do the journalism you would wish to do”.

So, do the Cuban journalists themselves experience they have freedom in their work? On that question there is certainly not only one answer as each person has their own opinion. Danae Àguila Guiterres from Telecentro Perlavisión has the opinion that you can look at the issue of censorship in two different ways: as a brake and rigid politic or as a way to guide the journalism. Furthermore, she continues, there is always censorship when there is press, in any media, and there always will be. She thinks that there is sufficient autonomy and freedom for the journalists to work with what they want to and that their works only must be reviewed for publication in order to ensure that everything is well made – that everything is complete, all arguments are in place, all persons involved are mentioned and that the situation not is treated unilaterally.

Àngel Tomás Gonzalez from El Mundo has another opinion about the journalist autonomy which is the opposite to the one Danae Àguila Guiterres have. He says:
Here is a system that erases a lot of memories. The press does not publish almost anything. What the press does is, in my point of view, a government media – what they do is promoting what the party says. /.../ There are many things that happen in this society that are not collected in the national press. They do not exist. If you come within 20 years, want to investigate what happened in Cuba, and read the national press you will not learn anything.

Indeed you will not find any advertising in Cuban media, only informational messages related to health, education etcetera. But one consequence of the common political base that is stabilized in advance in all state-owned media is that the content does not get so diverse. With the same origin ideas the diversity is less. Each medium must therefore ensure that they have their own etiquette, says Diana Valido Cernuda from Cubavisión. She explains that audience and reception studies do not have such a strong influence on the Cuban media as in other countries. Since all media are owned by the government they will not be closed even if the number of recipients is low. But she still means the journalist has a fundamental role in society because people will always need a source that summarizes discourses and converts realities:

– I believe that a society like ours is beseeching new changes economically and socially. To coexist with all these changes I think journalism is the fundamental. A journalism that is in accordance with these new changes, that involves the inhabitants. Therefore it is necessary to have new ways of doing journalism. For these reasons we have to do it for make them (the public) continue to follow us.

Even if she does not see any changes occurring in Cuban media, which worries her, she thinks changes will have to come sooner or later. Recently this year the Venezuelan channel Telesur started to broadcast to Cuba and for the first time in half a century, Cubans can legally watch foreign television. Diana Valido Cernuda argues that this implies competition, and so changes have got to be made at least in Cuba's international news.

6.1.2 Working conditions

“Much dynamics and few routines.” That is how Helen Hernandez Hormilla, journalist at the cultural magazine La Jiribilla, describes her profession. Journalists need to stay informed and updated as it is a basis to make the selection of news. Diana Valido Cernuda agrees:

– The journalistic work never ends. From the time I finish work, I have to keep myself informed. I cannot wait until I get to my work eight in the morning to see what is on the agenda.

Of course the sources vary at different workplaces, but some of the most important are the country's news agencies, Prensa Latina and National Information Agency, news agencies in other countries, journalists' own ideas and the Internet. Some editorials have permanent correspondents around the country or in other countries. To deal with subjects that people suggest is also important:

– I am always very receptive to what people say about journalism in general and about my work in particular. For me, the people on the street is a basic thermometer, they say if you are on the right or wrong way, says
Milton Díaz-Canter, sports reporter at the television news on Cubavisión.

Depending on who you work for, an international, a national, a local audience or an audience with a specific focus, you must integrate with and listen to the public in order to know how to make things understandable for them. Susana Del Calvo who has been working on RHC for 40 years says that it always depends on “how you say it”. As she is specialized in a topic, health, and has an international public, she knows it is really important to explain things in a way that for example can be obvious for a Cuban citizen but incomprehensible for somebody else.

6.2 Opportunities and limitations

- Journalism has always been engaging. This depends on the media you work for. You respond to the media you are working for and you should respond to its politics. Otherwise, you should not work there. I work here because I have to respond to this and I want to do it. / ... / That is to say, for me it is no limit, I am not an independent journalist.

Esmerida Marcel, news reporter and editor, RHC

Several of the interviewed journalists argue like Esmerida Marcel, especially noticeable is that those who are born in the forties and fifties describes their profession as a military one and important mission in the defense of the revolution.

The journalists emphasize the opportunities for further education and training at the workplace as two big benefits of their profession. There is the International Journalism Institute José Martí with degrees, courses, workshops for journalists from both Cuba and the rest of Latin America. There is also education for workers who want to change profession and become journalists.

The fact that the education and study literature is free, and that anyone who graduates in journalism is guaranteed a job is also very positive, a point that several of the interviewees mention. The profession is dynamic, provides experience and several journalists also have the opportunity to travel both nationally and internationally. Milton Díaz-Canter from Cubavisión has made over 150 exits by his work. He has been given many of these opportunities because he is a sport journalist and follows teams to events abroad, but also because he has several skills – he can handle the job both in front of and behind the camera – which has led to independent missions like making documentary films in Africa. Milton Díaz-Canter also highlights the value of having a good relationship with the audience. He could make greater financial gain by using the technical equipment he has at home, to work on his own. But of social respect, which he considers to outweigh the money, he could get through independent work, it does not interest him. He therefore chooses to be faithful the public:

- But without any doubt I live in a society in transition, consisting economic aspects of the modern world, and
the money starts to have a greater importance. And especially for me, I am from a generation that keeps money with you in your work, in your professional role … I am not perfect, I am not a saint. I am more devil than saint, but I want peace in my mind. I am cool with my country. I think it is the best humanity has, up to most money in the world one has: if you have peace of mind you are a happy one.

Milton Díaz-Cánter continues saying journalism has a huge responsibility in any society and that the journalists’ responsibility to do their work as objective and close to the truth as possible is very important. “Ignoring these basic principles, journalism would be a disaster” he says and continues:

- We or no one else can stand with our back to the development of society. And then we have to incorporate all the elements that contribute to make a better job, from making better press releases to make optimal TV-quality in every Cuban's home /.../ We cannot pretend to discover something that is already discovered. Not on television, in journalism, in life, in transport, in anything /.../ But the youth will be better than us. Because the pathway is another. These young people will reconsider, these young people will have their moments and then … then they will realize. Because the world, the life is like that. Everything is developing. More nothing. The old people always saw the bad things the youth did. When their grandparents were young their grandparents complained and said: "No". The story repeats itself. You are going to say something about your children, and your children will say something about your grandchildren and so on. It will always be like that, it is man by nature. It is good. Man by nature is good. This is not the end of the world. On earth we have the the ability to destroy what we have. But we also have the ability to save it. And so we must fight.

Milton Díaz-Cánter is therefore positive to Cuba's future:

- I look bright on the future for Cuba. We will make all updates we need to do. We have to do it, I have to do it. We will win a lot. Above all we will win to save the social project that we were not allowed to build. It is almost 60 years we rode this … I think it is worth it. So, I look bright on it. The future of journalism: Good. And with people just like you, with young people, better yet. And that is very good. The youth is very good. It is a young country.

Los códigos de ética, the journalistic ethical codes, seem to be strongly rooted in the Cuban journalists. Sometimes news reports can be about two countries that are in conflict, whereof one of the countries has good relation with Cuba. It is then important to make the news as neutral as possible, according to Diana Valido Cernuda from Cubavisión. Two of the most important principles that many of the journalists highlight are that news must be true and sources must be reliable. Wilfredo Gil Figueredo from Radio Coco, who has several years of experience as a director of various radio stations says he has often ordered journalists to change works that have been incomplete.

- If you are a journalist, you know that "It seems like ...” and "I think ..." does not exist. "It is like this because I checked it and I saw it …" Okay? You have to prove it.

Wilfredo Gil Figueredo clarifies that censorship does not exist in Cuban journalism. He means that the individual journalist sometimes has a fear though, which leads to self-censorship. But that depends on personal incompleteness of not being able to locate all the necessary elements, which is
Most of the interviewed journalists agree that journalism in recent years has become more critical. Joel Michel Varona says that it is largely because of the young journalists. He receives them with open arms to come working on Prensa Latina. He explains what the changes depend on:

- Because young people have another view and as the times changes, people change and the diction changes that can exist in a society and where people interact.

He says journalism is very important to the inhabitants and it gains more relevance every day because it is advancing and becoming more critical than before. It is now more focused on issues that are close to the inhabitants.

The limitations the journalists describe in their everyday work, they often associate with the U.S. politic which has made Cuba's economy suffer for many years. These financial barriers appear primarily in the form of shortages and difficulties with materials, transportation and technology. Although those who have worked for the Cuban medias for decades have seen many improvements over the years, primarily in the technology, they highlight there are still many things that are missing and need to be improved. For instance many journalists do not have telephones in their homes and even fewer have mobile phones. Therefore communication is often a problem.

6.2.1 Technology and Internet

- To get a page to load, you can smoke a cigarette ... call your grandmother in Sweden ...

  - Ángel Tomás Gonzalez about the speed, or slowness, of the Internet in Cuba.

Nygren's theory "information and communication technology (ICT) changes the conditions for all kinds of activity in society" has also got a point in the Cuban context. The Internet has also facilitated and provided a tremendous success in journalism. More dynamic information, more sources, more opportunities to publish, better communication and opportunities to exchange views with people around the world are some of the positive aspects the journalists highlight. But it is also true that the computers still are few, often old-fashioned, the speed of the Internet is very slow and some web pages sometimes are blocked.

It was not until October 1999 Cuban journalists got their first computers. 150 computers for the country's 3000 journalists or so, according to Adonis Subit Lamí. Today, all official media houses have computers and Internet and some of the journalists I have met have also had the Internet in their homes, subsidized of the state.

The journalists describe that they have access to all sites but when I got to borrow a computer at RHC both Facebook and Hotmail were blocked. In some newsrooms, I could visit any site, just like I could in hotels that sells surf-cards. Sometimes the access even differed at the same workplace and
depending on the user I logged on to. Thus, the access is sometimes different from journalist to journalist.

As a neutral observer it seems impossible to find an answer to why some Internet sites are blocked and why the Internet in general is so slow in Cuba. The question is a controversial debate where you have to decide who to believe in, where answers are like night and day depending on whom you ask. The journalists I talked to say the connection problem is a result of the restrictions by the U.S. embargo, which can be justified by RSF's report “Enemies of the Internet”. But the site also says that it is Cuba's regime that prevents "most of its citizens from gaining access to the Internet and is occupying the field in order to leave no cyberspace for dissident”97 which also independent journalists for the dissident site El Centro de Información Hablemos Press (CIHPRESS) agree on.

Roberto de Jesús Guerra Pérez, independent journalist at CIHPRESS, explains in an e-mail interview that Cuba's government is blocking the web pages for the dissidents since they do not want the world to know the truth of what is happening in Cuba. He also says that Cuba has several headquarters to monitor the sites and block them. For that the Ministry of Informatics and Communications exists, which is run by military and University of Computer Science (Universidad de Ciencias Informaticas) where they have young, prepared people to hack and block sites. The U.S. is not blocking sights, on the contrary, it has allowed Cubans to open blogs for free for reporting about the reality in Cuba.

### 6.2.2 Blogs

Section “3. The Cuban media landscape” in this thesis shows how Cuban authorities have started to call the Internet "the great disease of the 21st century" and that it is seen as a threat because it has possibilities to spread rebellious posts and propaganda on the Internet. The journalists I have interviewed do not share this view at all. Maria Elena Calderín, journalist at RHC since 35 years, does not believe that "dissident bloggers" have any effect at all, at least not on the Cubans, mainly because there are very few Cubans who have access to the network. Her colleague, Esmerida Marcel agrees:

- I do not think the bloggers will do no harm because the revolution is here. Here at Radio Havana Cuba, many journalists blog, everyone has the opportunity to open blogs and post their opinions. Everyone has the right to express themselves as they wish. But whoever Cuban cannot connect to the Internet and some pages are very limited.

Several journalists indicate that many of the most famous dissident bloggers are not real journalists. They write very manipulating, unilaterally and do not have serious, credible information

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and they are also being paid by the U.S. to write about counter-revolutionary themes. However, there are also journalists who write serious but critical blog posts and articles.

Adonis Subit Lami believes that everybody in one way or another are dissidents as you can never completely agree with the law:

- Anyone can be a dissident, the one who has Internet or the one who does not have Internet. With cable or without cable.

### 6.2.3 Access to Sources

- Along the way you realize that sometimes there are obstacles that prevent you from truly achieving a realization or a total projection of the profession. But along the way we are, trying to do it.

  - Pablo Rafael Fuentes de la Torre, Director of information at Radio Rebelde

Another thing that several journalists highlight as a limitation in their everyday work is the access to sources. It is difficult to get relevant information for journalistic work when institutional sources do not want to talk. Diana Valido Cernuda argues the need of a legal protection, a press law that obliges the sources to provide information. If anybody has hidden information that is obvious and necessary for the country, the person should be prosecuted, go to trial and be punished. Diana Valido Cernuda says that there is a discourse on the topic at the UPEC's congresses where journalists may share what problems they have. She says:

- If there is an irregularity in an institution and I want to enter you need to let me record, you have to let me do the interview or at least let me show on TV that I was there and you threw me the door - this must come out. But it does not. It does not because there is a fear.

  - Àngel Tomás Gonzalez from El Mundo agrees:

- Each day it becomes more difficult to do journalism in Cuba. Because it is a much more closed system and it is very difficult to get access to the sources. Very difficult to research a topic. They make it difficult. Very difficult.

But Joel Michel Varona at Prensa Latina disagrees about the difficulty of getting in touch with the authorities:

- This is something you plan and everything depends on the context /.../ Maybe there is a meeting where the press is invited and perhaps the minister cannot attend at this time. Sometimes in some ways it is easier, other times a little more difficult because you must always do your procedure and follow a series of formal steps that exist to reach a minister. But there is always access to authorities.

  - Pablo Rafael Fuentes de la Torre, director of information on Radio Rebelde, also believes that a major difficulty for the journalists in Cuba is that there is no legal mechanism that regulates access to information. If a source denies a journalist information, there is no law that says that the source
must provide information. This results in self-censorship. Since you cannot do anything about it the journalist instead makes more jobs with easier access - panel discussions, political information, events and sports even though what the crowd really ask is "if there is bread in the bodega today" for example, says Pablo Rafael Fuentes de la Torre. According to him the most important discussions in the newsroom right now are how to manage to get back the informative reputation which, he means, the Cuban radio and press today have lost:

- It is no secret to anyone that the people do not see us, do not listen to us, do not read us, because in fact no one actually believes in what we say.

He argues that the content does not respond to the interest of the audience because of the distance between the information that the Cuban press presents and the reality. The audience cannot identify themselves with what they are reading, listening to or watching, and this is certainly a big problem and challenge for the media, which must be resolved as soon as possible. The situation depends on Cuba's rigid politic which cannot be changed, Pablo Rafael Fuentes de la Torre says, not because the media does not want to commit the audience's interests. About press conferences he says:

- Actually when they summon us we come, we are with them and then we just become spokesmen for their (the authorities') point of view.

So what does he think Cuban media needs? First of all stronger support from the government. It needs to include a press law, be more realistic, open for changes and eliminate self-censorship and the old discussions. As a challenge for 2013 Radio Rebelde works on developing the work at the office to successfully achieve an integrated editorial. Pablo Rafael Fuentes de la Torre concludes:

- So it would be good to demand the press and the sources of information, the complement to their respective responsibilities, to make a radio, develop a journalism more newsworthy, objective and investigative /.../ because everyone needs transformation, everyone needs renewals, everyone needs a change and the media - to be with this process of change - needs its changes. Because we are not the best, everyone has their defects, and to improve the work we do, what would be good? To make a vision to new actors, laws and dynamics that contribute to offer more accessible information and respond to the needs of the Cubans.

7. Conclusions

7.1 The Cuban journalism landscape

The media’s primary function and purpose in Cuba, just like in other states with a communistic press doctrine, is used as a weapon for legitimizing the power of the ruling party, CCP, and its leaders. As journalists in Cuba have a professional role where everything they publish is in the voice of the CCP the media cannot be a fourth state, be the watchdog of government or review
authorities as journalists do in other parts of the world. Their main task is to defend the state, inform, educate and provide information and analysis of events and entertainment. Or as one of the interviewed journalists describe it; Cuban journalists are soldiers, reporting from a “trench” where they defend the CCP. Cuban media are commercial-free, but often convey different kinds of informative messages such as short films, radio messages and texts about hygiene, health, education and more. A lot of news about culture is broadcast and full statements of the president or ministers are also shown on TV or published in text and on the radio. However, scandal news is published very rarely in the official media. With the CCP’s interest to defend the revolution, many patriotic messages are shown permanently in the press as for instance “Reflections of Fidel”, protest messages against the blockade and against “The Cuban Five” who are prisoners in the U.S. but in Cuban are hailed as heroes. These patriotic messages are one of the things best characterizes Cuban media.

7.2 Working situation
The journalists have high professional values, are well schooled in ethics and even though the profession has a fairly high status in society, the interviewees mainly describe that it is the love of the profession and a passion to convey the voice of the people that is the driving force in their career. Salaries are usually not higher than average wages of other government jobs. What Swedish journalists can earn in an hour can be the same amount as Cuban journalists’ entire monthly salary.

7.2.1 Opportunities
Advantages of the journalistic work in Cuba are that there are good opportunities to get further education and to grow in the profession. All graduates are guaranteed a journalistic work and get help to be placed in a workplace. To travel both within and outside the country is also a possibility given several journalists. Cuban media also manages to spread important informational messages very well. Hence governmental participation has a role which can be seen as positive since it educates the citizens and gives them essential knowledge about for instance sexually transmitted diseases, health care and natural disasters.

7.2.2 Limitations
Shortages in the work exist according to all interviewed journalists, but the desire to improve is also strong. The lack of material things depend on the economic situation which in turn has to do with the country's politics. But there are also limitations in how and what news are reported, something that many of the journalists would like to see change. Making more critical and investigative
journalism, reporting on issues that directly affect the inhabitants and listening more to the people are some things that the Cuban journalists believe that they need to get better at. Journalists working for foreign media and independent journalists encounter many obstacles in their everyday work and also expose themselves to certain risks if they do not work cautiously and maintain a balance in the way they report the news about the country.

### 7.2.3 Freedom of expression

Generally, interviewed journalists working for state owned media experience freedom in their work. Self-censorship and problems with getting access to information are barriers that some journalists say limit them.

The norms in journalism are greatly influenced by political and cultural settings just as theoretical frameworks presented in this thesis shows.\(^9\) However some journalists mean the journalism education looks different comparing to the journalism in practice. This can be related to Josephi's theories which say journalism education cannot be linked to the media freedom of a country.\(^9\) Even if the journalists are educated in one way that does not mean that way is “a sign of how free or not free the country's media system is”.\(^1\)

On the Internet there is complete freedom of expression; many Cuban journalists have blogs and Facebook. But since those who have computers are few, those who have the Internet are even fewer, and many pages also are blocked, it is difficult for them to reach out - especially to a Cuban audience.

### 7.3 The future of Cuban journalism

Most of the interviewees were optimistic regarding the future of Cuban journalism, indicating that the youth are strong, prepared and willing to make changes that are necessary. When it comes to TV the Venezuelan Telesur recently started broadcasting legally in Cuba. This can have an impact on Cuban TV to make changes, some journalists say. But there are also those who think Cuban journalism will continue to be done in the same way it has been during the whole revolution – unilateral, censoring, controlled and not investigative – referenced to their point of views. Thus, Cuban journalists' opinions on today's working situation are diverse. Even if they have many views in common about what opportunities in the profession there are as well as they have a rather similar approach to what problems in the work field there are, there are various attitudes on how to improve and develop them. Some argue the journalists just have to continue to defend the state and fight

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98 S. De Beer, C. Merrill, 147 – 148, 151.
99 Josephi, 255.
100 Ibid., 253 – 254.
against the big obstacle, the U.S. economic embargo, while others would like to see structural changes in Cuba's political system.

7.3.1 Changes in society and media comes with technology

Nygren's theory that “Information and communication technology (ICT) changes the conditions for all kinds of activity in the society”\textsuperscript{101} also applies to Cuban society. Even in the largest Cuban media houses the technology is still way below standard, at least compared to what media houses in the western world have. All TV and radio have not yet been digitized, journalists miss equipment like recording devices, computers and cameras, the quality is poor both in television and radio and the Internet is usually slow and limited. But the technology still has a growing power. And although few Cubans have computers and Internet, many have got a memory card they use to “copy-paste”; to copy everything from music, movies and photos to texts, articles and documents and then transfer it to someone they know who has computer. In this way a lot of material is shared and exchanged, even material which does not come out in the public media.

Even if interviewed journalists do not believe that "dissident bloggers" have any impact on Cuban inhabitants, they have impact globally. For the bloggers to have the chance to spread information that does not come out in the Cuban press, the blogs are positive for giving the public a broader perspective on the image of Cuba. The negative side is that facts can be distorted and it is possible that bloggers have economic interests which make them effectively spreading propaganda. It is also possible that the information they spread can be understood as journalism, though it actually contains only subjective opinions.

8. Discussion

The press system used in Cuba is unique but has similarities to Development journalism where one of the journalists' tasks is to inform about issues such as health care. Just as earlier studies in Development journalism show journalists often take supporting national interests in media for granted, also Cuban journalists do. Most of the interviewed journalists in this thesis stay firmly positive to the media's role of educating people to report about such things, and also mean reporting national news in that way encourages an interest from the outside world. Many of the key components in Development journalism are practised in the Cuban system but there are also aspects that differ. “To be independent from government and to provide constructive criticisms of government”\textsuperscript{102} is one aspect included in Development journalism which is certainly not used in the

\textsuperscript{101} Nygren, 2012, 5.
\textsuperscript{102} Xu Xiaoge, 358.
Cuban media system.

The Cuban press system can also be likened with Advocacy journalism, the intentionally non-objective type of journalism. Since there is only one party in Cuba there is only one voice to advocate; the CCP. I would therefore not draw an equal sign between Cuban journalism and Advocacy journalism. Advocacy journalism is a way to promote something that one is for or against but since Cuban journalists only have the legal right to promote the CCP, the stories they publish are necessarily not the stories the journalists would tell if they could do it from their own point of view.

By comparing the results, the journalists’ answers, with theoretical concepts in this thesis, it becomes clearer that the media system in Cuba is a unique one. Sensational news barely exists in public Cuban media, and a problem that Cuba does not have is the integration between PR and media that reduces the possibility of independent media. However, Cuban media has completely other dependencies. Therefore is also the journalists' working situation a different one.

In diverse communities, we have different principles, morals, views and conditions, and these things are what set us apart in everything from lifestyle to politics, to our media models. Through research in the Cuban media system I have got to know a completely different media system than the Swedish, which I am educated in. A media system which, just like any other, has its pros and cons. A media system which has major problems but also several advantages. I have met journalists who describe that they have high work ethics and values, but also seen their own and other journalist’s shortcomings.

* To undertake an essay about journalism in Cuba has not only meant to explore a unique press-system and to try to understand the Communist journalist landscape. It has also meant to be part of the controversial game, which comes only with the theme “Cuba”, even though my desire always has been to be a neutral bystander who report what she sees and hears. The researcher role has therefore been difficult when it comes to evaluate and be critical to sources. Even if sources at first sight do not seem to have no interest or take anyone's side, they often contradict each other and the more research I did the more the oppositions became clearer. Because of that I have always compared information before I expressed them as facts in this essay and in which the information has been uncertain I have tried to be clear that it is the assumption of the researcher / source.

Cuban journalism is very anti-U.S. This research is not about comparing journalism in one country with journalism in another, but to get a perspective on journalism right in Cuba or even write about the profession in the state, it is important to have some knowledge of other media. For instance some facts in my background are based on sources that are in clear opposition to Cuba. I
have tried to use "neutral" sources, but as a big part of research on journalism are American and British, it is difficult and even wrong to exclude them. Official Cuban sources are the opposite – self-defending themselves. Therefore, one of the hardest parts of this work has been to find a balance in work and to have to be critical to all sources. On several occasions sources have been in contradiction to each other, turned out to be false, contained errors or had obvious interests which made them unreliable. For example several sources stated that all Cuban journalists must be members of UPEC, but this is not correct, even if most journalists choose to be it. And other sources noted some literature is prohibited in Cuba, so I did the experiment to bring books that are said to be censored into the country and nothing happened. And actually the whole research process I did in Cuba was illegal but everything ended up well anyway (1.3 Obstacles) …

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When I came back from the investigations in Cuba I found out that the Cuban independent journalist Calixto Ramón Martínez Arias got jailed in September the 16th 2012 after being arrested at the Havana José Martí International Airport where he was reporting on two tons of medicine and medical equipment that had been damaged. When a man is arrested because of his journalistic work, as occurred in this case, it certainly contradicts the argument that there is freedom of expression in Cuba, which some claim it is. Roberto de Jesús Guerra Pérez, who co-founded CIHPRESS together with Calixto Ramón Martínez Arias says in an email interview that "dozens of our correspondents have gone to prison for making independent journalism" but that they will keep running their website CIHPRESS which is banned in Cuba and publish newsletters that are censored since they “do not mind going to jail because we are telling the reality of what happens on the island”.

Roberto de Jesús Guerra Pérez explained that it is the government, not the U.S. that is blocking several web pages for Cubans. His argument sounds reliable, but what one could be critical of is what advantage the Cuban government would have of blocking websites in Cuba, since there are still so few Cubans who have access to Internet? And if the pages still exist and are read outside the country it is the Cuban government that loses on the blockage in the end. If dissidents succeed in getting their message out to the U.S. and other countries the enemy has gained. Also it seems illogical that the U.S. would have interest in blocking sites in Cuba - they should of course like to open the opportunities for Cubans to use the Internet so that they may influence people to become more critical of their government.

This shows there are many contradictions within this complex media system. However, a few things are certain. The Cuban population has little access to the Internet but all journalists in the

country at the public media are said to have access to computers and the Internet. Connection is very slow in most places, and many sites are only open on specific computers or to certain users. But still the Internet is a very important source which creates opportunities for the journalists to reach out world-wide.

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The main problem the Cuban press has is the centralized political direction that was set up by a certain president in 1959 and since then has barely not been changed. Indeed many fundamentals of the politics were very nice and had good purposes, such as favoring human equality, but unfortunately it has failed in various respects. This has also relevance for media to be able to adapt to the changes. And when the people have been positioned in a stationary situation for so many years, with so many crises, society finally begins to boil. Cuba is there now, in a bubble of need. And the journalists are also there, as peaceful soldiers in this boiling pot. There are many structural reasons to problems and in a society that is changing, as the Cuban certainly has done and is doing, changes in the politics also are needed.

The state will continue to be anti-U.S., even if there is also a major criticism of the young against their own government. There is an opposition through culture and music and high needs of the youth seems to increase crime and criminality. Cubans are a well-trained, well-prepared people, and therefore they will ensure that changes are made - or else they will leave the country if given the opportunity. It is true that reforms in favor of the Cubans have been made since Raul Castro came to power, but these go forward very slowly. If they remain though, they will be of great importance for Cuba's future and hopefully they will lead to a positive development.

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Cuban media often speak about the achievements of the revolution but very little about the problems and losses. Even if the biggest interest is to defend the state, should it still not be in the interest of the state to highlight the problems of the country and start discuss them as a way to resolve them? By the journalists interviewed I got to see different opinions about that question.

One answer is: Yes, the Cuban media has a lack of freedom of expression, it has censorship and if the political system does not change, it will continue to produce the same kind of unilateral news as it has done for the latest 55 years. With the circumstances the state has today, it is dangerous and even impossible, at least in the state owned media, to criticize the government, authorities and politicians. To not be able to do this makes journalists, just like the people, frustrated.
Another answer is: It is possible that the journalists have a certain previous knowledge that makes them deal with the news so that they themselves create a self-censorship. But they also see that the journalists, especially from the younger generation, have become more aware of the self-censorship, and work for developing a more critic journalism. Therefore, some argue, the future can only become better and the young have all preparation and education to do it. It is common to blame the enemy in their north for making it impossible for Cuban journalists to write about political issues, since foreign media make propaganda. Many also claim there is no problem of not publishing scandal news since the informative messages are enough and the system has the purpose to educate the people. There are other spaces to discuss and debate, but not in the official media.

8.1 Further research

There are a variety of areas in journalism research in Cuba to be covered. In this investigation, I have worked with a wide range of media and interviewed different kinds of journalists to understand how they perceive their professional role and daily work. To focus instead on how the audience perceives the media would be very interesting. Through audience research and interviews a study of this could be done.

It would also be interesting to investigate whether any changes in journalism occurred within a few years, I am thinking in particular of Radio Rebelde, where even the director of information believes that the channel currently fails to capture the interest of its audience. How did they do to change this and how did it go? Did they manage to get to the listeners better?
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Articles


Encyclopedias


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Laws


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• Fuentes de la Torre, Pablo Rafael, and Abreu Jorge, Yessika Zoe. Necesidad de Fortalecer el Periodismo Económico.


Informants

• de los Ángeles González Borges, Maria; Lecturer at Department of Journalism, Faculty of Communication Sciences, University of Havana, interview 2013-01-30, Havana, Cuba.

• Fuentes de la Torre, Pablo Rafael; Director and director of information of Radio Rebelde, interview 2012-12-19, Havana, Cuba.

Interviews (Appendix 2)
Appendix 1

**Interviews and observations**

Here the number of interviews at each medium and all observational studies (underlined) made for this study, are displayed.

**Radio-stations**
- International (Radio Havana Cuba) 4
- National (Radio Rebelde) 1
- Provincial (Radio Coco-CMCK) 1
- Municipal 0

**TV-stations**
- International 0
- National (Cubavisión) 2
- Provincial (Telecentro Perlavisión), 1 (Canal Habana)
- Municipal 0

**Newspapers**
- International (Granma International) 0
- National 0
- Provincial (Cinco de Septiembre) 1

**Magazines**
- National 0

**Online newspapers**
- Magazine (La Jiribilla) 1

**News agencies**
- International (Prensa Latina) 1
- National 0

**Journalists working for foreign media**
- Newspaper (El Mundo) 1

**Professors of journalism**
- Faculty of Communication Sciences, University of Havana 1
- International Institute of Journalism Jose Martí 1

**Independent journalists**
- El Centro de Información Hablemos Press 1 (Mail interview)

*Number of interviews in total*: 16 (including one mail interview)

*Visits and observations at media houses*: Radio Havana Cuba, Radio Rebelde, Canal Habana, Granma International, Cinco de Septiembre, La Jiribilla, Prensa Latina, University of Havana
# Appendix 2

## Interviewees

All interviews were recorded and transcribed. The author of this thesis has the recordings and transcriptions saved and they are available if anybody requires to listen to or read them.

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<th>First and last name:</th>
<th>Current occupation:</th>
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<td>2012-12-11 Havana, Cuba</td>
<td>Ángel Tomás Gonzalez</td>
<td>Correspondent for foreign media, the Spanish newspaper El Mundo</td>
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<td>2012-12-12 Havana, Cuba</td>
<td>Maria Elena Calderín</td>
<td>International Chamber, Radio Havana Cuba</td>
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<td>Esmerida Marcel</td>
<td>Newsreporter and editor in the International Chamber, Radio Havana Cuba</td>
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<td>Elisa Beatriz Ramírez Hernández</td>
<td>Editor in the Central Newsroom, Radio Havana Cuba</td>
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<td>Susana Del Calvo Penichet</td>
<td>Journalist with specialization in health, Radio Havana Cuba</td>
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<td>Pablo Rafael Fuentes de la Torre</td>
<td>Director and director of information of Radio Rebelde</td>
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<td>Helen Hernández Hormilla</td>
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<td>2012-12-22 Havana, Cuba</td>
<td>Wilfredo Gil Figueredo</td>
<td>Journalist, Radio Coco</td>
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<td>2012-12-28 Cienfuegos, Cuba</td>
<td>Alina Rosell Chong</td>
<td>Director of Cinco de Septiembre</td>
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<td>2013-01-03 Cienfuegos, Cuba</td>
<td>Danae Águila Guiterres</td>
<td>Director of information at Telecentro Perlavísion</td>
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<td>2013-01-29 Havana, Cuba</td>
<td>Joel Michel Varona</td>
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<td>2013-02-03 Cienfuegos, Cuba</td>
<td>Adonis Subit Lamí</td>
<td>Professor of Instituto Internacional de Periodismo Jose Martí and Centro de Estudios de la Radio y la Televisión Cubanas, web sight editor of Radio Ciudad del Mar</td>
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<td>2013-02-07 Havana, Cuba</td>
<td>Milton Díaz-Cánter</td>
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<td>Diana Valido Cernuda</td>
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<td>2013-03-05 (Mail interview)</td>
<td>Roberto de Jesús Guerra Pérez</td>
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### Appendix 3

*Salaries of interviewed journalists*

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### Cuban newspapers

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## Appendix 5

### Cuban TV-channels

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Appendix 6

Interview form

The journalist
Name:
Gender:
Age:
Education:
Hometown:
Occupation:
Member of UPEC (Yes / No):
Monthly salary:

Background and education
1. Why did you become a journalist?
2. What previous jobs have you had?
3. In what ways has your work changed during your time as a journalist?
4. What qualities would you consider have given you the job that you have got?
5. How satisfied / dissatisfied with the position on the work are you?
6. What are the requirements on the journalists, for example in terms of being multi-skilled?

News selection
7. What does a typical work day look like for you?
8. What daily routines do you have on your work?
9. How is the selection of news made?
10. Describe the way from an idea popping up until getting published/broadcasted.
11. What opportunities do the audience have to influence the content of news?

Professional role, ethics and values
12. What do you think about the journalists' role in society?
13. What status do you think journalism has in society?
14. According to the Western education a journalist should remain neutral and be objective in his/her way of writing news. How are the Cuban journalists educated?
15. Western journalism should be a watchdog, a "fourth estate” of power and depend freedom of
expression. How does your editorial board inspect authorities et cetera?

16. What discussions about ethics such as name publishing, advertorials and censorship do you have on your editorial meetings?

17. What professional values do the Cuban journalists have?

18. How does your collaboration with sources work? Do the sources have the right to remain anonymous?

**Opportunities and limitations**

19. What opportunities and what limitations do you experience in your job as a journalist
   a) on your editorial?
   b) in Cuba?

20. What opportunities to travel do you have in your work?

**Technical equipment and Internet**

21. What do you think about the technical equipment that is available on your job?

22. What opportunities to use Internet do you have on your job?

23. How does the Internet affect the news reporting in Cuba?

24. Cuban bloggers are said to be the new dissidents. What power and influence do you think the Internet can have when it comes to this topic?

25. What changes in your work has the Internet resulted in? Improvements / failures?

**Future**

26. How do you see the future of the Cuban journalism?

27. What changes will occur within the next few years?
Appendix 7

Interview with Àngel Tomás Gonzalez

Why did you become a journalist?

I studied at the Faculty of Letters and Arts. But after college, I was around 20 years, they sent me to lead the National Art School, a school that Fidel created in 1962 where the kids study paint, ballet, dance and theater. That was my first job, to lead this school that had 700 students and about 300 teachers. It was a great experience for me to be head of this place, so young. There I began my career, I was there for four years and then I left the place, not knowing what to do. By coincidence, over a dinner a friend said to me: your vocation is journalism, you have to dedicate yourself to writing.

In 1970 I started at the magazine El Cayman Barbudo. A tabloid which still exists, with cultural themes. It was financed by The Young Communist League. It's a very important magazine in Cuban culture. It began in 1966 and has always been very controversial with debates, cultures of theoretical discussions, of criticism. It is very famous in the context of Cuban culture. It still exists but no longer has the same power in the cultural field. It came out nationally once a month and was groundbreaking in the context that socialism is very conservative. For example, rock music was banned for many years. Then the Cayman was first breaking that taboo. I was working for Cayman Barbudo with Leonardo Padura (today a very famous Cuban author) like four to five years. Then we had a big political problem and they took us out of there. To punish us they sent me and Padura to work in the newspaper Juventud Rebelde. Punished, as people with ideological problems. We did not follow the editorial line … we were protesters.

In the Cayman we made great stories or essays but not “street journalism”. I did not know how to do real journalism. Padura went to the culture section. I stayed working with the editor. Remember that we got there seen as problematic people ideologically, people who had ideological problems. No one spoke to us, we were frowned upon. There were two gentlemen who came, who were copy editors of the newspaper. They were very old, more than 70 years old. They came from the era of capitalist journalism. As I was not given any job because I had ideological problem, I spent a lot of time with these guys. And these men showed me how to do real journalism, because they showed me the journalism that had been in Cuba before (the revolution), which was very important and very good. Very good! There I began to read newspapers from the 50s and from the 20th and 19th centuries. I went to the national library, started reading a lot of press from that time, and learned a lot. I learned a lot of the technical aspects of journalism with these guys and with the editor of
Juventud Rebelde, who was also a very old man and came from the time before the revolution.

As I could not work in any particular section to make official journalism, because of the ideological problem, I started making up stories - stories about things that seem insignificant but they all have their story. For example I went to the cemetery Columbus one day. I found the man who had worked there all his life and he began to tell stories and legends of the cemetery. And about customs, rituals that were in the cemetery. With that I started to write, making a literary journalism. /.../ I started doing this kind of good reporting, they released my stories on Sundays and I started to have a lot of success. I wrote a lot that the readers loved, and then the editor gave me all the space on Sunday's newspaper for me and Padura to work on /.../ The articles had a lot of success, tremendous success. /.../

We were there until the 90's, then the Soviet crisis came. We had no more paper for newspapers, no electricity, no food, there was nothing. Padura went away from the newspaper to make literature instead, but I stayed until the end of 90/91. Padura went one year before me for making literature, to the National Union of Writers and Artists of Cuba (UNEAC) and started to write literature.

We undertook many investigations because I was already tainted by the stories that we looked for. Because we made many investigations. For example I looked for characters that I later got to know who were great. Sometimes I took advantage two or three months and on that time I went to Sweden, took advantages writing about Sweden. I went to the Western Sahara War … So we were admired here, very valued. We were like little stars of journalism. They let us do what we wanted. That was in the 90's. But then I left the national journalism because there was no paper and they set up some very strong lines of control over the media. I went away from there, from the party. And I stayed two years with a lot of hunger. I had no money. I started writing, researching for a historical novel about Havana that I published later. But I experienced a lot of hunger when there was no money.

(Goes back to the time when he traveled with Juventud Rebelde) /.../ I traveled a lot in Spain at that time, I presented myself to the newspaper El Mundo. I did not know anyone but they agreed to let me start working, so I started working with them in 1998. I am the only Cuban here who has worked for Spanish Press. The one, the only. I was the first Cuban within the revolution working for the Spanish Press, this had never existed. And until today I work for El Mundo.

I am not a good fast working journalist. I am the type of journalist that does more research, reflections, who does columns, long features. The short news I have to do too, but I am terrible in it. Terrible. Now there is no money and no space. Each day it becomes more difficult to do journalism in Cuba. Because it is a very closed system and it is very difficult to get access to the sources. Very difficult to research a topic. They make it difficult. Very difficult.
There is a cultural problem that affects me personally, that is the historical memory - the memory of a country. Here is a system that erases a lot of memories. The press publishes very little. In my opinion, what the press does is promoting what the party approves. The journalist does not have autonomy. They (the party) give the subjects and orientation - you have to write about the tobacco cultivation or the sugar cane cultivation. But the journalists have no autonomy. There are many things that happen in this society that are not reported in the national press. They do not exist. If you come within 20 years, want to investigate what happened in Cuba, and read the national press you will not learn anything. So this is my chance, the historical memory - to collect, tell the history of the people when I still can. The story about the life, how people lived in this country. Therefore I stayed in the newspaper. I do not criticize. I tell what I see. You come to Cuba in 40 years and you go to the National Library. You want to see the story of what happened in Cuba. In your country you can do a press review from the years 20/30/40 of the 20th century and you see things that happened that you can understand. But here there is nothing. Only propaganda. That is why I stayed in the foreign press, I was working for the newspaper *El Mundo* because I got the opportunity to catch up with stories, columns, to write about events, about contradictions, about good things and bad things, about anguish and joys that do not appear in the press in my country. But someone has to pick them up. Those stories have to exist. Then, I have them. I have these stories.

**How do you work practically?**
There is always a problem between the party and the foreign press. You have to learn how to pick up many skills to operate in the exact balance or seek a balance of the news. A political and ideological balance. Try to express things, make them as objective as possible, to where you can be objective. It is very difficult. But you have to think a lot of finding a balance. It is very difficult because here sometimes they get very bad, they call you from the party … it is hard to write from here. Very, very difficult.

**But you continue?**
Well, until now yes. But now they (Cuban authorities) want to close the cooperation, so we will see. They are reducing the foreign press in the country, it is complicated. I am in a fight right now because they do not want to extend my permission to work for the foreign press.

**What will you do if you cannot work for *El Mundo* any longer?**
I do not know. I do not know. Cut my legs? I do not know what I will do. I am in a very bad
situation, because what am I going to work with? I do not know how I am going to live. On the street again? I cannot work here /.../ I have years of experience. I am the only Cuban who has managed to work for a Hispanic newspaper. It is me and no other. But as I have worked under a capitalist system I am contaminated. I cannot teach at the university. I do not know what to do. It is a complicated country, very complicated. And look, I am one of few who have most balance in my notes. I do them with great correctness. With a lot of precision. I know the country very well. And I know much more information than I publish. I do not publish even half of what I have. Do you understand? But this is an issue to find the balance. Intellectually what this animates me, is that I pick up the experience of what people say, how they live, how they think, how they feel, the contradictions, what the system says, what people say … I find this exciting, it inspires me enormously, I love the sector. But now they want to cut me off. I am fighting but it is very difficult. And now there is almost no foreign press here. From the news agencies, correspondents of newspapers we are three or four left.

**What does your life situation look like here?**

I have my mother who is still alive and my brother. My son from my first marriage went to England and is now living in Spain. And what do I have here? The memory and the friends. Someone has to do this or it will get lost. These memory does not exist – you can check *Granma*, go to the National Library and it is the same as always. *Juventud Rebelde* also. The same, the same, the same. No memory. It will get lost.

**In what ways has your work changed during your time as a journalist?**

In society, a lot of changes. But it is not reflected in the press. There is always an institutional angle, never a focus on the man on the street. Cuba is a trench. Journalists in Cuba are not named journalists, they are named soldiers. They are soldiers. With these military terms there is no room for open, diverse opinions, the different views. The soldiers only obey orders. That is the problem with the press here, it is a very complex problem. The press cannot tell reality and the problems of reality because we are in confrontation with the U.S. If you publish it, the enemy take advantage of it. We live like in a trench.

**What would the solution be?**

The solution would be a constitutional reform. The party is the guiding force of the country, the party is above the state. In every country in the world the state is the maximum. Here it is the reverse. The party is funding and controlling the press. This press does not have personal private
space. How you change that? The day the press really is a company, I do not mean private but a company of the state, not the party, has to make money to get financed and has to do real journalism. But working for the state not for the party. That is the only solution. Private press does not exist in this system.

... I remember a very good generation that left the journalism school in the end of the 80's. They were very attached to us, me and Padura. It was brilliant people, brilliant guys ... And many of them began to work with us in the newspaper. Now there is none left. Everybody are in Miami, Mexico ... everybody went away from here. People with a lot of talent.

... The Cuban press does not investigate the problems, for example with the agriculture ... they say "here they are planting potatoes", positive stories. But real reportages ... why are there never any potatoes in Cuba? Investigating why, that is not done. Not in the national press, no. Not because they do not want, but they cannot. The press has a brake, a control ... There are people down in the local press, which has become so accustomed to it that they see it as normal. They think that is what needs to be done.

Now when they (the journalists) have Internet access some may see other newspapers in the world. But most people have not seen a real newspaper. Never. They have never been in a real newsroom, a newsroom from real-time like Aftonbladet or El Mundo. All that is written in Cuba with that vision, all that is written about Cuba, is manipulated.

Is there anything the Cuban media do better than the media in other countries?
There are a lot of good people, but a pity ... if we are talking straight I do not think that the newspaper El Mundo is a libertarian newspaper. The newspaper has interests, has dependents. It has political and economic interests ... no newspaper in the world is autonomous, they all have interests and respond to interests. What happens is that within that, there are at least a little more space, a little more diversity (than Cuban media). I say this with all my professionalism. I have also fights with the newspaper El Mundo. Now not so much now, but I have had times. Because the Spanish are very passionate ... and to my concept as Caribbean or Cuban I find them very dogmatic, very closed. They are very military.

Can you publish your opinions about the authorities?
To me they do not speak. I know people who have responsibilities and I talk to them, but not about my work. Have you seen that our cars have a special license plate? They are orange. Plates that identify the press. The press and the church have the same license plate. Before, when you just stopped in a corner everyone knew that the car belonged to the foreign press or the church. And
there was always a cop ... When I worked I always left my car and walked (to the interviewee)...

**How do you see the future for the Cuban journalism? What changes will occur in the coming years?**

I do not know, I do not know. It all depends on many things. You cannot think only in terms of Cuba. Since Cuba was founded, since the time of Columbus, the state has always been of great importance, Cuba is the key to the Gulf. Cuba has always been very military, it has a military tradition. It is not an invention of Castro, it has come with the history of Cuba. From the 20th century until the revolution there has only been two civilian presidents, the others militaries. Cuba has a deep military culture. Journalists and the military do not go well together. To do journalism in a country with a military sector is very difficult. The controls are very directed.
Appendix 8

Interview with Diana Valido Cernuda

Why did you become a journalist?

Vocational, I always liked writing a lot. As a child I always participated in the things that had to do with literature. In high school I started my great interest for journalism like telling a story. So I made the tests, I passed and entered the career. What you see in the academy looks different to what you see in practice. Because I can try to explain and make you interested, but it is another thing when it comes to the media and you face the obstacles of the day that you have to fight, and maybe you are not allowed to do the journalism that you would like to do.

In Cuba the media belong to the government – they do not belong to private companies. They are media that have anachronistic characters with the respect of over other countries. Here you are not going to see any commercials, no propaganda which are not public related messages that has to do with education, health, and those kind of things. As all media are state owned - all belong to the government - all respond to what interests the government. So, we are good, but at the same time it has many disadvantages because when you all have the same idea, somehow you have to find diversity within the media so you do not show the same messages on all media. You can have the same interests as me, respond to the same agencies - but the thing is: How do you tell the story? Because if not, people say “Why am I going to look at El Noticiero if it is the same that came out in Granma, or why would I read the Granma if it is the same that came out in Juventud Rebelde?” So that is what we have to find, that each medium is different by their label.

Here, unfortunately, there is also a lot of generational chocks. The young people are very different to the older generation. What is left to their retirement is very little, they live in the moment and do their job in the moment but they are not looking for new ways to build the story. When it comes a younger person they send them to do the daily corrective. If they come back with a job made in a different way the older ones say: “No, but why did you do this?” And they begin to turn everything around so you have to walk back to the lane and do as supposedly, what is preset.

When you talk about editorial lines, there is no document in the media that says “You should do this” or “This issue should be addressed like this”. Nothing like that is said. That does not exist. You learn it with the bosses, with the directors of the emissions, as time progresses and you commit errors – when they tell you "this cannot go through because of this and this." Sometimes the censorship is in the head of the journalists. Yes, there is censorship, because millions of times you do not want to do work on national issues, let us say one of the issues that most people ask for… I
am journalists working with international news, and do you want to know why I am journalist working with internationals? Honestly what I always liked to do was national news, national topics reporter was always what I liked. But when I arrived, when I graduated and had my five years of experience (Diana worked five years at El Noticiero while studying journalism) I had already seen a lot and learned that the best way to survive within this was having a topic that has, like everything censorship and all, but not as much as nationals. Here, if you want to do a story on a topic that interests people and is controversial … because when you do a job because there is a problem, then you do not have the support, the institutional aspect. When sources deny to give you information and you do not have a legal support that says that the sources have to give you the information.

Here is a very serious problem with the “kidnapping” of information, but a kidnapping of the information in the media has not anything to do with the government or the ordinary people. It is the people who have public positions who want to cover their own mistakes or cover their own corruption problems, that may exist, who refuse to give the information /.../ when you (as a journalist) are full of expectations for the information they have to give you and they deny to give it to you, the story finally go out of light because they closed the door upon you. And the newspaper has no legal document like a press law that covers the aspect that you have to give me information - if I discover that an institution has a case of illegality and I want to enter, they have to let me do my job, you have to let me do the interview or at least you have to let it come out on TV when I stood there and they closed the door upon me. This has to come out, but it does not. It does not come out because there is a fear, “No, you cannot do this because you only get to that ministry”. But even if we do not denounce these cases it does not mean people do not know about the cases. Yes, the people know about the cases, what the people loose is the reliability to the media because then they say "El Noticiero did not cover the news today. The news of today was this and this, and no one said anything about it."

For example the problem cholera … my brother is a doctor. There is cholera in Cuba, that is not a lie (Cuba has not had any cases of cholera in decades\textsuperscript{104}). There is cholera. What are the objectives here (for Cuba to not report about it)? Do not make people panic. And then they do not throw out that there is cholera. So what do the media say? That there are infectious diseases that are transmitted through water. It is the same, but they do not use the word cholera, it is removed to avoid creating panic in the population /.../ They (the authorities) create strategies. For instance the strategy is to send out official messages - that people should boil the water and take action. And they do reportages about how people with private businesses are taking health measures. But they

do not say how many people are affected by the cholera. They wait until the information comes out as official notes which the ministries send. Discussing an official note has no power. If the official notes say “there are five wounded” then there are five wounded, if they say “there are five deceased”, then there are five deceased. And if they say there are no deaths, then that is what has to come out on El Noticiero, although people preach two cholera deaths. In the case of cholera there is an official note. There is a media campaign to make people take action, or the government is in function of this, but they do not let journalists act as the official. The journalist do not even take the trouble of asking, because they know what will happen.

Usually we have great journalistic movements with the topic election. Here you see a lot of journalistic cover about the elections because the elections of Cuba are democratic and then the vision is to always show that to the world. But the Cubans themselves are already tired of elections. Not that they are tired of voting, but they are tired of hearing the same, the same … then you have to find other ways to reach out to your Cubans, to your viewers. How to tell a story about how people choose their leaders, to make people say “This is not the same, I will look at the TV”. Because Elections of Cuba is a very democratic process, it is really beautiful. But when they say the same thing every year the people get estimated. They vote because that is their civic duty but they do not want to see the Elections all the time. We make a six-hour show about the Elections across the country on a Sunday but people want to see a movie, series, not the Elections. This is what happens. And it is the same thing in millions of things. Look, for example I worked at El Noticiero, the last of the day, which starts twelve o'clock. One day I saw an accident where people died, it occurred on Avenue 23. A loud crash with a bus against the Malecon. And we did not have the power to say ”Give me a camera and I will do the coverage”. We had cameras. But this you have to consult, you cannot just say “I do this job”. It is not like in other places, other countries, other societies where the journalist has the autonomy to go out with the cameraman and undertake the coverage. Here we do not have so much coverage about an accident if it is not some kind of catastrophe /.../ It is sensationalism. And “Unfortunately”, people say if they want to know. Because you can be one of these persons who had a family at the bus P9 which hit the Malecón. People need to know. And this accident occurred eleven a ‘clock at the night and El Noticiero comes out at twelve. The immediacy should be at the moment, we cannot lower the coverage. And like that we let a million of things pass. That is how it is. /.../

In what ways has your work changed during your time as a journalist?
I am going to tell the truth. I really do not see changes and this is the worrying thing. I see a stagnation in the form of making television, in the form of making broadcast journalism. For
example *Canal Havana* is a medium that I think takes out a lot more from the news than the Informational. Perhaps because it is a provincial channel and does not have the same pressure that has the Informational. But there you see much more controversial stories, stories that come closer to people's lives … I think we have to change a lot of ways to make the news, and I think that *Telesur* (Venezuelian channel, now broadcasting to Cuba) implies a change. Because Cuban had nothing else than national channels, they had *Cubavisión* which broadcasts *El Noticiero, Tele Rebelde* which broadcasts the sports, the *Educational channels* and *Canal Habana* for those who live here in the capital. With *Telesur* we now have an obvious competition. We already knew it but now also the entire population knows it. Then people will say: "Damn, that *Telesur* attempted the kidnapping in Algeria and Cuba did nothing, or why did Cuba made it this way and Telesur made it that way." So now we need to be one step before, in the case of the international journalists. For example in my case I try not to use the same images as *Telesur*. When I have no remedies, when there is a very important note and I cannot make it in no other way I use *Telesur*. But in my way with my view of the facts, but I try not to use *Telesur* for the following problem. Even if you are telling a different story but are using the same images as *Telesur*, the people who watch the television will say "Oh, this said Telesur" and they change channel and do not see the rest of your work. So I try in my own cases not to use *Telesur*. I try to use images from the news of *Russia Today, AFP, La Española* … if they treated the information that interests me.

This change (the introduction of *Telesur* in Cuba) was this month, it is very recent. And the people have great expectations because they see a lot of news with them that they have not seen with us. For example the same day that *Telesur* began to broadcast in Cuba, the Swearing-in of president Obama started. Cuba is not interested in this kind of coverage and Telesur gave the full coverage, as a meditative show. And then they could not do anything because if you decide to connect *Telesur* to Cuba you have to face it with frequency /.../

**What do you think about the journalists' role in society?**

I think that journalists are fundamental in society, the reporter constructs realities and when you are in a reality you are showing the public a way to plunge a theme. Because people definitely not have enough time to learn everything, so they will always ask media for it and will plunge the discourses that the media gives. The journalist will always be this person who constructs the reality, convert you a determined story. And you will believe or dialog with this that the journalist is researching. The more credible, the more contracting, the more diverse /.../ the more identified with the viewer, the listener or the reader you will get and achieve them to follow your media.

What happens? In Cuba there is no rating, nothing to oblige the medium as in other countries …
for example they are always doing reception studies, audience studies. In Cuba it is done but less backups. The system will not stop to exist because a study says that none is seeing anything. It will continue to exist because it is a state owned media, it comes from the state and they do not pay for any corporation or anything private. The fact that there is no study it does not force news people to say "Damn, I have to do it well because of the competition” or “I have to do it well to gain more viewership”. The journalist does not have to be thinking about this. But the journalist has to be thinking people follow their media. And for people to follow their media people have to be hallowed of what is broadcasted.

So I think in a society like ours, beseeching new changes, economic changes, social changes … to live with all those things, I think the key is to journalism. A journalism that goes in accordance with these new changes, that are part of these new changes and involves the population. So we need new ways of doing the journalism /.../ For these reasons we have to make it so our public keep following us. Not make them leave Telesur, that is not the idea. But more diversity.

**How do you see the future of the Cuban journalism?**

It has to change. And it has to adapt to the new circumstances. It has to be reconfigured, it must use the entire theme of the new technologies in its favor. Because I need to know that I can work from where I am /.../ My boyfriend is a journalism student (third year) and sometimes they get new programs and things that I did not do when I went to university, so there is a constant feedback. Journalism in Cuba have to keep believing in these studies, in this feedback and I definitely think that there are major problems that are presented to the journalists which have got to be changed. The journalism need to see greater support from the state because both the government and the party support journalism and require the journalists to do a serious work, a work that is in accordance with the times we are living. This is a discourse, but in practice I do not have the president by my side every day who helps me when an institutional source does not want to see me. Journalism need a legal protection, because although the government or the party say it, they are unfortunately not there in the moments the journalists are living. They see the moments, for example a congress with UPEC were we discuss all the issues and journalists say: "We have this problem, and this and this" and they say to the ministers: "You have to support the journalists". To the the institutional sources the ministers say: "You have to leave the door open to the journalists, there is no problem with the information, you cannot hide them the information ". This is the discourse but in practice I do not have the president next to me to solve my problems even if I would have liked to. Then, how to resolve this? A legal protection! That you know you have to give the information or you can go to jail or you may go to trial because you have hidden the information
that was evident and necessary for the country. Just like in other countries. When a case of corruption is showed the person can go to court for not giving the information to the journalist, because sometimes they abuse the medias here and here we do not have this legal protection. Here they shut the door upon you and yes, they shut the door upon you.